

The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming!

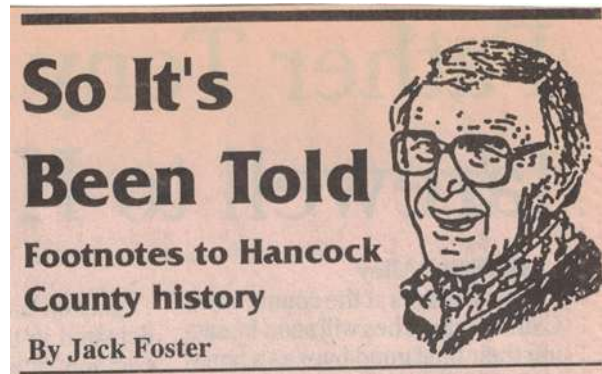
By Oswald G. Jett



The following series of five articles entitled – “The Indians are coming! The Indians are coming!”, by Oswald G. Jett (1917-2003) was published in the “So It’s Been Told... Footnotes to Hancock County History” column by Jack Foster in the Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, on 18 November 1993, p2, 16 December 1993, p2, 30 December 1993, p2, 6 January 1994, p2, & 13 January 1994, p2.



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 18 November 1993, p2:



**The Indians are coming!
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Oswald Jett, Lexington, is one of Hancock County's best and most prolific writer of local history. Several years ago he was approached about doing a series of guest columns about Indians in this area and Kentucky generally. Very little is written about Indians in this county. Rose Pell Henderson has a few "passed on" stories repeated in her family for many years about Indians.

Some say Old Fortification Creek (now Yellow Creek) was so named for a fort built to repel early Indian attacks. Here is the first of Mr. Jett's columns. Others will follow from time to time.

Indians, Their Philosophy and View or the Settlers

Before the American Revolution, and for many years afterward, the Indian situation greatly influenced the settlement of Kentucky. Although the tribes, both north and south of "The Dark and Bloody Ground" (destined to become the huge wilderness county of Virginia called Kentucky), preferred to use the fabulous hunting regions just for that, they adamantly opposed the encroachment of the white men, whether for hunting or settling. Tribes even fought among themselves for hunting rights, and everywhere their friction handicapped them in standing against the invaders.

Pride, bravery, and love of warfare caused them, in general, to overlook the importance of standing unified against the settlers, until much too late under the leadership of their greatest warrior, a man they named Tecumseh.

Tecumseh epitomized everything admirable about his race. Born in 1768, the son of war chief Pucksinwah, he was a remarkable Indian – a ferocious and fearless warrior on the one hand and a sensitive and conscientious individual on the other. Extremely strong and agile, he was also intelligent and possessed an inquiring mind. He grew to understand the creed of white men in wanting to own their own land, but he vehemently opposed negotiating with the settlers and determined to resist to the bitter end. He spent his life killing them, but was unique among Indians in standing against cruelty.

Beginning in his early years, he often wondered to himself and others why the Indian god, Moneto, allowed the white settlers to push the Indians back and steal their rightful land. In the back of his mind he suspected that Moneto disapproved of the Shawnee tradition of torturing their prisoners and burning them at the stake. He was determined to use his influence to cease this cruel practice as soon as he earned the authority.

He participated in war parties by the age of 9, several years younger than most youths, and was the equal of any warrior by the age of 17. In the early years of the 19th century he traveled extensively in the north, west, and south trying to organize every tribe in a combined resistance to the settlers. Strangely, to his Indian friends, he refused to fight in squabbles between tribes, but was always eager to lead or join in battles against settlers.

He always refused to participate in the torture of prisoners, and as a war chief demanded the custom cease in his tribe; calling the cruel treatment of captives the acts of cowards. To the Indian mind this was a strong reprimand. He gradually shamed them into agreement, but in his absence the torturing sometimes continued. This attitude was a rub off on their white enemies.

Indians of all tribes considered it their right to scalp enemies, and usually killed women and children along with the men. The captives they allowed to survive were made to run the gauntlet at the approach to any Indian village. In this procedure a prisoner was forced to run through a double line, sometimes as long as a hundred yards in length, composed of men, women, and children poised to strike at the naked captive with briar branches, clubs, switches, strips of rawhide, knives, or tomahawks.

If the prisoner failed to reach the end of the line he was doomed to a horrible death by slowly being tortured with whipping, slashings, and fire brands, before being roasted alive at the stake. Even the women and children participated in this activity.

