

Indian Captivity of Isaac Knight

By Jerry Long
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Published in Evansville, Indiana, in 1839 A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Isaac Knight from Indian Barbarity is an 18th-century captivity narrative told by Isaac Knight and written down by Hiram A. Hunter. It details Knight's 1793 kidnapping as a child in Kentucky, his time with the Kickapoo and Potawatomi, and his eventual escape.

A biography of Rev. Hiram Abiff Hunter (1800-1883), a Cumberland Presbyterian minister, is found on the Cumberland Presbyterian Church Internet site (Cumberland.org). It reports that "In 1839 he removed to Owensboro, Ky, where he remained as pastor of the church ten years,." And "Among his published writings may be mentioned, A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Isaac Knight from Indian Barbarity, (Evansville, IN: Evansville Journal , 1839).

In March 1904 The Overbrook Citizen, of Overbrook, Kansas reprinted A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Isaac Knight from Indian Barbarity from a copy of the original (J. D. Quillen Publisher). The reprint's introduction included:

The following pages are a reprint, verbatim, of the story of Isaac Knight, published in pamphlet form, at Evansville, Indiana, in 1839. This reprint is made from the only copy extant of the original, now in the possession of D.S. Fairchild, whose mother was a daughter of the subject of the following sketch, and who, with a number of other descendants of Isaac Knight, now live in Overbrook, Kansas and vicinity.

It has been the aim of the printers to reproduce the story exactly as it was formerly printed, though it has sometimes been difficult to decipher the faded and timeworn original. But the quaint expressions of the narrator of almost one hundred years ago are given exactly; and with the punctuations, capitalization and spelling as it appears in the original, is set down herein.

A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Isaac Knight from Indian Barbarity.

Giving an account of the cruel treatment he received from the Savages while afflicted with the small pox: His escape and joyful return after enduring the hardships of an Indian Prisoner, during Two Years and Six Months.

Communicated by himself, and at his request written by
Hiram A. Hunter.

Evansville: Printed at the Journal Office
1839

ISAAC KNIGHT, the subject of the following Narrative, was born in what was then called Washington county, in Pennsylvania; the record of his age being lost, the exact time of his birth cannot be ascertained.

His father's name was John Knight, who married Ann Rolison, by whom he had seven sons, of whom Isaac was the eldest.

When the subject of this Narrative was a child, his father removed, by water, in company with his father-in-law, Mr. Lawrence Rolison, and Norod Franceway, who had married in the same family. These all settled at or near the place, now known by the name of Vienna, or Green River, about eighty miles above its mouth, where, with much difficulty, they lived some years, grinding their corn on handmills or pounding it in a mortar, and at one time such was the difficulty with which bread stuff was had, that Isaac's father, bought corn at the mouth of Green River, at one dollar and twenty-five cents per bushel, and conveyed it to his family in a perogue or canoe, Indeed, the difficulties under which the first settlers of that part of Kentucky labored, were almost insupportable.

The corn purchased as above stated, sustained the family while they cultivated the soil to make more. Their strength being small, their crops were not large, and the wild beasts of the forest, together with the vermine, well nigh destroyed all the production of the first year's labor. This placed them in as destitute a situation as ever; for owing to the scarceness of their crops, they were reduced to the necessity of relying on their success in hunting, for their sustenance; and that without bread for some eight months. In the mean time, Indians were frequently seen more intent in their chase after the white man, than the latter after his game.

For the security of the whites and their families, they were impelled to build and resort to forts in as large bodies as their thinly settled population would permit. Uniting their energies, they labored by turn in each man's field, one or more, as necessity required, standing as sentinel.

During the season in which corn was making, they remained in their forts; but returned to their lonesome and dangerous retreats for the remainder of the year.

Seldom would anything short of abundant sign of Indian hostilities, drive them in the spring of the year, from their homely huts. It is, however, perfectly within the recollection of the Author of this Narrative, that, when a boy, he heard the report of a gun which killed dead, one of the finest men in the settlement, and one, too, who lived within a few steps of his father's door. Mr. Downs, who was thus shot by the Indians, left a wife and seven children to lament his untimely death. He was most cruelly used by the savage butchers, and left scalped upon the ground.

About this time the country about the Red Banks, on the Ohio river, now known as Henderson, in Henderson county, Kentucky, began to be spoken of as a most desirable section, and Isaac's father, with the rest of the connexion, moved to that place, where they found a few families residing. But one house was yet erected--the rest of the families lived in camps. In removing to this place, their property being conveyed by water, except the stock, Isaac, then a boy about nine or ten years of age, assisted in driving them.

One circumstance transpired on this route, which much diverted the little drover, and therefore, for the amusement of little readers, should any be disposed to peruse this history, he desires to relate it, although it resembles somewhat some of Davy Crockett's staked and ridered stories Bears, buffaloes, deer, and almost all wild game, were plenty; and the dogs scouting about started a huge bear, which ran almost into the midst of little Isaac's drove, and not more than twenty or thirty steps from him started to climb a tree, when a sprightly little dog, belonging to some of the company, seized him by the ham, and either he was so light or the bear so strong, that he ascended the tree to the distance of some twenty or thirty feet, with the little dog holding to him.

When he loosed his hold the reader would of course expect him to fall and be killed, or very much injured; but to the pleasing surprise of the anxious spectators, when he struck the ground he was heard to grunt, "ah, hah!" sprang to his feet and ran off.

During this route, also another circumstance, a little diverting, attracted the attention of and very much pleased the drover. On discovering a gang of buffaloes, one of the company shot down one, which proved to be a cow, that had following her a fine young calf, which was kept and driven with little Isaac's charge. A Dutchman by the name of Adam Hay, being in company, had no little fondness for playing with it; and would frequently, when the cattle were halted, get on his hands and knees, as if in a posture for battle, motioning his head toward the calf, as another would do to butt it. The little calf of the forest became at length enraged, and before the Dutchman was aware, the calf grunted, gave its tail a twist, and throwing its head at the Dutchman's, to his great mortification, and the sport of the company, butted him over. As soon as he could collect himself, he arose, and pronouncing a Satanic benediction upon the little thing, calmly stepped aside, and let it alone.

This same Dutchman, however, afterwards, being fond of hunting, followed a gang of buffaloes the greater part of a day and near night had the good fortune to kill one. Finding himself too far from home to gain it before dark, and the night threatening to be immensely cold, he skinned the buffalo, kindled a fire, and wrapped himself in the hide, with the hair next to him, and laid down to sleep. In the morning he awoke, and found the green hide frozen stiff around him. His struggles, aided by the heat of the sun, enabled him, however, to extricate himself about 10 o'clock, and return to his camp the next day.

They at length arrived all in safety, at the Red Banks, where even greater difficulties were undergone by settlers, than had been endured by them at Vienna. Here, too, as at the former place, they cultivated the soil in safety, only by means of sentinels. But these only secured them from the attacks of red men. Greater fears were excited among the quiet settlers, by the inhuman conduct of some white men, Kuyrkendall, Ayers, Ashley, Howard, Cane and the Masons, who seemed to delight more in bloodshed and murder than in any thing else. With such men as these, they were harassed for some years, and no man's life was considered secure, who was so unfortunate as to incur their displeasure. A gentleman by the name of Smith came from Louisville with a small store. Mason, who was in the habit of trading with him, called one evening, and pricing a number of articles, objected to them, and abused Smith until he became enraged, and attempted to dirk him. His blow was warded off by Mason's throwing up his arm, which received the dirk. Mason now giving the alarm, his comrades were all soon there, and Smith obliged to make his escape the best way his could, leaving his store door open, and his goods exposed. He was closely pursued, but succeeded in getting to a flat boat, which lay at the landing, sunk in the water to the roof. In this he concealed himself, with nothing but his head out of water, until early next morning, when, to his agreeable surprise, he saw a keel boat about to land near him. On raising his head, he recognized an officer of his acquaintance, commanding a company of soldiers. The officer knew him, and exclaimed with an oath: "Smith, what are you doing there?" Smith related to him the circumstances, and Mason and his van standing on the bank, made in dangerous for Smith to stir. The officer ordered his men to arms, and bade Smith come aboard of his boat promising to riddle every man that attempted to fire at him. With the assistance of this officer and his soldiers, Smith succeeded in getting his goods, &c, on board the boat, and returned to Louisville.

