

The Gabriel Walker Indian Attack.

This is an attempt to bring together in one place the various versions of the attack on the Gabriel Walker farm by Indians in 1782. This was one of the last Indian raids carried out in the vicinity, and was conducted by Indians serving as allies of the English during the American Revolution. I have divided the different versions into three types. I have placed "original" accounts in the first group. The second group is comprised of short accounts that seem to contain some additional "original" information. The third group is a set of accounts that essentially reiterates earlier accounts.

Group I. These are probably the most reliable accounts. Most were from descendants and relatives of the Gabriel Walker family.

Charles M. Ewing account (two versions).

I came into possession of two slightly different versions of this account which have only minor differences. (My notes indicate that this account was also published in *Keyhole: Quart. Pub. of the Geneal. Soc. of SW Pa.*, but I have not been able to locate it in my back issues.) I have made the one found in the Citizens Library, Washington, Pa., the basis of this account and I note the major differences in the second version with italics. The Citizen's Library version is obviously the more recent version, since it refers to the Settler's Cabins Park which did not exist when the original was written. The older version came into my hands via my Aunt Nellie Hays Schall who made extensive handwritten annotations in the margins of her copy. I have placed these notations at the end of this section. Nellie Schall indicated that the original might be in the Washington and Jefferson College Library. This should be investigated.

REMINISCENCES OF THE SETTLEMENTS OF ROBINSON RUN

Presented with notes by: Charles M. Ewing

The following narrative was written at an early date by Isaac Walker, of Walkers Mill, PA. While but a small scrap in the records of the western movement as a whole, it is, however, an important contribution to the perspective of that horrible picture of the Indian wars as they affected our pioneer stock. The narrative as now presented is a verbatim copy of the original manuscript. When the transcript was made some forty years ago, the original document was in the possession of the late Mr. William Green of Boyce Station, PA.

"Gabriel and Isaac Walker were born in Lancaster County, PA. Gabriel in 1735 and Isaac in 1746. They emigrated in 1772 and purchased land adjacent to and west of the Ewing tract." Gabriel built his cabin on Robinson Run, and Isaac built his near the confluence on Scott's Run and Robinson Run. For several years after settlement Isaac traveled back and forth to Lancaster County in the fall and spring for lead, tinware, axes, and etc., which at that time were much in demand, the country being an unbroken wilderness. The only means of conveyance was by pack horse, the road only a trail over the mountains and through the valleys. Col.H. Benton has said: "The Buffalo and the Elk

were the first engineers in the art of road making". In 1779 Isaac married Mary (Stewart) Richardson whose husband had been killed by the Indians on the Loyal Hanna. He brought his new wife to his western cabin where they settled down to the joys and hardships of pioneer life. (Note): Gabriel Walker's cabin was located near present Rennerdale Station and Isaac's near the old Walker home at Walker's Mill. Mrs. Richardson's husband William Richardson was tomahawked and scalped by the Indians, November 2, 1777, three miles from Ligonier, PA."

"Shortly before this the Revoluttonary War broke out and the Indians were incited by the British government to make war on our white settlers. A reward of \$8.00 apiece was offered for every scalp taken. This barbarity contined to the close of the war, and was a disgrace to the English nation"

"In September, 1772 a band of Indians, about twenty-five in number, approached the cabin of Gabriel Walker. They concealed themselves nearby, intending to surprise the family at dinner. An intervention of providence saved them from destruction, two travelers with guns on their shoulders came at this time, Indians are a cowardly race, and these waited to do their hloody work until the travelers and extra guns had taken their departure. Before this occurence, however, the younger members of the family including the bound boy Bill Harkins were sent to hoe timothy grass in a field near the house. After seeing the strangers leave, Mr. Walker started to the field, and while on his way saw the Indians creeping toward the children. He called to them to run as the Indians were coming. They started to run but were soon captured by the Indians. Five children were taken prisoners but Mr. Walker made his escape. Two Indians pursued Bill Harkins, but not being swift on foot ran to a corn field and through it to Robinson Run, which stream he followed down to Ewing Fort over two miles away, where he spread the alarm."

"Mrs. Walker was in the house with two children when the alarm was given, she started to make her escape, snatching up her baby to run, but the other child said, "Mother don't leave me for the Indians," so she grasped them both and under cover of the high weeds back of the house she managed to conceal herself, and so made her way to the fort. Young Harkins in his flight also gave the alarm to Isaac Walker, who also with his family made their way to the fort. (Note): This fort or blockhouse was on the property of James Ewing, and was located on the hill north of, and overlooking present Fort Pitt Station. The original Ewing cabin was located near the fort, and was recorded in the land patents as "Ewing's Delight." A millwright by trade, Mr. Ewing constructed a grist mill in the valley, below his home in 1774. Traces of the millrace are yet apparent paralleling the Pennsylvania Railroad.

"This fort was built by James Ewing, born in Cecil County, Maryland, and emigrated west in 1770. His claim, situated on Robinson Run, extended from the western boundary of what is Chartiers Borough to Walkers Mills, a distance of two miles, and back to Thornburgs line, embracing in this one trace over one thousand acres."

"The Indians pillaged the cabin of Gabriel Walker, ripping open the beds, and taking such things as they wanted, set it on fire and burned it to the ground. They then

assembled for a general attack on the fort, which had just been started when providence again intervened, but the timely arrival of several men from Millers Run, among who was Capt. Joseph Casnet. The Indians after a consultation murdered the two younger boys, eight and twelve years old, in sight of the fort, and left their scalped and bleeding bodies upon the ground.”