However, if the prisoner survived the gauntlet, sometimes more than one, he proved his mettle to the braves and was sometimes adopted into the tribe, especially if he had some knowledge

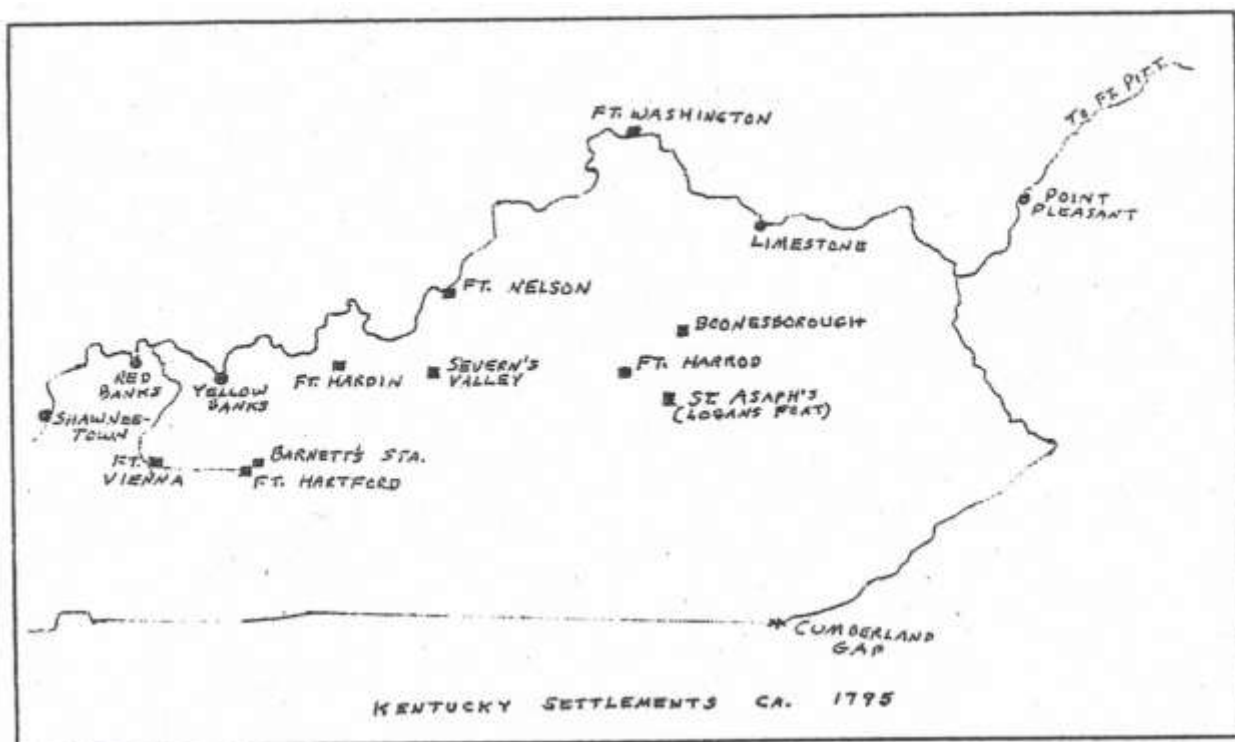
of the Indian language along with the traits of strength, endurance, and bravery. It was not unusual for a prisoner to qualify, and Indians always had s need to replace sons or husbands lost in battle.

Although the Indians looked with scorn upon the fighting quality of settlers in general, there were several Indian fighters who earned their respect, and even fear. Among them were Daniel Boone, Samuel Brady, Simon Kenton, Lewis Wetzel, Wm. Bailey Smith, Bill Hardin, and Bill Smothers, mostly tall, burly men who could run like a deer. Boone was only about five feet, nine inches, but was deadly with a rifle, and was as at home in the wilderness as any Indian.

It is natural to assume that the settlers, armed with rifles, held a distinct advantage over the Indians, with their bows and arrows, but the arrows were deadly accurate, and Indians could release several while a gun was being reloaded. Anyway, the Indians were soon bearing flintlocks traded to them by devious traders.

