

The Lost Valley Fight  
Jack and Young Counties  
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by Eddie Matney

## ***Introduction***

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*For almost twenty years, pioneer citizens living in the frontier counties of north Texas had suffered from cruel attacks by bands of Indians, which met out horrible murders of its citizens, and stealing of their much-needed horses and livestock. All lived under the constant fear that at any moment, whether working in the fields or in their homes, the wild "Savages" would enter the area committing their acts of murder, mutilation, and theft.*

*In an attempt to meet this aggression, for a number of years men in the various counties would often form groups of temporary citizen "minutemen" in order to provide what limited protection they could give to the local frontier families.*

*During the period of 1867-1868, some Federal Infantry and Cavalry troops began moving into the North Texas area after having been withdrawn at the beginning of the "War between the States".*

*By January, 1868 a new military facility to be known as "Fort Richardson" was began just to the south of the little settlement of Jacksboro in Jack County. Although construction was on-going for several years, it saw early occupation by elements of the Sixth U. S. Cavalry.*

*The first few years saw limited action by the troopers to act as a detriment to the raiders. Early on, many of the troopers were used as laborers helping the hired civilian construction crews. The garrison was called on several times to provide troopers in various settlements and towns in north Texas to enforce the laws of the unpopular "Reconstruction" State Government. Also hampering the Cavalry troopers was a poor supply of good horses. Seldom did the post have sufficient mounts for all the men.*

*It was reported that a saying around the settlers was to the effect "The troopers would follow an Indian trail until the whiskey run out and then they would turn back". However, in Post Reports, there are recorded several engagements by patrols with Indian raiders.*

*All-in-all, the Sixth probably did the best that they could in spite of the hardships. In early 1871 Fort Richardson operations would greatly improve when the Sixth was replaced with the Forth Cavalry Regiment serving under Colonel R. S. MacKenzie.*

*By the beginning of 1870, Indian depredations were so numerous that Governor Edmund Davis requested the Legislature to approve funds for several companies of Rangers to meet these Indian raids. On June 13, 1870 the funds were approved and the companies, known as the "Frontier Force" were enlisted and posted to selected positions along the frontier. Finally, the people of the State of Texas were going to give the raiders, most of them Comanche, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apache, combat where and when they could be found.*

*For about one year the Rangers gave good service in several encounters with incoming Indian raiders, however, because of severe money problems in the State Treasury, the Legislature was forced to cut-off funding for the Ranger forces. By June, 1871 the last company of the Frontier Force was mustered out. For the next three years the citizens living on the frontier were left to their own means and their local militias for defense.*

*By late 1873 Texas was emerging from years of hard "Reconstruction" laws forced on it after the late War. A new Governor was elected by the free and popular vote of the people. At 41 years of age, Richard Coke was voted into office. During the Civil War he had risen through the ranks to the position of Captain, fighting for the South.*

*One of the appointments of the new Coke administration was William Steele to the position of Adjutant General. Born in 1820, Mr. Steele was a graduate of West Point and had risen to the rank of Brigadier General in the Southern cause.*

*As Governor Coke entered office in January 1874, he quickly set in motion with the Legislature an Act to form a new fighting force of men to combat the horrid Indian raids on the western frontiers. This force of some 450 men would be known as the "Frontier Battalion".*

*Formed along military lines with similar type ranks, the Battalion would be composed of six Companies, A through F, each having no more than seventy-five Officers and men. Each company would be commanded by a Captain aided by a 1st and 2nd Lieutenant... Sergeants, Corporals, and enlisted men would make up the other seventy-two.*

*To command this new fighting force, John B. Jones of Corsicana, Texas was selected. During the War Mr. Jones, also a Southern Officer had distinguished himself as a skilled military leader, and cool under fire. He was also well known for his organization abilities.*

*When he agreed to assume command of the Battalion, he was given the rank of Major. With a determination to end the Indian raids in Texas, the three leaders, Governor Coke, Adj. General Steele and Major Jones set about choosing qualified men to command the six Companies of the Battalion. Once the men were notified and they accepted, orders were issued to proceed at once to enrolling and organizing their respective companies.*

*As the companies were formed, they were stationed in positions along the frontier counties, one company located to the southwest of Austin, while the last company was placed in Archer County, just below the Red River. Company "B", enlisted in Wise County on the 16th day of May, and under the command of Captain George Stevens soon moved out to their assigned position in the southwestern section of Young County.*

*Leaving his home-town of Corsicana, Major Jones traveled to Austin where he soon established residence and set up an office where he would command the new Frontier Battalion. The next few weeks were spent conferring with the Governor and General Steele while also sending letters to the company commanders instructing them where to position their respective company along the frontier counties.*

*For his Headquarters Staff, Jones signed-on Dr. E. G. Nicholson as Battalion Surgeon and Mr. Martin M. Kinney of Brenham in the dual role of Battalion Paymaster and Quartermaster. For this important job, Kenney was given the rank of Captain.*

*By late May, five of the companies were in position and patrolling their assigned territory for*

*Indians and also making arrest of lawbreakers, and assisting some county Law Officers. Only Company "F", recruiting at Kerrville, remained as yet not fully enlisted and thus not assigned to duty.*