“Then they departed in a northwesterly direction with their captives. *James seventeen, Martha, fifteen, and Mary, thirteen (This list is not in older version)*. After going a short distance they set fire to a cabin on Brackenridge farm, now owned by Miller and McBride. They continued their journey single file, and were extremely careful to cover' up their tracks so that the white man could not follow them. They cut the young ladies clothing at the knees to expedite traveling. In this way they journeyed on, camping that night at the head-waters of Robinson Run, where they feasted on green corn, which was visible to the settlers who followed their trail the next morning. Continuing on they reached the Ohio River at or near Logstown, where their canoes were hidden. All north of the river at that time was called Indian country, and few men had courage to explore its virgin soils, always going to it in a body and took care to be well armed." (Note:): With Logstown their place of rendezvous it is quite obvious that the Indians camped, and had their feast of green corn at the headwaters of the north branch of Robinson Run, which enters the main stream at Oakdale, Pa.”

“The news of the massacre and capture spread among the settlers, messengers were sent out far and near to the inhabitants, who gathered next day at the fort. A band numbering between forty and fifty men was organized, among them were John Henry, Ewing, Peter Hickman, and John Conners. After a consultation they appointed John Henry their leader. They then appealed to the bereaved mother who told them: "Go bring them dead or alive."

Note: Earlier in the narrative Mr., Walker mentions a Captain Joseph Casnet arriving at the fort with the settlers from Millers Run. This is no doubt Captain Joseph Casnet who is recorded in the Pennsylvania Archives as commanding Washington County Militia at that time, it was in Virginia not becoming part of Pennsylvania until 1785. The Militia Laws at that time, aside from their commission of rank, extended very little authority to officers. This fact coupled with the then burning political issue as to whether Capt. Casnet was a Pennsylvania or a Virginia adherent may account for the appointment of John Henry as leader of the party.

“They followed the trail with caution for fear of ambushade. But finally they reached the Ohio at Logstown, where they saw the Indians crossing the river, they fired upon the last canoe killing one and wounding another Indian. The prisoners did tell after their return home, that they were not all over the river when their rescuers came to it, but were hid in the brush and tree tops. The Indians with uplifted tomahawks threatened death should they make the least outcry. Sometimes the white men were so close they could almost touch them. The scalps of the two white boys were carried along by the Indians, and at night while sitting around their campfires, the prisoners were compelled to scrape the flesh from them in order to dry them. Not being pursued after they crossed the river, they traveled at their leisure toward Canada, and in about two weeks reached Detroit. They were kept until war ended, when they were exchanged for British prisoners. They were sent by sea to the port of Philadelphia. From there they crossed the mountains on

their way homeward, in rough road wagons, until they reached their parents, from whom they had been separated for two years, and who had given them up for dead. The joy of their meeting surely can only be imagined, not described by either tongue or pen."

"Young James Walker while with the Indians, often accompanied them in their expeditions, with their ponies and horses. On one occasion he was loading a horse belonging to a chief, when by some mischance the horse stepped on the foot of the chief. Smarting with pain, he turned and hit him on the head with his tomahawk, knocking him senseless. He soon recovered sufficiently to walk, but always afterward talked through his nose. He died on his farm near Hays Crossing, Pa. about the year 1844"

Note: Hays Crossing is the first railroad crossing east of Gregg Station near Rennerdale, PA..

"Some months after the narrated events, Bill Harkins and a slave belonging to James Ewing were killed by the Indians near present Gregg Station, while rounding up stray cattle."

(The following was included in the older version, but left out of the Citizen's Library version.)

"Mr. Walker's description of the property owned by James Ewing is not entirely in accord with the original patents before us. The crude sketch accompanying the patents seem to indicate that it did, however, extend south of Robinson run to the lines of the Nevilles and Glens, within the present Allegheny County Farm. He owned other tracts of land on the waters of Montour Run where he constructed a second grist mill in 1780. James Ewing was ruling elder of the Montour Presbyterian church from the time of its inception until his death in 1823. He was also the first Recorder of Allegheny County."

"We owe a debt to Isaac Walker for the narrative he has bequeathed to our use. Many wilderness tragedies went unrecorded. This is to our ever-lasting misfortune. The pen of Isaac Walker has, however, contributed to our understanding of the price of blood and treasure that our forefathers paid for the freedom we now enjoy."

(The following additional information was not present in the older version, which had to have been transcribed before Settler's Cabin Park came into existence.)

"Gabriel Walker's cabin is still in existence in Allegheny County, Pa. and is located in Settler's Cabin Regional Park, which is located on the property that Gabriel owned in 1772."

"Gabriel served in the Revolutionary War as 2nd Class/Pa. 2nd. Batt'n. Washington County Militia, under Capt. Joseph Cessna."

"Gabriel was much envolved (sic) in the "Whiskey Rebellion" in the fall of 1794 and was arrested by Washington's Army and taken to Philadelphia, along with his brother Isaac Walker, they were released on May 12, 1795 and allowed to return home after promising to pay the dreaded taxes that was imposed by the Continental Congress. It was

common for stills to be on the plantations of Western Pa., as this was sometimes the only source of hard currencies, which came mostly from eastern Pennsylvania."

"Gabriel Walker, born Dec. 5, 1735 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, died November 4, 1799 in Walkers Mill, Allegheny. County, Pa. Married Nov.19, 1761 in Octoraro, Pa. by the Rev. John Cuthbertson to Margaret Bell, born 1740 in Lancaster Co. Pa., died April 8, 1815 in Walkers Mill, Allegheny County, Pa. Both are buried at Union Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Robinson Twp. Allegheny County, Pennsylvania."

"James Walker, Sr., born 1765 in Lancaster Co., Pa., died 1845 in Allegheny County, Pa. married to Margaret Algeo, born 1771, died July 3, 1859 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. Daughter of William and Margaret (Levens) Algeo. He was captured by the Indians as a young man and held captive by the British until the end of the Revolutionary War, Both are buried in Union Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Allegheny County, Pa."

"Martha Walker, born 1767 in Lancaster Co. Pa. Married March 29, 1785 in Dauphin Co. Pa. to William Stewart, born Oct. 21, 1757 in Paxtang, Pa. died May 29, 1829 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. They had nine children. William Stewart served in the Revolutionary War as En/Pa.. Martha was taken captive by the Indians and held captive until the end of the war."

