1929

Bryant's Station

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The community spent their merry evenings ogether; and while their fires blazed bright with- the little and secure square, the far howl of olves, or even the solitary war-whoop of an In- ian sounded in the ear of the happy and reckless dwellers, like the driving storm, pouring on the eltering roof above the head of the traveller, afely nested in his clean and quiet bed; that is, rought the contrast of comfort and security in ore home felt emphasis to the bosom.

Such a Station was Bryant's in 1782. It was e nucleus of the settlements of that delightful and ich country, of which Lexington is the present entre. There were at this time but two others orth of the Kentucky river. It was more open attack than any other in the country. The liami on the north, and the Licking on the south f the Ohio, were long canals, which led from the orthern hive of the savages between the lakes nd the Ohio directly to it. In the summer of this ear, a grand assemblage convened at Chilicothe. he Cherokees, Wyandots, Tawas, Pottowatto- ies, and most of the tribes bordering on the lakes ere represented in it. Besides their chiefs, and ome Canadians, they were aided by the counsels f the two Girtys and M'Kee, renegado whites. I ave made diligent enquiry, touching the biogra- hy of these men, particularly Simon Girty, a retch, whose name is of more notoriety in the stigation of the wars and massacres of these In- ians, than any other in our records. No tortur- d captive escaped from them in those times, who ould not tell the share, which Simon Girty had his sufferings; no burnings and murders, in hich he assisted not either with his presence or is counsels. I have gained no specific informa- on, except, that they were supposed to be refu- ees from Pennsylvania. They added the calcu- ting and combining powers of the whites to the stinctive cunning and ferocity of the savages.— hey had their warlike propensities, without their agnanimity; and their appetite for blood with- ut their active or passive courage. They had e bad properties of the whites and Indians, un- ixed with the good of either. The cruelty of e Indians had some show of palliating circum- ances. But theirs was gratuitous, cold-blooded, nd without visible motive. Yet Simon Girty, ke the people, among whom he dwelt, sometimes ook the freak of kindness, no reason could be as- gned wherefore; and once or twice saved an nhappy victim from being roasted alive. This enegado lived in plenty; and smoked his pipe, nd drank off his whiskey in his log palace, con- ilted by the Indians, as an oracle. He was seen ad in a ruffled shirt, a soldier's coat, pantaloons nd gaiters, belted with pistols and dirks; and ore a watch with an enormous length of chain nd tassel of ornaments; all, probably, the spoils murder; and as he had a strong affectation of isdom, there is no doubt, but in these days he ould have worn green spectacles. So habited, swelled in the view of the unhappy Indian cap- ves, like the peacock spreading his morning plu- age. There is little doubt, that those saved by s interposition, were spared, that he might have hite admirers, and display to them his grandeur nd the extent of his influence among the Indians. The great assemblage to which I have referred, ithered round the shrine of Simon Girty for counsel, touching the point, which it was expedi- ent to assail. He painted to them the delights of the land of cane, clover, deer, and buffaloes; and the fair vallies of the Kantuckee, for which so much blood had been shed. He described the gradual encroachments of the whites; and the ne- cessity of a determined effort, if they would ever regain possession of their rich and rightful domain. He warned them, if the present order of things continued, that the whites would soon leave them no hunting grounds worth retaining; and no means of procuring rum, with which to warm and cheer their desolate hearts, or blankets to clothe their naked backs. They were advised to de- scend the Miami, cross the Ohio, ascend the Lick- ing and paddle their canoes to the very contiguity of Bryant's Station. The speech was received with yells of enthusiastic applause.

Away marched this cohort of biped wolves, howling through the forest to their canoes on the Miami. Girty, in his ruffled shirt and soldier coat, stalked at their head, silently feeding upon his own grandeur. The Station, against which they were destined, enclosed forty cabins. They arri- ved before it, August 15, 1782, in the night. In the morning the inhabitants were warned of their presence, by being fired upon, as they opened their doors. The time of their arrival was provi- dential. In two hours most of the efficient males of the Station were to have marched to the two other Stations, which were reported to have been attacked. The place would thus have been left completely defenceless. The garrison found means to dispatch one of their number to Lexing- ton, to announce the assault, and crave aid. Six- teen mounted men and thirty one on foot were immediately marched off to their aid.

