

James A. McLaughlin to Amos Kendall, March 13, 1843, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

class=MsoNormal>JAMES A. McLAUGHLIN TO AMOS KENDALL. 1

1 See Kendall to Jackson, Sept. 19, 1842, ante.

Hermitage, March 13, 1843.

General Jackson and I have just been talking about his life when a lawyer. Twenty two times when the Indians were most numerous and hostile he crossed the wilderness between Knoxville and Nashville. And once he crossed it alone. During this trip he arrived at the banks of a stream which it was necessary for him to cross. It was night, was raining violently and he was obliged to wait until daylight before he could find the ford. He took the saddle off of his horse, laid it at the root of a tree with the pad turned up, seated himself on it, covered himself with his blanket, and holding his horse with one hand and his rifle with the other he there spent the night. 0238 214 What a picture of patience, courage and endurance of hardship does this scene afford! At another time he was bringing out a (blooded) 2 year old filley which he had purchased. He started for Bean's Station from whence a party were to have started the day after he arrived there, but they had left that morning. Having fed his horses and employed the services of a man well acquainted with the habits of the Indians as his guide he sat out about an hour before sun down to overtake the party which had left the station that morning. Just before day break the[y] came up to their fires and they soon discovered that their friends had been pursued by a party of Indians. They saw the tracks of about twenty two but they followed on the Indians being between them and their friends. They continued to follow until they got so close on the Indians that wherever they stepped on rotten logs they discovered the water still

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remaining which had been pressed out by the Indian's weight. The guide now declared he would go no farther. Jackson and he took breakfast and then Jackson shared his remaining stock of provisions with him and they separated. Jackson followed on until he saw by the tracks that the Indians had left the path of the whites and turned off to the right evidently with an intention of getting before them. He kept on and overtook his friends just before dark when having crossed a stream partly frozen and very deep they had stopped, made up fires and were drying their clothes. He was invited to stop with them but declined because as he said the Indians were trying to get before them. The whole party then pushed on until just before dark on the following evening they arrived at some huts occupied by some hunters but who refused to let the party sleep in their cabins for no reason as Jackson could suppose except the fear of having their meat stolen. Having slept none for the last two nights Jackson covered himself with his blankets and laid himself down on the outside of the cabins although it was then snowing fast. When he rose in the morning there was six inches of snow on the ground. The party then pursued their way and arrived at their destination safely. But the hunters were killed.

I expect to start for St. Louis on the day after to-morrow and I do not know whether I will have money enough to take me home or not but I will make the effort.

Affectionately Yours