"Mary Walker, born 1769 in Lancaster Co. Pa. died prior to April 18, 1815 in Allegheny Co. Pa. married in Allegheny Co. Pa. to Matthew McGregor was born in Ireland, died after Aug. 28, 1830 and prior to April 11, 1831 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. Served in Revolutionary War 7th Class, in Capt. Joseph Cessna's Company in the 2nd. Batt. of Washington County Militia. Mary was taken captive by the Indians and held as a prisoner until after the war."

"Walker boy born 1770 in Lancaster Co. Pa. died Sept. 1782 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. He was killed by an Indian raid at age 12, when his brother and sisters were taken captive."

"Walker boy born 1774 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. He was killed by an Indian raid at age 8, when his brother and sisters were taken captive."

"Rebecca Walker, born ca 1777 in Allegheny Co. Pa. unmarried. Will probated Nov. 13, 1832."

"Jane "Jean" Walker, born ca 1781 in Allegheny Co. Pa. died 1850, unmarried, was mentally deranged. Buried Union Presbyterian Church cemetery."

"Gabriel Walker, born 1783 in Allegheny Co. Pa. died May 22, 1862 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. Married in Allegheny Co., Pa. to Elizabeth Walker, [first cousin] born 1786 died Sept. 22, 1862 in Allegheny Co. Pa.. They had three children. Both buried Union Presbyterian Church Cemetery."

"Margaret Walker, born ca 1785 in Allegheny Co. Pa. died 1859 in Allegheny Co. Pa., unmarried, buried in Union Presbyterian Church Cemetery."

Annotations of Nellie Hays Schall:

1. Mrs. Richardson had buried one child, a boy, in mountains near Ligonier, some say she had boy and girl.
2. This Mrs. Margaret Bell Walker (Mrs. Gabriel Walker) caught a colt that had never been ridden with baby in arms and other child held and rode to fort.
3. John Henry ancestor of Dr. Henry of Mercy Hospital, Pgh., Pa.
4. The three captured Walker children were bare foot.
5. Some say they went on Allegheny River then Genesee, then north to Canada.
6. Hays Station was named for James Hays whose large white frame house still stands (1955).

Old Citizen of Collier account. I found this account among my Aunt Nellie Hays Schall's papers. Where it may be found in a library I do not know.

UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF A PORTAIN (Sic) OF THE FIRST SETTLERS OF WESTERN PENNA.

About the year 1772 seven brothers named Walker came to western Pennsylvania. Two of them settled along the Monongahela river in the vicinity of McKeesport, where their descendents still reside. Three of them settled along Robinson's Run on the line of the Pan handle R. R. Of the three that settled here we shall only speak of two, namely, Gabriel and Isaac Walker. They purchased the land lying on said Run between Scot's Run and Pinkertons Run and as far back as they could hold on both sides, including about two thousands five hundred acres of land. They built log cabins and other improvements needed at that date. Isaac erected his at the mouth of Scot's Run, the present site of Walkers Mills. Gabriel erected his near what is now Hay's Crossing. They lived on in peace for ten or twelve years, clearing out and tilling the land, until in Sept. 1782, when a band of Indians made a raid on Gabriel's family. The children being out in the corn field chopping the ground for the purpose of sowing timothy seed. While their father was in after seed the Indians shot two little boys and took one boy and two girls prisoners. When the old man heard the shouts he was crossing the fence into the field, he turned and made down the ravine toward his brothers while his wife started for the fort with a little girl. But when a short distance up the hollow she thought of the sleeping babe who was lying in a sugar trough cradle and turned back to kiss it, when she went to the cradle it laughed. She snatched it from the cradle and took it with her up the hollow to the top of the hill and went screaming, Murder! Indians! along the river to the Fort, which some suppose to be on the property of old John Henry now, some on that of Col. Glenn, others on that of Dr. Sphar.

In the mean time Mrs. Isaac Walker had received intelligence of the Indians being in the neighborhood. She ran out and espied a colt on which never man sat, she put a bridle on it and took her two small children to the Fort. When the Indians had finished their work of

blood, they set fire to the cabin and razed it to the ground. They then started with their prisoners, proceeding up the stream in a north westerly direction. After going a short distance they set fire to a newly built cabin on the Brackenridge farm, now Miller and McBrides. When about two miles and a half further they heard the drums beating at the fort, being at the bottom of a steep hill they left their prisoners and retraced their steps to the top of the hill to ascertain where the sounds came from. The prisoners were too badly frightened to try to escape which would have been easy as the weeds were very tall. When passing through Jeffreystown they stole a side saddle and strapped it to the boys back and compelled him to carry it to Detroit. They crossed the Ohio River near Logtown now Aliquippa. They journeyed on at their pleasure, hunting and fishing. But the next morning there were forty well armed men on the ground where the murder was committed. The party was divided with regard to the matter as to what to do. They appealed to the bereaved Mother for a decision. She said, "Go bring them dead or alive!"

The party led by John Henry got on the trail, and when they reached the river all they saw was a canoe just landing on the opposite side. They fired a few shots at them, having no way to cross over they concluded to give up the chase and turned home, but the prisoners could afterward tell they were not all over the river. An Indian with the two little girls was hid in a tree top, with up raised tomahawk, daring them to speak under penalty of their lives. One of them afterwards told that John Henry had passed so close to her that she could have caught him by the leg. This certainly was a heart rendering trip. When they started they wished to know where they were to be taken. The Indians said, "Take you to the hanglish", meaning English. The children mistook them to say hang them and were expecting to be hung to every tree they passed, and worse than all, when sitting around the camp fires every night, the scalps of their little white haired brothers were placed on little dogwood limbs having four prongs on the end, for the purpose of keeping the scalps stretched until they would dry. But they stood it well walking all the way to Detroit, which took about two weeks, with the scanty clothing they had on, and no shoes to protect their feet from the thorny path. We would like to see some of the modern belles or young gents with their hair parted in the middle, under go such a trip as this

When a treaty of peace was ratified in 1783 the English gave up all their prisoners, these three children being among the number. They returned via Pittsburg in rough road wagons. The descendents of the two brothers that settled on Robinsons Run must now number upwards of fifteen hundred souls. Of the two who went farther west one settled on the Big Kanawha river and died there, the other is supposed to have settled in Kentucky. I being one in the line of descendents from these Old Settlers, and having received it from parents and they from theirs and never having seen any history of this, I have thought proper to put it in print, hoping that there may be others better posted, and would like much to have them correct it and also give publication of it.

