

Topic: Stories and Legends

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SURPRISED BY INDIANS

In the early days when Mrs. Fannie C. Torreyson still lived with her family in a log cabin on the bank of Rock Creek she was surprised by Indians. Mr. Torreyson had just fenced in an adjoining school section for pasture and the fence led up the valley toward the cabin. One morning Mrs. Torreyson was out by the side of the cabin in the shade doing her family washing, when suddenly she was startled by a chorus of "Hows". She turned and there was a party of about a dozen Crow Indian squaws all on ponies. She was not used to being surprised by Indians for she said that Indians were very rarely seen around the place where they lived. Among the squaws was one young half-breed squaw whom Mrs. Torreyson knew. Her name was Ella Farwell. Mrs. Torreyson when she recognized her among the squaws said, "Ella Farwell! aren't you ashamed of yourself?" For she said, "They liked to scared me to death".

The Indians had never seen Torreyson's cabin before, and while they had been riding up the country came upon the new fence that had just been built. Their curiosity had caused them to follow the fence until they came upon the cabin and found Mrs. Torreyson washing. Mrs. Torreyson said that they approached Indian fashion, slowly and not even their ponies making any noise. For that reason she had no warning of the approaching visitors.

In the conversation that Mrs. Torreyson had with Ella Farewell on this surprise visit she remarked to her that she was surprised to find her among the Indians for she had been educated in the white man's schools at Billings. Ella's reply was that the whites would not associate with her and that if she associated herself with the whites the Indians would not have anything to do with her, and that for that reason she had gone back to her own people. Mrs. Torreyson saw Ella occasionally in those early days. She later married a breed Indian who had been educated at "Carlyle" and who was one of the Indian police on the Crow Reservation. The last time Mrs. Torreyson saw Ella was on the occasion of some public celebration in Red Lodge, and then she had two little boys. This must have been in about 1908-1910 because the Indians were camped around the foundation for the "Labor Temple" which was under construction in those years.

Ella's father, Farwell was married to a Crow squaw and lived in a log cabin on the Reservation near the present site of Silesia. He was there when the first settlers came and his was the first known cabin to have existed in what is now Carbon County.

(The above is what Mrs. Fannie Torreyson, Red Lodge, Montana, an a resident of Carbon county since June 1885 told me while I interviewed her August 3, 1939. She was away on a visit last winter when I was looking for such stories, and I thought this might still be acceptable.)