The number of the assailants amounted to at least six hundred. In conformity to the common modes of Indian warfare, they attempted to gain the place by stratagem. The great body conceal- ed themselves among high weeds upon the oppo- site side of the Station, within pistol shot of the spring, from which it was supplied with water.— With a detachment of a hundred, they commenc- ed a false attack upon the south east angle, with a view to draw the attention of the garrison to that point. This stratagem was predicated on the be- lief, that the inhabitants would all crowd to the point of assault, and leave the opposite one de- fenceless. But here they reckoned without their host. The people instantly penetrated their pur- pose; and instead of returning their fire, com- menced, what ought to have been completed be- fore, repairing the palisades, and putting the Sta- tion in a condition of defence. The high and lux- uriant Jamestown weeds near the spring instruct- ed these experienced backwoodsmen, that a host of the foe lurked beneath their sheltering foliage, there to await the coming forth of the men, to draw water for the supply of the garrison. Let modern wives, who hesitate to follow their hus- bands to this place, because it is deemed unheal- thy; or to that, because it will remove them from the scene of their accustomed pleasures, hear and prepend! These noble wives, mothers, daugh- ters and sweet hearts, I dare affirm, handsomer, than ever either Juno or Venus or Minerva, or any of the graces, and the nymphs to boot, ap- peared on Mount Olympus, informed the men, that there was little probability, that the Indians would fire upon them, as their game undoubtedly was the men; and that even if they did shoot down a few of them, it would in no way diminish the resources of the garrison. The illustrious he- roines armed themselves with buckets, and march- ed down to the spring, espying here and there a painted face, and an Indian body crouching under the thick foliage.

The Kentuckians of those days, carrying their lives in their hand, were faithful in obedience to the precept, to "take no thought for the morrow." While gloom was retiring from their forehead, joy shone again on their cheeks. As soon as they were aware, that the merciless prowlers had left the vicinity for good, they paid due honors to the dead who had fallen, while coming to their aid. The wounded were nursed with the tenderest assiduity. These duties of humanity duly performed, the subsequent afternoon and evening were devoted to the joy and hilarity of a kind of triumphal jubilee. The tables groaned with good cheer; and, as there were then no temperance societies, a reasonable proportion of "Old Monongahela rye whiskey," which even in those early days was deemed a drink of most salutary beatification, was added to the persimon and maple beer. All, not excepting even those, who had been most zealous for treating with Simon Girty, overwhelmed Reynolds with well-earned compliments, and admiration of his spirit and oratory. The gentlemen were scarcely more hearty in expressions of this sort, than the ladies; among whom, being handsome, and of a brave and free spirit, he had been a favorite before. There was something particular in the wistfulness, with which Sarah McCracken contemplated him this evening. Sarah was Irish, six feet and an inch; her limbs admirably turned, and her frame as square, and proportioned, as an Italian statuary would have desired for a model. Her hair was fair, and inclining to yellow; and in her face piony red was sprinkled on a ground of lily white; and withal she carried a hook nose, an abundant vocabulary of Kentucky repartee, and a termagant spirit curiously compounded of frolic and mischief. Sarah had been wooed to no purpose by every young man of any pretensions in the vicinity. It was clearly understood, that no lover would be favored, until he should be able publicly to give her a fair fall, and noose her, as they were in the habit of managing a wild, or, as the phrase was, a "severe" colt. More than one had struggled for the prize. But they fared like the Philistine upon Sampson; or as Tabitha Grumbo managed with her tiny suitor, young Mr. Thumb. Reynolds had sighed among the rest; and had surveyed the premises with feelings, not unlike those, with which a hostile man of war regards the rock of Gibraltar. When questioned by the young men, why he had not attempted to noose this pretty and "severe" colt, he discussed the value of the prize, much as the fox did the grapes.

In the triumph and expansion of heart of that evening of deliverance, two or three fine young girls had been noosed; and, to their credit be it recorded, they were ever after as gentle and docile, as they had been wild and unmanageable before. Whether Reynolds felt stronger, after the ample honors and praises, he had won, or whether there was a consenting languor in Sarah McCracken's eye, doth not appear. The fact is submitted without any explanatory conjectures.—Reynold's, with a neat cord of buffalo hair, made up to Sarah, evincing a show of the requisite hardihood, of purposing a trial to noose her. "Come on," said Sarah. "Faint heart never won fair lady." Jigs, reels, sports, frolics, rifle shooting, every other excitement was instantly absorbed in the keener interest of witnessing the trial at noosing. It commenced with an energy, for which I have no comparisons. The contest of the stranger with the Giant of Gauntly, or even that between Æneas and Turnus, for the hand and kingdom of Lavinia, afford no adequate parallel of illustration. Tears of laughter streamed from the eyes of the spectators; and it actually made them pant, that sultry August evening, to see the exertion of athletic power, the intertwining of hands, the bending of arms and the dishevelling of locks. Sometimes her fine form seemed to bend to the muscular powers of the young warrior; at other times, to avail of the Kentucky phrase, she "flirted" him, as though she had been playing pitch-penny. Sometimes one scale preponderated with the chances of victory, and sometimes the other. But no golden sign was hung out in the sky.—Reynolds began to show laborious respiration; and the ladies to cheer, and the gentlemen to despond. But at the very moment, when his powers seemed to be sinking under the prowess of the fair and blowzed female Hercules, the destinies threw a heavy weight into his scale, and hers instantly kicked the beam, for lo! an almost imperceptible trip of the ancle bestowed her at length on the white clover. While the woods rung with united acclamations, the lover followed up his conquest. The "severe" colt was noosed, as meekly as a lamb.