*As the end of May approached, Major Jones was making plans to visit each company where he could meet the men, learn of their needs, and also place each company where Jones felt they were most needed.*

### ***TRAVELING "UP THE LINE"***

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*By June 3rd, the Major was finishing what business he could in Austin and was soon leaving for his inspection of the Battalion.*

*Although a fine horseman, reports state that on long trips, Jones preferred riding in a light wagon with his horse following along tied to the wagon. On this first trip, Major Jones was accompanied by Dr. Nicholson and Quartermaster Kenney. One also might surmise that another wagon with a hired cook followed along. Leaving Austin they traveled west some one hundred and thirty miles to Mason County where they arrived at the campsite of Captain Perry's Company "D".*

*Years later, Ex-Ranger Ed Carnal would write that he and five other men were detailed from Company "D" temporarily to ride with the Major as an escort. After spending some time with Captain Perry's command, Jones and his H.Q. detachment rode out going south some sixty-five miles to Kerrville where he found Captain Coldwell finishing his enrollment of Company "F".*

*On June 12th, Jones issued Special Orders #7 instructing Captain Coldwell to station his company "at the head of the Guadeloupe River in Edwards County". Also in this order, Jones directed "Capt. Coldwell will detail a non-commissioned officer and six men familiar with frontier service, for duty with these Headquarters on the march to Red River and will furnish them with four day's rations".*

*After sending a dispatch to Gen. Steele requesting twenty new revolvers and twenty five hundred cartridges be forwarded to Coldwell's company, Major Jones and his little command left Kerrville on June 13th, headed north back to Perry's company near Menardville in Menard County.*

*Arriving in Menard (called Menardville at that time) he located Captain Perry's Company "D". June 22nd, Special Order #9 was issued directing "Capt. Perry will take post, with his Company "D" in the vicinity of Menardville and scout North to the Colorado and South to the Llano river".*

*Jones also sent a dispatch to Adjutant General Steele informing him of his (Jones) actions. Another letter was written to Captain Coldwell informing him of Captain Perry's location. Major Jones also informed Coldwell that for the next two weeks, Jones could be reached by sending mail to Jacksboro in Jack County.*

*Jones also informed Coldwell "I hope you will embrace every opportunity to gain information as to the headquarters of any bands or tribes of Indians as I design making an expedition against*

*them if I can ascertain their probable whereabouts". (If only he knew that in three weeks, his command would meet with all the Indians he could handle).*

*Leaving Menardville, Jones proceeded up north by journeying some seventy or eighty miles to Brownwood. Finding Captain C. R. Maltby's Company "E" in station some fifteen miles west of Brownwood, Major Jones directed the Company to take station at Post Oaks Springs in Coleman County, the next County west from Brownwood.*

*Leaving Brownwood, Jones growing escort (he had borrowed five or six men from companies "D", "E", and "F") moved on to the community of Comanche, an easy days ride northeast of Brownwood.*

*Locating Captain Waller's Company "A" at Comanche, he directed the Company through Special Order # 10, to at once take Post on Sandy Creek near the northwest corner of Eastland County (near present Cisco). As was his custom, Jones wrote letters to the other companies and Gen. Steele informing them of the location of Company "A", and how they were to patrol. The Major also requested from Adj. General one hundred and fifty more pistols for the Battalion.*

*As with the other companies, five or six men were picked from "A" to serve on the Headquarters escort. Departing Comanche, the entourage headed for Captain Steven's Company "B" in camp in far western Young County. Arriving at the little settlement of Palo Pinto on approximately July 6th, Jones sought out J. T. Wilson of that community which many locals recommended as a very good candidate for the Rangers. Knowing that Captain Waller was still needing a 2nd Lieutenant for his Company, Jones after talking to the man, on July 7th, hired him on the spot as Company "A" 2nd Lieutenant and assigned him to ride with the escort.*

*Major Jones, as he had visited the four companies in turn, had probably gathered the men around and impressed on them that for their term of employment, each man was expected to do combat with Indian raiders, and capturing or killing any hostile Indians whenever and wherever they might be found within the State. In a secondary role, the Ranger force was also authorized by the State to be used as a state-wide Battalion of Lawmen aiding County Law Officials in combating wide spread criminal acts within their County. Leaving Palo Pinto, Jones and his escort likely rode north to Jacksboro where the Major picked up his waiting mail and the men enjoyed themselves in town that Friday afternoon. Later that afternoon Jones with his escort rode west, conceivably on the old Fort Griffin rode, to locate the camp-site of Company "B" over in western Young County.*

*Arriving some time before midnight, Jones learned that over half of Stevens' men had left that day in search of a reported large party of Indians a few miles up north.*

*The following morning, Major Jones, as he had relocated the other Companies, also had Captain Stevens to move his Company some ten miles eastward to the banks of Salt Creek where there was reported a better supply of water. Also they would be located in a better position, hopefully, of intercepting raiders coming out of the Indian Territory across the Red River.*

*The rest of that Saturday, Jones would spend in camp conferring with the men, Captain Stevens,*

and writing letters.

