

A MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE

A Pioneer Story

By WALTER WILCOX

One hundred years ago a young couple left Virginia, crossed the Allegheny mountains and settled in Henderson county, Ky. It was a wild country in those days, but very beautiful, nature seeming to tempt the pioneer with its virgin scenery, its immense trees, its profusion of wild flowers. And such temptation was necessary. The settler never knew at what moment the yell of the savage would break the stillness of the wilderness or when he and his family might be cut down by a tomahawk without even a whisper of warning. These were the inducements and the drawbacks to settlers in the new country, though there is a fascination in danger that drew the fearless.

John Aborn and his wife Mary journeyed to their new home down the Ohio river on the only means of inland navigation known at that time, a flatboat, and on reaching their destination went ashore, "entered" a quarter section of land, built a log cabin and proceeded to make a living by the cultivation of the soil and hunting. Children were born to them. As more room was needed their cabin was extended, and within a few years the location assumed the semblance of civilization.

Aborn brought with him to Kentucky a few slaves and bought others from time to time, for we must remember that in those days the only hands a farmer could obtain were his own negroes. The community lived on game, of which there was abundance near at hand; the grain they raised and nuts and berries, which grow plentifully on tree and bush. Each family was a unit bound together by the strongest ties.

But after a time the game was not so plentiful about the settlements on the river bank, and the hunters were obliged to go farther inland to provide meat for their families. Then it was that the Aborns' troubles commenced. In the wilderness still inhabited by the deer and the wild turkey were many dangers. Besides the Indian, there was the wolf, and there were desperadoes, who, whenever a new country is settled, on account of the absence of government find it a fine field for their lawless operations. Nevertheless every autumn John Aborn was obliged to go into the unsettled regions in order to bring back a supply of meat for the winter consumption. Sometimes he would go with a party of his neighbors, sometimes with a single friend and sometimes alone.

One October morning he set out on his annual hunting tour in company with Alexander Swift, the neighbor with whom he was most intimate. When Aborn embraced his wife and children before departing they clung to him with unusual reluctance to let him go. Whether this was due to a presentiment that evil might happen to him or that he must now go farther and remain longer than ever before, the fact remains that he and his family were loath to part. Finally, tearing himself away from them, he sprang into the wilderness with his friend.

When it came time for the husband and father's return his wife and children watched for him eagerly. He had usually been away two weeks, but on this trip he purposed to be gone three. This was because with the settling of the country he was obliged to go farther from home. He had set out on a Monday and had promised to be back on Saturday, two days before the third Monday following. All that day his wife and children watched for him, but he did not come. The next and the next day they felt sure would bring him, but he disappointed them. The wife and mother began to be troubled, but concealed her anxiety as well as she was able from her children. When another week had passed and neither Aborn nor his companion returned Mrs. Aborn felt sure that both had met with misfortune. The most reasonable supposition was that they had been killed by Indians.

A month passed, and still neither Aborn nor his companion returned. Then the other hunters of that region organized a band to go and look for the missing men. A week later they returned, reporting that they had come upon the body of Alexander Swift pierced with arrows and scalped. They had found no trace whatsoever of Aborn. It seemed probable that the two men had been attacked by Indians; that Swift had been killed and Aborn captured, in which event he must have met a worse fate than his companion. The rains had washed out the trail of the redskins as well as that of their captive.

The party before their return debated what report to make to Mrs. Aborn as to the probable fate of her husband and agreed that it would be best to tell her that her husband had doubtless been killed by the Indians, not mentioning that he had been first tortured. As the Aborn family had increased the father, who at times had been troubled with insomnia, had slept in a room by himself. Mrs. Aborn, who did not relinquish all hope that he would return, kept this room always ready for him. But she kept it locked and never mentioned it or to whom it had belonged. After her husband's capture by the Indians she sold most of her ne-

groes, feeling that she could not afford to keep them, buying a strong woman who would serve all domestic purposes. To this woman the bedroom that was never opened was a mystery. She once mentioned the room to her mistress, asking why it was kept locked, but received no satisfaction. After that she speculated a great deal about the room, telling the field hands that she "spected Missy Aborn had a ha'n't locked up in dat room." The settlers, or, rather, their wives, who knew of the closing of this room pitied the poor woman, whose husband had doubtless been tortured and burned at the stake by the savages and would never return. They assumed that she hoped her husband would come back to her and she wished him to find his room ready for his occupation.