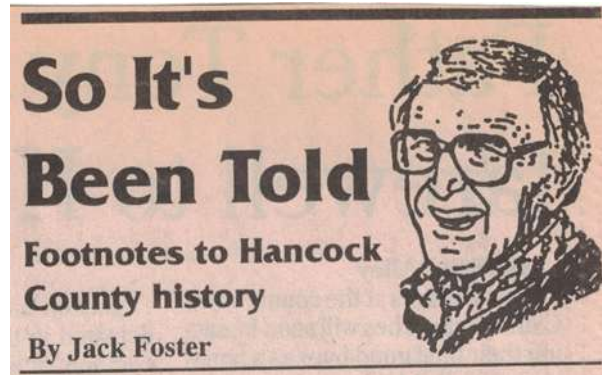
As far as is known, no Indian ever managed the art of reloading a gun while in full flight, as could Boone, Brady, and Wetzel, whom they called Death Wind. And none could run faster than Wetzel, Boone, and Kenton. Wetzel and Smothers picked up lifelong hatred of all Indians after their parents were massacred. Smothers was said to cross the Ohio River regularly from his trading post at Yellow Banks (the site of future Owensboro) just to add another Indian to his collection."

(Mr. Jett's Indian columns will appear from time to time.)



A map of Kentucky settlements and forts about the time Kentucky became the 15th state. Oswald Jett, who begins a series on Indians in the Commonwealth, believes the map will be helpful as his columns unfold.





The Indians are coming – Chapter two

The following will be the second installment of Oswald Jett's stories of Indians in this area. If anyone has a suggestion or questions about this series, direct them to the address at the bottom of this column, and they will be forwarded to Mr. Jett.

Settlement of Western Kentucky

The Revolution was almost over before settlements reached present Breckinridge and Ohio Counties, at that time included in Jefferson Co., which stretched west to the mouth of Green River. From all accounts, the first settlement to the west of Severn's Valley (future Elizabethtown) was Vance's Station, established on Brushy Creek in 1780, 15 miles from the mouth of Green River. In 1782, a party of settlers moved up Rough Creek from Green River to build Fort Hartford on a cliff bordering the south side of the creek.

Soon afterward, a party of Pennsylvanians from Westmoreland County floated on rafts down the Ohio to the mouth of Green River. It is recorded that this group, led by Henry and David Rhoads, stayed at Fort Hartford while building Rhoads Fort near the mouth of Rough Creek.

At the Battle of Yorktown in October, 1781, the final battle of the Revolution, two brothers are said to have met and discussed settling in fabulous Kentucky after the end of the war. Col. Joseph Barnett, born in Pennsylvania, had served in the northern wing of the American army. Col. Alexander Barnett, born in Amherst Co., VA, served under Gen. Nathanael Green in the South. As it turned out, Joseph was the first to move westward, and after stopping for a while near the settlement of Severn's Valley, led a group of settlers past the site of Fort Hardin and across the southern end of future Hancock County to establish Barnett's Station, two miles NE of Fort Hartford, in the early spring of 1783. Alexander's family arrived in 1788.

According to historian Hugh Potter, Barnett's Station was first called Smothers' Station, indicating that the wild and woolly pioneer named Bill Smothers had started the fort and Barnett finished it. Anyway, Smothers was an early arrival who spent time in the forts of Hartford, Barnett's Station, and Vienna before riding down a buffalo trace to the Ohio River around 1797 to build the first cabin at the future site of Owensboro, near the end of Frederica Street.

In the early spring of 1784 Cot. William Rowan, an Irish-born veteran of the Revolution, led a party of six families out of Pittsburgh on two flatboats, one for the animals, and they arrived at Fort Nelson, at the mouth of Beargrass Creek near the Falls of the Ohio in March. In late April they continued on their westward journey down the Ohio River, apparently without incident until

they approached the mouth of Green River on a dark night. At this point the blackness of the northern river bank became brightly lit by the campfires of a party of celebrating Indians.

Despite the settlers' efforts to float silently into Green River, Indian sentries heard their paddling and sent an investigating group toward them in canoes. Fortunately, the darkness prevented the Indians from determining the size of the flatboat party, and they were intelligent enough to realize they were silhouetted in the glare of the campfires. So they were content to terrify the women and children with loud war whoops as they trailed the settlers for some distance up Green River.

The Rowan party disembarked at the Long Falls of Green River on May 11, 1784, and proceeded to rebuild and strengthen Rhoads Fort. They named it Fort Vienna (future Calhoun). This strong fort discouraged the Indians from using the nearby ford to send war parties against Fort Hartford and Barnett's Station.

The facts are clouded on the first settling of what is now Breckinridge County. According to an article in the Breckinridge County News of July 4, 1976, Fort Hardin was finished on April 20, 1780. This statement is disputed by Jack Hardin in his history of the Hardin family (1881). In his account he stated that Capt. William Hardin, with a dozen other families, moved on flatboats from Fort Pitt and landed at the Falls of the Ohio in early 1780.