Old Citizen Of Collier

Oakdale Sta. Alle. Co. Pa.

Howard L. Dinsmore and Alvin Dinsmore, 1976?, *The Dinsmores of Washington County, Penna.* p. 2. (Citizens Library, Washington, Pa.)

Rev. John Walker Dinsmore, grandson of Rebecca Walker, Gabriel's sister, recorded this version. He indicated that it was as told to him by his Grandfather John Dinsmore, son of James Dinsmore and Rebecca.

“These southwestern settlements for a number of years, had much trouble with the Indians. Even after they had been driven across the Ohio, the Indians made frequent forays, burning the cabins, laying waste the settlements, and massacring the people. I have heard my grandfather tell of such an invasion as late as 1784, when within a few miles of the present city of Pittsburgh the whole country was devastated by the sudden incursion of savages. He was a little fellow of five, and, with his two elder sisters and three little cousins, was playing in the edge of the clearing, while the parents were scutching flax across the ravine. The Indians broke from the woods, barbarously tomahawked two of his little cousins, and took their sister, a girl of fifteen, prisoner, while he and his sisters by swift flight escaped. The poor girl was kept in captivity, taken to Canada, there redeemed, brought back to Philadelphia and turned loose to find her way home across the mountains as best she could. She reached home after an absence of three years.”

Switzerland County, Indiana. Probate Book A, Page 429. 7 April 1834. (See W. Pa. Gen. Quart. 1982, Vol. 8, No. 3, p. 153.)

“George Reno, aged 83, entered service in 1776 for 2 months under Capt. Drennen; I 1776 he served 2 months in Capt. Zadock Wright's Company; 1777 served two months in Capt. Phillip Ross's Company; in 1778 served 2 months with Capt. Ross; in 1779 he served 2 months with Capt. Ross; in 1779 he served 2 months with Capt. Wright. He was born in Prince William County Virginia Sept. 1, 1751; then he lived in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Since that time he lived in North Carolina for 6 years; then he moved to Kentucky in 1793 for 3 years and then to Ohio for 20 years; and last has lived in Indiana for 19 years. He was drafted to serve 6 times and served as a volunteer scout. He served General Irwin and Captain Sullivan.”

“The following people were killed by the Indians while I was in service: John Smith, Patrick Moore, Richard Vaughn, Gabriel Walker's 2 sons and his daughters Martha and Mary were taken prisoners; George Turner was killed during the same time at a sugar camp. In 1776 I was stationed at Catfish Camp (now Washington, Pa.); in 1777 I was drafted on Chartiers Creek near Pittsburg and served two months at a camp on Monture's Bottom on the Ohio (river). Until 18 months ago I was an inhabitant of Dearborn County, Indiana.”

J.W., Commercial Gazette, about 1876. This account was written by a person with the initials J.W., who noted in this account that his or her father was one of those in the fort "at this time."

CAPTURED BY INDIANS,
**A LOCAL FAMILY, THAT SURVIVED
 AN INDIAN MASSACRE.**

Settlement of Walker's Mills-Surprised
 By Indians-Two Boys Murdered-Pur
 suit to the Ohio-The Prisoner's
 Return from Canada.

Special Correspondence of the Commercial Gazette.

WALKERS MILLS, PA., Feb. 23.-Tradition says the Walker family were of Scotch-Irish descent and that their ancestors were in the siege of Londonderry. Some time after this they emigrated to America and settled in Pennsylvania. Two brothers, Gabriel and Isaac Walker, were born in Lancaster county Pa., Gabriel in 1744 and Isaac in 1746. They emigrated West in 1772, purchased land from John Henry, who had a tomahawk claim Robinson's run, extending from Scotts run to Pinkertons run and as far back as the McMichael line, a tract. of nearly 2000 acres. Gabriel built his cabin near what is now Hay crossing, on the Panhandle railroad. Isaac erected his at the mouth of Scotts run, near the present site of Walkers Mills. In 1779 Isaac married a Mrs. Richardson, whose husband had been killed by Indians on the Loyalhanna. He brought his new wife to his Western cabin, where they settled down to the joys and hardships of pioneer life.

In September, 1782, a band of Indians, about twenty-five in number, approached the cabin of Gabriel Walker; they concealed themselves nearby intending to surprise the family while at dinner. Before this occurrence, however, the younger members of the family, including, a bound boy called Bill Harkin, were sent to hoe corn in a field near the house. A little later Mr. Walker started to the field, and. While on his way saw the Indians creeping towards his children, taking care to keep a haystack between them. He called to them the Indians were coming and they started to run, but were soon captured by the Indians. Five children were taken prisoners, but Mr. Walker made his escape. Two Indians pursued Bill Harkins, but he being swift-footed, ran to a cornfield, straight through it to Robinsons run, into which lie sprang and thus he also evaded his pursuers. He then ran and gave the alarm to the other family two miles away.

MRS. WALKER'S ESCAPE.

Mrs. Walker was in the house with two children when the alarm was given. She started to make her escape, snatching up her baby to run, but the other child, old enough to talk, said "Mother, don't leave me for the Indians." So the mother grasped them both, and under cover of the high weeds back of the house managed to conceal herself and so made her way to the fort.

