

The Canoe Battle

By Mr. Jerry Anstel.

On the 12th of Nov 1813, Capt Dale proposed an expedition upon the Alabama & was joined by Capt Jones, making the party consist - in all of 72 men. We struck the river above Ganocton where we procured two Canoes & spent the night in the same, without fire the next morning Dale, with all his 8 (eight) men started up on the East Bank leaving me in command of the boat, & keep parallel with the Land force. On reaching Bayly's farm a halt was made, Dale came on board, crossed to the farm & searched the same, finding plenty of fresh tracks. Returning, he started for Randon's plantation where I was to meet him. Soon after starting, I discovered a boat descending, with ten (10) Indians in it, who tacked about on seeing us. We gave chase immediately & gained fast upon them. One half mile above they ran up Randon's Creek, into the canoe. So

Canoe Fight -
J. Anstel

after Dale & Jones met a party of
Indians, in the canoe, crossing the
Creek. Dale killed the one in front.
The Indians then dropped their
jacks, a fire was kept up for a
few minutes, after which the
Indians fled in the canoe. As
the firing ceased, I pushed on
up to the Landing, where the
Land party soon after arrived.
This was Randon's Landing, below
Jim Cornels Landing or ferry. Capt. Jones
crossed over with his men & all
of Dale's Company, except twelve (12)
men, namely Dale, Maj. Creagh, Smith,
Brady, myself & six others. We were
roasting potatoes & beef taken up
at the Creek, where the fight took
place. Just as we were taking
the potatoes from the fire, a
large body of Indians was discovered
hunching off on either side to
surround us. We ran to the bank
of the river & neither of the
Canoes had returned, the small
one was on the way over. Just
then we discovered a large canoe
descending, with eleven (11) Indians
in it. As we were in a three
acre field, we ascended the
bank about twenty yds &

commenced firing on the Indians
in the boat - which was returned
by them for several rounds, when
two of them crept out & made for
the shore, some sixty or eighty yds
above us & above the mouth of a
small creek. Smith & I ran up to
kill them & were followed by
Craigh, who found no up to the
bank in mud. We scuffled out -
& tho' very heavy reached the place
in time! We had to stand on the
slope of the bank from which
I slipped & fell into the river
just in front of one of them, both
were carrying their guns above water.
Smith fired & killed one, while
the other sprang up & presented
his gun at Smith - as he ascended
the bank, passing over my gun.
I was after him, but he
could recover my gun, he was
in the canoe. I pursued him some
forty yds for an open space
to shoot & was just within four
feet of a place, when a gun
was fired within thirty feet of
me, the boat passing just over
my head. I intended to fire
on the offender & Craigh was
just ascending the bank of the
creek as I was passing in the

came - supposing me to be an
Indian & by this means my Indian
escaped. We returned to Smille &
descended the river on the turn of
the bank to our squad. Talk in
the meantime called to Capt
Jones to send over the large canoe
& capture the Indian boat. Eight
men started over, but when within
fifty yds, the man in front
rose up so as to see the number
who were lying down loading their
guns. He called to the packer &
back out so there were so many
Indians in the boat, whereupon
they retreated, the small boat
having reached us, paddled by
an old negro named Caesar.
During the interval I ordered Brady
to ascend the second bank to see
if a land party of Indians were
closing in upon us. He crawled
up, but seeing no Indians he
mounted a pile of earth, where-
upon some seven guns were
discharged at him shooting
the breech of his gun off with
one round, he was in our midst
screaming it was too hot up there
for him. Talk then proposed
to Smille & I to board the boat.

x
Tale then leaped down some ten
feet, Smith & I following. We
entered the boat in the same order
placing me in the bow. We ran out
some twenty yds below the Indians.
They rose up & we all attempted to
fire. Tale's rifle & my own missed
fire from the rocking of our
poorly getting into the boat &
the rolling of the boat. Caused
Smith & I miss his aim. Tale then
ordered Caesar to joggle up in a
hurry & upon approaching their
boat - the Chief & I exchanged
blows with our guns. Catching the
end of his, I drew him up to
me within reach of Smith & Tale
who brought him down, Tale
drove the barrel of his gun in
me & Smith caught the myrtle
with which he fought out the
battle - Tale getting Smith's gun
with which he made his blow. I
used the Chief's gun - As we
were running up roadside I
had two upon me at one time
until Tale got in the Indian boat
& placed himself opposite Smith.
On reaching the last two, one of
them knocked me down with a

