

## THE LITTLE CAPTIVE

By Andrew Simon

One-hundred and some thirty years ago there lived, east of the mountain near Shippensburg, in Cumberland County, Pa., some forty miles southwest from Harrisburg, a family of German, or Swiss, descent, the parents of the subject of our story. In those days the white settlers of that region were never safe from being molested by gangs of Indians prowling over the country for plunder. They would often set fire to the houses, kill the inmates or take them captive. Even farmers while reaping their grain were not safe. They frequently had guards placed round the fields to protect them. This was in the "Good Old Times" of which people sometimes speak.

It was in the Spring of 1764, sugar-making time, that the subject of our story was taken captive by the Indians. He was at the time in a sugar camp, or orchard, alone--either gathering sap or overseeing the boiling of the same. While thus occupied he was spied by a gang of those roving Indians. When Andrew, for this was the name of the subject of our narrative, a youth of about 12 years old, first saw the Indians, he started for the house, thinking he could outrun an Indian, but was soon overtaken. He was placed in care of a few of the gang who proceeded with their prisoner, while the others went to the house in pursuit of more victims or plunder. But those at the house had seen the Indians after little Andrew, and so lost no time looking after their safety. They left everything and started for the Fort, about seven miles distant. The Indians, finding no one at the house, quietly seated themselves on the wood pile in front of the house, awaiting the coming home of the family.

Michael, the oldest of the boys, had been away on horseback, and came home before the Indians had left. He saw men in front of the house, but not being aware that Indians were about, he took them to be white soldiers. A short distance from the house he had to go through a pair of bars. After he was over, and the bar rails laid up and he was on horseback again, he noticed that the men at the house were Indians. Here there was no time to be lost, so he wheeled his horse about, made him spring over the bars, and made for the Fort. Seeing that their victim would come no nearer, they opened fire on him. He said afterwards that he heard one bullet pass his head, one strike the ground in front of him, and one struck his horse. He got to the Fort all right, but the horse died from the wound. The Indians, failing to secure any more victims, set fire to the house and burned it to the ground with its contents.

But to return and follow our Captive. As the gang that had him under guard proceeded, they came to a place in the forest where a small cabin had been erected. The smoking chimney, and the barking of a small dog, were good evidence that there was somebody there. Two of the Indians, with tomahawks in hand, started to the cabin, knocked in the door and entered; after a short interval they returned without molesting anything, and the gang proceeded.

After our captive had been released and returned to his home, he saw the man who lived in said cabin, who told him that he had been married a short time before and had just set up house-keeping; that, hearing the dog bark, they looked out of the window and saw the Indians and, as there was not time to lose, they took refuge under the bed. The Indians did not find them in their hiding place. The man thought if the Indians had not made such a racket, they might have heard their hearts beat.

The gang then proceeded, following their trails westward across the mountains, plundering, destroying property, and taking prisoners as they went. Among other prisoners was a woman with an infant child to carry. Either the child was too annoying to them or they were fearful that the woman would not hold out. Anyway, they took the child from its mother and stayed back of the rest of the company; and they saw no more of the child.

When they got to the river, perhaps the Youghiogheny, the prisoners were put in a boat of some kind and enough men to manage it and the prisoners; while the others went across the country either to commit further depredations or to convey the stolen horses etc. that they could not carry in the boat. Passing down the river past Fort Pitt, now Pittsburgh, which was then in possession of the Colonial force, the prisoners had to lie down in the boat, so as not to be detected. It was after night when they passed Fort Pitt; they proceeded down the Ohio River, and across country to where the Indians had their settlements. And this was to be the home of "The Captive."

Of course our captive never knew just what part of the country those Indian settlements were, but had the idea that it was somewhere near Chillicothe, the county seat of Ross County now. He was satisfied that it was where now the State of Ohio is. But the writer's idea is that it was not so far in the southwest of Ohio, but that it was in the neighborhood of New Philadelphia, on the Tuscarawas River, and thinks history will sanction this idea, as will be seen further on in our story.

Well, here in the midst of a settlement of savages, we now find our little Andrew, separated by the mountains and rivers from parents, brothers and sisters, and all the comforts of home. Let us see how he fared here. As was the custom of those tribes in those days, Andrew was given to an Indian mother who had lost a son in war. He used to call her his Indian Mother. She had some knowledge of the English language and Andrew soon acquired quite a knowledge of the Indian tongue, so she could soon make him understand what she wanted, and sent him on errands. And in a short time he became the delight of his Indian Mother. He used to say she was good to him also kind; that she would often take food from her children and give it to him with the remark that they were more used to being hungry than the whites.