There were not wanting sly girls, inmates of the station, who used in private to insinuate to her, that the slip was intentional. Sarah always assumed a knowing look on the occasion; and insisted that she found no cause to repent the fall. Reynold's, it is well known, behaved nobly afterwards at the battle of the Blue Licks. He it was, who, being in after days a little in the habit of "striking the post," as the Indians have it, or, in our phrase, blowing his own trumpet—started the proverbial Kentucky boast—"I have the handsomest horse, dog, rifle and wife in all Kentucky."

COL. DURRETT ON BRYANT'S.

Spells the Station's Name With a "t" and Gives Reasons Therefor.

Some Authorities Left Out the Letter, But the Preponderance of Evidence Lays the Other Way.

(To the Editor of the Courier-Journal.)

The recent effort, by some of our patriotic ladies, to secure the necessary funds for erecting a monument to the memory of the brave women of Bryant's Station, in 1782, who, to procure water for the garrison, went to the spring outside of the protecting walls, within range of 500 rifles in the hands of the besieging savages, has started a lively inquiry as to whether the proper name of this station is Bryant's or Bryan's. I have received and answered a number of letters asking my opinion on this subject, and I have yet a larger number of them on my table unanswered. The labor of replying to these letters is considerable, and I have concluded that the best way to avoid the constant repetition of answering such inquiries is to publish the facts in the Courier-Journal, whose wide circulation may bring them to the knowledge of all inquirers. Do me the favor, therefore, to publish the following, which contains about all of importance that I know on the subject:

In answer to the inquiry whether the right name of this station is Bryant's or Bryan's, I might answer that there is authority for both spellings of the name, and having thus answered I might let the matter rest. The facts themselves, however, are a better answer, and when they are given each one can judge for his or herself.

I myself have always spelled the name Bryant's, and I think I have sufficient authority therefor. All the early historians of Kentucky, some of whom personally knew the family whose name this station bore and were familiar with the station itself, give the name Bryant's. John Filson, the first historian of Kentucky, whose work was published at Wilmington in 1784, and which contains the autobiography or adventures of Daniel Boone, a brother-in-law of the Bryants, dictated by himself, spells the name Briant. This use of I instead of Y in the spelling is immaterial, as the dispute is only about the final T. After Filson's in 1784, followed Marshall's History of Kentucky in 1812 and 1824, Butler's in 1834 and 1836, Lewis Collins' in 1847, Arthur & Carpenter's in 1852 and Allen's in 1872, each giving the name Bryant's. It thus appears that for nearly a hundred years every historian of Kentucky without an exception gave the name Bryant's. Outside of these regular historians of the State, such kindred works as Imlay's Topographical Description of the Western Territory in 1792, McClung's Sketches of Western Adventure in 1832, Spalding's Catholic Missions in 1844 and numerous local historians and works that might be mentioned, give the name Bryant's.

It was not until 1874, nearly an hundred years after the station was erected and after everybody connected with it had been laid in the grave, that it appeared in history by any other than Bryant's. In 1874, however, the history of Kentucky by Richard Collins was published, the name first made its appearance in the Following Collins our later historians Shaler, in 1884; Perrin, in 1885; Smith, in 1886, each adopted the name Bryan's. Mr. Perrin, however, in his history of Fayette county, in 1882, gives the name Bryant's, while in his history of Kentucky, in 1885, he has it Bryan's, which weakens him as authority. While he was writing his history of Fayette county, where the station stood, he had before him Rancke's History of Lexington, in 1872, in which the name Bryant's is given, and while writing his history of Kentucky he had Collins', in 1874, where he found and seems to have adopted Bryan's.