Two years passed, during which Mrs. Aborn worked her farm as well as she could, and her neighbors on their return from their hunting expeditions always supplied her with meat for the coming winter and spring. But it was a forlorn country in which to bring up children, and she was often tempted to remove to Indiana or Ohio, where she would have facilities for giving them an education. Finally she resolved one autumn that if no tidings came from her husband during the winter she would sell her plantation and her negroes, keeping her horses, and mounting her children and herself on them, would go to some point on the river bank opposite Ohio, cross the river and make a home in one of the villages of that state.

The winter passed without the return of her husband or any news of him. Friendly Indians came and went to and from the settlement, and the widow never failed to inquire if any of them had knowledge of a white man she described to them. But none of them could give her any news of him. In the spring she began her preparations for removal.

One night when she had put her children to bed she concluded to ride over to the house of a neighbor to whom she hoped to sell her plantation. It was a stormy night, but she was anxious to get an offer for the property and was not deterred by the weather. During the evening a band of friendly Indians came into the settlement and were soon wandering about in search of what they could steal. One of them appeared at the kitchen, where Martha, Mrs. Aborn's maid of all work, was at work, and, turning, she saw him standing in the doorway. She was wiping a plate, which she straightway dropped on the floor, and it broke in pieces. The savage in a guttural tone peculiar to the Indian said:

"Me want bed. Me good Indian. Me no hurt anybody."

Martha got up enough courage to tell the redskin that every room but one was occupied by the children and that was locked. The Indian horrified her by walking into the kitchen, taking up a tallow dip and proceeding to examine the house. Seeing the children sound asleep in their beds, he held the candle over each one of them in turn, giving a grunt of satisfaction at the sight of their rosy faces. Martha followed him at a distance, her complexion wearing the sickly light yellow of a frightened negro. She saw him go into her mistress's bedroom, and when he came out he had a key in his hand. Going to the empty chamber, he unlocked the door and said to the woman:

"Me sleep here. You no tell."

He accompanied his words with a savage look that tied her tongue completely. She wished to tell of the Indian who had gone into the only vacant room, but did not dare. He would surely know that she had told and would tomahawk her. When her mistress returned it was evident that the negro had experienced a great scare; but, though Mrs. Aborn tried to induce her to tell what had frightened her, her efforts resulted in failure. As soon as Mrs. Aborn had gone to her room Martha went out and reported the Indian's presence in the house. But she was either not believed or those she told, considering that the group of red men who had come to the village were friendly, did not think the matter worthy of their attention, especially as the Aborn house was closed for the night.

Summer finally reigned over the settlement. Martha slept in one of the negro cabins and early in the morning returned to the mother's stode, dressing to find both her and her children murdered. Entering the kitchen, she went from there into the other portions of the house, and, finding everything quiet, the older children asleep in their beds and her mistress slumbering with the smaller ones, she made up her mind that the savages was less murderous than she had supposed him to be and set about getting breakfast.

Presently she heard a cry. Terrified lest the Indian, after all, was about to tomahawk her mistress, she ran out of the kitchen into a passageway. There she saw Mrs. Aborn in the arms of the Indian, whose face had lost its copper hue during the night. Mrs. Aborn's head was hanging limp on the Indian's arm, it being evident that she had fainted. Martha, supposing it to have been from fright, sought support against the wall to avoid collapsing herself.

The Indian was none other than John Aborn. And this was his story: He and his companion hunters had been set upon by Indians. Swift had been killed and Aborn made a prisoner. He was taken far to the south and adopted into the tribe. No opportunity had occurred for some time to return north, and even then he had been obliged to delay going to his home. Those with whom he had entered the settlement were ignorant that he was a white man, and he did not wish them to know it. He remained concealed till they had left.

