

**Museum Musings Article- Krum News**  
**May 2010**

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**By Della Isbell Davis**

**THE INDIAN RAID**

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The early settlers lived with two constant threats to lives and property: prairie fires and Indians. It was almost impossible to bring a fire under control once it got started on the open grassland. One of the most disastrous of the period started near Dallas and swept northward until it burned itself out near the Red River.

The Indian threat was even more to be feared. After the Civil War, the Government had disarmed citizens as a precautionary measure during the period of reconstruction, and had placed detachments of soldiers at various forts for their protection; but the army was too weak in numbers to spread over the territory. Under this policy, the Indians became bold and made frequent raids from their reservation in "Indian Territory" into North Central Texas.

On a beautiful moonlit night in October 1868, Indians from Fort Sill made a raid into Denton County in the area between Clear Creek on the north, and Denton Creek on the south. In the early part of that night, they were discovered by Dempsey Jackson at his place on Hickory Creek, just south of Krum. To alert the citizens, he crawled on his hands and knees down a ditch in his field to the creek, and then walked up the bed of the creek until he came to the George McCormick home. Other families in the area were notified, including the Egans. By daylight, some eight or ten, poorly armed settlers had gathered. Before them, the Indians were rounding up all the horses they had been able to find, coming and going in all directions in the valley between the two Hickory Creeks. Mr. McCormick counted 325 Indians in the party. Shortly after sunrise, they started the herd northwest, and it was estimated they had taken about 600 head of horses.

The settlers dropped in on the trail and were joined by others in the pursuit until there were about forty in the posse, under the leadership of Crow Wright.

About eleven o'clock that morning the Indians were sighted on the north side of White's Creek, northeast of Slidell. They were well equipped and were drawn up in a line of battle, with warriors protecting the herdsman driving the stock. The posse crossed the creek and the Indians charged. The settlers had to fall back to the bed of the creek. In the retreat, the horse of George McCormick Jr. (grandfather of Robert "Squirt" McCormick), was shot from under him, but he remounted behind his brother, Issac and thus escaped.

In the battle, Sevier Fortenberry, ancestor of the well-known Fortenberry family, was killed and scalped. He was buried by the posse on the side of a hill on the south side of White's Creek.

Four days after the raid, the United States Government gave its consent to the citizens to organize and bear arms for self-defense. In November 1868, a company of Indian Scouts were organized with Crow Wright as its captain. The last raid in Denton County was made on Denton Creek, south of Stony, in 1871.

**Acknowledgement:** An account of the Indian raid is in both "History and Reminiscences of Denton County," by Ed F. Bates (page 164) and "William Lee McCormick, A Study in Tolerance, By Edna McCormick (pg 31). Material was freely drawn from both accounts in writing this story.