About this time the small pox prevailed at the Red Banks, and little Isaac was vaccinated with it. He was, however, still under the necessity of giving more or less attention to his father's cattle, cutting cane, providing food for them, &c. Accordingly in company with others, he went

frequently across the Ohio river in a canoe to cut cane. In one of those routes, accompanied by Peter Sprinkle, and George, his brother, John Upp, and Jacob, his brother, having arrived on the bank opposite to Henderson--as boys are naturally inclined to do--they commenced their sport, running and jumping along the bank, all alike ignorant of their danger, until from behind a blind, which was made of cane, cut and stuck in the ground; for the purpose of concealment, eight Indians, six of whom were found to be Pottawatomies, and two Kicapoots, came rushing upon them. In confusion and astonishment the boys all attempted to escape. The eldest, Peter Sprinkle, a young man of about 17 or 18 years of age, ran nearly to the river, and was shot down; three guns being fired at him at once. Little Jacob Upp, a small boy of about seven years of age, finding escape impossible, stood still and begged for his life, crying "Don't kill me, don't kill me;" but it was to no purpose--the cruel savages buried the tomahawk in his skull, and put an end to his cries and his existence.

George Sprinkle and John Upp, the former a little larger and the latter a little smaller than Isaac, were taken almost on the spot where the Indians were discovered. When the author of this Narrative first saw the Indians, he ran, without saying a word; and on hearing the report of the guns that killed Peter Sprinkle, he looked back, and seeing one Indian in pursuit of him, he continued his race, until, in a short time, he felt a blow upon each shoulder, which he afterward learned came from two Indians, instead of one, that had pursued him. These blows stunned him so that he fell, and in falling he lost his hat. He had no sooner touched the ground than his savage pursuers had each hold of an arm, lifting him up. Even in this predicament he attempted twice to reach for his hat, but failed to get it. He afterward learned from one of the Indians who took him, that if he had made a third attempt to get his hat he would have killed him. These led the affrighted Isaac to the rest of the company, and, as he thought, to the place of execution; but to his surprise, when he came there, he found his associates, George Sprinkle and John Upp, in the custody of the savage Red men, yet alive.

Here, in full view of the Red Banks, the savages, holding up the yet warm scalps of Peter Sprinkle and Jacob Upp, raised the war whoop, and started with their young prisoners; holding fast to Isaac's hand, as they compelled him to run after them. Such was their fearfulness that he would yet escape, that in swimming the bayou, a short distance from the river, one still held him by the hand. On reaching the camp where those savages had lain the preceding night, they put mocassins on the boys, and compelled them to follow them or keep up with them, running all day and traveling all night.

In the evening of the first day, one of the boys, John Upp, became so much exhausted that he could run no longer. The Indians, with a view to compel him forward, threatened him with their tomahawks; but finding that he could not go, two of them assisted him.

The morning of the second day, they came upon three bears, which the Indians had killed, and in great haste took each a small portion along with him, until they crossed the Pattoka river, and on the bank they stopped for the first time to cook and eat.

The boys by this time, were much fatigued, and well nigh worn out by means of constant and hard travelling. Nothing worthy of note transpired until the evening of the third day, when, after making a small fire of sticks, they produced the scalps of the murdered boys, and after cutting the meat out of one of them, carefully put it on sticks before the fire, and cooked it; then, in the presence of the boys, ate it, shaking the remaining scalp at them. This they did, because they were hungry, but each, that he might thereby say, "I have killed a white man, and eat him." And thus they acquired no little reputation as warriors. The remaining scalps they then stretched on hoops, made for that purpose.

That night they danced the war dance, and made their young prisoners walk round with them, and would have had them dance, had they not been too much exhausted. This was afterward their regular employment every other night.

In their route they attempted to cross a stream in a small canoe, which was not more than large enough to carry two men in it; however one of the Indians conveyed the boys across the creek, and, on striking the opposite bank, George Sprinkle being a little fearful, and knowing that he could not swim, leaped from the canoe to the bank--on doing which the Indian gave him a blow with his paddle, across the back, which injured him so seriously that it was with difficulty he ascended the bank.

The reader will remember that Isaac was vaccinated, with the small pox. This was done just the day before he was taken by these cruel savages, on the 8th day of April, 1793, according to his best recollections; and in something like a week he therefore became very sick with that disease; but was nevertheless impelled to travel every day, even when scarcely able to hold up his head, or help himself in the smallest. The knowledge which his friends at home had of the fact that, if alive, he would be thus afflicted, augmented their uneasiness and anxiety about him. Their fears could not be great that the cruel wretches would kill him; and if not, both he and they expected he would die of the small pox, exposed as he was in an Indian camp. their manner of crossing ponds, creeks and rivers was, to wade or swim, and, sick as Isaac was, such was the manner in which he was compelled to pass them. After the disease above named, had appeared on him, he was under the necessity of swimming a small river, which was the means of driving it in, so as to render him very sick. Then, for the first time, the savages discovered some humanity, and after kindling a fire, with a view to encamp for the night, they placed Isaac near the fire, wrapped in two blankets, in which situation he spent the night. In the morning the pox appeared again and he was some better, but still unable to travel. Nevertheless it was his fate to go, and he endeavored to do so, until, faint and sick, he fell to the ground. His Indian drivers, however, soon raised him, and compelled him to go forward.

Fatigued with travelling and afflicted with fever, he suffered much for water, which they frequently refused him. When in crossing water he would lift up some in his hand and put it to his mouth, they would push him down in the water. At night, encamping near a small branch, he asked leave to go for water; they granted it--but an Indian followed him to the bank, and then kicked him down a steep, where he fell among the rocks, and was not a little hurt by the fall. At another time, passing a small branch, he asked permission to drink, which was granted; but as he put his mouth to the water, an Indian, with his foot, crushed his mouth into the sand. With this most brutal treatment, and swelled till shapeless, with sores which were constantly separating; and not unfrequently, especially of a morning, discharging blood, he was forced to march.

Provisions growing scarce, they spent one day in hunting. In the afternoon, having killed two deers, they stopped to cook; Isaac being in the way of one of the Kickapoos, he took the liberty to kick him down a descending ground, some twelve or fifteen feet. This kicking was no pleasant thing to Isaac; and here he found in one of the Indians, a friend, who claimed him as his, and was much offended at the conduct of the other.

In a few days they passed the Kickapoo towns, where the two Indians of that nation left the company, for home, and the prisoners saw them no more so as to recognize them. They soon arrived at another town of some note, on the Illinois river.

As they entered the town, on the 15th day after they were taken, it being the 23rd, day of the month, on passing a few wigwams, some of the warriors gave a signal, which brought out several squaws, who relieved them all of their packs.

At this place the prisoners were conducted into the presence of, and exposed to the view of a vast crowd of Indians, many of whom came up with apparent friendship, and gave them a hearty shake of the hand.

Among those who came to them were two Frenchmen, who were merchants, and traders amongst them, one of whom was very much marked with the same disease of which Isaac had suffered, and on shaking hands with him, asked: "What is the matter?" Finding he could talk English, Isaac told him "it was nothing but being in the wet and cold so much." He replied: "It will be well if you find it so." Isaac did not wish to let him know what was the matter with him, as he feared that the knowledge of it among the Indians would be the means of his losing his life.

From this place they were conducted across the river to a wigwam, where something was provided for them to eat, which very much pleased their palates, as it somewhat resembled small hominy, and they had seen a squaw put a handfull or two of sugar in it, after striking a dog over the head and driving him out of the wigwam with the ladle with which she stirred the mess.

As the evening came on, the Indians began to collect, and as the other two boys had been painted and trimmed by the Indians, previous to their arrival in town, and Isaac was not--though none of them could account for it--it was the opinion both of him and them that it was their intention to burn him; however, when they were all collected, the young prisoners were ordered out, and the Indians, in one vast body, around a small fire, danced a war dance, the prisoners and the warriors that took them being next to the fire, and opposite to, or facing them as they danced round, were two squaws, bearing on canes from the Ohio Bottoms, the scalps of the little boy and the young man who had been killed, when the other boys were taken.

Next morning, as Isaac thought, almost all the Indians in the world collected on the opposite bank of the river, for a ball play, where they spent the greater part of the day in that exercise, both men and women sharing its pleasures; the sexes engaging apart from each other, and seeming to delight greatly in the employment.

In the evening, a company of some two or three hundred elderly Indians came marching down to the wigwam where the prisoners were kept, bearing two large kettles of hominy, beating their drums, rattling the deer's hoofs, and making music of different kinds. They marched several times around the hut, and then with great apparent solemnity, placed the kettles on a handsome green, and when they were all seated around them, two men waiting on the rest divided the contents of the kettles, putting a small portion in each man's bowl--for they all had bowls, and, as was their custom, ladles. A prophet then, as was supposed, repeated as he sat, a lengthy ceremony; after which they enjoyed their repast in good order, and dispersed.

