

A sworn, notarized statement given in front of witnesses by

William Gibson

concerning searches for horses stolen by Indians from Kamas families

including an incident involving the blood of a rabbit

(Note: William Gibson was the husband of Mary Adelia Lambert, daughter of John Lambert and his first wife, Adelia Groesbeck.)

The year after my settlement at Kamas the *Black Hawk Indian War* began and I enlisted in the Utah Militia with James McCormick as Captain and Levi Pangburn, Lieutenant, and I, as Captain of ten Cavalry men with John C. Lambert as my Lieutenant. We kept guards out night and day, which was very hard on our small settlement, and we soon abandoned Kamas and went to Peoa, where we built a fort to protect ourselves from the Indians.

While [I was] after logs to build the fort, a grizzly bear stepped from behind a bush on his hind legs about ten feet away. I was afraid to run and he and I looked at each other eye to eye for a few seconds. He rolled his eyes to the left and brought them back on my eyes again without moving his head, doing this three times and then he ran away. I was unarmed and this shows the power of the human eye over the beast.

We [later] moved back to Kamas where we built another fort. The Indian trouble was mostly in the southern part of the territory; but the Indians made several raids on our settlement driving off horses, and I made several long trips after them. On the second of those trips while in camp one evening accompanied by John C. Lambert, James Woolstenhulme, John T. Leonard, Don C. Pack, William Woostenhulme, Silas M. Pack and John Duhamel, on motion of James Woolstenhulme, we agreed to voluntarily resume the obligations of the former organization and reorganize ourselves with the old officers of the Ten Cavalry, with myself as Captain and John C. Lambert as Lieutenant. While this organization was not binding further than our joint pledges and agreements, it was recognized by all the old settlers. All the trips after Indians from then on were made under its directions and authority and it was relied on as long as the Indian trouble lasted, and I believe it would still be recognized if occasion required.

Under authority of this organization, I made one trip to Salt Lake City with John C. Lambert to consult with Pardon Dodds, the Indian Agent, in regard to recovering horses stolen by the Indians and also made four long trips after Indians, on three of which I called at the Uintah Indian Agency. Two of these were while Pardon Dodds was agent and one while Lieutenant Graffen was agent.

All the Utes were not bad. Tabby and his tribe were always friendly, while Black Hawk and his followers were on the war Path and operating in the middle and southern counties of the territory. Most of our troubles were from renegade Indians who had left Black Hawk's band and joined with other renegades from Tabby's tribe and from Southern Colorado and New Mexico who pretended to be friendly and took advantage of the Indian trouble to run off our stock. Two or three Indians would sometimes run off twenty or thirty horses and hurry them through the Uintah mountains and across Green and White rivers into the Book cliff mountains where they would rest for a while and continue on to the Southern Colorado.

The country was all new to us and every trip took us into country that had never been trod by white men. We knew nothing of the trails and routes and could do nothing but get on

the horses' tracks and follow them. It was hard to get riding horses, and pack animals were out of the question, consequently we were always short of food and bedding, and whenever our trail passed near the Agency we stopped for supplies. The agency people were always kind and helped us with provisions and information whenever they could. Agent Pardon Dodds was particularly good in this respect, never letting us go away needing anything we could carry in the shape of provisions. Besides the four principal trips stated above, we all made many short trips from two to four days hunting the horses and finding the trails they had taken.

Of the four principal trips two were only to the agency and vicinity and had but little to note more than the time it took to make them. We named all our trips and I will tell them in their order. The first trip was to the Agency with John C. Lambert and James Wolstenhulme. We recovered one horse from a Uintah Indian named John H. Patterson, who had a cut on his upper lip and was sometimes called Washington. We called this the Patterson trip.

The second trip we called the Browns Park trip and did not go by the agency but up Weber river and down Henry's fork and Ashley Valley and crossed Uintah Mountains at Browns Park where from the southern slope of the mountains we could plainly see the Green river near Jensen and supposed it was Browns Park. About fifteen miles from the summit of Little Brush Creek we overtook the Indians and recovered the horses. We now call it the Brush Creek trip and it is fully described further on.

The third trip was to the Book Cliff mountains and is also described further on. The fourth and last trip was to the Uintah Agency with William Tanner of Wanship who had lost a horse, we did not get his horse, but learned that it had been killed on the upper trail.