## **THE "LOST VALLEY" FIGHT**

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*As dawn began to show itself on Sunday, July 12, the day would be another one of those sweltering hot, dry days to be expected in this time of summer. At "Reveille", as the men began to stir, Lt. Wilson, who was in command of Major Jones escort party, was given orders to take a few men and reconnoiter northeast up Salt Creek for recent sign of an Indian raiding party coming into the area. Major Jones, overall commander of the "Frontier Battalion" on an inspection tour of his Ranger companies, with his escort of approximately twenty rangers had arrived late Friday, July 10 at the campsite of Captain Stevens' Company "B" stationed in southwestern Young County. Here he learned that Stevens had the day before sent out a reinforced scout of thirty-nine men in search of a Comanche war-party believed to be ten or fifteen miles north.*

*Thinking that the company was located to far from the settlements, Jones, the following day, had Stevens move his company to a better situated campsite some ten miles east near the banks of Salt Creek. After traveling some five miles, Wilson's scouting party came upon a large trail headed down the east side of Salt Creek, going in a southeasterly direction. Lt. Wilson immediately dispatched a rider back to the camp to inform Major Jones that a large force of perhaps fifty Indians had recently passed, and to come with all available men.*

*As the messenger arrived back in camp, the men were just finishing their breakfast. With the alarm given, the men were ordered to "saddle up" Leaving fourteen men to stay behind for camp protection, Jones led out for Lt. Wilson's scout.*

*About one and a half hours after Lt. Wilson dispatched his messenger, Major Jones and party arrived. The total strength was now Major Jones, Captain Stevens, Lt Wilson, and approximately thirty-three enlisted men, from the escort and Company "B". Although this was a large enough force to do combat with any Indian raiding party, Jones, still, perhaps wished that he knew the location of Captain Stevens scouting party of thirty-seven men under Lt. McGarrah and Sergeant Boyd, sent out on July 9<sup>th</sup>.*

*With the exception of Captain Stevens and a few men of Company "B", most of the men had very little or no experience in fighting Indians. Thus, they were eager to "earn their pay" and to do combat with the wild foe. Also, the Major wanted to see how his men would react to being under fire.*

*Setting out at a brisk pace, the command followed the large trail for several miles until they came onto the Salt Creek prairie area and to the location of the late Warren wagon train fight. Following on east, the trail led about a mile and a half to the foot of Cox Mountain. Here, the trail at once scattered into many individual tracks leading around the northwest side of the mountain and headed east along-side the mountain for about one mile. The much-scattered trail then turned north towards the southern end of an area known as "Lost Valley".*

*"Lost Valley" was, and is, a twenty-square-mile prairie rimed by hills and mountains. The mountains are covered with rocks and boulders of sandstone and a heavy growth of oak trees. The*

*prairie is covered with good grass and fed at the northern end of the valley by the winding Cameron creek.*

*Throughout the valley, a few scattered mesquite trees were to be found. Thus, the valley prairie, surrounded by a natural "fence" of hills and mountains made for a good area for raising cattle and horses. A few ranchers used the valley, principally, J.C. Loving with his ranch headquarters located in the extreme northeastern end of "Lost Valley" at the confluence of Steward and Cameron creeks.*

*Arriving at Cox Mountain and finding the Indian trail now scattering north, Major Jones believed that the Indians had seen his command following and had "made a run for it."*

*As the command galloped on-ward over and through a draw between mountains, they were sure of soon finding the Indians scattered on the valley prairie before them. Following the various trails, the boys began to fan out across a large area. Some going up the west side of a feeder branch of Cameron creek, while others were moving up the east side, crossed past two rocky hills and entered onto the open prairie. As the right hand group of rangers, including the Major, rode onto the valley floor, northeast about one mile, the men could see two Indians walking north and leading their horses near a tree-covered mountain on the east side of the valley prairie.*

*Jones and the thirteen men with him immediately galloped forward to over-take them. As they drew near, suddenly, the ranger party was fired on from the foot of the mountain, a multitude of yelling, shooting Indians came galloping toward them.*

*Wheeling their horses, the surprised band of rangers retreated northwest approximately three hundred yards and halted to return fire and make a stand. While the Indians drew forward their attack, the other men west of the group, hearing the gun fire, began galloping in to join their comrades being encircled by perhaps as many as one hundred twenty five Indians.*

*Unknown to the Major, this was a well-armed war party of the dreaded Kiowa, led by the well known Lone Wolf and Mamanti. Bent on a killing raid, the Indians and their horses were all decked out in all manners of colored paints and cloth. Each warrior's body, shield, and horse painted with colors of dots, stripes and designs. Red, white, black, yellow and other colors meant to strike fear in their enemies.*

*With their long hair streaming down, and striped to the waist, the Indians were a fantastic and dreadful sight, as they circled the Rangers. Rallying around the Major, calmly setting on his horse directing the men to fire low and slow, the rangers began to return fire with their pistols and big fifty-caliber carbines. Perhaps some of the men dismounted, and holding their horses, shot from the kneeling position, or laid on the ground for accurate shooting.*

*Rising dust from the Indian horses, and smoke from the guns, added to the mounting confusion of the Indians and rangers, as they hollered and shouted above the noise. Major Jones and Captain Stevens were seen coolly giving encouragement and instructions to the encircled force of young fighters.*

