

History of Big Spring Cemetery
Kerrs Creek
Compiled by Sarah Clayton

On a gentle rise above the Big Spring in Kerrs Creek lie the remains of some of the earliest Europeans, mostly Scots-Irish Presbyterians, to settle on the banks of Kerrs Creek in the early 18th century, then the untamed frontier of the New World. The names of those known to be buried herein--McKee, Weir, Moore, Gilmore, Laird, Cunningham, McCown, McHenry, Hamilton, Dougherty, Dunlap, Lam, Dixon, Fix, Logan, Stilson, Harper, McConnel, Blacks, Irvin, Newcomer-- live on still in Rockbridge County, if, at times, only as middle names.

The cemetery, often called the McKee Cemetery or the McKee Burial Ground, is mostly referred to today as the Big Spring Cemetery, and was, until recently, under the auspices of the nearby New Monmouth Presbyterian Church. It is now owned by James "Buddy" Powers of Big Spring Farm.

Many of the families buried herein came from the lowlands of Scotland, often by way of the Plantation of Ulster in Northern Ireland (thus the name Ulster Scots, formerly Scotch Irish) created in 1609 by the English King James I (1603-1625), to lure in the Presbyterian Scots to help temper the rebellious Irish Catholics. Many of the children and grandchildren of those earliest emigrants decided to move on beginning around 1725 when conditions on the Plantation became untenable due to newly imposed economic sanctions, religious intolerance, and, in 1740, famine

The journey to the New World was harrowing, life below decks crowded, fetid and disease-ridden from lack of decent sanitation, with never enough food and water. All going well, crossing the 3000 miles of ocean took three months but bad weather could delay arrival for much longer, which meant death from disease and starvation for many. One ship in 1732 got stalled by weather for six months and of its 150 passengers, only 50 remained when they reached Philadelphia. And then they had find a place to live, food to eat, and jobs.

The people of Philadelphia got so distraught at seeing the ragged, sickly appearance of the newly arrived that they forced laws to be passed with specific space requirements for passengers—two feet by six feet for adults and half that for children, so the practice of cramming the in-coming ships with far too many people was theoretically halted, and trans-Atlantic conditions slightly improved.

If the trip used up all the immigrants' available funds paying for food, families were often broken up immediately upon arrival to become indentured servants to work off the cost of their passage. Land around Philadelphia was quickly bought up, then resold at prices most immigrants couldn't afford

Between 1710 and 1775 some 200,000 people emigrated from the Plantation of Ulster to America, most arriving in the port of Philadelphia to then disperse south to cheaper and more available lands in Virginia and the Carolinas along the Appalachian range of mountains.

This is the back story to some of the deceased lying here, many in unmarked graves. It is assumed that some, after all their travails of actually getting to the banks of this small creek, became victims of the Shawnee raids on Kerrs Creek in 1759 and 1763, the last major conflicts between settlers and indigenous people in this part of Virginia. And are buried here.

The Shawnee of the Ohio Territory, riled by the French and Indian War (1744-1763), and the invasion of Europeans moving ever further west, came over North Mountain in an attempt to discourage the influx of settlers on their lands. The 1759 attack by 27 Shawnee might well have been a rogue band of Indians heading back to the Ohio Valley and just looking for a fight, like rival towns on football night.

Kerrs Creek at that time was an established, highly functioning community, practicing a mixed agriculture of grains—corn, rye, wheat, oats, barley, buckwheat and hay. Livestock consisted of horses, sheep, cattle and hogs. They had a meeting house built in 1748 several miles east on U.S. 60 from Kerrs Creek, one of the earliest religious establishments in this area.

The best account we can ever hope to have of the raids at Kerrs Creek comes from the Rev. Samuel Brown who, in 1872, just over 100 years after the last of two battles, pulled together interviews he'd done 20 years earlier with descendants of some of the people involved in the gruesome events.

“It is a matter of surprise,” he wrote in his article’s introductory paragraph, “that no account of this awful scene has ever been published. The effort which I now make to preserve from total loss this interesting event in the history of my native county is drawn...from the most authentic sources to which I could find access, namely; conversations with aged people living on the Creek and elsewhere, a number of whom were descendants of those who suffered. I will state as facts only such matters as were related to me as such. It is not always possible to say whether the thing related occurred at the first or second invasion. The persons stating the facts, were not themselves, always certain.”