Making the Farm Pay

CORN IN DRY REGIONS.

Need of Getting Moisture into Soil and Conserving It. (Prepared by United States department of agriculture.)

As lack of moisture more than anything else limits corn yields in droughty regions the first question regulating each operation should be, "What will be its effect upon the soil moisture supply?"

The authorities state that while summer fallow frequently results in greater yields of corn, the practice has not proved practicable. They therefore advise beginning the preparation of land to prevent loss of moisture and to put the surface into condition to receive moisture as soon as the preceding crop will permit. Cultivation after the re-



BREAKING VIRGIN LAND IN SOUTH DAKOTA.

moval of the preceding crop is profitable if it stops or prevents a growth of weeds. But if the growing season is past dead weeds may catch more snow than would be caught by a cultivated surface.

Fall disking, or listing, is usually beneficial in putting the land in better condition to prevent the soil from blowing, to hold the snow and to prevent runoff. The penetration of moisture is slow, and when rains occur evaporation is rapid from hard soil surfaces, such as usually follow the growing of small grain. The chances of storing moisture are increased by loosening such compact surfaces as early as possible. Whether plowing is necessary, however, depends very much upon the type of soil. Most heavy clay soils are best put in proper condition by plowing. Sandy or light loam soils should not be plowed in the fall and left bare during the winter in regions where soil blowing is likely to occur. If however it becomes advisable to plow such soils in the fall, blowing of the plowed area may be checked by top dressing with barnyard manure.

Deep plowing should always be done in the fall or very early in the spring to allow more moisture to penetrate and the soil to settle before planting time.

On sloping land the plowing, listing and cultivating should follow on a level along the slopes or around the hills.

The moisture saved makes this a profitable practice, and very often the prevention of runoff is necessary to avoid erosion, with the loss of the richest portions of the soil.

Alfalfa land to be prepared for corn should be followed one year or plowed early the previous summer.

Growing plants draw large quantities of water from the soil and subsoil. All growth of weeds and volunteer grain on land to be planted to corn should be prevented.

Deep plowing and subsoiling should be done in the fall rather than at corn planting time. Soil put in the right condition to take in moisture to a considerable depth is also open to the air and dries out rapidly. If necessary to plow in the spring for corn the plowing should be done early and should not be deep, and the ground should be packed immediately. Plowing under several inches of snow is an effective and sometimes a practicable way of getting moisture into the ground.

Dairy Farming Profitable. Dairying is an economical form of agriculture, and economy and thrift are handmaiden of prosperity. It retains upon the farm the larger portion of the fertility of the crop and thus the productiveness of the fields is kept up without recourse to expensive commercial fertilizers. Dairy farms are invariably highly productive because the fertility is returned and because a plentiful supply of humus is supplied to the soil. Dairy farming is economical in that it utilizes practically all the land. Parts that are unsuited to the plow can in nearly all cases be turned to pasture.

Corn For Poultry. Do not supply too much corn to laying hens. It is very heating, and it is too fattening for hens that are to make eggs. It is a good winter feed, but too much fat stored in a hen's body interferes with the laying functions.

A BEARER OF DISPATCHES

His Difficulties in Reaching His Destination.

By ALAN HINSDALE

When the pan-European war broke out I offered my services to the war department of Great Britain for secret service. My reason for doing so was that I was traveling abroad and found myself strapped in London, communication with my native land, America, having been cut off, and I was unable to get funds. I will admit, however, that I always had a desire to try my hand at secret service work.

My fitness to serve the British at this time and in this field was that I am an American and had an American passport.

I made my offer through an official in the office of the foreign secretary who knew something of my antecedents and was in a position to vouch for me. There was plenty of work to be done and plenty of work to be worked, but the main trouble with the government was to know whom to trust.