*Presently, ranger Lee Corn is shot near the right shoulder, breaking his arm. Corn then crawled into some brush and was joined by a man named Wheeler of Company "F", who would stay to help and protect him. Later, they were able to escape west to the cover of the trees lining the banks of Cameron creek.*

*After a while, during the fight, Captain Stevens, seeing the command being encircled, informed the Major, "we will have to get to cover soon, or we all will be killed" It was decided to make a charge south through the thinner section of the Indian encirclement. Shouting for the men to "mount-up", the rangers soon charged.*

*Hunting Horse, one of the Kiowa on the south side of the encirclement, said that the Indians rode south in great haste. One of the Indian horses is shot down, causing the Indian, Red Otter to jump around on the ground dodging the gun fire from the charging rangers. Presently a companion, Set-kop-te pulled him up behind on his horse, and they galloped away to safety. Several horses of the rangers and the Indians were shot, and, it was later reported, the Indians left three warriors dead on the prairie.*

*After about a mile in the running gun fight, Hunting Horse and the other warriors rode up to two low, rock capped hills, where they dismounted and begin firing at the rangers closing on them. Tsen-au-sain shot his rifle and hit George Moore in the right leg, just below the knee, severely wounding the man.*

*Major Jones, quickly ordered his men to fall back to a shallow ravine about one hundred fifty yards east and parallel to the Indian hill position. This ravine ran North-South and was at the edge of some timber. By lying down in the ravine they would be protected from Indian fire. More long-range rifle fire, from the Kiowa and Comanche, was now coming from the north and from the south of the Ranger ravine.*

*While making their retreat to the ravine, the men lost their first man. After wounding Moore, Tsen-au-sain took careful aim and shot ranger Bill Glass from his horse. Mr. Glass did not move and was presumed to be dead. After leaving their horses among the trees, the little ranger force got down into the ravine and begin to return fire at the Indian position on the hill and at the numerous Indians coming up on the north and east sides of the ravine. With both sides of the fight now in place, a heavy shooting broke out, with shots being taken whenever a head appeared.*

*The Major did not go into the ravine, but moved up and down the line encouraging his men to conserve their cartridges, stay steady, and, "trend strictly to business and all the Indians there can't pull us out of this ravine".*

*After about twenty minutes, Billy Glass, lying between the lines, who was though dead, was observed to move and heard to "cry out" for the boys to help him from two Indians creeping down the ridge behind two trees that were showing intent to get him. Under a heavy covering fire, three rangers ran out and carried him to the ravine, where, he soon died.*

*Jones now found his command numbered twenty-eight men, all told, with several of the unprotected horses being killed and wounded by the Indian fire. Evidently five men of the Battalion were unaccounted for, left somewhere in the valley after the first fight. Jones could only hope for*



*the moment, that the missing men made it to safety.*

*For several hours, the men continued the fight from the ravine under the hot July sun, hungry and now, without water. With some of the men facing east, and some facing west, the boys kept up a steady fire from their shallow protection. The rangers were finally able to drive the Indians from the hill and ridge positions. Walter Robertson and W.W. Lewis volunteered to go upon the ridge, extending from the hill, in order to protect the boys from attack from the west side while the boys fought the Indians on their front to the north and east. Luckily, none of the men were seriously injured, and, as far as the rangers knew, any of the Indians suffered any severe casualties during this segment of the fight. For several hours they fought, when, late in the evening, the shots from the Indians begin to decrease. Several Indians were seen to be moving north across some low mountains about a mile and a quarter away.*

*Major Jones then wrote a message to the Commander at Fort Richardson, describing the fight and requesting aid as he, the Major, believed that the Indian force would stay in the valley. Two men volunteered to carry the message through the Indian lines, and soon they were on their way to the Fort, located sixteen miles to the east.*

*As there now seem to be no Indians in the near vicinity, two of the rangers, Dave Bailey and Mel Porter, declared that they were going for water over in Cameron creek. The men tried to dissuade them, but go they must. Loading up with all the empty canteens they could carry, the two boys mounted their horses and galloped north to a water hole in the creek, about a mile and a quarter away.*

*Reaching the water, Mr. Porter rode down the bank while Dave Bailey remained at the top as lookout. Suddenly the boys at the ravine observed several Indians charging the two rangers from the mountain to the west, and, from out of the trees along the creek. It was an ambush.*

*Firing their rifles to attract Bailey's attention, he was seen to shout at Porter, and then Mr. Bailey begins to race straight back towards the ravine. Approximately twenty-five Indians cut him off, where within sight of the men, Bailey was killed and mutilated.*

*Having been warned by Bailey, Porter mounted his horse and rode out on the north side of the creek and was quickly pursued by two of the Kiowa. Soon he was un-horsed by one of the Indians and jumped into the water of the creek. Suddenly, gunfire came from the brush along the creek bank, driving the two Indians away from Porter. Fortunately, for Mr. Porter, he has entered the creek near where Wheeler and Corn had taken refuge after the first fight in which Lee Corn was wounded. Wheeler, and Corn by using his good left arm, had done the shooting which drove the Indians away.*