Harkins, who had escaped and given the alarm to the family of Isaac Walker, was so much frightened that he thought the Indians were still at his heels. Accordingly they all

hid in a hazel thicket near at hand and remained hid for several hours. After reconnoitering and finding no sign of Indians, Mr. Walker bridled a colt that had never been ridden, and putting his wife and 2-year-old son on him they and young Harkins made their way to the fort. The site of this fort is disputed; some say it was on the farm of Dr. Spahr, but the writer of this article, whose father was in the fort at this time, always heard him say it was on the farm of Col. Glenn, of Pittsburgh, opposite the mouth of Robinsons run on Chartiers Creek.

The Indians pillaged the cabin of Gabriel Walker, ripping open the beds and taking such things they wanted, set it on fire and burned it to the ground. They then held a consultation and concluded that the two youngest boys would be too young to travel as they were only 8 and 12 years old; so they were murdered and scalped and their bleeding, bodies left upon the ground. They then started with their three captives—two young women, and a boy—in a north-westerly direction, After going a short distance they set fire to a cabin on the Breckenridge farm, now owned by Miller & McBride.

They cut the young ladies clothes off at the knees to expedite their traveling. In this way they journeyed on, camping one night on the headwaters of Robinsons run, where they feasted on green corn, the cobs of which were visible to the settlers who followed their trail a few days later. Continuing on they reached the Ohio river at or near Logstown, where their canoes were hidden. All north of the river at that time was called the "Indian Country" and very little was known of it.

A FRUITLESS PURSUIT.

The news of the massacre and capture spread among the settlers. Messengers were sent far and near to the inhabitant who gathered next day where the murder had been committed. The band numbered between forty and fifty men. They appointed John Henry as their leader. They followed the trail with caution for fear of an ambush, but finally they reached the Ohio at Logstown, where they saw the Indians crossing the river. They fired at the canoe not yet across, but one account could not tell whether any Indians were killed or not. Another account says one Indian was wounded at the river bank. When the whites ran up he held out his hand and said, "How do you do, Brother?" But the white men, regardless of mercy, killed him with his own bowie knife and brought home his scalp as a trophy. The prisoners said after they returned home that they were not all over the river when their rescuers came to it, but were hid in the brush and tree-tops, and the Indians with uplifted tomahawk threatened death should they make the least outcry. Sometimes the white men were so close they could almost touch them.

The scalps of the two little white-haired boys were carried along by the Indians. and at night while sitting around their camp-fires the prisoners were compelled to scrape the flesh from them in order to dry them. Not being pursued after they crossed the river they traveled at their leisure toward Canada, and in about two weeks reached Detroit. They were kept until the war was ended, when they were exchanged for English prisoners. They were sent by sea to the port of Philadelphia; from there they crossed the mountains on their way homeward in rough road wagons until they reached their parents, from whom they had been separated for two years and who had given them up as dead.

Young Walker while with the Indians often accompanied them on their expeditions with their ponies and horses. On one occasion he was leading a horse belonging to a chief, when by some mischance the horse stepped on the foot of the chief. Smarting with pain he turned and hit the boy on the head with his tomahawk, knocking

him senseless. The boy recovered, but always after talked through his noise (sic). He died on his farm at Hays Crossing about the year 1844.

J.W.

Group II.

Cushing, History of Allegheny County. Part II. 1889, A. Warner & Co., Chicago, p. 27.

This is one of the best-known versions of the attack.

“In September, 1782, a party of Indians, about twenty-five in number approached the cabin of Gabriel Walker, and concealed themselves near by, with the intention of surprising the family while at dinner. In the meantime two hunters approached and entered the house, and as they were well armed the savages thought it best to defer the attack until their departure. Visitors at that early period were not frequent, and the hospitalities extended them required a long time in the discussion of current events. And so, immediately after dinner, the younger members of the family, including William Harkins, an indentured boy were sent to the field, while Mr. Walker entertained his guests. Several hours passed in this manner, when the latter finally departed. The Indians rapidly closed in around the unsuspecting family, but their movements did not escape the practiced eye of Mr. Walker. He called to his children in the field to run, which they did, but only Harkins escaped, and the five others were captured. Hearing the alarm, Mrs. Walker seized the two children who were with her in the house and concealed herself until she could safely proceed to the fort. Mr. Walker also escaped. After pillaging the house and burning it to the ground, the Indians killed the two youngest captives, and set out with the three that remained, two young women and a boy. They then started out in a northwesterly direction, stopping that day long enough to burn the cabin of a Mr. Breckenridge. When the course of a stream coincided with direction of their journey, they waded its channel; when a fallen tree lay in their course, they walked its trunk, making their prisoners do the same.”

“Harkins, after making this escape, alarmed the family of Isaac Walker, and they also made their way to the fort, which was situated a short distance above the mouth of Robinson’s run. On the following day a body of men numbering forty or fifty collected at the scene of the massacre. Under the leadership of John Henry they set out in pursuit, and overtook the Indians as they were crossing the Ohio River. The captives were taken to a British post in the northwest, and returned upon the cessation of hostilities in 1784.”

Cushing, History of Allegheny County. Part II. 1889, A. Warner & Co., Chicago, p. 469.

This is from the biography section. There is one error in this account. “Mrs. Steivert” should be replaced with “Mrs. Stewart.” This Mrs. Stewart was Martha Walker wife of William Stewart.

J. Nelson Ewing, farmer, postoffice Oakdale Station, was born in Allegheny County, Pa., April 29, 1821, a son of William and grandson of Alexander Ewing. He was reared on a farm in Robinson township, and educated at the common schools. In 1844 he came to North Fayette township and purchased ninety acres of his present home. He married Margaret, daughter of Parker Lorain and granddaughter of Mrs. Steivert, who was a Miss Walker, and with her sister and brother was captured by the Indians. To Mr. And Mrs. Ewing three children have been born: Eliza Jane (Mrs. Bell), Anna (Mrs. Glass) and Amice M., attending school. Mr. Ewing is a highly respected citizen, has filled township offices and was justice of the peace ten years. He is a member of the U.P. Church; politically a staunch democrat”

History of Allegheny County. Part II. 1889, A. Warner & Co., Chicago, p. 469.