For some reason unknown, Timothy Flint, when he wrote the biography of Daniel Boone, in 1833, gave the name Bryan's. Almost every subsequent biographer of Boone has followed Flint in thus calling the station Bryan's. It is not certain, however, that either of these biographers had the original of Filson or had ever seen it.

The strongest evidence in behalf of those who held to the spelling Bryan's is found in the land entry book of Kentucky county, in 1780. While Mr. Collins, the younger, was writing his history of Kentucky, I called his attention to this record among other things and showed him in my note book the following entry:

"January 7, 1780. William Bryan, assignee of Anthony Haviland, enters 400 acres in Kentucky by virtue of a certificate, etc., lying on the north side of the North Fork of Elkhorn, on both sides of the Shawnee trace made by Capt. Holder's men going to the Nation, including a spring on the east of said trace."

This is evidently the land on which the station was reared, and it seems to have had influence enough with the junior Collins when I showed it to him to make him change the spelling of the elder Collins and all previous historians in Kentucky as to this station.

When it is remembered, however, that the applicant did not himself make this entry in the record book, but that it was made by the Recorder of the Land Office, who spelled the name as he understood it to have been pronounced by the applicant, the evidence will hardly be deemed conclusive. In the same way the name of the grandfather of President Lincoln was written in the entry book "Linkhorn," and other entries made equally as variant from the names of the applicants as known among the pioneers.

Daniel Bryan, the author of the "Mountain Muse, or Adventures of Daniel Boone," published at Harrisonburg in 1813, which was a very popular book in its day, gives the name Bryant's. As he was of the Bryan family, he ought to have known how to spell the name, and his making this distinction in his book by spelling his own name Bryan and that of the station Bryant is, to say the least of it, very significant, if not conclusive.

So far as my observation has gone in looking over old manuscript journals, letters, etc., which has been considerable, this station was known among the pioneers as Bryant's. Col. Edmund Lyne, an educated gentleman who was in charge of the Blue Licks, not far distant from this station, making salt as early as 1786, and who continued in that business for many years afterward, wrote the name Bryant's in his account book whenever he sold salt to go to that locality. Daniel Boone, however, in his letter to the Governor of Virginia in 1782, giving an account of the disastrous battle of the Blue Licks, spells the name Bryan. But as is well known Boone was too erratic in his spelling to make this single effort of his conclusive as to the proper way of spelling. Two years later his spelling was Briant's, as dictated to John Filson, the historian, so that he can not stand for very high authority on this subject.

It is needless, however, to multiply authorities on either side of this controversy. At this late day, those who favor the name Bryan's will adhere to it, and those who prefer Bryant's will adhere to that, no matter what those who differ with them may say. My reverence for precedent induced me long ago to adopt the spelling Bryant's as I found it uniformly in our histories for nearly a century; and I have since come upon no evidence sufficiently strong to induce me to change to Bryan's. I shall, therefore, continue to write the name Bryant's, for which I deem the authority sufficient.

August 11, 1894. R. T. DURRETT.

Bryant's Station

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The Siege of Bryan Station

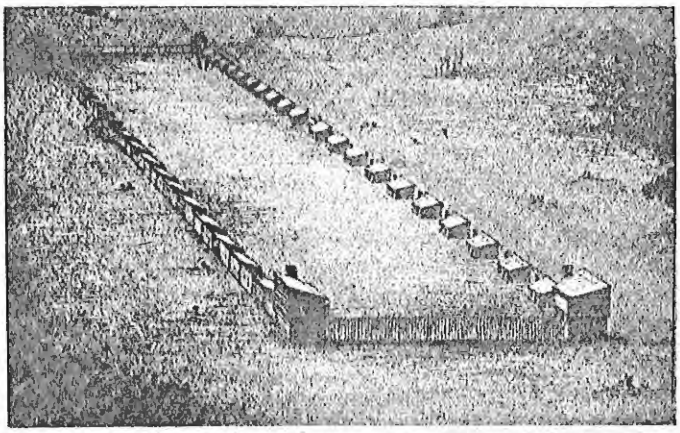
Story of the Heroic Part Played by the Women

By MRS. PEYTON B. HOWARD
Regent, Bryan Station Chapter, D. A. R., Lexington, Kentucky

KS. Progress Magazine September 1929

ONE hundred and fifty years ago, in 1779, five stalwart woodsmen, with their families and all their worldly possessions, set out from the valley of the Yadkin River in North Carolina to make new homes in what is now the famous Bluegrass region of Kentucky.