*With the killing of Bailey, all the raiding party of Indians retired from the fight. Walter Robinson would later relate "The Indians had drawn off at dark and nothing now could be heard of them, and Major Jones asked the boys which they had rather do--remain there until daylight and renew the battle again if the Indians did not leave, or until soldiers could come from Jacksboro to their relief, for a ranger named John P. Holmes had ridden out of the ravine on a wounded horse in sight of the Indians before night, and gone to the fort where United States soldiers were quartered*

*to ask for assistance. After canvassing the situation thoroughly, the rangers concluded to leave the ravine and make an attempt to get to Jacksboro or meet the soldiers."*

*Major Jones then gathered up his unwounded horses, and mounted a few of his men along with the injured Moore on the horses. The body of Billy Glass was placed on a captured Indian horse which had been left on the field of battle.*

*Knowing that the majority of the Indian raiders were somewhere to the north of them, and possibly between them and the Loving ranch, the little ranger force moved out leaving their ravine refuge, and taking a wide circle to the east, headed for the ranch headquarters of Moses Dameron some eight to ten miles northeast of Lost Valley. Arriving at the Ranch sometime after midnight, the men were fed and given much needed water. Unknown to Major Jones, Porter, Wheeler, Corn and the two other missing rangers had cautiously moved up Cameron creek during the night, and made their way to the J. C. Loving Ranch.*

*After burying the body of Billy Glass, and taking care of their horses, the weary rangers laid down for a short rest.*

*Soon after, Captain Baldwin with a contingent of troopers having left the fort around 10:00 P. M. in answered to the Major's request, arrived at the Dameron ranch sometime after midnight, and later reported finding the rangers at the ranch.*

*After a conference with Major Jones, Baldwin on learning the details about the valley fight and where it took place, announced that he was riding on to the Loving ranch; Jones requested that if Baldwin would wait, they would accompany him. Finding the tired rangers not yet in a condition to ride with him, Captain Baldwin declined to wait and surely told Jones that he, Baldwin, was planning to be at the battle-site by early dawn. With that, Baldwin and his two companies moved out for Loving's, possibly expecting the rangers to join him later.*

*After the troopers departed and giving the men a couple hours more to rest, Jones ordered his men who had horses to "mounted-up" and rode-out leading his rangers west toward the valley to hopefully linkup with the troopers arriving at the valley.*

*Again, Robinson recalled later: "Uneasiness was felt for the boys who had been left scattered in the Lost Creek bottoms, and a hurried return was made to the place by the rangers and soldiers, but on arriving there they were all gone and could no-where be found. The fact was developed later that they had left some time during the night and made their escape to Loving's ranch. the body of Bailey was found near where the fight commenced, badly mutilated, scalped, and full of arrows, besides numerous lance wounds."*

*Captain Baldwin in his report of scout wrote: "I would state that Major Jones joined me at Sunrise in Lost Valley on the morning of the 13th inst and assisted in searching for the trail but without avail."*

*Meanwhile, back at Dameron's ranch, a ranch hand loaded the two wounded men, Moore and Corn, into a wagon. Also, the un-mounted men, whose horses had been killed in the fight, were*

loaded aboard. They were then hauled to the fight site, where they were able to retrieve their saddles and accouterments from their dead horses. Mr. Dameron was later paid seven dollars for the use of his wagon and driver.

Concluding a long search, and not discovering any Indians, the ranger force returned to their campsite on Salt Creek. The troopers set up camp a short distance down the creek from them. On Tuesday the 14<sup>th</sup> Captain Baldwin's command heads back to the Fort; Major Jones writes his report of the fight to his superior, Adj. General Steel, and states that the two wounded men were placed in the hospital at Fort Richardson and, that he was buying horses for the un-mounted men.

With all accomplished, the rangers returned to their camp on Salt creek, where Major Jones later takes up his inspection tour, north to Captain Ikard's Company, located in Archer County.

This writer gives a most grateful THANK YOU to the two owners of the land on which the fight occurred. Mr. Edwin Graham III of Graham, Texas and Mr. W.H. Springfield of Springtown, Texas, courteously allowed this writer to explore the complete area of the 'Lost Valley' fight many, many times.

#### **Further Information and Thoughts of the "Lost Valley" fight**

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As Major Jones and his escort approached the Company "B" camp site at old "Fort" Murrah, late on July 10, 1874, his was escorted by approximately twenty to twenty four men. This escort consisted of Lt. Wilson of Company "A" in charge of the escort, and four to six enlisted men from each of the Companies visited, on the tour.

Another man was also traveling with the escort. Dr. E.G. Nicholson was apparently the Battalion Doctor, however, he is not mentioned in official Ranger documents as being in the Frontier Battalion. Ranger James B. Gillett, in his book "Six Years with the Texas Rangers" says that the Doctor was well liked by the men and that he was with the Battalion from the time of its organization until Major Jones became Adjutant General in 1879. "The Doctor always messed with Major Jones, and, mounted on a fine horse, traveled by his side. ----- When the Escort was disbanded, he retired to private life at Del Rio, Texas, and finally died there."