One day I received a note from my friend in the foreign office to call upon him in his office in Downing street. Upon my reporting to him he led me to one of the chief men in the foreign department, who asked me a number of questions about myself with a view to establishing my trustworthiness. I doubt if he would have employed me had it not been that I told him my mother had been born in Canada and lived there till she was twenty years of age. That seemed to satisfy him.

He knew the strong affection for the British flag among those who have been born and raised under it and agreed that a man would not be likely to turn traitor to a cause with which his mother sympathized.

When he had satisfied himself with regard to my fitness for the work he said to me:

"We wish some one to take certain important instructions to our ambassador at Athens. You are probably aware that there are certain Balkan nations for whose support both the entente and the central allies are struggling. Greece is one of these countries. We desire to offer to the king of Greece certain advantages for his support in case we are victors in the great struggle upon which we are entering. If a knowledge of what we offer should fall into the hands of the Germans it would give them certain intentions of ours which they would at once endeavor to forestall. London, every route to Greece and the capital of that country is beset with spies. We are not sure but that we have them right here among our clerks in the government offices. You are liable to be watched, waylaid, possibly murdered on the way."

The commission was given me, and I accepted it. Had there been no risk attending it I should not have been interested in it. I was handed two packages, the one somewhat bulky, inclosed in an official envelope and bearing the official seal; the other a simple letter, evidently written on thin paper.

How the spies got on to the fact that a communication was to leave the foreign office and I was to carry it was and is a mystery to me. I was told that no one was employed to copy the paper, which was written by the under-secretary himself. Nevertheless the matter was known to some one who informed the proper person outside, who at once set in motion certain agencies to get possession of the document I carried, or at least prevent my delivering it.

As to my route, it was uncertain. I might go all the way by sea, but there was some danger of being submarine. I could go through southern France and Italy, but in the beginning of the war no one knew how the Italian cat would jump. Italy did not join the allies for a year after the beginning of hostilities. I resolved to go through France to Marseilles, then determine by what route I would continue my journey.

I had scarcely seated myself in the train for Southampton—I proposed to cross the channel from there to Havre—than I noticed a man in the same compartment as myself casting furtive glances at me. I surmised at once that he was aware of the fact that I was what I was, but believed that he would not have let me see him observing me, had I anything to fear from him personally. It was much more probable that he was intending to draw my attention to himself while my real danger lurked elsewhere. During the ride I opened my suit case and felt for the bulky document as though to make sure it was there. He left the train at Southampton, and I did not see him again till I was on the boat steaming for the French coast.

On reaching Havre I stood holding my baggage, a suit case, in the crowd of passengers waiting to leave the boat for the dock. Suddenly I felt the suit case wrenched from my hand. Turning, I looked for the person who had taken it, but saw no one near. Those behind me were comparatively quiet. Convinced that my enemies' plans for making way with my baggage were perfect, I made no motion to recover it. It was doubtless passed from one person to another till it was at a safe distance from me.

My first attempt to outwit my way-layers was a success. They had got a

dummy dispatch, and I had the real one sewed in the lining of my vest. However, this did not accord with my plans. I had intended to use the dummy in another way and farther on in my journey. Now I had lost it, and my enemies had possession of evidence that I was a messenger from the British government. This latter consideration did not trouble me much, for it was clear that they knew all about me.

However, there was one advantage in their having the dummy. They must have believed they had the dispatch I carried, for I saw nothing more of them till I arrived at Marseilles. My theory is that they were understrappers, with no authority to open the dispatch, but took it to some one who had such power, and this occasional delay while I went my way.

But they did not lose track of me, for the man I had seen observing me on the train from London to Southampton kept me in sight. At Marseilles I had two problems to settle. Should I go farther by land or all the way by sea? And how could I throw my shadow over off my track? I concluded that, whichever way I went, I would endeavor to make him believe that I had gone the other.