Four of these men were brothers, William, Morgan, James and Joseph Bryan. William, the acknowledged leader, was a brother-in-law of Daniel Boone. The fifth man, William Grant, was also a brother-in-law of the great pioneer. Two hunters, Cave Johnson and William Tomlinson, joined the travelers as they journeyed through the wilderness. On and on they traveled, stopping at Boonesboro for corn and other supplies and pressing on again until the beautiful valley of the Elkhorn lay before them.



Here, surrounded by a hunter's paradise, rich land, and abundant water, they found an ideal location for a fort, or station. Work was immediately begun and in a short time a number of rude, but strong, cabins were erected. Other settlers joined those already at work and very soon the cabins reached about twenty in number.

The cabins were placed at irregular intervals on the long sides of a parallelogram which was something like six hundred feet long and one hundred and fifty feet wide. At each corner was built a blockhouse, to be occupied by the single men of the station. The spaces between the cabins and blockhouses, and across the ends of the parallelogram, were filled with great pickets, made from trunks of trees split in two and sharpened at the ends.

At the foot of the hill, facing Elkhorn creek, was a spring of almost ice-cold water. This spring was not included within the stockade, despite the fact that its discovery had decided the location of the station.

Thus was founded Bryan's Station, a spot destined to fill so prominent a place in the history of Kentucky. Life in the new station was filled to overflowing with thrills, romance and very often, tragedy.

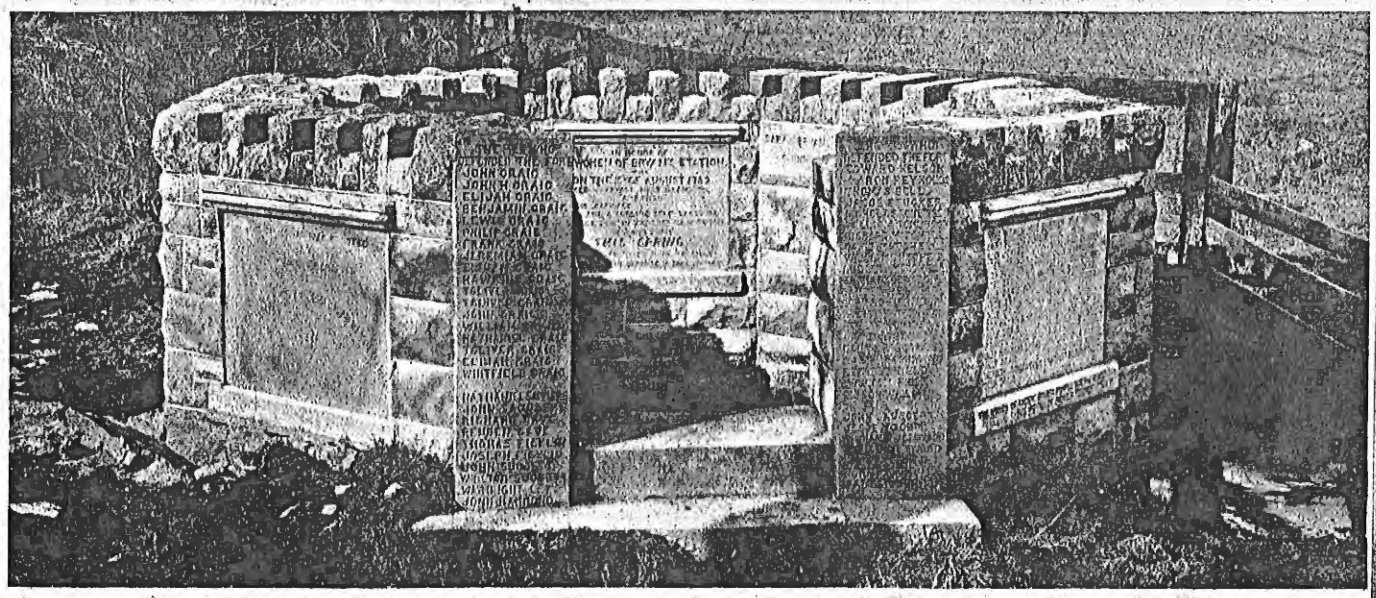
Here, William Bryan, the founder, while hunting game in the nearby forest, was wounded by Indians. His was the first death within the new settlement.

Here, in July of the year 1780, corn sold for one hundred and twenty dollars a bushel in Continental currency.

It was on August 15, 1782, that the Indians and Canadians, spurred on by British officers, and led by two abandoned white men, McKee and Simon Girty, that the station was besieged.

During this fearful time, a period of three days, twelve women and sixteen girls, led by Jemima Suggett Johnson, faced death to carry water from the spring into the stockade while the men stood guard to shoot down the savage enemy hidden so near.