The next day the boys were permitted to walk round and visit the different huts in the village, where they were received with kindness and well treated by the squaws who kept them. One of them seemed to pity Isaac's situation, and in expression of her kindness, combed his hair, and, finding some sores on his head, anointed them, and was thus the means of restoring him to health sooner than he would probably have been restored. By this time his health was somewhat improved, though he was yet quite unwell. His resting however, another day in the village was of great advantage to him.

On the morning of the fourth day Isaac was presented with his moccasins by a squaw, who also gave him something to eat. Soon afterwards an Indian of the company that had taken the boys came in and beckoned to Isaac to follow him, and without a thought that he and his associates were now to be separated until they should meet at home, he followed his guide that whole day, up the Illinois river, wading many small swift running streams, which, as Isaac expressed himself, washed off many a scab. By this Indian he was piloted to a wigwam where lived, as he afterward found,

the mother of the two warriors that had taken him, and who were detained at the village by sickness, of which one of them died. Here, being delivered to this old mother, and seated by her, she immediately gave him a new blanket, and provided him something to eat. This day's travel had again freshened Isaac's sores, and so fatigued him that although he was wrapped in a new blanket, and kindly treated, he had no rest, but felt in the morning almost as bad as formerly.

This morning Isaac's guide gave him to understand that he must start again; but feeling unable to travel, and having learned by this time the Indian term for sick, Isaac made all the excuses he could think of, and at last pointing to his mocasins, which were worn full of holes, he told him his mocasins were sick, and the Indian turned away from him and left him.

The squaw then, in whose care Isaac was left, with a view to cure him, made preparation for it, and with a sharp flint scarafied him, and rubbed the sores with a piece of rough bark, to make them bleed; then caused him to jump in the Illinois river. This was all done through kindness, although it was harsh treatment.

From this place Isaac, together with many Indians, started up the river, to an Indian town, situated upon a small island, in a lake through which the Illinois river passes, now called Illinois lake; this place they gained in five days, nothing very important transpiring on the route. It was Isaac's fate, however, according to the direction of the squaw to whose care he was committed, to jump in the river every morning.

When they arrived at this island, the Indians began soon to make preparations for a crop, and Isaac was sent, in company with two squaws--who took along with them skins to smoke--to pick up and burn corn stalks: these squaws set Isaac to work in the stalks, and shewed him what to do and how to do it; but he pretended not to understand them; and after gathering an armful of stalks, took them and laid them down by one of the squaws, as if he supposed they intended, with them, to smoke the skins. This excited their laughter, but was not sufficient to relieve him; for they set him at it again, and made him do it. Here, for the first time, Isaac discovered that his eye sight was injured by means of the smallpox; for, when they started across the lake to the corn field, he could not see across it, but was surprised to gain the shore in so short a time.

Returning that evening to the town on the island, Isaac was permitted to rest some days, by means of which his health gradually improved, and as he gained strength his eye sight was restored, until he could see mountains, trees, huts, horses, men, and even dogs, at a distance.

On this island a few Indians, supposing to have some sport with Isaac, caught two horses, and putting Isaac on one somewhat wild, had an Indian to ride the other, with a long pole or switch in his hand, to whip Isaac's horse, and perhaps to whip him, if he did not ride well; but he happened not to be brought up in the woods for nothing--suspecting what they were after, as he stepped to the horse he secured a little switch, and when they gave him the signal to start, he laid whip, and the Indian after him; but Isaac and his pony were smart enough to keep so far ahead of him that he never reached either of them; and the laugh all turned on the Indian, who came so far short of effecting his purpose.

Soon after this the small pox made its appearance among the Indians on this island, and the kind old squaw who had given so much attention to Isaac, and thereby endeared herself to him, was one of the first subjects and victims of that destructive disease. He had for a long time learned that if this disease broke out among them, they would kill him, as he had been the means of bringing it among them; and although he sometimes hoped that some of the most cruel and barbarous of them would die with it; yet he more frequently desired they might all escape it, as he feared the consequences. Their manner of treating the disease proved fatal in many instances: They invariably at first, in that, as in other cases of complaint, took a severe sweat and then jumped into the river;

and so terminated the existence of many. The death of this humane and motherly old squaw gave the Author of this Narrative most unpleasant feelings, and was the cause of much distressing exercise of mind. He had found in her a true and tender friend, and one who was willing to do for him all she could; but when he saw her taken from him, he found himself far from home,--without a friend,--among strangers,--in the midst of foes, and surrounded with sickness, producing death in every direction. His spirits sunk, all hope was well nigh gone. No cheering thought checked his distress--no gleam of hope could light up his countenance, or buoy up his disconsolate spirit. Clouds, gloom, and the prospect of death, in its most horrid form, for a considerable time encompassed the woeborn mind of the lonesome little prisoner. No handsome grove, green upon this island, inviting the sufferer to contemplative retirement, nor even wood to warm the cold or cook for the hungry. All the wood used on this island was brought across the lake in canoes, and here had been pointed out to Isaac the spot where two prisoners had been buried. It was a part of his employment, with others, to bring wood across the lake in this way, and sometimes to do it alone. Here, in the far distant woods, his cheeks were frequently bathed in tears, while he gathered wood, which, for ought he knew, was to consume his own frail body, as a punishment for that for which he could feel no guilt.

The death and burial of the squaw, whom Isaac recognized almost as a mother, were extremely solemn and impressive. Appearing sensible of her approaching dissolution, she gave Isaac to her daughter, who lived along with her. She was buried after their manner, with great solemnity; and many of the Indians painted themselves black and mourned for her ten days, fasting every day until evening; but all this was not expressive of Isaac's grief for the death of her who had nursed him with so much tenderness, and friendless now left alone, he found no one to whom he could unbosom his sorrows. Tears flowed in torrents, but were insufficient to quell his grief. Though he afterwards witnessed the death of his own dear mother, his feelings were nothing to compare with those which harrowed up his mind at the death of her who had given birth to the men who dragged him from the banks of the proud running stream where he had left his home.

A number of Indians died of the disease on the island before they left it. Necessity seemed to compel them to leave the island, and, supposing that a change of situation would improve their health, they started, moving a short distance at a time, and spending but little time at any one place. They had moved, however, but seldom, until the squaw in whose care Isaac had been left, followed her mother, by means of the same disease. Indeed, they lost some at every place where they stopped. This squaw left a young child, some twelve months old, which it fell to Isaac's lot to nurse, and besides the attention which he was compelled to give that infant, it devolved on him to nurse the sick, help to bury the dead, and frequently to do all alone. Worn down with fatigue, by means of his arduous labor, he devised means to be relieved of the burden of the child. Accordingly, as he carried it on his back, wrapped in a blanket, in Indian style, he drew the blanket tight around it, and so put an end to its cries, removed his own burden, and terminated its life.

Isaac's time, however was taken up attending on the sick and burying the dead. One night, in company with an Indian who assisted him in this service, after one of their patients died, the Indian laid down to sleep, (for they were both much fatigued,) and left Isaac to watch with the other until he died. Glad of an opportunity to sleep, Isaac laid out the last mentioned patient, and then laid down to rest between the other dead one and his assistant,--here he spent the balance of the night pleasantly, until he was called to attend a squaw that died the next morning. To bury these three Indians was Isaac's business the next day.

After the death of an Indian of some note, in these woods, whom they buried in as much splendor as their circumstances would permit, his squaw and four children, the eldest of whom

was large enough to support the family by hunting, left the rest of the Indians, and moved down the Illinois river in a canoe.

Isaac's fears being great lest he should yet be killed for bringing the smallpox among them, he was halting whether to tell or not that he brought it, when he heard two squaws conversing on the subject, and learned from their conversation, that the Indians were of opinion that they, in and by means of goods sold them by the French, had taken the disease. This so relieved his mind he told them nothing about it.

Some weeks afterwards the rest of the Indians turned their course down the river, also taking Isaac along with them. Still some of them were sick and dying all the time. After passing the island in the lake where the disease first appeared amongst them, they descended the river for some distance; but how far and how long time, is not within the recollection of the Author.