Brush Creek Trip. A large bunch of horses had been stolen and we started with seven men besides myself and followed them up the Weber river where we camped the first night. We voluntarily resumed the old organization. I had gone to bed and asleep when some Indians tried to pass our camp with some horses. Our guards captured one Indian and some horses and were coaxing the Indian to get off his horse which he refused to do. This awoke me and I jumped up with my pistol in my hand and pulled him off the horse. Daylight showed that they had none of our horses or any that we knew were white-men's horses so we turned him loose, but several months later we heard that the horses were stolen from the Spanish Fork country.

The second day we found two horses and sent one man, Silas M. Pack, back with them and another man of Henry's Fork, John Duhamel, whose horse was disabled. My only team [of horses] was among the stolen horses and I was very anxious to recover them. On the trail down Henry's Fork, I found one of them lying dead, shot through the heart, and I swore in vengeance if I found an Indian on my other horse I would kill him. Two days later, near what is now the Spicer Ranch on Little Brush Creek and twelve miles from Ashley Valley, one of our party, John T. Leonard, gave the cry of "Indians."

I looked up and there was an Indian on my other horse. I was on lead of the party and immediately gave chase. The horse he was riding was better than the one I was riding and he should have out ran me, but I gained on him every jump. In the chase he passed the bunch of horses. His horse tried to run into the band and it was with difficulty he got by. I continued to gain on him and was within ten feet of him when he plunged into Brush Creek. I drew my pistol and leveled it on him, and could have killed him easily by the pulling of the trigger, when the thought came into my head, what am I after, horses or Indians? And the answer came to me, horses. I lowered my pistol but the Indian turned and looked down the barrel and rolled off the horse into the water as though he were shot. This was the reward for having no murder in my heart.

I soon caught the horse which had the Indian's saddle and buffalo robe on. It being my

horse I got on and felt more safe as it was trained to lay down and I could use it for breast works if occasion required. I had the band of horses rounded up and found one Indian horse in it by the time the other boys came up. (John T. Leonard was riding a little mule and was next to me on the trail when we saw the Indians. He tried to follow, but the mule could not run as fast as the horses and when the other boys tried to pass him, the mule would always keep them out of the trail. They tried to get Leonard to turn out and let them pass but he said "I am going to help Billy !")

I had done the work alone, as well as though the whole force had been with me. As soon as they came up they voted that I should have the Indian's horse, saddle, and buffalo robe for my valor. I lost my hat and tore nearly all my clothes off in the chase. I tied my clothes together as best I could with strings and made a hat out of willows covered with pieces of cloth.

The other boys spied another Indian on a horse running for life, on a horse belonging to J. Lambert. The Indian who dropped in the water [had] crawled out of the water beaver-like. We tracked him to the trail of the horse and the Indian that got away and we supposed that he jumped on behind. We were afraid to look any more for the Indians for fear that we might find the whole tribe, so we rushed back with the band of horses to safety.

We were out of provisions for two days and had to go back by way of the grading camp on the U.P.R.R. line and beg for provisions. We were gone about 27 days from home and found that the people of the settlement on the Weber river had formed a posse of fifty men and sent them out to hunt for us, but failing to find us had given us up for lost.

Everybody rejoiced when they heard of our return with the horses. I rode the Indian horse we captured on this trip and on my trip with William Tanner to the Agency, which has already been described. On leaving the Agency and while passing a bunch of several hundred Indians one came out and took hold of my bridle rein and said "my horse." I grabbed him by the collar and said, "I've been looking for you for two years." In the scuffle he pulled away and I let him go. The Indians afterwards stole the horse away from me at Kamas.

Book Cliff Trip. On the Book cliff mountain trip I had with me John C. Lambert and Oscar Clark. We got on the horses tracks and followed them across Provo river and down the Duchesne. At a point near the present site of Myton, we left the trail and went to the Uintah Agency for supplies, where we met J. F. Tortolette, Superintendent of Indian affairs who, after hearing our story, secured for us the services of three Indian guides, viz. Yank, and Sagoose ([both] now dead), and Little Doctor (still living).