Arriving at the campsite, the Major was probably updated on the conditions of the company by Captain Stevens. The "Monthly Return" of Company "B" for July 1874, shows the company to be of the full complement of seventy-five men, composed of three Officers and seventy-two enlisted men. On July 12<sup>th</sup>, of these men, thirty-eight were out on scouting duty, while eleven were on leave from the Company, thus, leaving a compliment of twenty-six men in camp for duty. (The scouting party of thirty-seven men assigned to Sergeant G.G. Boyd, on the morning of July 9<sup>th</sup>, were apparently given orders by Captain Stevens to scout northeast across Young and Jack counties in search of reported Indians.

Saturday July 11, the Major finding the Company "B" campsite not located where he preferred, moved the camp several miles east along the banks of Salt Creek.

Perhaps upon hearing of Indian trouble in the area, Captain Stevens ordered out early Sunday morning Lt. Wilson and a few men on scout.

*Mr. Walter M. Robertson, a member of this scout, stated, in his story of the fight in Frontier Magazine, that the scout totaled five men. After traveling approximately four miles east from the camp, a large Indian trail was discovered moving in a southeast direction down the east side of Salt Creek.*

*Using Mr. Robertson's information and a U.S.G.S. map, this writer believes that the raiding party trail was located just west of Flat-Top Mountain. This Mountain is located approximately two miles southwest of the present community of Loving, Texas.*

*Mr. Robertson also stated that after a messenger was sent back to camp, it was approximately an hour and a half until Major Jones and his group of rangers joined up with the scout.*

*The personnel of the command now totaled about thirty six or thirty seven men. The Monthly Return of Company "B" for July, 1874 states "Capt. G.W. Stevens started on scout July 12<sup>th</sup> with 20 men and 14 men and one Lieut. Belonging to the escort of Major J.B. Jones commanded by the Major."*

*The command followed the large trail southeast perhaps for approximately a mile and one half, then turning east, followed another five miles, crossing Salt Creek prairie, to the western end of Cox Mountain.*

*Cox Mountain sits in an east/west position, and is located approximately six miles southeast of Flat-Top Mountain.*

*Arriving at the foot of Cox Mountain, Jones found that the Indian trail suddenly scattered, moving around the mountain and then heading northeast towards the south end of "Lost Valley".*

*The reader is now ask to return to the Ranger camp at old Fort Murrah. In the morning of July 9<sup>th</sup>, Sergeant Boyd's command moves out, going northeast about twenty miles. After camping Thursday night, the command continued northeast another ten miles to the approximate location of the northeast corner of the county. Here, a very large trail of Indians (possibly Comanche's from the reservation near Ft. Sill) was found moving southwest toward the Lost Valley area. Following the trail into Lost Valley, Boyd's command soon lost the trail. Searching over Lost Valley and not finding any sign, they then turned north traveling to the*

*Loving ranch located in the north end of the valley, at the conference of Cameron and Steward Creeks.*

*Upon arrival at the ranch, Sergeant Boyd is informed that about an hour earlier, an Indian raiding party had attack Mr. Loving and several ranch-hands at his corral just to the west of the ranch house. Mr. Loving reported that one man, John Heath, was killed and six horses were stolen.*

*Once more, Boyd's men scouted through the Lost Valley area; however, the band of Indians had disappeared, leaving no trail sign to follow. Possibly, the warriors of the raiding party gathered again somewhere southeast of Cox Mountain, some two miles south of where the fight would take*

place.

*This Comanche party was perhaps the warriors that later joined up with Lone Wolf's Kiowa's in the attack on Jones's command two days later.*

*Having found no sign, Boyd's patrol set up camp Friday night, tired, after scouting sixty five miles this day.*

*Saturday morning, the 11<sup>th</sup>, another search was begun. Finding no sign, the patrol left the valley and headed west, traveling about thirty miles across Young County.*

*We now move forward to Sunday morning, July 12, 1874, and follow the story as related to the author, W.S. Nye in the early 1930's. Perhaps the only story of the Indian side of the fight, was given by Hunting Horse, a participant with the Kiowa, lead by Lone Wolf. Mr. Nye was privileged to receive the story, as relived by Hunting Horse, on site, in Lost Valley.*

*Mr. Nye learns that early Sunday morning, Lone Wolf's raiding part moved down the east side of Salt Creek, passing Flat-Top Mountain. The Party turned east and traveled to the foot of Cox Mountain. On that late July morning, becoming very warm, the Indians went to the summit of the mountain to rest in the shade of the trees for a while.*

*Soon, four men were observed riding leisurely from the southwest. Mr. Jack Lofton, a noted historian of North Texas, states in his book " Trails Through Archer", the names of the four men were J.C. Loving, W.C. Hunt, I.G. Newcomb, and Slade Damron.*

*By the time that the Kiowa's had picked their way down the south side of the mountain, the cowhands had traveled around the west side of the mountain, and were riding east.*

*Suddenly discovering the Indians rapidly approaching, the cowmen galloped north toward the roughs of the south end of Lost Valley. Keeping to the timber along the hills, Mr. Loving and his boys escaped the searching Kiowa's, and returned to their ranch house at the north end of the valley.*

*Soon after arriving, Mr. Loving dispatched a message to Fort Richardson, approximately sixteen miles to the southeast. He reported:*