As they descended the river in their canoes, they found the three smallest sons of the squaw last mentioned, lying in their little bark, well nigh exhausted with hunger, and struggling to ascend the river, in hopes to meet them and find something on which to sustain themselves. On their meeting, the Author states that all the distress he ever witnessed never equalled what was manifested on that occasion. The shrieks and cries of men, women and children surpassed all he had ever seen or heard. From the eldest of these boys they learned that they, with their mother and brother had gone some distance down the river, and that both the mother and eldest brother had died there, and leaving them alone, they had attempted to wade and tow their canoe up the river in pursuit of help. They had then been, as they said, seven days without anything to eat; while they had been lying in that place, they had pulled up all the grass they could reach, and chewing it, sucked the juice of it, which had kept them alive until that time. This being in the after part of the day, they went a little farther down the river and encamped. A heavy storm was approaching, and all hands were hurried to prepare a shelter for these poor little skeletons, for such they were. The storm, however, came so speedily that the tent was not entirely fixed before the wind commenced to blow and the rain to pour down upon them. It was Isaac's fate, poor fellow, to hold it down on one side until the storm would abate, while a heavy chunk held down the other.

After descending the river a short distance farther, they encamped for several days; during which time, two squaws went down to the camp where the mother and brother of the boys were found dead; and, burying them, they returned, bringing with them some of the property which the boys had not brought.

A short time now elapsed until they started again up the river, passed the town on the island before mentioned, and Isaac, having been committed, by some means, to the care of another squaw, traveled up this river in the same canoe with her, and, passing the place where husband had been buried, she steered the canoe to shore, and, taking out some venison in a bowl, had Isaac to accompany her to the grave. Here she kindled a small fire over the head of the grave, into which she threw some of the venison. Setting down the bowl she told Isaac to eat of it, which he did, while she walked to some distance, and mourned with loud and sore lamentations for near an hour; then returned to the grave, wiped off the tears, threw some more meat in the fire and on the grave, and bade Isaac to start. Ascending the river still farther that before, they all encamped, and lived with great difficulty, in as much as the crops were very short, the corn having received no attention after it was planted, owing to the sickness that prevailed with so much fatality. Indeed, the support of all depended on the success of the hunters and fishermen, and much time was spent in moving from place to place by this means.

About this time Isaac began to be threatened, as he learned from the Indian boys, by an old chief, who said he had brought the smallpox among them, and while this was in agitation, one of

the Indians arrived who had taken Isaac, and who had been left sick at the first town, the place where Isaac had been separated from his associates, his fellow prisoners. This Indian Isaac met with much joy, and he claimed him at his property.

A few Towa Indians now arrived among these Pottawatomies, selling them goods, trading for furs, &c. These Indians were acting as agents for a merchant at Mackanaw, as is frequently the case.

To one of those Towa Indians Isaac was sold for what he thought would amount to about \$500.00, and was delivered to his new master perfectly naked. He was then told to do so, and, mounting the horse behind the man that bought him, rode off across what he now thinks was Spoon river.

Isaac's situation by this trade was much improved, and his fears in a great measure subsided. When he alighted from the horse his new mother presented him with a new blanket.

They then traveled for some days north of the Ohio river, to the hunting ground of the Indians who had now purchased him. Here the "Big Buck" was killed, and a feast prepared, to have Isaac adopted into the family. Some twelve or fifteen elderly Indians were invited in, and the whole buck was dressed and put into a large kettle with his horns sticking up amidst the curling smoke, while the heated blaze cooked the carcass. When it was well done, and kettle set off, one Indian serving the rest, filled each man's bowl, as they all sat around.

An old Prophet, being informed by Isaac's adopted mother, (at whose side he sat all the time,) what was to be his name, "Mishawatee," commenced and repeated a lengthy ceremony, somewhat resembling a solemn prayer, in which he frequently mentioned Isaac's new name, to all of which the old Indians would now and then make some noise, which seemed to sanction what he said. After this, they ate their fill of the buck, of which the family took no part, and, repeating another ceremony of like character with the other, they all arose, and took with them in their bowls, all of the buck that was not eaten.

Now being made an heir, Isaac was trimmed, his hair pulled out, as was the custom of that nation, except the scalp, and hole made through his nose.

In his nose they put six silver rings; his hair being long, it was divided and platted, one half before and the other behind; the hinder part ornamented with beads, and the fore part filled with silver broaches.

The little prisoner began now to be proud that he had got into a better family, where he had a prospect of living somewhat more agreeably, if he should never see his home.

On this hunting ground they spent the winter, and Isaac was principally employed in getting wood, making fires, cooking, &c. Towards spring they returned by the place where Isaac was purchased, and, crossing the Illinois river on the ice, went over the ridge dividing the waters of the Illinois and Chicago rivers, to the Indian sugar camp, near the latter river, and not far distant from Lake Michigan, where a number of Indians collected, and, in the proper season, they made a considerable quantity of sugar.

During the time they were making sugar, many of the Indians were frequently drunk--and, in their drunken sprees, would often try to kill Isaac. On this account he would sometimes flee to the woods, remain concealed all day, and return at night, knowing that at night they could not distinguish him from an Indian. At one time a drunken Indian came into the wigwam in which Isaac lived, with his knife drawn, and threatening to kill him. Another Indian happening to meet him at or near the door, detained him until Isaac, raising up the mats, and crowding between some packs of deer skins, succeeded in getting out, and making his escape until night.

The season for making sugar being over, they moved to the mouth of Chicago river, and commenced making arrangements to go to Mackanaw with their skins and furs.

The reader will of course understand that Indians, when they travel by water, go in canoes. These canoes are generally made of birch bark, and, as many persons may not understand how they are made, the Author has thought proper to describe them: They sometimes make them of several pieces, which they sew together with long pine roots, and then tar the seams. Those of ordinary size are made of one piece, and in the following manner: Finding as large a tree as they can, of which to compose it, and, splitting the bark on one side of the tree, the length they desire it, they take the bark from the tree and shape the ends as they want them, sew them together with a whip stick, and tar the seams so as to prevent them from leaking. They then rib them from end to end with pine splits, about the width of a man's hand, and place them as close as possible to each other. They then put in knees, made of the same materials, extending from side to side, and of these compose the round of the canoe inside. They then put whaling on each side of the edges, and, clamping it with the knees and bracing it from one side to the other, they wrap the whaling and braces with pine roots, from end to end, and so make it perfectly safe.

Few persons are aware how safely and with what speed these canoes will ride some of the highest waves. In the canoe in which Isaac sailed, with his adopted father and family, from the mouth of the Chicago to Mackanaw, they took not less than three thousand pounds of deer and fur skins, besides all the loose property belonging to the family, the dogs not excepted.

As the route which they had to go led them near the shore, they encamped every night on it, where, for the security both of the canoe and its loading, they were under the necessity of unloading, drawing it out of the water, and turning it upside down, made it answer the purpose of a wigwam. They continued this route for some days, and arrived at a small island, on which was a number of Indians, where they landed and spent the night. Between that place and Mackanaw they landed on another small island, inhabited by Indians, with whom Isaac was left, until his Indian father and mother returned from Mackanaw.

On their return, Isaac was curious to know what they had seen, and the boys were no less anxious to tell him. By them, therefore, he learned that they had seen such vessels as induced him to believe they were ships; this increased his anxiety to go there; hence all his future conduct was directed in a channel which he intended should impress the Indians with a belief that he would rather stay with them than the white people.

Isaac's Indian father and family now started with him and their fresh supply of goods to return to Chicago. Nothing of importance transpired on the route. Sailing along the shore of lake Michigan they encamped every night as before, and at length arrived at the mouth of the Chicago river, where they had embarked for Mackanaw. Here, having raised their canoe on forks, and so secured it, they removed from place to place, principally up the river, trading with the Indians, and making a living by fishing, they steered their course for the old hunting ground on the Illinois river. The fatigue of travelling was not so great as formerly, in some sense, as Isaac's father had along with him too large a pack to take all at once. They would take one load, some ten or twelve miles, and, having but one horse, would return for another, and so in a few days, move all. They were seldom in a hurry; being always at home, having even their mats with them to repair their tents.

By the time the weather became cool they reached their hunting ground, and had considerable success in killing deer, raccoons, &c. &c. Isaac, in company with an Indian, was sent by his Indian mother some distance to an Indian hutt, for the purpose of getting what was due her for merchandize; but the debtor, intending to remove near to Isaac's Indian father, they got nothing,

and returned that night to their own camp. Isaac is of opinion that he travelled farther than he has ever done on horse back in the same length of time.