On Red Creek one of our horses was shot by the Indians. When a horse got sulky or troublesome the Indians would always shoot it. When we saw the shot horse, we knew we were on the right trail. We left Oscar Clark at the agency cradling grain for the Indians, while I, with John C. Lambert and the three Indian Guides followed the renegade Indians across the Green and White rivers into the tops of the Book Cliff mountains in that rough country west of Baxter Pass. Yank had no horse, so we had to let him have Oscar Clark's which was badly jaded and soon gave out, and we had to take turns walking. We were on our horses' trail and anxious to overtake them and kept moving as fast as possible which kept the footman nearly always on the trot.

We were on the fresh trail of our horses going up a long cedar ridge in the afternoon when the sun was very hot. It was my turn to walk. Provisions were scarce and we were on half rations. We had no water and were weak from lack of food and [being] nearly always on the trot. I asked Yank, our Indian Guide, how far to water? He answered with a motion, but knew nothing about the distance. I believe our Guides were lost, for every hollow that had a green bush in it, the Indians would scratch for water.

My lips stuck together and my throat and tongue were parched and swollen and I could hardly speak. I had exhausted every means that I knew of producing moisture, such as chewing lead etc., without relief. Then Sagoose shot a rabbit. I ran and picked it up and cut its throat and tried to suck its blood, but could get none. I looked and saw it had been shot through the body. I then cut it open and found a pint of blood and began to drink it. My lieutenant, John C. Lambert, spoke up and said, "Don't drink it all." I then gave it to him and he took a mouthful and spat it out and said, "I can't do that." I then offered it to the Indians, but they all refused by the shaking of the head and I finished it and believe it saved my life. Right here I was "christened" by the Indian name "Anshibob," meaning red blood or blood drinker. That night we found [a] spring and each of us took a moderate drink and lay down for a while, then took another, etc., until our thirst was satisfied.

The next day we came in sight of the Indians' camp with our horses. They were camped on a small stream in some cottonwood timber which we believed to be on the Grande river slope. They had nine wickiups and we could plainly see that they were too strong for us. They were resting after their long ride and had no idea they had been followed or that there was a white man within a hundred miles of them. We carefully noted the location of the Indians and horses and waited for darkness.

Now came our reward for the hot sultry days we had suffered. They were storm breeders [clouds] and the night was dark and the rain fell in torrents, which kept the Indians within their wickiups while we got the horses onto the trail. Here the [Indian] Guides did good work getting the horses. Everything went our way. We had a white horse that would follow the trail the darkest night. He was called our trail horse. We put him on the lead and the band followed; and we followed the band. An occasional flash of lightning showed the trail and horses with the white horse on lead.

One flash showed a smooth cedar limb over the trail; so low that we would have to stoop in order to get under it. The other boys passed under it all right, but by the time I reached it the light was gone and all was darkness. The limb missed my head, but caught my collar and ran down the back of my coat and lifted me off my horse and I was left hanging to the limb. My Lieutenant heard my cries and came back and let me down. Had I been alone I might have been hanging there still. Had I have practiced undressing while hanging in a tree I might have released myself; but unfortunately I had never had such practice, neither hanging in a tree or to a pole, or in fact hanging in any other way.

Daylight found us many miles from the Indians' camp and well out of danger. We had three horses in the bunch that were not ours. One belonged to Pardon Dodds, the Indian Agent, the other two were Indian horses. We gave one to Yank. We arrived safely at the Agency and Oscar Clark [joined us] and [we] continued homeward.

On the way our horses were jaded and we camped on the divide between Provo and the Duchesne rivers to hunt and let our horses rest. Here we found a horse that had been stolen by Indians the year before from Melvin D. Cook of Salt Lake County, which we returned and got fifteen dollars for it. I killed a bear and saved the hide, which was worth eight dollars. We got Clark's check for cradling grain at the Agency and five dollars for delivering a horse belonging to a settler at Kamas, and one Indian pony. Oscar Clark got the bearskin and pony, Lambert and I divided the money. We had been gone thirty days and traveled more than five hundred miles.

I spent from twenty-one years of age to twenty-six, between the years 1865 and 1871 in building forts, standing guard and traveling between one and two thousand miles; following horses tracks the only guide into an unknown country on the Book Cliff mountains and other

Indian trails, where I believe that white man's foot had never trod before. The only pay I received was a medal from the State of Utah, which I highly prize. From the Federal Authorities of the United States, from Captain Pardon Dodds, Indian Agent of the Uintah Indian Agency and J. F. Tortolette, superintendent of Indian Affairs for the United States I received assistance in the way of provisions and an Indian guide. Their kindness to me I shall never forget.