(Continued on page 47)



Bryan Station Memorial at Lexington, erected by the D. A. R. to the memory of the brave women, who carried water to the besieged fort at Bryan Station under the rifles of several hundred Indians.

Whether the Indians were fascinated with their beauty or their courage does not appear. But so it was, that they fired not, and these fair and generous ones came and went, until the reservoir was sufficiently supplied with water. I depend upon traditionary rather than written documents for the fact, that a round number of kisses were exchanged with these heroic ladies, who had so nobly jeoparded themselves, and proved that the disinterested daring of affection, is not a mere poet's fiction.

After such an example, it was no ways difficult to procure young volunteers, ready to try the Indians in the same way. As they deemed, they had scarcely advanced from the station, before a hundred Indians fired upon them. They retreated within the palisade; and the whole Indian force rose, yelling, and rushed upon the enclosure. They howled with mere disappointment and rage, when they found every thing prepared for their reception. A well directed fire, drove them to a more cautious distance. Some of the more desperate of their number, however, ventured on the least exposed point so near, as to be able to discharge burning arrows upon the roofs of the houses. Some of them were fired and burnt. But an easterly wind providentially arose at the moment, and secured the mass of the buildings from the spreading of the flames; and the remnant they could not reach with their arrows.

The enemy lurked back to their covert in the weeds; waiting, panther-like, for safer game.—They had been informed, or they had divined it, that aid was expected from Lexington; and they arranged an ambuscade, to intercept it, on its approach to the garrison. When the reinforcement, consisting of forty-six persons, came in sight, the firing had ceased. The enemy were all invisible; and they came on in reckless confidence, under the impression, that they had marched on a false alarm. A lane opened an avenue to the station, through a thick corn field. This lane was ambuscaded on either side by the Indians, for a hundred yards. Fortunately, as it was dry and mid summer, the horsemen raised such a cloud of dust, that they sustained the close fire of the Indians, without losing a man, or even a horse. The footmen were less fortunate. They dispersed in the corn field, in hopes to reach the garrison unobserved. But masses of savages, constantly increasing between them and the station, intercepted them. Hard fighting ensued, and two of them were killed, and four wounded. Soon after the detachment had joined their friends, and the Indians were lying in their covert again, the numerous flocks and herds of the station came in quietly, ruminating, as they made their way towards their night pens. Upon these harmless animals the Indians had undisturbed sport; and they made a complete destruction of them.

A little after sunset, the famous Girty covertly approached the garrison, mounted a stump, whence he could be heard by the people within; and demanded a parley and the surrender of the place. He managed his proposals with no small degree of art, assigning, in imitation of the commanders of numerous armies, that they were dictated by his humanity; that he wished to spare the effusion of human blood; that, in case of a surrender, he could answer for the security of the prisoners; but that, in the event of taking the garrison by storm, he could not; that cannon were approaching with a reinforcement, in which case they must be aware, that the palisades could no longer avail, to secure them from the numerous and incensed foe. His imposing manner had the more effect, in producing consternation, as the garrison knew, that the same foes had used cannon in the attack of Ruddle's and Martin's stations. Some faces blenched. Two had already been slain, and the four wounded were groaning among them. Some of the more considerate, apprised of the folly of allowing such a negociator in such a way, to intimidate the garrison, called out to shoot the rascal, adding to his name the customary Kentucky epithet. Girty insisted upon his promised security, as a flag of truce, while this negociation lasted; and demanded with great assumed dignity, if they knew, who it was, who thus addressed them. A spirited young man, of whom the most honorable mention is made in the subsequent annals of Indian warfare, was deputed to answer the renegade negociator. His object was to do away the depression of the garrison; and perhaps to gain a reputation for waggery, as he already had for hard fighting. "Yes," replied Reynolds, "we know you well. You are one of those cowardly villains, who love to murder women and children; especially those of your own people. Know Simon Girty! Yes; his father was a panther, his dam a wolf. I have a worthless dog, that kills lambs. Instead of shooting him, I have called him Simon Girty. You expect reinforcements and cannon, do you? We expect reinforcements, too; and in numbers to give short reckoning to your cowardly wretches. Cannon! you would not dare touch them off, if you had them. Even if you could batter down our pickets, I for one, hold your people in too much contempt to honor them by discharging fire arms upon them. Should you take the trouble to enter our fort, I have been roasting a number of hickory switches, with which we mean to whip your naked rascals out of the country."