*" Today the Indians some forty in number run myself and three of my men a considerable distance, we barely escaping with our lives. This was about 11 ½ o'clock a.m. and at a point about seven miles from the ranch, on or near the Overland road near the Cox Mountain."*

*Lone Wolf and his men in the meantime, having lost the chase, find themselves on the valley floor near Cameron Creek. Observing several cattle scattered about, a few calves were killed, and the skin used to cover the hooves of horses, damaged during the chase into the valley.*

*Mr. Nye, in his book, reports "Then they rode east to a place where a little stream emerges from a gap between two sharp peaks" This mountain range is located on the east side of the valley, running north/south just on the southwestern edge of the present community of Jermyn, Texas.*

*This mountain range rises approximately two hundred to three hundred feet above the valley floor. From the crest, several miles can be viewed to the west.*

*After reaching the mountain, Lone Wolf's people climbed up the mountain in order to search for the missing cowmen. Seeing nothing, they begin complaining among themselves. Shortly, several well-armed white men were observed, riding into the valley at a rapid rate. They were apparently following the scattered trail Lone Wolf's band had made in their recent disappointing search.*

*Perhaps, not seeing all of the rangers entering the valley, Maman-ti, one of the leaders of the party, presented a plan. He and another warrior rode out from the mountain, dismounted, and begin leading their horses, anticipating the few white men would charge them. The rest of the warriors, remaining in the timber along the mountain, would then attack the white men.*

*Return now, to Major Jones and his ranger force tracking the scattered Indian trails into the valley.*

*Ed Carnal, in his reminiscences, states; "As we pushed on this trail, leading toward the valley, our men became much scattered, every one trying to find the trail himself, as the Indians had scattered in different directions, making many trails".*

*Major Jones, in his report made two days later, says "--- being at the time in a gallop, and expecting to see them when we entered the open valley. In the mean time they joined another party in a rocky gorge in the mountains, which we suppose to be the party which attacked Loving's Ranch and killed a man five or six miles down the valley the day previously. While we were searching for the trail, part of our force being on one side of the creek, and part on the other, about half mile off in the open prairie but, near the foot of the mountain. About one hundred Indians charged upon us, we fell back two or three hundred yards when we were joined by the rest of our men."*

*Up to the point of attack, by all reports, the rangers believed that they were trailing approximately fifty Indians. Suddenly, they were attacked by about one hundred to one hundred fifty yelling warriors. Where and when this other party of Indians joined in the fight is in question. Mr. Jones, as quoted earlier, believed they had joined with Lone Wolf's party in the rocky gorge in the mountains before the attack.*

*This writer believes that this war party may have been the Comanche's which Sgt. Boyd's command was searching for, the day previously.*

*Ed Carnal says that he had trailed far behind as the command traveled onto the floor of the valley. "As I came out of the timber on the edge of the valley I had my first real sight of the Indians."*

*"I was very much astonished and reined up my horse and sat looking at them. They were in such great numbers it was difficult for me to believe they were redskins.-----It was then I threw my gun in their direction and fired more as a warning to our boys far below in the valley. As soon as I did this, the Indians saw me and came rushing toward me with yells and wild shooting. I started, keeping on the edge of the timber for some distance, in the direction I supposed the command to be. When I came out into the valley the real race begin,-----The chase covered about a mile before*

*I reached Major Jones and what of the outfit he had assembled-----."*

*Mr. Carnal's story might explain how, Major Jones command suddenly was surrounded by a much larger force of Indians.*

*Walter Robinson describes the fight on the prairie: "The other two parties of the ranger force were not long in rushing to the scene of the fierce fight which was now being inaugurated, and the main battle opened with terrific fury on both sides, the yelling of the Indians almost drowning the noise of the carbines, which popped and cracked like a canebrake afire, and in a few moments Lee Corn was badly wounded with a bullet and his horse killed beside other horses being wounded".*

*Although Jones and most of the rangers had never been in a Indian fight, fortunately, Captain Stevens was with them. Mr. Stevens, as a private citizen of Wise County, as Sheriff, and as Captain of an old Ranger company, had been "called out" many times when Indians were in the area.*

*Recognizing that the men were surrounded on the open prairie, and being cut off from the creek and water, Captain Stevens advised Major Jones "Major, we will have to get to cover somewhere or all be killed". Concurring with the Captain, Jones ordered his men to make a charge south through the Indian encirclement toward some timbered hills.*

*In a later interview given to author W.A. Nye, Hunting Horse described the rangers charge as "Soon the enemy charged at us. We rode south in great haste. Red Otter's horse was hit, set down suddenly and begin to scream in pain. Red Otter slid off neatly, and with his red cape streaming from his hand commenced dodging around to escape the bullets".*

*Major Jones was to report later that three Indians were killed and three wounded in this charge, plus several horses shot, of both the rangers and Indians.*

*Ed Carnal states "The Indians continued to fall back as we advanced, keeping up a steady fire. Passing through a belt of timber, the Indians took position on a couple of rock-capped hills which were very close together, and which afforded almost complete protection. We advanced to near the foot of the hills and when Major Jones saw the position of the enemy, he ordered us to fall back".*