I had a trunk with me, and as soon as I could get possession of it I called a fiacre and, putting the trunk in it, got in the cab and told the driver to take me to the station of the railway running eastward along the Mediterranean. On reaching the station I billed the trunk for Nice; but, since there was no train for several hours, I strolled away, proposing to direct myself, if possible, of the observance of my shadow. Lighting a cigar, I strolled away carelessly, as if bent only on passing the time before the starting of the train. But I directed my steps toward the more frequented streets and from these entered a very narrow one. After having gone into it for some distance, seeing a door of one of the houses open, I looked behind me and, not seeing my shadow, darted into it.

I fell in with a lot of women who received my intrusion so angrily that I concluded to enlist them, if possible, to my service by appealing to their patriotism. I told them that I was a messenger of the English government and was followed by German agents who were bent on possessing themselves of a dispatch I carried. They were not convinced till I showed them a letter addressed to the British minister at Athens. Then I told them that I wished to go out unknown on a boat that I had been told left Marseilles that night for Italian ports.

When I departed from the house in which I had taken refuge I did so dressed in the apparel of one of the women after dark and under the guidance of another, for I did not know the way to the dock. About 9 o'clock I went on board, carrying my own masculine clothing in a grip-sack.

I had succeeded in my maneuver in respect to the man who had been watching me in throwing him off my track. But the enemy had left nothing to chance. He had placed an agent on the boat. Unfortunately I did not suspect that he would do this. I concluded to retain my feminine costume, and it was a dead give-away once the light of day shone upon me, for there is nothing feminine about me, and as soon as my enemy saw that I was a man it was pretty clear that I was the man who was wanted.

I was sitting in a secluded corner on deck when a man approached me, raised his hat politely and made some passing remark, as though he wished to scrape an acquaintance. I reckoned that his purpose was the dispatch I bore. I must decide at once whether I should send him about his business or pretend to be deceived with a view to outwitting him. I chose the latter course, for he had an advantage of me in the fact that I was a man traveling in woman's clothing. I did not repel him, but after a few casual remarks I excused myself and went to my stateroom.

The first thing I did after reaching it was to doff my woman's apparel and put on my own. I knew the man who had spoken to me would be on the lookout for me, and when next I went on deck, seeing him at a distance, I walked toward him. Passing him, I saw that he recognized me. I returned his gaze with one which said plainly, "Keep out of my way or I will kill you." He said nothing, and I received no further attention from him. I doubt if he cared to commit any act that was not covered by duplicity, and I was determined if he did I would scare him off. I did not wish to occasion the delay that would come of a fight with him, but I proposed to make him consider me dangerous.

What he did was this: He went to the captain of the boat and told him that I was an Englishman fleeing from justice. Of course since I had come aboard as a woman and was now a man there was excellent ground for the accusation. But my answer had no documents to prove his case and could only ask that I be detained at the first port touched till the matter could be looked into. When I found the captain disposed to assent to this I showed him my sealed letter to the British embassy at Athens, and it served its purpose.

The next day we passed a French man-of-war. I induced the captain to signal her and send me on board of her. He did as I requested, and when I was conducted to the officer in command and stated my case he volunteered to take me to Athens.

This ended my embarrassments, for I delivered my dispatch, and it was doubtless communicated to the king of Greece. But subsequent events showed that it did not win his majesty over to the allied cause.

ALL CHILDREN LOVE "SYRUP OF FIGS" FOR LIVER AND BOWELS

GIVE IT WHEN FEVERISH, CROSS, BILIOUS, FOR BAD BREATH OR SOUR STOMACH.

Look at the tongue, Mother! If coated it is a sure sign that your little one's stomach, liver and bowels need a gentle thorough cleansing at once.

When peevish, cross, listless, pale, doesn't sleep, doesn't eat or act naturally, or is feverish, stomach sour, breath bad; has stomach-ache, sore throat, diarrhoea, full of cold, give a teaspoonful of "California Syrup of Figs," and in a few hours all the food and sour-bile gently moves out of its little bowels without griping, and you have a well, playful child again.

You needn't coax sick children to take this harmless "fruit laxative;" they love its delicious taste, and it always makes them feel splendid.