This is a second entry from the biography section.

“**William Glass**, farmer, postoffice Remington, was born in Robinson township in 1811, and has always lived there. His grandfather, Isaac Glass, came to America from County Armagh, Ireland, and was a merchant by occupation. Samuel was among the oldest of the children born to this pioneer, and about 1810 purchased one hundred acres of land in Robinson township. He followed farming, was extensively engaged in weaving, being the first person in the section who was able to do that kind of work. He married Jane, daughter of William Stewart. Mr. Stewart married Miss Walker, who was one of the three children taken by the Indians and held captive many months. To Samuel Glass and his wife nine children were born, all of whom grew to be men and women. Samuel died at the age of eighty-one years, his wife at age of seventy-eight. William, their second child, was educated at the log schoolhouse on the township, and has followed farming all his life, owning at one time three hundred acres of land. He married, in 1835, Sarah, daughter of Andrew McCurdy, and six children were born to them: Samuel, Lizzie, Hugh M., Lutitia, Rocsa and Emma. Mr. Glass was school director and tax collector for thirty years, and supervisor for twenty-five years. He is a member of the U.P. Church, and a republican.”

Emma Leila Glass. 1924. History of the Glass Family, 1744-1924, p. 5.

"Great-Great-Grandfather Walker

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, somewhere in Scotland there live a family of Scotch-Irish descent, by name Walker. They came to America and settled in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where in 1744 our Great-Great-Grandfather was born. In 1772, he purchased land and settled at Hays Crossing, now known as Rennerdale, Penna.

Although everything possible was done to escape the Indians' raids through the country, yet in September, 1782, five children from this home were captured by the Indians before they could reach the fort. The children were in the field helping their

father prepare ground for the sowing of timothy seed. While the father was in after the seed, the Indians shot two little boys and took their brother and two sisters prisoners. When the father heard the shots, he ran to the home of his brother to give the alarm, while the mother with two small children ran to the fort. The Indians set fire to the cabin and started with their little prisoners for the Ohio river. They crossed the river at Aliquippa and when the pursuing party reached the river all they saw was a canoe landing on the opposite side. But they had not all crossed the river, for an Indian, with the two girls, was hidden in a tree top so near to the path that the girls could have touched those who were passing; but the Indian with upraised tomahawk, dare them to speak under penalty of their lives. They walked all the way to Detroit, which took about two weeks, and were delivered to the English. When the treaty of peace was ratified in 1783 the English gave up the prisoners and the children returned home in road wagons."

Milton M. Allison. 1952. Robinson Run Sketches. I. Iffly "Ghost Town." Western Pa. Hist. Mag. 35, pp. 92-102. Contains verbatim version from Warner's History of Allegheny County with the following additional information.

pp. 95-97. "The land of Hugh H. Brackenridge, known by the classical name of 'Parnassus,' lay northwest of that of Gabriel Walker and also of the tract jointly owned by Isaac and Gabriel Walker, on the north side of Robinson run across from "Richland," by which name the Iffly farm was known. Apparently it was Hugh Brackenridge's cabin that was burned by the Indians on their trek toward the river. The Ohio was crossed, according to the traditional story told to the writer by Mr. J.J. Walker of Rennerdale, a descendant of Gabriel Walker, at what is now Stoop's Ferry, a short distance below the south end of Sewickley bridge. According to this same tradition, which the writer believes to be correct, it was at the river bank, when the several canoes were being loaded, that the murder of the tow youngest of the captured children, a boy and a girl, occurred. There was not boat-room for all the captives and the intention was to tow the youngest girl through the water by her hair. The little brother came to her defense and both children were slain and scalped. Their bodies were found at the riverside by the pursuers."

"According to Mr. J. Scott Walker of Walker's Mills, a descendant of Isaac Walker who lived there, the farmhouse at Iffly was built on the site of the original Gabriel Walker cabin, and capture of the workers in the field occurred somewhere in the bottom lands of the present day farm, now crossed by the railroad due east and west, but then skirted by Robinson run which there makes a long bend to the north."

"The distance of this spot from the western borough limits of Carnegie has been variously stated. Mr. Sipe refers to the scene of the tragedy as 'not far from the present town of Carnegie.' More specifically, the place is about four-and-a-half miles west of Carnegie. The 'bound boy' Harkins is reported by Mr. Sipe to have run two miles to Ewing's blockhouse, but following the course of the stream the distance is at least three miles. The boy's route was probably roundabout, through the woods, and consequently a longer distance."

"The Ewing blockhouse or stockade, as the case may have been, stood on the edge of Robinson Run directly across from the weathered log house with lean-to kitchen that stands at the foot of Lick Hollow to the left of Noblestown Road as one goes east

after crossing the concrete culvert nearest Hudson's Crossing on the railroad at West Carnegie. This log house was occupied by Mr. Charles M. Ewing's father, a son of the Colonel Ewing mentioned above. The grandson once told the writer that his (Mr. Ewing's) father, as a boy of fifteen or sixteen years, removed the last remaining logs of the old fort from that spot, at his father's orders, to make of them a pigpen at the top of Lick Hollow where another of the Ewings lived. The house that replaced the original Gabriel Walker cabin was owned by one of the Walkers when Iffly was in flower in the 1850's and '60's. At that time the barn was in good condition and the spring house had already seen many years of service. The house was burned to the ground about 1912—to be succeeded by the flimsy cottage that stands there now.”

p. 101. “The Walker school, still recalled by former pupils, the youngest of whom are now in middle life, stood on the east side of the new Pinchot road, about two blocks north of the Noblestown Road, on the McKown property. On their way to school the Iffly children left the Noblestown Road at the foot of Walker's lane (now the post-office corner in Rennerdale) and followed the lane (now Sunnyside Avenue) up through the orchard. Then they trudged northeast across the field (passing within sight of the old Walker family burying lot, where the murdered children of Gabriel Walker were buried), and emerged at the road near the Walker spring house.”

