

Fourth Cavalry under Lieutenant James Parker, with Infantry detachments under Lieutenants Richardson and Bullard, a total of some thirty to forty men—again too few to furnish my escort without disrupting the command. We went on together to Carretas, Mexico, and, as Parker had no news of the hostiles, I waited there five days with him, for news and to recuperate from old injuries revived by the ride from Bowie.

I decided to get in touch with the command of Captain Lawton, who had excellent facilities for gathering information, in the hope that he knew where the hostiles were. We started out, accompanied by Parker's command, and on August 3rd arrived in Lawton's camp on the Arros River, high up in the Sierra Madre mountains, some two hundred and fifty miles by trail below the border. Lawton had no information of the hostiles' whereabouts, nor any news of them within two weeks. Having no escort—which I should of course have taken from Bowie—I put myself under Lawton's orders, with the distinct understanding, however, that when circumstances permitted I should be allowed to execute my mission. Parker with his command returned north.

While on the Arros River, news came that the hostiles were far to the northwest. We moved in that direction, and about the middle of August learned that Geronimo's party was near Fronteras, Mexico, making some overtures to the Mexicans on the subject of surrender. My little party, with an escort of six men that Lawton gave me, left the command about two o'clock that morning and at night camped near Fronteras, having marched about eighty miles.

The next morning at Fronteras, we learned that two squaws from the hostile camp had been there with offers of peace to the Mexicans, and had departed, going east, with three extra ponies well laden with food and mescal, the strong drink of Mexico. Lieutenant Wilder, of our Army, had talked with them in regard to their surrendering.

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In the meantime, the Prefect of the district had secretly brought about two hundred Mexican soldiers into Fronteras and was planning to entice the Apaches there, get them drunk, and then kill all the men and enslave all the women

and children. Geronimo told me later that never for a moment had he intended surrendering to the Mexicans, but wished merely to deceive them for a while so that his band could rest, buy supplies and have a good drunk. The Prefect did not suspect that; and he was much annoyed at the presence of the American troops and tried to get them to leave; but, since the treaty between the two republics gave them the right to be there, his requests availed him nothing. But he demanded that the Americans should not follow the squaws, with implied threats if we did.

Taking an escort of six or eight men that Wilder gave me from his troop, and Tom Horn and Jose Maria as additional interpreters, I started as though for Lawton's camp, twenty miles or more to the south; but after going about six miles we quickly darted up a convenient arroyo and circled around toward the north, so as to strike the trail of the squaws. We picked it up about six miles east of Fronteras. Then, from time to time, members of the escort were sent back to tell Lawton where the trail was leading.

Slowly and cautiously, with a piece of flour sacking on a stick to the fore as a white flag, we followed the squaws for the next three days, over rough country full of likely places for ambush. By the third day the trail was very fresh; and we found where it joined that of the main body. It entered the head of a narrow canyon, leading down to the Bavispe River about four miles away—a canyon so forbidding that our two Indians, who were ahead, stopped to consider the situation. Hung up in a bush just before us was a pair of faded canvas trousers, which *might* be a signal for us to go forward without fear, and again *might not*. Everybody gave a different opinion of what should be done, and we finally went on all together—an unwise formation—but that canyon proved to be harmless, and then I was sorry I had not been brave and gone ahead.

A few miles farther, we reached and crossed the Bavispe River, near its most northerly sweep where, after flowing north, it makes a wide bend and flows south. Here we made our camp for the night in a cane-brake just under a small, round hill that commanded the surrounding country for half a mile. With a sentinel on the hill, with the two Indians scouting the trail several miles beyond and with the hiding