Evidently they were still there (at Fort Nelson) in March, 1781 when the fort was attacked by Indians. Hardin led a group to chase the Indians down river, and crossed the river at the site of future Cloverport. The party then explored the Hardinsburg area, and Hardin was so pleased with a spot near a spring that he decided to settle there as soon as possible.

Mrs. Howard Baker reported in her history of the Nelson Jolly family (1983) that Capt. Bill Hardin established his fort at present Hardinsburg in 1785. Historians agree that his party came by flatboats from Fort Nelson and landed at the mouth of Sinking Creek to move inland and southward to build Fort Hardin.

There was precious little settlement before 1800 in the area that is now Hancock and Daviess Counties, so it follows that there was no major encounter between settlers and Indians. Early settler John H. McFarland stated that by 1805 there were less than a dozen families in future Davies County. Considering the isolation of the squatters' cabins in the wilderness of trees and canebrakes, he probably underestimated, but not by much.

More than likely, by that time there were residents such as Bill, James, Jacob and John Smothers, Valentine (Felt) Husk, Benjamin Field, Reuben Field, Adam Shoemaker, David Glenn, John McFarland, Joseph Adams, John Leman, and John and William Galloway. By 1780 a hunter named Joe Blackford had built a cabin near the mouth of what was then called Muddy Creek in present Hancock County. After he was killed by Indians, the creek was named for him.

Before 1800 Welsh surveyor John Lewis settled on old Fortification Creek by neighbor James Bradly. This was present Yellow Creek, lying to the east of Little Yellow Banks, present Lewisport.

There is evidence that Indian hunting parties spent time in present Hancock County. When I was a lad in the 1930s, I collected a shoebox full of flint arrowheads and stone artifacts, mostly from our 50-acre farm near Pellville. It was amazing that so many relics were left for me to find at such a late date. Moreover, considering the obvious fact that Indians spent long hours chipping out the items, why did they not collect the released arrows and artifacts themselves?

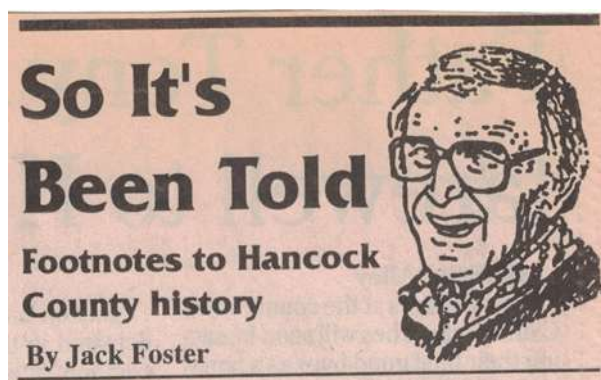
Evidence of an ancient Indian campground is a corn hole bored 18 inches deep and 10 inches in diameter into a large stone at the site of Old Victoria. Some 16 miles to the northeast,

near old Fort Hardin, an eroded spot on my aunt's farm in 1928 contained arrowheads so numerous one could hardly walk without stepping on one.

But there is no record of Indian attacks on whites in what is now Hancock County. There are only arrowheads, stone relics and names such as Indian Creek, Indian Lake, and Indian Hill. Also, by 1847, according to historian Lewis Collins, there was an Indian burial ground near the river above Hawesville, beneath a cliff. About 100 yards away, a sparkling spring bubbled up from the base of the cliff to lend an air of beauty to the scene; but human bones were still visible on the surface near the mound in 1847!



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 30 December 1993, p2:



"The Indians are Coming" – PART III

Oswald Jett has done Hancock County a great honor to again contribute some of his scholarly and well researched writing to this column. He graduated from Pellville High School in 1933, and writing has been his hobby for a long time. Here is part three of his five chapter series on Indians in this region:

There is no record of a siege of Fort Hardin, but the settlers suffered regular harassment by the Indians. Big Bill himself experienced many close calls. On one occasion, he tested his rifle outside the fort early one morning by firing it into the air. This may have been a common practice, because this time a hidden brave immediately sprang from a bush and pointed his gun at Hardin (wanting to capture such a noble specimen of the enemy rather than kill him). But in an instant Bill knocked the gun aside and brained the Indian with the gun barrel. Capt. Hardin was a tall, robust and hardy man, well known for his strength and courage.

A memorable example of his close encounters occurred outside the fort one day as he served as a sentry in the forest beyond the clearing while others tilled the crops. An Indian crept up behind him and wounded him in the neck and shoulder before he himself was killed.