Some time after this, two Indians came to Isaac's Indian mother with packs of skins to pay their debts, and after settling their accounts, they purchased some more goods, and rum enough to make them both drunk. Now they were for battle, and attempted to kill Isaac's Indian father, who was also drunk. Acquainted with their custom, Isaac and his mother had concealed their knives and tomahawks as soon as they commenced drinking, but had neglected one gun. When he became enraged, he felt for his knife, then for his tomahawk, and, finding neither, he sprang to the gun, and making his way to Isaac's Indian father, who was too drunk to help himself, Isaac clenched him by both arms, and in the scuffle got hold of the breech of the gun, and presently took it from him, and threw it out at the door, where the snow was near a foot deep, and then, by the dexterity of Isaac and his Indian mother, they put the drunk Indians out, and kept them out until they became so cold that they were glad to be quiet and sit by the fire, until they both fell asleep and took a good nap. In the mean time, Isaac and his mother stole all the deer skins and fur skins they had left, and when they awoke and enquired for them, they told them "they had drank them up," and they then went off quietly.

After the river and lake became closed by ice, they returned to the Illinois river, near the little island in the lake where the small pox had been so fatal, and here turned their attention to killing muskrats; this business they followed for some time, and Isaac and his Indian father had the fortune to kill about 500 of them. These rats had become the more numerous in this lake, in consequence of the Indians that formerly lived there having either died with the small pox or moved away.

The manner in which they killed these muskrats was with bearded spears, somewhat similar to a gig; and the rats built their houses of grass principally, and they were elevated above the surface of the water. When the water froze, Isaac and his Indian father cut off their houses level with the ice--they would resort to them for fresh air and as they raised their heads, or even their noses in view, they threw their spears and killed them.

Toward spring, but while the snow was yet on the ground, they turned their course again for Chicago, spending the time in hunting and trading, until in good time for sugar making, they arrived at their old camp. Here again, they met a vast number of Indians, who had collected for the purpose of making sugar; and, introductory to the exercise, they danced three days and nights, around two large kettles of hominy, which were boiling over slow fires, during that time. This was a common custom with them, whenever many of them came together.

In this dance Isaac figured amongst them in no ordinary style, being richly ornamented by his Indian mother, and attracted the attention and admiration of many of the young squaws, with whom, as well as the elder ones, he had become quite popular. At the close of the dance, they ate the hominy in their usual manner, and went out quietly to work. This was no drunken dance, but was all conducted in good order.

Soon after this, Isaac and his Indian brother, hearing, in the night, the voice of an Indian whom they knew to be drunk in the woods, had curiosity to see him, but when they found him, though he was lying on the cold ground, and the snow falling on him, they were afraid to go near enough to assist him, until their Indian uncle came, who was a stouter man than either of them. Isaac then went along with him and assisted the drunk Indian, (who had all the time been singing his death song) and took him to the highest hut where they placed him by the fire, still singing his song in a lower and lower tone, until he fell over and fell into a deep sleep. Here he remained until morning; then awoke, stole something, and made his escape.

Before they left the sugar camp they had many drunken sprees, in some of which Isaac's life was greatly endangered, but by some means preserved.

The sugar season over, we again moved to Lake Michigan, near the mouth of the Chicago, where the Indians had much sport in their ball plays.

Isaac's Indian mother now sent him back to the sugar camp for some kettles that had been left; and, as he was about to leave the camp with his load, three young Indians, one larger and two smaller than himself, approached, dragging a fish; the largest one demanded his knife; Isaac refused to let him have it; and the Indian, drawing one from his belt, presented it at him, as if for battle; Isaac then drew his knife and advanced towards him, when he gave back, and they all walked off and left him. Isaac then started with his kettles on his back, and one of those little Indians shot an arrow at him, which was prevented from hurting him by the kettles he carried. He went on home, and they interrupted him no more.

Isaac's Indian father's rum was now nearly exhausted, and his mother frequently made him water it when they sold it to the Indians. Unwilling to let it all go at once, she and Isaac had emptied the last keg into a tin kettle, intending to shew the Indians the empty keg, and so convince them there was no more. This kettle they took out and concealed in a thicket not far from the wigwam, which happened to be discovered by some Indians, who took a small kettle to it, and stole some of the rum. When his mother discovered this, she suspected that Isaac had told them of it, and calling him to her, he ran to obey and do her will, when suddenly as he came up to her, she raised a club, which she held in her hand behind her, and striking him with it on the side of his head, brought him bawling to the ground. His cries roused his Indian rather, who was lying drunk in the wigwam. Coming out with his knife drawn, and finding what was done, he pursued his squaw, who ran with all speed, and would doubtless have killed her, if he had overtaken her.

Arrangements were now made for another trip to Mackanaw; and, having collected all the skins they could, they thought of taking Isaac along with them; but fearing that he would get away, they called in an old Prophet, in whom they placed great confidence, who went into what they call a sweat house, to pow wow, and inform them of such things as they wished to know, that would happen in future. Accordingly, Isaac went to work to prepare the sweat house, within the wigwam, covering it with skins and blankets, rolling in a large hot stone, on which the Prophet poured water, and leaving a place at the top for the steam to pass out. Into this house the old Prophet entered, pow-wowing and singing, while Isaac and his little brothers danced around it, waiting on the Prophet as he ordered, until the smaller boys, becoming sleepy, laid down and went to sleep. Some time elapsed, and the Prophet came out. Isaac immediately, as if worn out and overcome with sleep, threw himself down on some deer skins, and pretended to be asleep. The old Prophet took a seat near his Indian mother, and commenced speaking. She asked him many questions, and he answered them; but none of them so much interested Isaac until she wished to know if she would keep him if she took him all the way to Mackanaw. The Prophet, much to Isaac's gratification, told her she would, but she must be careful not to let him talk much to white people.

Now, full of glee and in fine spirits, they loaded their bark canoe and started. After many day's toil and sailing, they all arrived in safety at Mackanaw.

Here, unlading the canoe, and preparing to encamp under it, Isaac was conducted by his Indian mother, in company with her two eldest boys, to the house of the merchant for whom they traded. After showing Isaac to them, and suffering him to talk but little with them, the merchant's lady gave each of the boys a slice of bread well buttered, which Isaac received very gratefully and ate it, saying "it was very good." It was the first bread he had tasted since he last ate at his father's table!

Here Isaac was permitted to walk about in company with the Indian boys, but was generally accompanied by his Indian mother, and sometimes an uncle and aunt who had accompanied them to that place in a small bark canoe. In company with these, as they walked along the beach, seeing a ship lying at the wharf; and a man convenient to it, whom Isaac supposed was the Captain, their attention was mutually drawn to each other. The Captain perceiving that he was white, asked him where he was taken prisoner; he replied from the Red Banks, on the Ohio river, Isaac asked him, "are you the Captain of this vessel?" He said he was. "Where are you bound?" said Isaac. "Detroit," was the reply. "When will you start?" "In the morning." "Can I," said Isaac, "runaway from the Indians and get aboard of your vessel?" "Yes; but you must be careful how you come." Here Isaac was commanded to hush, and was taken away by his Indian friends. Towards evening, his Indian father being drunk, and some Indians being across an arm of the lake drinking and carousing, Isaac was called to convey him to them in the little bark canoe, belonging to his uncle. Having done this, he returned late in the evening, and landing near their camp, drew his little bark partly on the shore, and went to the camp contented as usual. Here he found an English soldier, who seemed to feel much solicitude about him, whom Isaac told he would rather live with the Indians than the white people. Fearing that such interviews with the white men would lead Isaac off, his Indian mother made him lie down by her, for she had gone to bed. The Englishman went away. Isaac, however, did not sleep, but waiting until he thought the rest were locked up in the quietness of a pleasant nap, he caught his blanket in his teeth, and softly stole from behind his mother, drawing his blanket after him. He got out, straightened himself, and listened, he could hear no stir, except the quiet music of the lake before him, which invited him to LIBERTY! He stepped softly to the little bark he had drawn to the shore, and seating himself in it, he moved as gently as possible around the picketing that enclosed the town and extended into the lake, and again turned to the shore. Giving his bark a push into the lake, he steered his course for the vessel on which he had learned he could make his escape. When he reached the vessel, the Captain was walking about on the deck, and, seeing Isaac approach, he met him and told him to follow him. They went together into the cabin. The Captain was much perplexed to know what to do with Isaac, so as to secure him, and screen himself from the censure of the Indians, with whom his greatest success in trade was carried on. At length, however, he told him, "I have a little negro boy in the kitchen, who will find you out, let me do with you what I may. If you will go to him and tell him your situation and your object, he can take care of you;--but don't tell him that I know anything about you." Isaac went into the kitchen and awoke the negro, but he appeared unwilling to have anything to do with him. Fearing that, between them, he would have to go back to the Indians, Isaac told the little negro that he master knew he was there, and had told him to come to him. "Then," said the negro, still lying in his bunk, "get in here." Isaac tumbled in with him, but not to sleep. His fate, as yet, was too uncertain. By the side of the sleepy-headed negro he laid and watched for the day to dawn. Seeing, as he did, the first appearance of light in the morning, with much difficulty, he awoke the little negro, and told him, "You must do something with me--this is no place for me." The negro arose, unlocked the lower part of the cupboard, and told Isaac to get in there. He did so; and the boy locked him up and left him.