Milton M. Allison. 1952. *Robinson Run Sketches. II. The Nobles of Noblesburg.* *Western Pa. Hist. Mag.* 35, pp. 132-156.

“Depredations by the Indians, such as the raids of 1779, were a source of great fear to colonists on the western frontier during the unsettled period of the Revolutionary War, in which struggle the people in the Robinson Run region had a part and saw local action. It was in September 1782, that a band of about twenty-five redskins in the employ of “Head-hunter” Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit, raided the Gabriel Walker plantation, “Richland,” near the present Rennerdale, about five miles down the Run from Noblesburg. These Indian marauders burned the Walker home and killed two of the Walker children. Two young women and a boy were taken captive and removed to a British post in the northwest whence they were returned to Fort Pitt upon the cessation of hostilities in 1784.”

Group III. The publications in which these are printed are cited but not reproduced there, since there are many, and for the most part only reiterate the prior accounts.

Jordan, *Genealogical and Personal History of Western Pennsylvania*, Vol. 3, pp. 1490-1491. This account does not jibe with any of the others. In this account, Gabriel and his wife, not their children were captured. It is included here for completeness.

“The American life of the immigrant ancestor of this branch of the Walker family, Gabriel Walker, a native of Ireland, was, in part, of the most dangerous and thrilling nature. His original grant of land of which is now occupied by Noblestown, Pennsylvania, was from William Penn, and conveyed title to a tract twenty-five hundred acres in extent. The most primitive of conditions prevailed throughout this locality, and the long-lasting feud between the native American and white colonists had begun, so that in reality at the time eternal vigilance was the price of safety, and even the utmost precaution was no assurance against a superior force. While pursuing his daily business he and his wife were taken captive by a band of Indians and carried away to Canada, where they were held in slavery for three years before they escaped and returned to their home, where both died. Gabriel Walker was the father of a considerable family, one of his sons Gabriel, of who further.”

William A. White, Pittsburgh Press Staff Writer. (Date unknown, 1960's?) The following is a complete transcript.

Walker's Mills.

The black-and white cattle you see on many dairy farms hereabout are of the famed Holstein blood.

And the story is they were introduced into Allegheny County at Walker's Mills a little settlement in Collier Township west of Carnegie, by J.J. Walker, descendant of the first settlers in that area.

From the early Walkers and their grist mills, essential parts of a frontier settlement, the settlement gets its name. J.J. Walker, credited with the Holstein introduction, was a breeder-dairyman who imported most of his original stock. His farm was handed down from his great-grandfather, Gabriel Walker, one of the area pioneers.

Gabriel and his brother, Isaac, came from Lancaster County in 1772, two years after James Ewing had settled at the present Fort Pitt, then called Ewingville. The brothers bought 2000 acres of land, their tracts extending from Scott Run to Robinson Run.

Brought Supplies over Mountains

Isaac settled at what is now Walker's Mills; Gabriel near the present Rennerdale. To Isaac, young and unmarried, fell the task each spring of crossing the mountains for ammunition and other necessities which for lack of wagon roads was transported by pack horse.

His journey East had more import in 1779. That spring he married the young Lancaster County widow of William Richardson, who had been killed by Indians near Fort Ligonier two years before. He brought his bride back to his wilderness home at Walker's Mills.

Three years later, September 1782, Indians struck at the Gabriel Walker Farm, taking five children prisoner. They had evidently concealed themselves for an attack, as was their custom, while the family was having the noon meal, but two armed travelers, arriving at that time, probably delayed their strike.

Arrival of travelers at a frontier home was comparable to the delivery of your newspaper. They brought news.

When the meal was over the five children with a bound boy, went to the fields while their elders talked. When the men left, Mr. Walker started for the fields, spotted the Indians and shouted a warning. The bound boy, Bill Harkins, outran his pursuers but the five children were caught.

Wife, 2 Children Flee to Woods.

Mrs. Walker, in the cabin, heard her husband's warning, grabbed two small children under her arms and fled into the brush. Mr. Walker also escaped and with his wife arrived at Ewing's Fort, a few miles distant. Bill Harkins, en route to the fort, stopped to warn the Isaac Walkers, who joined him in flight.

Shortly the Indians, having pillaged and burned the Gabriel Walker home, were before the fort but arrival simultaneously of several men from Miller's Run. (Bridgeville), staved off attack and the Indians, in anger, killed two of the Walker children before departing.

A band of frontiersmen caught up with the Indians at the Ohio River and killed one as the band fled in canoes. When the Revolutionary War ended the three child captives, two girls and a boy, were freed and returned home.

Bill Harkins, the bound boy who escaped in the attack, was killed in a second Indian foray two months later near the present Gregg Station.

C. Hale Sipe. 1929. *Indian Wars of Pennsylvania*. Telegraph Press, Harrisburg, Pa. Pp. 671-672. In general, I have not included most secondary accounts, but these versions are cited so often, I thought I should.

The Walker Tragedy-Attack on Ewing's Blockhouse

In September 1782, about twenty-five Indians approached the cabin of Gabriel Walker near Robinson's Run, in the southern part of Allegheny County, not far from the present town of Carnegie, and concealed themselves with the intention of surprising the family while at dinner. Fortunately some travelers, with guns, came to the Walker home just at this time, causing the Indians to delay their attack. When the travelers had taken their departure, and while the younger members of the family and an apprenticed boy, named William Harkins, were working in a field some distance from the house, the Indians, coming from their place of concealment, captured five of the Walker children, and pursued William Harkins, who made his escape to the fort or blockhouse of James Ewing, two miles away, and gave the alarm. Mrs. Walker, seeing the Indians approach, made her escape with her infant and another small child to the high weeds back of the house, and then fled to Ewing's fort. Mr. Walker also made his escape to this place of refuge. In the meantime, William Harkins, while running to the fort, passed the cabin of Isaac Walker, gave him the alarm, and thus enabled him and his family also to, escape to the fort. After burning the home of Gabriel Walker, the Indians assembled for an attack on Ewing's fort or blockhouse. Just then several men from Miller's Run, among whom was Captain Joseph Casnet, arrived at Ewing's. After a consultation, the Indians murdered two of the captive children of Gabriel Walker in sight of the blockhouse, boys aged eight and twelve, respectively, and left their bleeding bodies on the ground.