Hardin's yells sent the workers racing for the fort, but one girl, seeing that Bill's shirt was blood-soaked, waited in the field for him as he ran before a group of whooping savages. When the Indians gained on him, Hardin twice turned to bluff them away with his empty gun.

Sallie McDonald was a husky young woman, as well as brave. She unhitched her team as Hardin approached. The warrior on his tail paused to reload his rifle as she swung the wounded leader on one horse and scrambled onto the other. They managed to gallop safely to the fort.

Major John Hardin, the father of Capt. Bill, was among the casualties at Fort Hardin. He was killed in 1789. At about the same time, 15-year-old James Jolly, the son of Nelson Jolly, Sr. and Mary Graham, was killed 15 days after the family moved from Severn's Valley (future Elizabethtown) to the fort. He had killed a deer in the woods and was waylaid by a party of Indians on his way back to the fort. In his attempt to escape, the boy was knocked off his horse by a tree limb. The Indians cut his throat and scalped him.

For over a decade the settlers at Fort Hartford and Barnett's Station endured sniping and raids. Among the killed were two children of John Anderson at Fort Hartford. At Barnett's Station, in 1790, Col. Alexander Barnett's 13-year-old daughter, Rebecca, was scalped and left for dead, but she survived to live to the age of 83. Her cousin, Hannah Barnett, the 10-year-old daughter of Col. Joseph Barnett, was captured. She was recaptured within a few months by her brother-in-law, Robert Baird. Many victims were not so lucky.

Even after the decisive victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794, leading to the exchange of long-held prisoners by both settlers and Indians, hostilities continued in Western Kentucky. About 1795 the Indians began settling in the area of Saline Creek, near the river in present Illinois, and continued harassing the white settlers across the Ohio River.

Capt. Bill Hardin led a war party of exasperated Indian fighters against the red men in August of 1796. According to Lewis Collins, the party consisted of 80 men, including a small group from Fort Nelson (Louisville), which joined them at Yellow Banks (Owensboro). It is logical that the settlements at Fort Hartford, Vienna, and Barnett's Station contributed fighters to the party, as they were all within 50 miles of the Indian settlement, and thus suffered the greatest danger.

Collins wrote that the war party left Yellow Banks and waded through an expanse of reeds and wild hemp to the river, crossing at Shawneetown, and engaging with a group of Indians returning from a hunting expedition. Some 30 Indians were wounded or killed, including a few before the main battle began. Settlers' casualties were slight, although Hardin himself was seriously wounded in both legs.

Known participants in the raid were: Bill Hardin, a Balser, a Barger or Barker, Adam Barr, Samuel Brashears, John Bruner, Christopher Bush, a Carlyle, Fred or Peter Claycomb, Benjamin Comstock, Samuel Crawford, Henry Dean, John Dial, John Faith. Charles Hamilton, Caleb Hardaway, a Haynes. Benjamin Huff, James Jennings, John Jolly, William Kelson, a Lampton, Mordecai Lincoln, Archibald Lockhart, William Luce, Horace Marry, William McDaniels, Daniel Meredith, Henry(?) Miller, Jeremiah(?) Pate, Robert Payne, William Perrin, Nicholas Rice, George Robards, a Shively, Samuel Spencer, a Taul, Joseph Toby. and William Weatherholt.

The known settlers at Fort Hartford by this time included: John Berry, William Casebier, James Clark, Thomas Gardner, Henry Grass, John Handley, Henry Hatfield, Adam Hay, Michael Hay, John Hogarth, Benjamin Huff, John Keith, William Kelly, Nicholas King, Joseph Knight, Daniel McCoy, Elias Moore, David Rhoads, Sr., David Rhoads, Jr., Henri Rhoads, Adam Rollins, Adam Shepherd, Abel Undet (Unsel?). Isaac Vantrace and Thomas Adam Young. Three others at one of the forts were undoubtedly Christopher Jackson, Bill Smothers, and William Bailey Smith, the latter two widely renowned as fearless and accomplished Indian fighters, I am sure the majority of the above joined in this raid to end the Indian hostilities.