He had been there but a short time, until he heard the voice of his Indian mother and brother, as they came down the hatchway, in pursuit of him. Presently the Captain sprang out of his bed and began to rail out at the Indians for disturbing him in that way before he was out of his bed. The Indians being easily cowed by a white man of some character, and especially an officer, Isaac's Indian mother soon left the vessel.

Fortunately for this Captain, as well as for Isaac, a barge which had lain at the wharf, started that same night about midnight, for Montreal, which circumstance afforded the Captain an opportunity of making the Indians believe that Isaac had gone on board of it, and to convince them that he was innocent and knew nothing about him, he remained there until eight o'clock in the morning.

Eight o'clock in the morning, the wind being fair, the sails of the Nancy were hoisted, Captain Mills commanding, Isaac started for the Land of Freedom! After they had sailed some short distance, perhaps a few leagues, the little negro brought Isaac from his concealment. He was resting in the negro's bunk, and the Captain came down into the cabin, where the following dialogue passed between him and his negro; the negro boy leaning on the table, as was his manner when he wanted anything of the Captain:

"What do you want?" said the Captain.

"I have an Indian prisoner here," said the negro.

"Aye," said the Captain, "how large is he?"

"A little larger than I am."

"Do you think you can keep him concealed?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," said the Captain, "go about your business."

The little negro went again on deck. The Captain then came into the room where Isaac was lying in the negro's bunk, and asked if he was sick? He replied "No; he had, not long before that, been sick in a bark canoe." He then left him, and Isaac kept close to the negro's room until, in about five days, the vessel came safe to port at Detroit.

The business of Captain Mills required him to leave the vessel before he went ashore; therefore he came into the room where Isaac was, and told him to remain there concealed, until he should return, and suffer no one to see him. The Captain did not return until about nine o'clock that night. When he returned, (the town being enclosed by pickets and gates, and the American Army being stationed there, under the command of Col. Hamtramick, the whole town was guarded by sentinels,) he told Isaac to go from the vessel a little to the left of the gate fronting the wharf, where there was a picket down, that a man might pass through. "There," said he, "you will find a sentinel, who will hail you, when you must tell him, 'a friend;' that you have run away from the Indians, and want him to protect you; but do not tell him nor any one else, who brought you here, or how you came, until you get to the commanding officer; then tell the whole truth."

Accordingly, Isaac bade Captain Mills adieu, and gave him his hearty thanks for his kindness and protection. He started, and soon found himself at the gate, and passing the pickets, the sentinel, a raw Irishman, cried, "who goes there?" "A friend," said Isaac, and added in a hurry, "I am running away from the Indians, and want you to protect me." "Oh! be Jasas, my good fellow, come here" said he, "and dam the one of them shall hurt you." With this sentinel Isaac waited patiently for some minutes, when the relief guard came round. The sentinel then informed the sergeant that he had a prisoner. Isaac being delivered to the guard, was taken to the guard house, where the curiosity of the soldiers kept him up all night, giving a history of his sufferings with the Indians, and answering questions respecting the country, rivers, &c. &c., much of which information he made as he went. This he did in accordance with the instructions given him by Captain Mills.

Next morning Isaac was conducted by the sergeant of the guard to the commanding officer, Col. Hamtramick, and here he heard that this was the Sabbath day. This was the first day of the week that Isaac recognized for more than two years! This morning he told the Colonel his story

from beginning to end; how he came there, and who brought him. On learning who he was, and where he was taken, the Colonel remembered to have heard of the circumstance, and ordered that he should draw rations as a soldier, until he met with an opportunity to get home.

It may be proper to state to the reader, that the object of Captain Mills, in charging Isaac to pursue the course he did, in concealing the truth from the soldiers, and relating the whole truth to the Colonel, or commanding officer, was, to prevent the Indians from finding out that he had been active in bringing him away.

This day a tavern keeper, living in Detroit, by the name of John Dolson, hearing that such a boy was in the place, sent a servant for him, inviting him to his house. Isaac accepted the invitation, and had the pleasure of dining in his house that day. With this gentleman Isaac remained some four or five weeks, attending to his stock and waiting on him in many things, being treated by him and his family with so much kindness as to bring him under great obligations to them.

About this time Isaac learned that a Captain and a company of soldiers were about to start to Fort Maumee, and having obtained permission of the Captain to accompany them, Isaac made ready, and early next morning, bidding his kind host adieu, and drawing rations in common with the soldiers, he went on board the boat, and sailed for Fort Maumee, which they made, having a favorable wind, in one day.

Spending a few days at this place, some wagons came to the Fort, bringing goods and presents for the Indians, to Wayne's treaty, and as these wagons were said to be returning to Cincinnati, Isaac asked permission of the wagon master to go with them, stating to him his situation; he gave consent, and drew rations for him accordingly. With these wagons he travelled about fifteen days, and they stopped at Greenville, in the State of Ohio.

Here he remained some three or four days, watching an opportunity to get home. It so happened that two men had gone there with three horses, loaded or packed with peach brandy, which they had sold out, and were now ready to return to Columbia, six or eight miles above Cincinnati. On their led horse Isaac had the good fortune to ride to that place, drawing rations still at every garrison that he passed on the way.

Here he staid some ten days or two weeks, and spent the time very agreeably with the young people, especially some handsome girls he found there.

A gentleman and lady passed, and riding towards Cincinnati, having a led horse, stopped at the fence; the family went out to speak with them, and Isaac asked if he might ride the loose horse to town; they told him he might; he hurried to get his blanket; bade his friends farewell, girls and all, and rode off to town.

All this time Isaac still wore his Indian dress. At Cincinnati he presented himself to the officer commanding, and was told that he could draw provisions until he met with an opportunity to go on. Perfectly composed, he laid down to sleep, but was presently aroused and informed by the soldiers that a man by the name of David Pea, who had carried an express from Vincennes, on the Wabash river, to the army at Detroit, and was then returning, as hunting for him. Isaac went immediately in pursuit of Mr. Pea; and, finding him, they drew provisions, and in a skiff, started for Louisville.

At Detroit, a gentleman to whom Isaac had related his story, gave him twenty-five cents, which he had carefully preserved. They had not gone far down the river until Mr. Pea, desiring to have some butter, landed near a farm where he thought it could be had, and sent Isaac to the house for it. He went with all speed, and found an old Irish lady who had just churned a fine portion of it; informing her what he wanted, and having nothing in which to carry it, the lady told him to get a cabbage leaf, and handing her his money, he hastened to do as she directed. When he returned,

he told her hastily who he was, and what was his purpose. "Ah, dear child, if that's the way of it, take your butter and your money too," and gave his money back to him. A young lady who had been listening to the conversation, came out soon and presented Isaac with a loaf of bread. He thanked them and bade farewell, still talking to them as long as he could hear them--making his way back to the skiff, he had not more than reached the place where he left Mr. Pea, until a negro boy came running, bringing them half a bushel of sweet potatoes.

They continued down the river until they got within a few miles of Louisville, where Isaac was sent again to a house to buy butter. He was informed that the lady had none; here again, he suggested that he had been a prisoner with the Indians, and was then trying to get home. On learning this the good woman took his cup and filled it with butter, and, in tears inquired if he knew any thing of her son, who had also been taken by the savages, giving a description of him. Isaac remembered to have heard some of the Indians say that there was such a boy, some distance beyond Mackanaw, and gave her that information; she seemed gratified to learn that it was probable at least, her son was yet alive. She followed him to the bank of the river, bathed in tears, and still talking as long as he could hear her.

Early next morning they landed at the Fort just opposite to Louisville. Isaac reported himself as usual, and was provided for.