“They (the Kerrs Creek settlers) were engaged with their characteristic industry and enterprise in clearing and cultivating their new homes (that morning of October 10, 1759), and thought themselves safe from the dangers of more exposed parts of the country. “

Earlier that day Robert Erwin had counted 27 Indians coming over North Mountain headed down into the Kerrs Creek Valley. Two Telford boys on their way home from school earlier in the week had seen a “naked man,” which had caused a frisson of concern—Pioneer John McKee and his pregnant wife, Jane “Jennie” Logan McKee, two of the community’s earliest settlers, had sent their six older children to Timber Ridge, just in case. But it wasn’t that uncommon to see Native Americans wandering through the area from time to time—the valley was their communal hunting ground and had

been for years untold—so life on Kerrs Creek was going on pretty much as usual. It was the end of the harvest, and the gathering in of winter’s supplies was of immediate urgency.

“They (the Native Americans”) could see the smoke of the white man’s abode,” wrote Rev. Brown, “and mark the encroachment upon what they claimed as their hunting ground, given to them by the ‘Great Spirit.’ With passions thus excited, they were prepared for the deeds of blood before them that day. Hastening down the mountain, they were soon at the head waters of the Creek.”

The first house they attacked was that of Charles Daugherty (also Dougherty 1716-1759), who’d bought 128 acres on Tees Creek (as Kerrs Creek was first known), probably in the 1730s though the title wasn’t recorded until years later (Feb. 13, 1756) as was the case with many of the deeds of transaction in the sale of lands in the Borden Grant. Some were still unrecorded when Benjamin Borden and his son, also Benjamin, died in 1743 and 1753 respectively.

The Daugherty cabin was said to be in Denmark, a settlement in upper Kerrs Creek close to North Mountain. Charles was married to Rebecca Cunningham. The Indians killed the entire family though no children are listed as buried with Charles and Rebecca in the McKee Cemetery who share the same death date—Oct. 10, 1759.

Daugherty had been born around 1716 in Lagan Valley, Donegal, Ireland, one of three sons of Michael Mor O’Daugherty Sr and Catherine Rogers O’Daugherty. (“O” in the

name is Gaelic for “descendent of” and “mor” means “great, chief, mighty or proud.”). With his parents, brothers, Michael and William, and several uncles and in-laws, 12-year-old Charles landed in New Castle, Delaware (then part of Pennsylvania) on December 10, 1728, another major port of incoming European immigrants in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ten years later, the Daughertys came down the Valley to Kerr’s Creek and in 1745, when Charles was 29, got title to 129 acres on Tees Creek, as Kerrs Creek was first called, “between House Mountain and North Mountain.” Daugherty witnessed a deed for James Cunningham for 100 acres on Tees Creek, cornering the land of Moses Cunningham. It’s possible the Daugherty and Cunningham families had come together as at some point between leaving for Virginia, Charles and Rebecca got married.

The next house attacked by the Shawnee was the Jacob Cunningham place which Rev. Brown locates at the Moore-Harper house across from the early 19th century Madison Dunlap House about a half mile west of Big Spring overlooking Rt. 60.

Rev. Brown has Jacob Cunningham away from home when the Native Americans raided his home but the Big Spring Cemetery has a Jacob Cunningham listed with an Oct. 10, 1759 death date but no birth date. One account said Cunningham had eight children who were away with their mother at Timber Ridge Church at the time so it doesn’t seem that the Jacob buried here was one of those children, though perhaps one or more children were older and didn’t go with the mother.

All accounts tell of a ten-year-old Cunningham girl being struck down, scalped and left for dead. She recovered, only to be captured in the second raid four years later and taken off to the Shawnee lands in Ohio with other members of the Kerrs Creek Community. There the Indians put what they claimed was her old scalp on her head and danced around mocking her.

As part of the Treaty of Paris that ended the French and Indian War, the Native Americans were required to return all white prisoners. The Cunningham girl came back to Kerrs Creek and lived for another 40 years after the attack before dying of complications from the scalping. "These strange facts I learned from her niece twenty years ago," writes Brown.

After scalping the 10-year-old Margaret Cunningham in the first raid, and leaving her for dead, "the Indians next came to the house of Thomas Gilmore, (being on the land) where his great-grandson, Captain W. C. Gilmore now lives (1872)," writes Rev. Brown. "The old gentleman and his wife were just starting from home to visit a neighbor. They were both killed and scalped and the house burned. The rest of the family escaped.