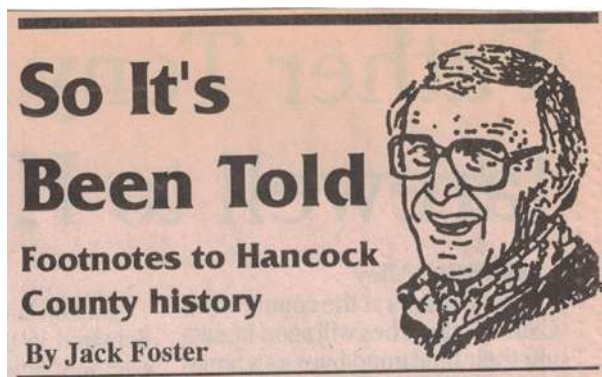
Serious friction with Indians continued into the war with England in 1812, when Tecumseh's braves joined with the British in a last ditch effort to stem the tide of white settlers. Most Indians knew their cause was hopeless, but Tecumseh, the noble war chief who hated cruelty, had sworn defiance to white settlement until his last breath, and was still trying to unify the tribes in resistance.

Gen. William Henry Harrison led 1,000 men out of Vincennes, via Terre Haute, and on Nov. 7, 1811 muted the Indians at the Battle of Tippecanoe, 7 miles NE of present Lafayette, Indiana. In this battle both Col. Joseph Hamilton Daviess and Cot. Abraham Owens were slain. When the county of Daviess was created in 1815, it was named in honor of the famous lawyer who had successfully defended rough Bill Smothers in a murder trial. Col. Daviess owned a large tract called Cornland just east of Owensboro. The city changed its name from Rossborough to Owensborough to honor Col. Owens in 1817.

In October, 1813, Gen. Harrison, with over 3,500 regulars and militia won another decisive victory over 1100 Indians and 400 British troops, led by Gen. Henry Proctor and Tecumseh. The Battle of the Thames was fought on the north bank of the Thames River near the site of modern Chatham, Ontario. The major casualty in the battle was the Shawnee war chief they called "Tecumseh."



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 6 January 1994, p2:



The Indians – Part IV

Students in our schools might want to clip out these columns by Oswald Jett on the Indians in this area. Precious little has been written about them before.

"All of the early forts suffered harassment from Indians, and many settlers were ambushed on the two major routes of migration – the Ohio River from Fort Pitt, and the Wilderness Trail through the Cumberland Gap from Virginia. For a while families returned to Virginia from the settlements about as fast as newcomers arrived.

The river route from the conjunction of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers at Fort Pitt was a tortuous, dangerous, and tedious voyage, vulnerable not only to Indian attacks, but to the natural hazards of the river. It contained numerous obstacles not present today. Dangerous currents, whirlpools, sandbars, snags, hidden logs and boulders abounded; and rafts and flatboats

twisted, bumped, scraped, jolted and swirled in circles as oarsmen strained frantically at the long sweeps.

Everyone had to be always alert to keep the clumsy crafts from sinking, at the same time scanning the northern shore warily for signs of Indians. Lurking savages would row out from overhanging willows to board the rafts and kill or capture the occupants.

A major problem was met at the Falls of the Ohio, where for years passage was impossible when the river was low, and was traversed at no time except by a rapid current near the north shore known as the Indian Channel. Many travelers waited for the river to rise, or for the services of an expert riverboatman who would guide the raft across. In many cases settlers left the river here to move inland to the Severn's Valley settlement (Elizabethtown).

There is no record that the Hardin party encountered Indian attacks, or ran the gauntlet of arrows or bullets as they floated slowly downstream, but the majority of early emigrants did. The builders of Fort Hardin suffered their share of Indian terror later. William Hardin (variously called Big Bill, Indian Bill and Captain Bill) was born in Frederick County, VA in 1747.

A Hancock County family that suffered greatly from Indian attacks was the Greathouse clan. The progenitor, Harmon Groethaus (b. 1676), had emigrated from Heidelberg, Germany with sons, Johan and Henry, to settle in Germantown, PA, now a suburb of Philadelphia.

Son Harmon married Mary Stull, of Frederick Co., PA (formerly Frederick Co., VA) in 1750. He served with the Pennsylvania militia under Col. William Crawford in his disastrous campaign against the Indians. Along with Col. Crawford and others, he was tortured and burned at the stake in June, 1782. His son, Harmon III, was also captured, but managed to escape.

Another son, Ason or Aron, was also at the scene when his father was burned at the stake, but he was whipped to death by the Indians. As if the family had not suffered enough from Indian hostilities, the youngest son, Jonathan, was later killed on the Ohio River at the mouth of the Kanawha River, along with his fiancée, Henrietta Jones, who was the half-sister of Mary Stull Greathouse.

Harmon Greathouse III married Mercy Buche in 1789 near future Wheeling, WV, and migrated the next year to the Falls, where they traveled overland to Bardstown, 20 miles to the east of Severn's Valley (at least they eventually settled there). He died there at the age of 108. By 1818 his son, Isaac Newton Greathouse (b. 11-18-1792) settled in future Hancock County as a doctor, in the Troy Bend.