The same day Isaac, getting the lone of the canoe, went across to Louisville, and spent the day in seeking an opportunity to go on. In the evening he met a man who told him that he and another man would start the next morning from the lower landing, and if he would come to them that night, he could go with them. Isaac hurried back to the Fort, and with some difficulty, drew provisions for the route, and with greater difficulty, procured a canoe in which to cross the river again. He succeeded, however, and bearing a heavy pack of beef and flour from the mouth of Beargrass down to the landing above named, a little after dark he reached the canoe, in which, after waiting a few days, he again descended the river.

After running some days, they landed at the mouth of Harden creek. Here Isaac met with a young married woman, with whom he had gone to school before he was taken by the Indians. They recognized each other, and she informed him that his father and friends had removed from the Red Banks, to what was then, and is now called, Knight's Falls, on Green river. He was here advised to land at the Yellow Banks, which he did.

Now we find the weary, anxious little prisoner within thirty miles of his father's dwelling. From this place, he started alone and afoot along a path some twelve miles in length, to the house of an old acquaintance, Mr. Martin Vernado, with whom he had seen often forted at Vienna, when but a child. As he approached the gate, he was perceived by the old man, who had not yet recognized him. He entered the yard, where all were engaged swingling flax. The eyes of the old lady were no sooner fixed upon him, than she came, in an ecstasy of joy, exclaiming. "Oh Isaac! Isaac! Isaac!" The poor boy, overwhelmed with joy at meeting with those he knew and loved, could not but be affected by the scene, while all the family shared in the joys of the occasion.

His anxiety was unspeakable to reach his own dear home, but this kind family were unwilling that he should leave them until next morning; he therefore spent the night with them, and rested but little, being all the time employed in giving a history of his sufferings, hard usage, &c.

Next morning the kindness of Mr. Vernado and one of his sons impelled them to accompany Isaac in a canoe, down Green river, to his father's house. When they landed, the old gentleman advised the boys to remain at the canoe until he could reach the house, and then to come suddenly upon them.

Isaac's father sat in the door, conversing with Mr. Vernado, who asked him if he would not shout for joy, as he had brought his daughters to see him. Just at this instant, Isaac ascended the top of the bank in full view of the door of his father's house which stood some fifty or sixty yards off. The moment the disquieted old man saw his son, he recognized him, and exclaimed: "Yonder is Isaac!" and ran to meet him. At this moment his mother and the family all started to welcome the return of the long lost boy. Overcome with joy, till pale as death, with feelings wrought as high as nature could well bear, the anxious mother came wringing her hands, and exclaiming: "Is it possible it is him! is it possible it is him!" and falling upon his neck, she wept over him and kissed him; evincing feelings of joy and gratitude which no human tongue can describe, and none but a mother's heart can feel. Their joy was still further expressed by firing three guns, to inform the neighbors that something joyful had taken place.

Now, Isaac must eat again in his father's house, and his own fond mother had the pleasure of preparing the repast. Meanwhile one of his brothers had hurried to a neighbor's house, where Isaac's connexions were nearly all collected at a quilting and corn-shucking. When he entered the house they were all seated for dinner. He gave the information, and the dinner was left untouched. All hands started to meet Isaac; men, women and children. His swift-footed associates, whom he had left at home, leading the way. By this time Isaac and his father's family, not knowing that the younger brother had carried the news with so much speed, started to the place above named, where the neighbors were collected. Presently they all met the little Indian prisoner, and with joys unutterable, welcomed him again to their social enjoyments, in the dear loved land of his early boyhood.

Remembering his weight about the time he was taken, Isaac and his friends had curiosity to know how much he had gained during his absence; and upon weighing him with the same steelyards on which he drew down 82 lbs. when he left, he now weighed 84 lbs.; gaining in two years and a half, but two pounds. This is mentioned to satisfy the reader that his hard usage, scanty living, and arduous labors while with the Indians, was such as to prevented him from growing much if any.

Isaac was about two years and six months with the Indians, and having had previously but little schooling, his education was limited, and advantages of that kind were seldom enjoyed at the early period in the settlement of that part of Kentucky. He now spent about a year with his father, and labored on the farm, until he began to think of arranging business for himself in future life.

After Isaac's arrival at home, having learned that his fellow-prisoners, George Sprinkle and John Upp, had returned some three months before him, he went to see them, and happy to review the trials, hardships and sufferings they had undergone. These boys are yet all living--George Sprinkle in Illinois, John Upp in Kentucky, and Isaac Knight in Vanderburg county, in the State of Indiana. – Now, however, they are all old men; and the Author of this Narrative wishes now to conclude it by giving a relation of his experimental acquaintance with religion.

Residing in the vicinity of the Red Banks, Isaac Knight enjoyed the ministerial labors of the Rev. James McGready, through whom instrumentality he first became awakened. Feeling himself to be a sinner against God. He seldom heard a sermon which did not make some lasting impression upon his mind. Finding no peace for his conscience which he lived in sin, and fearing the final consequences of it, he commenced an humble, penitent prayer for mercy – in the course of his pursuit, oppressed with conscious guilt, his fears were frequently great beyond measure, that God had forgotten to be gracious, and mercy was clean gone forever. The sins of his whole life laid heavy upon him; especially was the remembrance of his guilt in killing the little Indian child (of which an account is given in this Narrative) a source of much uneasiness and great alarm.

Having, however, nothing to plead but mercy, he begged for that with humble importunity; and now he gratefully remembers that, when at prayer by a stump in the corn field, his burden of guilt was removed; he found joy and peace in believing and ventured humbly to claim God, as his God, reconciled through Christ; through whom then, as now, he hopes sooner or later, to share in the blissful blessedness of Heaven.



McLean County News, Calhoun, KY, Thursday, 15 May 1997, pp.3A-4A:

Remembrance of Ft. Vienna

By Ken Ward, Historian

There are only scattered facts and stories about the pioneer days of Ft. Vienna, Calhoun's predecessor. What are available do not always connect. Yet these shards of information help shed light on that gray period of the past.

In his old age Isaac Knight wrote his "Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Isaac Knight." Knight's story was reprinted in "The History of Henderson County, Kentucky" (Frieda J. Dannheiser and Donald L. Hazelwood, eds., 1978, pp. 686-701).

Knight's narrative mainly concerns his life following capture by Indians, across the Ohio from Henderson. However, before his family moved to Henderson, they made a stop at Vienna, now Calhoun.

The son of John and Ann (Rolison) Knight, Isaac was the eldest of seven sons. He wrote that the "record of his age being lost" he did not know "the exact time of his birth." When Isaac was a child, his father "removed by water" from Pennsylvania, with his father-law-law, Lawrence Rolison, and Norod Franceway, "who had married in the same family." They settled "at or near the place, now known by the name of Vienna, on Green River." Here, "with much difficulty, they lived some years."

They ground corn on hand-mills or pounded it in a mortar. At one time the scarcity of "bread stuff" was such that John Knight bought corn at the mouth of Green River, at \$1.25 per bushel, and brought it to his family at Vienna in a "perogue or canoe."

The corn bought by Knight fed the family while they attempted to make a crop. "Their strength being small, their crops were not large," Isaac remembered, "and the wild beast of the forest, together with the vermin, well nigh destroyed all the production of the first year's labor." This left them in "as destitute a situation as ever."

Their small crop forced them to rely on hunting for food. The meat was eaten "without bread" for some eight months.

Indians remained a threat. In fact, Isaac concluded that "Indians were frequently seen more intent in their chase after the white man, than the latter after his game."

The whites "were impelled to build and resort to forts in as large bodies as their thinly settled population would permit." They would rotate working in each man's field, with one or more standing guard.

"During the season in which corn was making," Isaac recalled, "they remained in their forts; but returned to their lonesome and dangerous retreats" the rest of the year. "Seldom would anything short of abundant sign of Indian hostilities, drive them in the spring of the year, from their homely huts."

One incident stuck in Isaac's memory. When a boy, he wrote, he "heard the report of a gun, which killed dead, one of the finest men in the settlement," who lived within a few steps of John Knight. "Mr. Downs, who was thus shot by the Indians, left a wife and seven children to lament . his untimely death."

The Mr. Downs remembered by Isaac was William Downs, reportedly the last man killed by Indians at Vienna. His death is given, usually, as about 1792. One source gives the date as "about 1790."

According to Harrison D. Taylor, who gave no date, the cows, let out during the day to feed, failed to return one night. The next morning they still failed to come in, although their bells could be heard.

Stephen Rowan, eldest brother of John Rowan, future builder of "My Old Kentucky Home", volunteered to hunt them. He found the cows in a narrow ravine. Luckily, before entering the ravine, Stephen spotted at least two Indians waiting in ambush. He charged back to the fort.