She also placed considerable confidence in her white boy. She had a cow and the milking and caring for her she entrusted to him. In the evening the cow had to be brought in, milked and tied for the night, to have her to milk in the morning. Although his Indian mother was good to him and

shared what she had, yet often he suffered hunger. In later years when his children complained of being hungry, he would tell them that they knew not what it was to be hungry.

It was now the summer time, and he mostly slept outside their tents; he said their hides--bear and deer--were so infested with vermine [sic] that he could not sleep on them. He would improve this state of things at times, when the Indians were asleep, to help himself to some milk from the cow to quench his craving hunger. Our lad had to endure many privations of mind and body, among which the enjoyments of home were not the least--the company and pleasure of parents, brothers and sisters, and other comforts of home life which his new associates could not fill.

The Indians lived sumptuously when they had it; at other times, at fasting rate. The tribe our youth was with did some farming, raised some corn at least. The women did the farming. The men did the hunting and fighting. When the corn was in roasting ears, they would have a general feast to which the old and young, disabled and poor, were invited. The men provided the game and the women did the cooking of it and the roasting of the corn. After all were ready, the old and poor partook of the repast first; and after all were through eating, the rest was put into baskets for the old and poor to take home with them.

The writer does not remember that our captive had much to say about the religion of the Indians; only he told his children how he had seen his Indian mother pay her obligations to the Great Spirit, in that she knelt by a small fire and was looking heavenward and saying something--which he could tell by the moving of her lips. She would throw bits of tobacco into the fire. This is nearly all that is left of the tradition of our Captive from the time he was taken captive, the route he was led forth, and how he fared with his savage associates.

After he had a family he would often tell his children of his life with the Indians, their ways of living, and at times talk in the Indian language to them for their amusement.

He had it better than some other little white prisoners he got acquainted with. Another squaw would sometimes come to see his Indian mother, accompanied by her little white prisoner--when the conversation would be about their boys. When our captive's mother would relate how smart her boy was, then the other mother would club her captive clear out of sight--who was a little dull and slow in understanding her.

But as always intimated, our Captive was liberated and returned to his parental home. He was with the Indians from Spring until Fall. In November, some nine months, according to tradition--as related from generation to generation--his liberation and return was as follows: "Fort Pitt was then in possession of the Colonial forces, from where a message and an army was sent to the Indian settlements, demanding the liberation of all the white prisoners, as a condition of peace, or the destruction of their towns and property if they refused. The Indians having been subdued to some extent before, thought best to comply with the demand. Thus all the white prisoners were brought together and delivered up." Our Captive thought two hundred and seventy five in number.

Many of the Indians accompanied them and supplied them with game all the way to Fort Pitt. But many of the prisoners, having been captured in their childhood and grown up among the savages, were so accustomed to the Indians that they could hardly be induced to improve the opportunity to return to the kinfolds, and even after they were started, some ran off and returned to the Indians.

Some of the Indians were also very much attached to the white captives. Our captive related how his Indian mother tried to persuade him to come back again and stay with the Indians, where he would not have to work like the whites did. And when he left, she cried that you could have heard her at a great distance.

Now the story goes on and tells about when the army with the prisoners arrived at Fort Pitt, the forces there encamped--to give expression to their joy--discharged a great number of cannons.

But here the tradition as it has been handed down to the writer--a grandson of the said Captive--closes. Tradition says nothing about how the prisoners were conducted to their respective homes or how they were received by their relatives and friends generally.

[Twelve paragraphs were omitted here, relating incidents taken from a German work entitled "In Der Neuen Heimath" [In the New Homeland], a book devoted to the remembrance of the German Society of New York.]<sup>1</sup>

Here I will close by saying that this young captive with the Indians was Andrew Simon, second son of John Adam Simon, the great ancestor of the Simon family of the United States of America. The same who, some forty years later entered a section of land in Columbiana County, Ohio, and the grandfather of the writer.

Andrew Simon  
Lisbon, Ohio  
Sept. 20th, 1895

Copied by Margaret M. Simon  
Summer 1967

From: a typed copy by Lucille Patterson, Struthers, Ohio. Miss Patterson copied it from a history of the Simon-Schauweker families, written in 1933 by Alberta S. Herrold, Beaver Falls, Pa.

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<sup>1</sup>Ed. note: Miss Patterson thinks the twelve omitted paragraphs are included in the history. No effort has been made to locate a copy of the Simon-Schauweker history, but the library in Beaver Falls, Pa., probably has one. M. Simon.