A Jacob Greathouse was later added to the list of casualties inflicted by the Indians, but he brought the tragedy upon himself. Born ca. 1730, he was the black sheep of the family, and was apparently of the first generation of American-born Greathouses. He may have been the brother of Harmon burned at the stake in 1782. In any case, he had a brother named Daniel who was a storekeeper at Fort Pitt. However he was related to Harmon, he had developed a fervent hatred of Indians long before the burning of Harmon at the stake.

According to historian Allen W. Eckhart in his book "A Sorrow in Our Heart" (1992), testimony from pioneer Simon Kenton, a huge man himself, described this Greathouse as a tall, burly, and cruel man held in fear by nearly everyone. As a teenager who had fled to the wilderness after he thought he had killed a youth over the affections of a girl back in Fauquier Co., VA, Kenton traveled with the party of Jacob Greathouse for a short time; but was not with them in April of 1774 when Greathouse, leading a party of six, brutally tortured and murdered the entire family of Mingo Chief Talgayeeta (called Chief Logan by the settlers).

Tragically, Logan was a good friend of the settlers and was highly respected. He took his name from a personal white friend named James Logan. Naturally, after the senseless atrocities,

Logan vowed eternal vengeance against all settlers, and used his influence to bring about the Battle of Point Pleasant later in the year.

Up to 1790 the Indians were accustomed to winning most battles with the settlers; and in November, 1790 they won another against a force of 1500 men led by Gen. Josiah Harmar. So, on March 24, 1791, they were ready as always to harass the white traffic on the Ohio River. On this day the Indians gained revenge for the massacre of Chief Logan's family. One of three keelboats of settlers was captured by a party of Indians six or seven miles above the mouth of the Scioto River on the Ohio. Somehow the Indians recognized the leader as Jacob Greathouse.

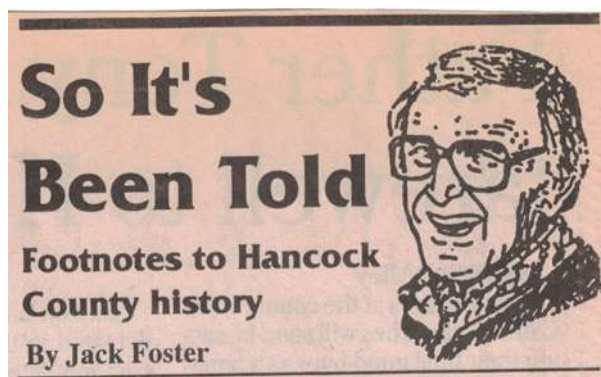
Of the 16 aboard, 14 were the family of Jacob, including 12 children down to the age of five. Two young men outside the family and the 12 children were lashed to trees, burned about the feet and legs, and were beaten to death with willow switches. Jacob and his wife were also tied to trees and beaten viciously, but they were also forced to stumble around the trees as their intestines wound around them. Horrible as this massacre was, it was no worse than the treatment inflicted by Greathouse on the Indian party in 1774.

Two Greathouses married into the Van Swearinger family, presenting the possibility that their spouses were related to the Indian Chief Blue Jacket. Susanna Greathouse, the daughter of Harmon Greathouse and Mary Stull, married Capt. Van Swearinger (b. 11-3-1754, d. 7-18-1839 in Shelby County). William Greathouse (b. 1793), the son of Harmon and Mercy Buche, fought at the Battle of the Thames in 1813, married Sallie Van Swearinger, and mover to Hannibal, MO.

Another unlucky settler was Jacobus Westervelt (later Americanized to Jacob Westerfield). He led his group to the Falls in the spring of 1786. Disaster struck while Mr. Westerfield was at the tiller, preparing to steer the raft through the Indian channel chute, when the hidden savages attacked from the river bank. Disregarding a painful stomach wound, Westerfield managed to turn the raft toward the southern shore and land it at the mouth of Beargrass Creek, where the settlers scrambled to the safety of Fort Nelson. Members of the Westerfield family eventually reached Ohio County."



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 13 January 1994, p2:



The Indians.. . Chapter V

This will conclude Oswald Jett's series on the Indians in this region. Clarion readers surely know a lot more about these "original Americans" than they did before, and Mr. Jett would be grateful for any additional Indian stories which he might include in future columns. Write him in care of this address at the bottom of this column.