*At this point, as the Indians were firing from their position on the hill, and the rangers riding close, Walter Robinson's horse was killed, George Moore was severely wounded in the leg, and Billy Glass was shot off his horse. All the rangers were able to fall back to a ravine except for Mr. Glass, who fell "between the lines" and was presumed dead.*

*Approximately twenty minutes later, he was seen to move and shout for help, where three men ran out and carried him back to the ravine under heavy fire. He soon died.*

*The main force of Indians soon came up into the woods to the east and northeast of the rangers, and begin a heavy fire on them. While some of the boys were firing at the hill to the west, the others were shooting at the Indians to the east side of the ravine.*

*In Ed Carnal's story of the fight " we were to take position in a narrow skirt of timber running parallel with the red's position, with instructions to dismount, hitch our horses and occupy a dry ravine running along the edge of this timber. This ravine was about a hundred yards long and four or five feet in depth, naturally affording us considerable protection. As we turned to fall back, the Indians followed, yelling and shooting at every jump. To me the situation looked very bad, as though we were going to be swamped. When we dismounted and left our horses and scrambled into the ravine, we were fighting with our six-shooters, as action was much to rapid for our carbines ----- naturally a great deal of promiscuous shooting ensued. The confusion and noise by this time was tremendous. Major Jones was the only man in the command who did not go into the ravine. He was constantly walking up and down behind the line and encouraging us as much as possible".*

*Z.T. Wattles, a member of the force, says in his newspaper article of the fight; " The Rangers were not surrounded -----When we retreated to the timber, and for some time after, the Indians were divided into three parties, one in front of us, one on our left and the other on our right flank".*

*The Indian "hill-top" position was probably the "left flank" as described by Mr. Wattles. By actual measurement, the "hill-top" position is three hundred and fifty five yards to the ravine. The ravine which the rangers occupied was located just inside of, and along the edge of a scattered line of trees.*

*For about three hours the engagement continued, when Major Jones ask for volunteers to carry a message for assistance to the Army post at Jacksboro, approximately sixteen miles to the east. This message read:*

*To the Commanding Officer of U.S. Troops at Fort Richardson,*

*Sir,*

*I was attacked today four miles South of Loving's Ranch by about one hundred well armed Indians. Had only thirty-five men and lost one man killed, one wounded and five missing. Fought them three hours and drove them off, but have not force enough to attack them. Can you send me assistance to Lovings. The Indians are still in the valley. Lost twelve horses.*

*Jno. B. Jones*

*Maj. Comdg. Frontier Battalion*

*Walter Robertson reported that John Holmes of "D" Company and a man from Company "B" agreed to go, and soon were on their way.*

*Late in the evening, after the Indian force vacated the field, the rangers discussed what to do and the decision was made to head to Jacksboro, or to meet-up with the soldiers which should soon be headed from the Fort towards Loving's ranch.*

*Ed Carnal reported that they, the rangers, left the valley about 5:00 P.M. and went to the nearest ranch where they obtained something to eat. He also states that they left the ranch around 3:00 A.M. when they moved to Lost Valley to meet the Company of cavalry who had passed on ahead*



of them. He stated that they arrived about daylight to assist in hunting the trail of the hostiles. Finding none they returned Steven's camp.

### ***The Fight was Over***

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*Today, traveling approximately seven miles north from Jacksboro, one arrives at an intersection with Highway 114 to the community of Olney. Turning west at this intersection, one travels seven miles to the little community of Jermyn. On the western edge of Jermyn, just to the south, can be seen a tree covered mountain, from the base of which, Lone Wolf's band made the surprise attack on the ranger force.*

*Three miles west of Jermyn, one suddenly comes upon the Loving Cattle Company ranch house on the north side of the highway. Set back among the trees, the old Ranch house was built here in 1878 by J.C. Loving when he moved his cattle operation from the original place located farther north on Cameron creek.*

*Directly across the road, on the south side, can be seen a cattle-guard with a pipe gate. An Oil field access road can be seen going south. On either side of the road may be seen a heavy growth of mesquite trees covering the landscape. The reader is now in Lost Valley.*

*Crossing through the cattle-guard, and following south, down the road a few hundred feet, to the left would be where the rangers had the prairie fight with the Indians. After traveling about one mile from the cattle-guard, an open cultivated field will be observed on the right side.*

*Perhaps two hundred yards across the field, a shallow ravine is observed among the trees. Running somewhat north/south, this ravine is where Major Jones's rangers took cover to fight the Indians.*

*To the west, across the open field, and among the heavy growth of trees, lies the hill and ridge, which was one of the Indian positions. The ravine today is only about two to three feet deep and has several ditches which makes it hard to locate the position of the original ravine.*

*Walking west from the ravine, one comes to the heavy growth of mesquite trees. Entering the tree line, one travels through a grassy, rock-strewn area, perhaps for one hundred yards, until the elevation of the hill is reached.*

*This hill is perhaps fifty or sixty feet in elevation.*

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*PO Box 12927*

*Austin, Texas 78711-2927*

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**MONTHLY RETURN**

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"Record of Scouts" (this gives great information about Company operations  
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