Ask your druggist for a 50-cent bottle of "California Syrup of Figs," which has directions for babies, children of all ages and for grown-ups plainly on the bottle. Beware of counterfeits sold here. To be sure you get the genuine ask, to see that it is made by "California Fig Syrup Company." Refuse any other kind with contempt.

FELIX, W. VA.

Not seeing anything from this place I thought I would drop you a few lines. Health is not good here and the weather very cold.

On last Sunday night the infant child of Ireland Duncan passed to the great beyond.

Our locality has plenty of measles and whooping cough.

Several in our community are preparing to move.

Quint Copley was among us Sunday. He has a job at Chaturay with the N. & W. Ry. Co., and returned Sunday evening.

Feed is so scarce here the people are pinching to get through with their stock as they can't buy any roughness.

The writer is informed that our merchant, G. M. Salmons will vacate his present location for somewhere not yet known.

E. H. Salmons, who is employed by the Salmons Produce Co., says the weather is very cold for our work.

Bill Little passed by Felix one day last week with some fine cattle. The aged of our community are suffering with rheumatism on account of so much cold weather.

MOUNTAIN BOY.

PAPE'S DIAPEPSIN FOR INDIGESTION OR SOUR, ACID STOMACH

IN FIVE MINUTES! NO DYSPEPSIA, HEARTBURN OR ANY STOMACH MISERY.

Sour, gassy, upset stomach, indigestion, heartburn, dyspepsia; when the food you eat ferments into gases and stubborn lumps; your head aches and you feel sick and miserable, that's when you realize the magic in Pape's Diapepsin. It makes all stomach misery vanish in five minutes.

If your stomach is in a continuous revolt—if you can't get it regulated, please, for your sake, try Pape's Diapepsin. It's so needless to have a bad stomach—make your next meal a favorite food meal, then take a little Diapepsin. There will not be any distress—eat without fear. It's because Pape's Diapepsin "really does" regulate weak, out-of-order stomachs that gives it its millions of sales annually.

Get a large fifty-cent case of Pape's Diapepsin from any drug store. It is the quickest, surest stomach relief and cure known. It acts almost like magic—it is a scientific, harmless and pleasant stomach preparation which truly belongs in every home.

FULLERTON.

Myrtle Gray is visiting friends and relatives in Portsmouth, O.

Ballard Wells has been very sick with measles, but is slowly improving.

Miss Mattie Webb celebrated her 19th birthday on Sunday, the 28th by asking in some of her friends to help eat the birthday dinner. Those present were Mr. Willard Webb and wife, Cula, Marie Ross, Ruth Miller, Ethel Wells and Ruby Webb, Mr. Taylor Prince, Mr. Elva Williams and Mr. Louis Smith.

Gladys Wells is calling on Miss Hazel Bailey of McCall.

Ova Sarraives of Blaine is visiting Mr. Dees Wells.

Mrs. Louis Smith left Sunday for Grays Branch to visit her home folks.

Rev. Oaks held his usual meeting here last Sunday and quite a crowd was out to hear him.

Squire J. A. Braden and wife will leave with Homer Braden and his wife for Florida very soon. Squire will be very much missed here and Fullerton friends will welcome him back.

The Research club of the Hilltop was entertained one evening at the home of Misses Estelle and Frieda Green, where there was good attendance. The study of the second canto of the "Lady of the Lake" was completed. A list of words commonly mispronounced was given by Misses Bertha Wilhelm and Estelle Green. Current events were given by Mrs. Ben Stewart. Miss Carrie Edgington gave a few piano selections and a quiz of author's works was enjoyed by all. Ethel Wells was a guest.

Misses Nettie and Essie Ratcliff, of Frost, Ky., spent Saturday and Sunday with friends here.

Ethel Wells and Myrtle Gray were calling on Mrs. Price Taylor of Happy Corner Monday.

Estill Boggs is numbered among the sick.

Hope everybody will bid the Fullerton writer a welcome.

DADDY'S GILL.