(Indian Adoptions)

"Among the most notable frontiersmen adopted was Daniel Boone, taken as a son by Shawnee Chief Black Fish in February, 1778, and named Big Turtle. Boone managed to escape four months later. He had been captured on February 7 with 27 other prisoners from Boonesborough while making salt at the lower Blue Licks.

Among this group was young Benjamin Kelley, who was also adopted by an Indian family. He also escaped, and was to become a Baptist minister and eventually the grandfather of Rev. Carter Jerrell Kelley, a Baptist preacher in Hancock County in the 1850s.

Another white youth, captured by the father of Tecumseh in 1771 when the boy was 17 years old, was Marmaduke Van Swearinger. The boy was oddly eager to be captured. He had always admired the Indians and was not averse to leaving his family forever. Shawnee Chief Pucksinwah quickly realized the aptitude of his young captive for Indian life and added him to his family, naming him Blue Jacket for the sleeveless hunting shin he wore at the time of capture.

Blue Jacket was to become a respected, even idolized, warrior in the Shawnee tribe. He participated in many battles and raids against the white settlers for nearly 40 years. He had even been appointed chief of a Shawnee tribe in 1785. He died in 1810, the probable victim of cholera.

On May 25, 1778, Margaret and Elizabeth McKinzie (11 and 8 respectively) were captured by Chief Black Fish when his war party killed their mother, brother, and two sisters at their cabin home some 40 miles up the Kanawha River in present West Virginia. The terrified survivors were eventually adopted by Black Fish, and young Tecumseh persuaded the chief to allow the girls to teach him English.

Tecumseh's sister, Tecumsepese, was a gentle soul who acted as the girls' foster mother, and they gradually became reconciled to Indian life, although determined to escape at the first opportunity. This happened in October, 1786 when Col. George Rogers Clark led a war party against the Indians. It was to be a while, though, before the young women were reunited with their father.

Stephen Ruddell, the son of John and Elizabeth, was 9 years old in 1780 when Ruddell's Station, commanded by Isaac and John Ruddell, was attacked on June 22 by a combined force of Canadians and Indians (about 500 in all), led by British Captain Henry Bird,

Although his parents were brutally killed, young Stephen was saved from death by the Indian youth named Tecumseh. Later, the white youth made an impression on his captors by running the required gauntlet almost unscathed. He was soon adopted by Chiksika, the older brother of Tecumseh, and was named Big Fish.

Stephen Ruddell's five-year-old brother, Abram, was also spared, and adopted by an Indian family in the town of Chalahgawtha (future Chillicothe). Stephen developed into a respected warrior, almost inseparable from foster brother Tecumseh, who was about the same age; but Abram hated his captors and bided his time to escape. He and Stephen were exchanged in 1795 after the Treaty of Greenville.

Around 1791 a white girl named Catharine Malotte was captured and adopted by Leaning Tree, and eventually married Simon Girty, the notorious white renegade who had joined the Indians before the American Revolution. With his brothers, James and George, Simon fought regularly with the British and Indians in their raids against the settlers' forts in Central Kentucky.

All the Girty brothers spoke the Indian tongue well, and James was fluent. He was considered by the white settlers to be as savage as the Indians.

A white boy named John Ward was captured by Shawnees and became a deadly warrior called White Wolf. Another white youth was 13 when he was captured at the mouth of Brush Creek on the Ohio River ca. 1785. Adopted by Chief Little Turtle, he was named Wild Carrot because of his red hair. He grew to be trusted and respected by the Indians, but he chose to return to the settlers before 1793.

The families of John Bruner and William McDaniels had landed their flatboat at the falls of Sinking Creek early in the 1780s. The men left their families guarded by a slave while they walked southward to get help in moving their supplies and equipment to the fort (future Hardinsburg). While they were gone, Indians emerged from the bushes and captured Mrs. Bruner, her child, and the slave, while the terrified wife of McDaniels fell off the raft and drowned. The Bruner child and the slave were soon violently killed, but Mrs. Bruner was inter adopted as his squaw by an aged chief. After several years, probably with the prisoner exchange in 1795, she returned to her husband.

On the reverse side, Tecumseh's nephew, Big Horn, was captured by white Col. Logan in 1786 when he was 11 years old. Logan's kindness resulted in his remaining with the settlers when he could have been exchanged, much to the consternation of Tecumseh and his family. He served the settlers as a guide and spy. To add to the Shawnee despair and disappointment, the boy's mother, Tecumsepese (who joined Tecumseh in scorn for cruelty), defected to the whites and married a French trader named Francis Maisonville in 1811."



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.

