

A Chapter in the Life of X. Beidler.

In the latter part of November, 1861, I was camped in Washington gulch, Colorado, where I was engaged in mining; X. Beidler being in camp with us, he being engaged in running a pack train into the gulch.

On this trip X. proposed that we should take a bear hunt, and accordingly we started on the proposed hunt, and after an absence of five days we returned, it having proven to be a "bare" hunt, indeed. We were confronted with a blinding snow storm during the whole time we were gone, and we were glad enough to return to camp.

After our return X. came to me and said: "Uncle George, there is a family here that will have to be moved out before this storm becomes any worse, as they are entirely out of provisions and without means of procuring any."

The family was known as the Jones family, and consisted of man and wife, a grown son by a former wife and a little son and daughter.

"Now," said X. (who was always ready to help others sooner than himself,) "I want you to go with me and help them across the range to California gulch."

We formed a party of eight men to assist them out of the deep snow of the mountains, across the range, a distance of eighty miles.

The snow was still falling with increased fury and was, at that time, three feet deep on the level. We started on the 3rd of December and traveled but three miles on our journey that day. On the fourth we traveled to the mouth of the canon known as California canon, covering a distance of nine miles and camped.

On the next morning X. remarked that we were making very slow progress, as it was still snowing very hard, and proposed that I should take a number of the best animals and proceed ahead with the woman and children, while he would bring up the rear with the poorer animals.

I selected Henry Kern's mule for the woman and little girl to ride, and the noted mule, Black Bess, which afterward became famous, as connected with some of X's adventures in Montana, to carry the woman's feather bed and bedding, and also Robt. Coburn's sorrel horse and a bay mare of my own.

Jones had one cow, which we packed a part of the household goods; but she proved to be an unworthy pack animal and stampeded, scattering her burden promiscuously over the snow.

We got loaded and started, leaving X. and party behind, with ones to manage the cow.

At about three o'clock that day we reached Dead Man's gap, (so called on account of a party of ten having been murdered there by the Apaches) and a strong northwest wind having risen we were forced to camp; having no tent, we ran some canvass around trees in order to protect the woman and children and keep them from freezing; while we put in our time building fires and shoveling snow to obtain grass for the stock. The location of the camp was about seventy-five yards from where the men had been murdered.

X. and party camped about four miles in the rear. On the next morning, it being too cold for the woman and children to travel, X. passed us and took the trail, but our animals being stronger than his, we overtook him that evening, and we all camped together on Rock creek.

We put in that night, building fires and shoveling snow, catching a nap now and then leaning against a tree. The following morning we traveled together for a short distance, but X. sent a man to me and told me to go ahead without him as his animals were worn out and would have to camp or go slower. Shortly afterwards Jones, who was leading the mule on which his wife was riding gave the animal a jerk in crossing a stream, causing the animal to throw her into the stream, and compelling her to travel the rest of the day her wet clothing. We pitched camp at night in a little park, having traveled nearly all day in a long strip of timber.

We were gladdened next morning at seeing the sun rise bright and clear, and we quickly packed up and started. We were about six miles from the foot of the range, where we arrived about 6 o'clock and concluded to try and cross the range that night. After proceeding about three miles, Black Bess gave out and did not proceed farther; the cow also became wearied, and we left both at that point in charge of Jones; and Mrs. Jones' mule gave out with carrying a dog burden,—the woman and little girl—relieved the mule, by Jones carrying the little girl, and the little boy carrying Leolly's gun, and Hally carried the feathers.

We were compelled to take our trail around the crags to keep out of deep snow, and finally reached the summit at five o'clock in the evening. Proceeding down the other side of the range animals became exhausted and refused to proceed farther with their burdens. Young Jones, with his little brother and sister, and a man whom we called Frey,

had gone on ahead to endeavor to reach the nearest point of timber, about three miles distant, and provide a fire for us on our arrival, if we every should get there.

I left the balance of the party with the animals and proceeded on foot with Mrs. Jones. She became wearied and several times sat down, saying she could go no farther and begged me to leave her. I aided her all I could and tried to encourage her and we finally reached camp between eight and nine o'clock. Kern, Hally and Coburn came in shortly afterward and Jones about an hour later, having left the cow and Black Bess on the range. On the morning of the 9th, having broke camp, Jones went back after the cow, knowing she would return to the last camping place for water.

Having passed through the dangers of being caught on the range at night I knew what they were, and sent a note back to X. for Jones to post up so that he would get it, telling him not to cross the range unless he had all day in which to do it. Fortunately X. got the note. Jones got his cow and Black Bess, but had to leave the latter at the foot of the range, where X. found her the next day.

After traveling all the next day we reached the Twin Lake house, and were all thankful that our lives were spared to see a house once more. On the following day Coburn and I got some fresh horses, that X. had left at the Twin Lake house, and as we knew X. and party were short of provisions we procured hay for the animals and provisions for X. and his party, and started out to meet them, which we succeeded in doing near the foot of the range, finding them in great need of supplies.

On the 11th we reached the Twin Lake house, where we tarried a few days and then each took his own course and we separated. The only one injured on this trip, in the midst of the severest winter, was the little girl, who had her toes frozen.

The miners who remained in Washington gulch that winter were compelled to dig tunnels, in order to get through the snow from their cabins, in some cases from twenty to thirty feet deep. In one instance a snow slide imprisoned several men in their cabin, and they were compelled to live on oats for thirty days, and on being released in the spring they bucked and jumped the same as a cayuse would after a diet of thirty days on oats straight.

This was as courageous, true-hearted and honorable a lot of men as I have ever seen; and X. Beidler, in this little incident added but one to the many noble-hearted actions of his life.—G. W. Krutner, in *Academy Courier*, Bozeman, Montana.

On the summer following X. was through the country with a U. S. marshal, who wondered at the trees being cut off about thirty feet from the ground. After joking with him and telling him it was done by a race of giants who inhabited the country, X. finally told him truthfully that his party had cut them the previous winter on the snow.

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