"Now you be d——d," says Simon, apparently no ways edified, or flattered by the reply. Affecting to deplore the obstinacy and infatuation of the garrison, the man of ruffled shirt, and soldier coat returned; and the firing commenced again. The besieged gave a good account of every one, who came near enough to take a fair shot. But before morning, the main body marched away to the lower Blue Licks, where they obtained a signally fatal and bloody triumph. The Indians and Canadians are said to have exceeded six hundred; and the besieged numbered forty-two riflemen, before their reinforcement.

The following appendix to the above real history, we frankly confess, seems rather apocryphal, and is not unlikely to have been foisted into the Kentucky annals by some wag. Though there are not wanting commentators, who discover intrinsic evidence of its fidelity in the narrative.—We leave the reader to settle the question for himself. We give, as we have received. It seems to us to be a spirited sketch of the energetic and somewhat wild manners of the brave and free spirits of the former generation in that state.

From the Western Monthly Magazine. 1829

ATTACK OF BRYANT'S STATION.

I know of no place nearer, than the sources of the Mississippi, or the Rocky Mountains, where the refuge of a "Station" is now necessary. The last one in the west will soon have mouldered; and history and the lexicon will be the only depositories of the knowledge, what the term imports. Of the million readers in the United States, it is, probably, a large allowance, that five thousand of the first settlers of the west, or as we call them, the "old residenters," have a distinct idea in their minds of the aspect and intent of the establishment. I have been in a number, that were erected on our north-western and southern frontiers, during the late war with Great Britain. I will endeavor to transfer to my readers the distinct picture, which was thus impressed upon my own mind.

The first immigrants, that fixed themselves in the fair valleys of Kentucky and Tennessee, came in companies and societies. A hundred neighbors, friends, connexions, old and young, mother and daughter, sire and infant, the house dog and the domestic animals, all set forth on the patriarchal wilderness trooping, as on a frolic. No disruption of the tender natal and moral ties, no revulsion of the reciprocities of kindness, friendship and love took place. The cement and the panoply of reciprocal affection and good will was in their hearts, and on their breasts, as they came over the mountains to the wide domain of the red men, and the wild howlers of the desert. Like the gregarious tribes, and the vernal emigrations of the sea-fowl to the interior lakes, they brought all their charities, their true home with them.—Their state of issolation concentered these kindly feelings. It has been found, that the current of human affections flows more full and strong, in proportion, as it is less divided, and diverted into numerous channels. This community, coming to survey new aspects of a nature, measured only by the imagination, new dangers, a new world, and in some sense a new existence, were bound to each other by a sacrament, as old as the human heart. I have a hundred times heard the remains of this race of the golden age deplore the distance and coldness of the measured, jealous and proud intercourse of the present generation, in comparison of the simple kindness, the frank and domestic relations of those primeval days, reminding me of the affecting accounts of the mutual love of Christians in the early periods of the church.

Another circumstance of the picture ought to be redeemed from oblivion. I suspect, that the general impression of fine ladies and gentlemen of the present day is, that the puritans of Plymouth, the episcopalians of Jamestown and the backwoodsmen of Kentucky and Tennessee were persons of an aspect, garb, beard, address, and *toute ensemble*, very little tending to tempt unregulated movements of the heart; in other words, precise, ugly, and natural dampers of love. Truth is, they were just the reverse of all this. Only mark how careful the ruling elders and godly men of New England were, that the women should veil and conceal their charms. It is notorious, that a woman was churched there, for cutting off the ends of the fingers of her gloves, and exposing the tips of her dainty and delicate fingers to the manifest annoyance and disruption of the spiritual chain of thoughts in the bosom of the worshipping beholders. What other fact in all history bears, I had almost said, such sublime testimony to the charms of the charmers of that day? It stands, in fact, in the history of the triumphs of beauty, like the famed text quoted by Longinus in relation to sublimity. What fine fellows the Virginians must have been, to have melted down the stern hearts of the red women at the first glance, as in the case of Pocahontas!

However it may have been with Atlantic progenitors, I have no doubt that the first settlers of Kentucky and Tennessee were a race of beauty as rare, as their courage and virtues. I have conversed with some hundreds of these people; and they are the finest looking ancients, male and female, that I have seen, noble, square forms, open chests, bright, clear and truth-telling eyes.—The ladies, I admit, had a little more of the Amazonian, than comports with our modern notions of a pretty, square-rigged insect, made pale by strong tea, late hours, dissipation, brag, vinegar and chalk. But I can easily believe, what these venerable patriarchs, affirm, that these people were for the most part, perfect Apollos and Venuses. I have seen their sons and daughters;—and I believe that children are apt to inherit the physical and mental likeness of their parents; and it is my clear conviction, that there is, no where on our globe, a finer looking race of young men and women, than in these states. Nevertheless, love has softened down, even there, to a malady of slight fevers and chills, compared with the continued and ardent fever, which rioted in the veins of their fathers and mothers.