William Downs met Stephen at the gate and, "in an imperious manner," demanded to know where the cows were. Stephen shouted "Indians! Indians!" Downs then made "some contemptuous remark" and said he would go get the cows himself.

Stephen and others tried to stop Downs but failed. While the settlers listened to Stephen's report and hurried to get their guns, they heard gunshots.

The whites found Downs, killed, scalped and "most savagely mutilated." They found the trail of a few Indians and followed it as far as the Ohio River.

Rather than seven children, as reported by Isaac, most sources report only two sons, William and Thomas, both of whom became noted Baptist preachers (see NEWS, Jan. 14, 21, 1993).

In support of Isaac's remarks about the need to hunt for food, and the dangers, in August 1790 three men from Vienna, William Faith, Martin Vanada and John McElmurray (or McIlmurry or Macklemurry) were hunting meat to supply the fort. Indians ambushed them at the mouth of Green River. McElmurray was killed; Faith was wounded but escaped by swimming Green River; Vanada was captured but also escaped.

About the time of Downs' killing, to continue Isaac's story, the country around Red Banks (now Henderson) was being "spoken of as a most desirable location." Isaac's father, "with the rest of the connexion," moved there.

The settlers' goods were moved by water but their stock had to be driven. Isaac, guessing his age at nine or 10, worked as one of the drovers. Along the way, their dogs chased a bear through the herd. They also came upon some buffalo and killed one, which turned out to be a buffalo cow with a calf. They adopted the calf and brought it along with their herd.

The former Vienna settlers all arrived safely at Red Banks, but their luck here was no better. "(E)ven greater difficulties were undergone by settlers (here), that had been endured by them at Vienna," Knight wrote.

Isaac's main chore was to care for the family's cattle. This included getting cane for fodder. He and four other boys crossed the Ohio to cut cane, as they frequently did. Eight Indians ambushed them, killing two boys and capturing the others. After a lengthy period of captivity, Isaac escaped on the Great Lakes and made his way home by way of Cincinnati.

In speaking of the Vienna days, Isaac wrote: "Indeed, the difficulties under which the first settlers of that part of Kentucky labored, were almost insupportable."



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 27 July 2000, p.1B:

1839 pamphlet tells of area life

By Keith Lawrence, Messenger-Inquirer

On April 8, 1793, Isaac Knight, who was 9 or 10 at the time, paddled his canoe across the Ohio River from Henderson with four friends to cut cane.

While they played on the bank, the boys were ambushed by eight Indians – six Pottawatomies and two Kickapoos. Two of the boys were killed and scalped. The other three, including Knight, were taken prisoner.

Sam Adams, a former Messenger-Inquirer assistant city editor, found the text of an 1839 pamphlet about Knight's captivity among the Indians on the Internet and passed it along.

It's a fascinating account of life on the Kentucky-Indiana frontier, and it raises more questions about when the first settlement began in Owensboro.

If you like history, check it out at www.cumberland.org/hfcpc/minister/KnightI.htm.

John and Ann Rolison Knight moved their family by river from Pennsylvania to Calhoun – then Fort Vienna – in the 1780s. Isaac, the eldest of seven sons, writes of the hardships of life on the Green River in those years, including going without bread for eight months because wild animals destroyed the crops.

And he writes about the death of a Mr. Downs, shot and scalped by Indians on the edge of the settlement in 1792.

Soon after, the Knights moved with several other families to Red Banks - Henderson. There was only one house, Knight writes. Everyone else lived in camps.

Knight helped drive the cattle through the forest from Calhoun to Henderson. Along the way, the dogs treed a "huge bear" and discovered a buffalo herd.

Henderson seems to have been filled with cutthroats and river pirates – "Kuykendall, Ayers, Ashley, Howard, Cane and the Masons - who seemed to delight more in bloodshed and murder than in anything else."

They also had to contend with smallpox. And Knight came down with it just before he was taken prisoner by the Indians. He writes of how sick he became and how he spread the disease through the tribes of Illinois.

During his 21/2 years as a prisoner, Knight watched the meat from the scalps of his friends eaten over a campfire, killed an Indian baby that he was charged with caring for and was adopted into the Towa tribe along the Spoon River.

His hair, he says, was "pulled out, as was the custom of that nation, except the scalp, and a hole made through his nose."

Finally, on Lake Michigan, Knight managed to escape and make his way to Detroit on a trading boat.

From there, he slowly made his way with various travelers to Cincinnati. There, he caught a ride in a skiff to Louisville, where he met another man heading down river and caught another ride.

It was September 1795.

Along the way, they stopped at a cabin where Knight met a woman he had known in Henderson. She told him his family had moved to Knights Falls on the Green River.

The pamphlet says, "He was here advised to land at the Yellow Banks, which he did."

The area where Owensboro is now was known as Yellow Banks to the early river travelers because of the color of the soil. The first settlement took the same name.

Did Knight land at a settlement or a geographical landmark?

His memoirs don't tell.

They just say he hiked across Daviess County for 12 miles to the home of Martin Vernado, who took Knight to find his family.

It's fascinating reading. But with all the description in the story, it's a shame he couldn't have said more about Yellow Banks.



Vanderburgh County, IN 1820 Federal Census, p.310:

Isaac Knight	1 male	0-10	2 females	0-10
	1 male	10-16	2 females	10-16
	1 male	26-45	1 female	26-45



Vanderburgh County, IN 1830 Federal Census, p.206:

Isaac Knight	1 male	0-5	2 females	0-5
	1 male	5-10	1 female	5-10
	1 male	15-20	1 female	10-15
	1 male	50-60	1 female	30-40



Vanderburgh County, IN 1840 Federal Census, p.365B:

Isaac Knight	1 male	5-10	2 females	15-20
	1 male	10-15	1 female	20-30
	1 male	15-20	1 female	40-50
	1 male	30-40		
	1 male	60-70		



Vanderburgh County, IN 1850 Federal Census, Knight Township, p.353:

Isaac Knight	70	m	farmer	real estate \$2,000	born Pennsylvania
Almira “	57	f			born Con..
Elizabeth “	22	f			born Indiana
Achippus “	19	m	farmer		born Indiana

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Evansville Daily Journal, Evansville, IN, Saturday, 18 October 1856, p.2:

DIED:

At his residence in Knight township. on the 15th instant, Mr. ISAAC KNIGHT, aged 77 years. His funeral will take place this morning at 10 o'clock his residence.

Mr. Knight was one of the oldest citizens of this county. He has killed buffalo within what is now corporation of Evansville. He was taken prisoner by the Indians when a boy, just opposite Henderson, and remained with his captors two years. His history was an eventful one, and connected as it was with early life in the West, and particularly in this neighborhood, made him a subject of particular interest at home.

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Grave of Isaac Knight in Rose Hill Cemetery,
Newburgh, Warrick County, IN.

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Courier & Press, Evansville, IN, 20 February 2000, pp.1A & 16A:

Old Cemeteries often disappear

By Herb Marynell, Courier & Press staff writer

..... Isaac Knight, who was captured by Indians at the age of 13 but managed to escape shortly thereafter, brought his family to the Evansville area in 1815.

He settled about four miles east of Evansville at today's Green River Road in what was known as the Hebron community.

Knight Township is named after Isaac Knight, who was one of the area's leading citizens. When he died in 1856, he was buried in Hebron Cemetery, located at the northeast corner of Lincoln Avenue and Green River Road.

One of the first burials in the Hebron Cemetery was in 1813, according to the book "Green River Road: From Cornfields to Concrete." The last burial at the cemetery was in 1885.

In 1923, the city said the cemetery hindered the growth of Evansville, and had become a menace to public safety by obstructing the view from Green River Road and Lincoln, which was being resurfaced with asphalt nearly to the intersection.

The cemetery at that time still was two miles from the city limits.

The decision was made to move the bodies from Knight Cemetery to other cemeteries.

Some bodies were relocated to James Cemetery, located along Green River Road south of the levee, and Oak Hill Cemetery. The body of Knight had been moved to Rose Hill Cemetery in Warrick County.



A historic stone marker in front of Snodgrass Floral Co. on Lincoln Avenue, just east of Green River Road in Evansville, Indiana marks the original family property and gravesite of Isaac Knight.



Oil painting depicting the capture of Isaac Knight in 1793 is in the collection of the Evansville Museum of Arts, History and Science. The painting was done by Nelson D. Wilson, of Evansville, IN, in 1915.

