

First Lieut. John L. Bullis, Twenty-fourth Infantry. Committee on Military Affairs, Washington, D.C., January 8, 1878. "Testimony to the 45th Congress on the Texas Border Troubles Hearings before the United States House Committee on Military Affairs" (January 8, 1878).

Pages 194-195. Available at [House-45-2-Miscellaneous-64-Serial-1820.pdf \(28.68Mb\)](#) (Accessed 9/3/2021).

"About the middle of October last I left Fort Clark with 34 Seminole scouts, 1 Mexican guide, 1 Lipan squaw, and acting assistant surgeon Dr. Wolf, and proceeded on a scout up the Rio Grande, acting under instructions from colonel Shafter, commanding the post. On reaching the Pecos River, distant about 140 miles, about the 22d of October, two scouts, who had been sent out about forty days before, reported to me at that point that they had found where a party of Indians had been camped but a few days before, below San Carlos, Mex, on the Rio Grande, the Indians being camped on both sides of the Rio Grande.

They stated to me that the Indians had moved south into Mexico, in the direction of Colorado Peak, near the Sierra Carmel. I immediately left my camp on the Pecos, marched to the Rio Grande, and crossed at a point known as the lower point of the Sierra Pachona. I crossed the river on October 28, I think, and within 10 miles of the river we found where 2 Indians riding mules had passed about two weeks before, going toward the settlement in Texas. I continued on my course south, made a dry camp that night in a mountain pass, left camp the following morning before daylight, continued south, and about 12 o'clock in the day found three Indian Trails. The first was that of an Indian village moving south, about three weeks old; the second was that of an Indian village moving northwest, about 7 days old; and the third was that of 7 horses and 2 mules, made the night before.

The following day, October 30, we took the trail which had been made about 24 hours before, followed it for three days, and came on an Indian village on the Texas side of the Rio Grande about 5 o'clock in the afternoon. The Indians discovered us about 3 miles distant, and commenced funning off their herds of horses and cattle. The horses alone numbered, as we supposed, about 200. The Indians came down on our side of the river below their camp and attacked us as we were moving up to their camp a little before sundown. We checked them up at the time, and found that the country was so rough and broken that we could not get at them, the cliffs in places being about 1,000 feet high.

Not knowing the number of these Indians, I deemed it best for the safety of my command to leave the canon of the Rio Grande, and I marched back about 7 or 8 miles and went into camp in an open place about 1 o'clock at night. One packed mule with a pack fell over a bluff which was supposed to be 200 or 300 feet high. We crossed the Rio Grande 3 or 4 days afterward, and on reaching the Pecos River I sent two scouts with a letter to Colonel Shafter, or rather his acting assistant adjutant -general, at Fort Clark. On reaching the head of Devil's River, a few days later, I received instructions from Colonel Shafter directing me to camp at Pecan Springs, and to await the arrival of troops, which he had sent out under Captain Young, of the Eighth Cavalry, to whom I was ordered to report.

Captain Young left Pecan Springs about the 16th of the month, and I accompanied him. We followed the trail made by us, crossed the Rio Grande into Mexico, and reached the point where we had attacked the Indian village. We reached it on the 23rd of the month, the trail then being twenty-three days old. The second day afterwards the trail crossed into Mexico. We followed it for some five or seven days and surprised the Indians on the 29th of November (Thanksgiving day) in the Sierra Carmel.

We killed two Indians, wounded three, captured about thirty head of horses and mules and destroyed the village. This party of Indians was that of Alsate, a Mescalero Apache, whom I have mentioned before. He is called the most cunning Indian on all the frontier of Texas and Mexico, and that was the first time that he had ever been hit. He is about sixty years of age, and is as cunning as a fox. He always camps on the highest peaks, even if they are a mile or more in height. The reason he was so careless at that time was that the weather was extremely cold, so much so that the water in our canteens was frozen, and the canteens burst asunder.

We recrossed the river a few days later, and arrived at Fort Clark on the 16th of December.”

Bullis' full testimony about campaigns involving the Scouts starting in 1873 starts on page 187 of this document.