As I said, these emigrant societies brought all their charities with them. These feelings received even an accession of energy and intenseness from those peculiar circumstances, which render a similar sojourn in an Indian wilderness the strongest cement of neighborly affections. The air, before the forests were levelled, was generally remarkable for its salubrity. The chase yielded the most salutary viands, and immeasurable appetite and digestion corresponding. To these denizens of the flowering wilderness life was the sensation of high health, Herculean vigor and redundant joy. It was invigorating to hear the exhalatory interjection, the safety-valve respiration, as they struck their well tempered axe into the enormous trunk of the tree, they were about to fall. These were the men, who were parents of the pionies and roses, that now bloom there: and of the men of square form, unblenching cheek, and sure rifle shot; the players with thunderbolts, the swimmers of the Mississippi, and the challengers of battle with a whole menagerie of panthers and wildcats, with a supernumerary zebra to kick withal.

When the social band had planted their feet on the virgin soil, the first object was, to fix on a spot central to one of the most extensive upland alluvions of gentle swell and declivity, where pawpaw, cane and wild clover marked exuberant fertility; and where the woods were so open, that the hunter could ride in any direction at half-speed. The curse of party feuds, and political asperity had not yet smitten the soil with sterility; and it yielded, almost without other cultivation, than planting, from eighty to a hundred bushels of maize to the acre; and all other desirable products in proportion. Game was so abundant, that two hunters would often kill enough in two days, to last a station of a hundred souls a month; and these *robustious* young swains and damsels were not of your rice cake and wafer eaters neither.—They walked, played, danced, hunted and loved in strength and gladness; and their consumption of tender venison was in proportion.

The next thing, after finding the central point of this hunter's paradise, was to build a "Station," which now remains to be described. It was desirable, that it should be near a flush limestone spring; and if a salt lick and prodigious sugar maple orchard were close at hand, so much the better. The next preliminary step was, to clear a considerable area, so as that nothing should be left to screen an enemy from view and a shot.—If a spring could be enclosed, or a good well dug in the enclosure, they were considered important elements; but as an Indian siege seldom extended beyond one or two days, and as water enough to last through the emergency, could always be stored in a reservoir; it was deemed still more important, that the position should be on a rising ground, as much as possible overlooking the adjoining forest. The form was a perfect parallelogram, including from a half to a full acre. A trench was then dug, four or five feet deep, and contiguous pickets planted in it, so as to form a compact wall ten or twelve feet above the ground. The pickets were of hard and durable timber, nearly a foot in diameter; and formed a rampart beyond the power of man either to leap, or overthrow, by the exercise of individual and unaided physical power. At the angles were small projecting squares, of still stronger material and planting, technically called flankers, with oblique port holes; so that the sentinel within could rake the external front of the station without being exposed to a shot without. Two folding gates, in the front and rear, swinging on prodigious wooden hinges, gave ingress and egress to the men and teams in time of security. At other times, a trusty sentinel on the roof of an interior building, was stationed so as to be able to descry at a distance every suspicious object. The gates were always firmly barred by night; and sentinels through its silent watches relieved each other in turn. Nothing can be imagined more effectual for its purposes, than this simple contrivance in the line of fortification. True these walls would not have stood against the battering ram of Josephus, or the balls of a six pounder. But they were proof against Indian strength and patience and rifle shot. The only expedient was, to undermine them; or destroy them with fire; and this could not be easily done without exposing them to the rifle of the flankers. Of course there are few recorded instances, where they were taken, when skilfully and resolutely defended. Their regular forms, in the central wilderness, their aspect of security, their social city show rendered them delightful objects to an immigrant, who had come two hundred leagues, without seeing a human habitation. Around the interior of these walls, the buildings of the little community arose, with a central clean esplanade for dancing and wrestling, and the other primeval amusements of the olden days. It is questionable, if heartier and happier eating and sleeping, wrestling and dancing, loving and marrying fall to the lot of their descendants, who ride in coaches and dwell in spacious mansions. Venison and wild Turkeys, sweet potatoes and pies smoaked on the table; and persimon and maple beer quaffed as well, at least for health, as Madeira or nectar.

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VF - Bryant's Station

Bryant's Station