The Indians then departed in a northwesterly direction, taking with them Gabriel Walker's two daughters and a son. The news of the murders and capture soon spread through the neighborhood, and a band of about fifty settlers, among whom were James Ewing, John Henry, Peter Hickman and John Conner, pursued the Indians, and fired upon them as they were crossing the Ohio at Logstown, killing one and wounding another. The three Walker children returned to their parents after the Revolutionary War, according to the "Narrative of the Walker Family," written by Isaac Walker, III, now in the possession of Charles M. Ewing, of Washington, Pa., a descendant of James Ewing.

H. H. Brackenridge, in a letter recorded in the first volume of Loudon's "Indian Narratives," mentions the murder of the Walker children, and says that, at about the same time, other atrocities were committed in what is now Allegheny County, among them being the murder of two boys, named Chambers, in a corn field within three miles of Fort Pitt and on the south side of the Ohio. He seems to indicate that the Walker tragedy took place in 1781, instead of 1782 as set forth in Isaac Walker's "Narrative."

McClure, Marie. 27 Dec. 1973. "Murderous attacks are recalled as 200 year-old house is renovated." This is from a newspaper in the Pittsburgh area, possibly Beaver County. I have two copies of this clipping, but no one managed to write its origin on either.

"It was with interest that we learned of the gift of an ancient log house constructed in 1762 to the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation. This, we thought, would be something to see.

Accordingly, we set out to view the building, finding it situated in nearby Collier Twp., Allegheny County, southwest of Greater Pittsburgh Airport between Noblestown Rd. and Robinson Run and the Pennsylvania Central Railroad.

The house, in spite of its treat age, appears amazingly sturdy and quite suitable for its intended use, a meeting place for civic groups and Foundation members. Nearly one-half acre of land at the rear will provide future parking and recreation facilities. An accompanying gift of \$2,400 for renovations, plus a yearly cash grant for maintenance insures continuing care. Renovations and furnishings are hoped to be completed by spring.

Mrs. Jane Rovensky Ewing Grace, donor, has revealed the fascinating history of this house which I pass on to our readers.

Two ancestors of Mrs. Grace were Isaac Walker Sr., and Gabriel Walker who took up a Tomahawk claim when they were still bachelors and built the present three story log house.

The house, dated 1763 on the upper large triangle stone chimney, was finished about 25 years later. It is all dove-tailed and English fort architecture. They never moved into the house, but kept it for frontiersmen to sleep in and use temporarily. They bought many claims in this section, but this one was the first, and had never gone our of the family's possession.

These two ancestors finally settled at Walkers Mills. They must have been in this locale for quite sometime before 1762 as it is known their father, John Walker, and his wife, Mary, were also here.

In the Warrantee Atlas, in the Historical Schenly Library, it states that the Walkers and Ewings were the first permanent settlers in this township. James Ewing's grants comprised 2,000 acres, 12 miles from the Point.

In September 1782 about 25 Indians approached the log cabin of Gabriel Walker near Robinson's Run and concealed themselves with the intention of surprising the family while at dinner. Fortunately, just at this time, some travelers, with guns, came to the Walker home causing the Indians to delay their attack. When the travelers had taken their departure, and while the younger members of the family and an apprentice, named William Harkins, were working in the fields some distance from the house, the Indians, coming from their place of concealment, captured the Walker children.

They pursued William Harkins who made his escape to the Fort of James Ewing, two miles away and gave the alarm. Mrs. Walker, with two small children, made her escape to the high weeds behind the house and then fled to Ewing's Fort. Mr. Walker also made his escape to this place of refuge. In the meantime, William Harkins, while running to the Fort passed the cabin of Isaac Walker, and gave the alarm, thus enabling him and his family to also escape to the fort.

After pillaging and burning the home of Gabriel, the Indians attacked Ewing's Fort. However, several men from Mills Run, among whom was Captain Joseph Casnet, arrived at Ewing's Fort and after due deliberation and consultation in which they tried to negotiate with the Indians to no avail, the Indians murdered one of the captured children of Gabriel Walker in sight of the blockhouse.

The Indians then departed taking with them Gabriel's two daughters and a son. The news of the murders and the capture soon spread through the neighborhood and a bank of about fifty settlers, among whom were John Ewing, John Henry, Peter Hickman and John Conner, pursued the Indians, and fired upon them as they were crossing the Ohio at Logstown, killing one and wounding another.

The three captured children were taken to an English camp in Canada and were returned one year and nine months later to Philadelphia. Martha married William Stewart of Harrisburg and became the great, great grandmother of Mrs. Grace.

It is said one of the Walker brothers owned the Point at one time and traded it for a good penknife. Reportedly he said "There will always be plenty of land, but a good penknife was a good penknife, and I could use it!"

William Ewing Sr., Mrs. Ewing's maternal great grandfather, was known as Squire Ewing, born 1784 and died 1865. His wife was Jane Walker, born 1764 and died 1852, daughter of Isaac Walker, of Walker's Mills. It was this union that brought the "Log House" into the Ewing family. It was a gift to Jane from the Walkers who had always owned it. William and Jane lived in the log house with their six children.

It was during this time that the Pennsylvania Railroad's main division west to Chicago, St. Louis and Cincinnati was built through the farm. The railroad went broke at this point and several representatives of Robinson Run loaned the railroad \$6,000 cash. They received bonds to be paid them with interest on a certain date. A few of the families were paid after entering many claims, but William Ewing was never paid anything!

The Log House has remained in the Ewing family through the years until this time.

Van Trump, James D. 1975. "The Walker-Ewing Log House." Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation. (Pamphlet.) This is not included here.
