

CHRISTINA SYCKES AFFAIR

(Courtesy of Karen Bridgeman)

In Greene County, Pa., about the year 1783, Enoch Enix Sr. was living in a cabin with his wife and infant son, Enoch Jr.. They were located 1 mile north of lands owned by Conrad Syckes.

Conrad had emigrated from Germany in 1760 and settled in Monongahela Twp., on the waters of Rocky Run approximately 2 miles from the mouth of Dunkard Creek.

For several days that year rumors of prowling Indians had been circulating in their settlement. Consequently many settlers had removed themselves and their families to places of safety.

Syckes, however, chose to remain rather than abandon his home. One of his neighbors, Leonard Garrison (a collateral line to the Bissett family), arranged with Syckes daughter, Christina, then about 10 years old, to milk his cows during the Garrison's absence.

One evening Christina, with some reluctance and feelings of foreboding, gathered the milking pail which she hung upon a post and headed to the sounds of the cow bell tolling about three hundred yards northward, in the sugar camp. She was quickly driving the cow homeward when she was startled by a noise close behind.

Looking around she saw two Indians running towards her, both with faces grotesquely painted in black and red. Frozen with fear and unable to flee, she was captured by the braves and spirited away into the forest.

As the evening shadows began to fall and Christina failed to return home, her parents' greatest fears were being realized. Grasping his rifle, Syckes sped to the home of his neighbor, Enoch Enix Sr. to enlist his aid. Enoch, probably sensing the futility of reclaiming the girl that night, tried to console the father. Conrad, dejected, began to retrace his steps, whereupon Enoch undoubtedly felt a wave of heartlessness.

According to published accounts he turned to his wife "with a babe on her knee" and stated, "Really it is too bad to treat neighbor Syckes in this way, when he has come to ask such a favor of me. I believe I will go and help him find his girl." Securing his rifle and saddling his horse, Enoch quickly caught up with his saddened neighbor.

After proceeding for a distance, Syckes cautioned that he thought he spied a wolf. The image disappeared from view and they continued on their way. When they arrived within about 200 yards of Syckes' house, two shots were quickly fired and Enoch, a few paces ahead, fell from his horse mortally wounded. Conrad Syckes was able to detour from the path, thereby alluding the Indians, and arrived safely home. His 18 year old son Henry and his friend George Selsor, among others, were waiting for him.

The entire family, and those present when Conrad arrived, immediately set out for the safety of the nearest fort beyond the river, taking with them the wife and infant of Enoch Enix Sr..

After crossing the safety of the river, the balance of the party pursued a somewhat unperilous journey to the fort, while Henry and George retraced their steps to spread the alarm to remaining settlers. When they reached the river, they found a cabin situated on the bank which was engulfed in flames. Sensing the Indians presence could not be far away they hurried on. Soon they reached, and crossed, the mouth of Dunkard Creek to the home of Lane Robinson. His wife was alone with their infant.

She was convinced by the young men to flee into the woods and on to the fort, which she did...and arrived safely. As the men entered Levi Titus' meadows, they met the father, Lane Robinson. In fear for his wife and child, who were then on their way to the fort, Robinson would not heed the warnings of Henry and George but sped off to his home. He was shot and killed by Indians before reaching his destination.

Finally arriving at Fort Selsor, Henry and George met with a hastily formed council. It was quickly decided to abandon the place and seek the more adequate protection of Fort Swearingen.

The Selsor Fort party set out and, unmolested, crossed the river near the Dilliner home and on to the safety of Fort Swearingen.

The next morning a party returned across the river to view the remains of the atrocities. Enoch Enix Sr. was found, scalped and in a dying condition where he fell from his horse. Lane Robinson was found, near his home, lifeless and horribly mangled, naked and scalped.

Little Christina Syckes, meanwhile, was on a long and toilsome march as a captive of the Indians. She and the band eventually crossed the Ohio River at the mouth of Grave Creek (where Brice and Leah would live years later) and passed up Captina Creek on the way to their large, inland town.

Christina would remain a captive for 22 years and 6 months. By some arrangement of the government, she was finally liberated at Detroit and returned to her friends. Never quite ridding herself of the Indian education she had endured, Christina nonetheless lived with her friends until a ripe old age. When she died in 1844, Christina was buried at or near Clarksburg, West Virginia.

footnotes: Information for the above narrative was largely obtained from the publication *Pioneer History of Greene County, Pa....* by L.K. Evans (1941). In newspaper accounts appearing in Greene County in the mid 1800s, various survivors of the incident and their offspring were interviewed including Henry Sycks. All the accounts agree with the publication of L.K. Evans. Some contain more vivid details of the injuries of Enoch Enix Sr..

(Taken from my Description Of Brice Enochs/Eneix publication.....Karen Bridgeman)