In conclusion and in behalf of the Ten Cavalry, I will say that every man had done his duty to his Country, without pay, on half rations, with their saddle blankets for bedding and the company of Heaven for covering, the bill of fare ten to twenty pounds of flour to the man tied on his saddle, sometimes a little bacon and butter, without cooking utensils of any kind, as their weight would be better in flour.

The cook would take the sack of flour to the water, use his hat for a cup, mix the dough in the sack, divide the dough by the number of men, then make the call "Grub is ready." Then each man would cook according to his liking, on the coals or in the ashes. But when in a hurry, roll the dough on a stick, May Pole fashion roll your stick with the dough over and over before the fire until cooked, mount your horses, eat off the stick and track Indians while you travel. The Ten Cavalry have done more in the interest of civilization than some men have done who receive from the United States a monthly salary, a life pension and a token of honor.

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Uintah County, State of Utah SS:

Pardon Dodds being duly sworn according to law says that he is 71 years of age and resides at Vernal, Utah; that he was Acting Indian Agent at the Uintah Indian Agency from 1867 to 1869; that he has been acquainted with William Gibson since the summer of 1867 when he met him at Salt Lake City, Utah, and met him at the Uintah Agency on several occasions since; that I know him to be a creditable witness and the person he represents himself to be; that I have read his affidavit, that this is intended to corroborate; that the statements made therein that I am acquainted with are true and correct and those that I am not acquainted with I verily believe to be true.

Pardon Dodds (signed)
Ex-Indian Agent

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of May, 1910.

John Glenn (signed)
Notary Public

My commission expires September 3rd, 1910.

Uintah County, State of Utah SS:

Little Doctor, an Indian belonging to the Uintah tribe of Utes, being duly sworn, says that he has been acquainted with Mr. William Gibson since about 1870. when I went with him as a guide to the head of Book Cliff mountain; that those parts of his affidavit that this is intended to corroborate have been interpreted to me and I know that his narrative of our journey without water all day while traveling up a long cedar ridge until we were almost dead of thirst and he drinking the blood and manure mixed of a rabbit, and Yank naming him "Anshibob," meaning red blood drinker, and is known by that name to this day; and our taking the horses are all true and correctly stated.

Witnesses: Scott L. Fesler, E.D. Fesler (signed)
Little Doctor (his mark)

Source Information:

Kate Carter, *Heart Throbs of the West* , - Vol. I-XII (12). Salt Lake City, UT: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1947

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From *Echoes of Yesterday, Summit County Centennial History* , published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Summit County, 1947:

William Gibson, in about 1870, started another sawmill at the mouth of White Pine Canyon [east of Kamas]. He had his legs so badly broken in an accident at this mill that everyone thought they would have to be amputated. He would not listen to this but had the women of the neighborhood pack his legs in fresh earth. This treatment, all agreed, saved his limbs.

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From *Builders of Uintah* , published by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers, Uintah County, 1947:

...Mr. and Mrs. William Gibson landed here [Ashley Valley] from Kamas on the first day of November, 1877. They brought 35 head of cattle and enough provisions to do them for a year or more. The winter was very mild and they lived in a house without doors or windows. While Mr. Gibson was away after supplies two years later, the Indian troubles began over the line in Colorado. Mrs. Gibson being afraid, went to Old Ashley Town where the rest of the settlers had gathered. When Mr. Gibson returned he moved their sawed log house which they had built on their ranch during the summer (sawing logs with a whip saw) to Old Ashley Town where they lived for a year, then returned to their ranch. They sold their house in Ashley Town to the county for a courthouse. It was used for this purpose four or five years. The county then moved it to Hatch Town, which is now Vernal, where it was used for many years as a county building.

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NOTE: William Gibson, one of the first homesteaders in Ashley Valley, was Sheriff in Uintah County for several years. He died 11 Dec 1932 and is buried in the Vernal City Cemetery. His wife, Mary Adelia, was buried next to him just a few weeks more than one year later.