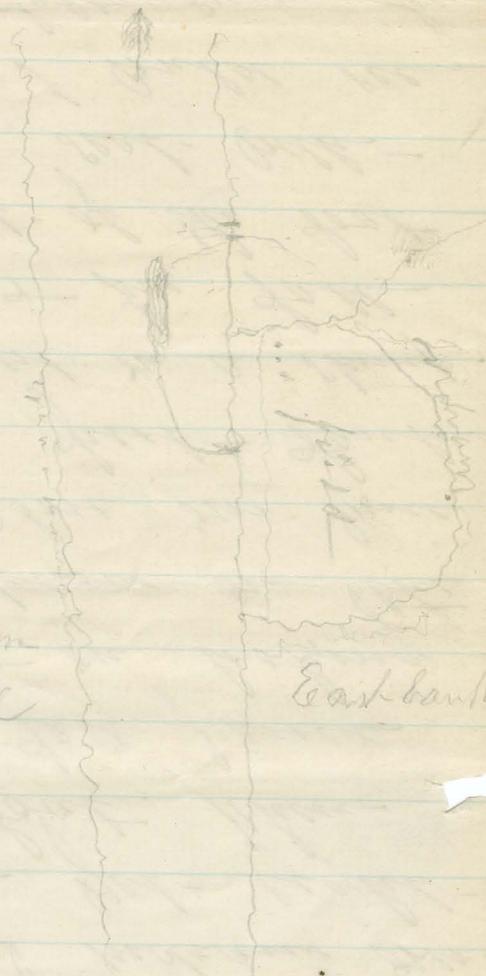
war club - falling across their boat
& holding on to the club until I
recovered my feet, one in each boat -
a scuffle ensued for the club,
which I gained & with which
I knocked him overboard, the
one in my rear having been killed
by Dale & Smith. So ended the
battle. We then started back,
with Old Caesar paddling, & Smith
holding the boats together, while
Dale & I threw the Indians over-
board as there were yet eight
bodies left in the boat. When
about half way a fall passed
through the boat - & on looking
up we saw three Indians on the
second bank just above our little
men, then under the first bank
the second on taking rest on a stump.
He stood up sideways & his fall
struck the water short of the boat -
he at last took his seat with
a large bore rifle - I could see
along the barrel & felt sure he
would hit me. I threw myself
up & stopped breathing - his fall
passed within an inch of my
abdomen, much to my relief. As
we were approaching the same
shore the Indians retired to
their main body of 280 (two hundred

* & (rightly) Indians. It reached our
comrades in the ~~comrades~~ & crossed over to
the west, without the Indians
knowing it.

March 1879

A diagram of the field and
position. J. A. A. A.

East bank



The Canoe Battle
By
Jeremiah Austill

On the 12th of Nov. 1813, Capt. Dale proposed an expedition upon the Alabama & was joined by Capt. Jones, making the party consist in all of 72 men. We struck the river above Jamestown where we procured two canoes & spent the night in the cane without fire. The next morning Dale, with all but 8 (eight) men started up on the East bank leaving me in command of the boats, to keep parallel with the land force. On reaching Bayly's farm a halt was made. Dale came on board, crossed to the farm & searched the same, finding plenty of fresh tracks. Returning, he started for Randon's plantation where I was to meet him. Soon after starting I discovered a boat descending with ten (10) Indians in it, who tacked about seeing us. We gave chase immediately & gained fast upon them. One half mile above they ran up Randons Creek, into the Cane. Soon after Dale & Jones met a party of Indians in the Cane, crossing the Creek. Dale killed the one in front. The Indians then dropped their packs, a fire was kept up for a few minutes after which the Indians fled in the Cane.

As the firing ceased I pushed on up to the Landing, Where the land party soon after arrived - This was Randon's Landing, below Jim Correls Landing or ferry. Capt. Jones crossed over with his men & all of Dale's Company, except twelve (12) men, namely Dale, Maj. Creagh, Smith Brady, Myself & Six others. We were roasting potatoes & beef taken up at the Creek, where the fight took place. Just as we were taking the potatoes from the fire a large body of Indians was discovered marching off on either side to surround us. We ran to the bank of the river & neither of the canoes had returned, the small one was on the way over. Just then we discovered a large Canoe descending with eleven (11) Indians in it.

As we were in a three acre field, we ascended the bank about twenty yds. & commenced firing, on the Indians in the boat, which was returned by them for several rounds, when two of them crept - met & made for the shore, some sixty or eighty yds above us & above the mouth of a small creek. Smith & I ran up to kill them & were followed by Creagh, who found us up to the waist in mud. We scuffled out & tho very heavy reached the place in time. We had to stand on the slope of the bank from which I slipped & fell into the river.

Just in front of one of them, both were carrying their guns above water. Smith fired & killed one, while the other sprang up & presented his gun at Smith as he ascended the bank, passing over my gun. I was after him, but ere I could recover my gun, he was in the Cane. I pursued him some forty yds for an open space to shoot & was just within four feet of a place when a gun was fired within thirty feet of me, the load passing just over my head. I turned to fire on the offender & Creagh was Just ascending the bank of the creek as I was passing in the Cane - supposing me to be an Indians & by this means my Indian escaped. We returned to Smith & descended the river on the turn of the back to our squad. Dale in the meantime called to Capt. Jones to send over the large canoe to capture the Indian boat. Eight men started over, but when within fifty yds, the man in

front rose up so as to see the number who were lying down loading their guns. He called to the padler to back out as there were so many Indians in the boat, whereupon they retreated, the small boat having reached us, paddled by an old Negro named Caesar. During the interval I ordered Brady to ascend the second bank to see if a land party of Indians were closing in upon us. He crawled up but seeing no Indians he mounted a pile of earth, whereupon some guns were discharged at him, shooting the breech of his gun off. With one bound, he was in our midst swearing it was too hot up there for him. Dale then proposed to Smith & I to board the boat. Dale then leaped down some ten feet, Smith & I following. We entered the boat in the same order placing one in the boat. We ran out some twenty yds below the Indians. They rose up & we all attempted to fire. Dale's rifle & my own missed fire from the wetting of our priming getting into the boat & the rolling of the boat caused Smith to miss his aim. Dale then ordered Caesar to paddle up in a hurry & upon approaching their boat, the chief & I exchanged blows with our guns. Catching the end of his, I drew him up to me within reach of Smith & Dale who fought him down. Dale broke the barrel of his gun into & Smith caught the muzzle with which he fought out the battle.- Dale getting Smith's gun with which he made his blows. I used the Chief's gun.

As we were running up broadside I had two upon me at one time until Dale got in the Indian boat & placed himself opposite Smith. On reaching the last two, one of them knocked me down with a War Club- falling across their boat & holding on to the club until I recovered my feet, one in each boat - a scuffle ensued for the club, which I gained & with which I knocked him overboard, the one in my rear, having been killed by Dale & Smith. So ended the battle. We then started back, with old Caesar paddling & Smith holding the boats together, while Dale and I threw the Indians overboard as there were yet eight bodies left in the boat. When about half way, a ball passed through the boat & on looking up we saw three Indians on the second bank Just above our ___? men, then under the first bank the second on taking rest on a stump. We stood up sideways & his ball struck the water, short of the boat - he at last took his seat - with a large bored rifle. I could see along the barrel & felt sure he would hit me. I drew myself up & stopped breathing - his ball passed within an inch of my abdomen, much to my relief. As we were approaching the same shore, the Indians retired to their main body of 280 (two hundred & eighty) Indians. We reached our nine comrades & crossed over to the west, without the Indians knowing it.

(On the original manuscript there is a pencil diagram of the field and position of the party drawn by J. Austill.)

(There is also a pencil notation "March 1874")