It was the original Gilmore land that Sara Virginia Lapsley and her first cousins Harvey and the late Harold Hotinger and their late sister Josephine Hotinger McCown grew up on. Sara Virginia runs a full scale cattle operation, with help from her son-in-law, on her childhood home, "Mountainview," tucked out of sight over the hill from her cousins' farm, NW from Big Spring about half a mile. Their mutual ancestor, great-Grandfather

Abraham Hotinger had come down from Pennsylvania, and was farming his wife's land over in the Collierstown area on the south side of House Mountain when the Gilmore place came up sale in the mid-1800's. Abraham bought this prime, fertile bottomland, and the Gilmores, one of the original Kerr's Creek families, slowly disseminated westward. The Hotingers gained a reputation for being superior farmers, running a "tight, efficient operation."

Across from the Moore-Harper house, on the future site, some 100 years later, of Madison Dunlap's fine brick home, was the cabin of Robert Hamilton. The final resting place of Madison Dunlap and his wife, Hanna McKee, are the two most imposing tombstones still standing in the Big Spring Cemetery.

Hamilton was 39 years old at the time of the raid and had emigrated to America with the three McKee brothers. He and his family were going about their usual daily chores when the Native Americans attacked and killed five of them, the other five fleeing into the woods. In the Big Spring Cemetery lie three of his children, Joseph and Robert Hamilton Jr., and their sister, Mary, nine at the time, who would be killed at 13 years old in the second raid and buried alongside her brothers. Both mother and father seem to have survived both raids although Robert Sr. is listed as having two wives, both named Margaret, the second being Margaret McKee.

"This was a large family of ten members and one-half of their numbers fell victims to the fury of the savages," wrote Rev. Brown. But Hamilton's house was apparently the

farthest down the valley the Native Americans ventured. "Perhaps," conjectures Brown, "their thirst for the white man's blood was satisfied for the present. Or, what is more probable, as the alarm was now rapidly spreading, they feared to venture further with so small a band of warriors."

When Madison Dunlap married Martha Hanna McKee in 1834, the two families merged for the first time.

The Dunlaps came to this area from Campbelltown, on a western peninsula of the southern Scottish mainland, and from Dunlop, a small village in southwestern Scotland. Both branches are related through a common ancestor, William Dunlop.

Captain Alexander Dunlop, born 1716, was the son of Alexander and Antonia Brown Dunlop, holder of the ancestral lands around the village of Dunlop until the English took them away for his being an unrepentant Covenanter, a strict sub-group within the 17th century Presbyterian Church of Scotland who believed that Christ, not the King, was head of the church, and refused to take an oath swearing otherwise.

Alexander and his sister, Elizabeth, emigrated to America where Alexander married Anne MacFarlane (1715-1786) the daughter of Caleb MacFarlane, the last laird of Clan MacFarlane of Loch Lomond. They headed south to Augusta County, Virginia, and ended up on the Cowpasture River, west of Kerrs Creek in Bath County. They owned Goshen Pass at one point, or Dunlop Pass, as it was then called. He and Anne had

three sons, John, Robert and Alexander, and a daughter, Elizabeth, who married William Warwick. The Warwicks' daughter, Martha, married John Stevenson, who was killed in the first raid on Kerr's Creek.

Captain Alexander died in Goshen in 1774 at 28 years old and his widow, Anne, married Capt. Robert Bratton of Bratton's Run, a popular hunting area west of the town of Goshen today.

The Campbelltown Dunlops are the direct line to the Kerr's Creek Dunlaps with William Halstead "Billy" Dunlap's (1950-) and James McKee Dunlap Jr.'s (1949-) great-great-great-great grandfather, John Dunlop, being born in 1728 in Scotland. Since his son, Robert, was also born in Scotland, the family must have come over between c. 1770 when Robert was five. In 1792 he married Margaret Kerr in Augusta County. His father, John, died 13 years later in Augusta County near Middlebrook.

Margaret and Robert's ninth child, was Madison Dunlap, born 1808, who ended up on the banks of Kerrs Creek married Martha Hanna McKee. Madison and Martha's eighth out of ten children, Milton Pollock Dunlap, born 1850, was Billy's great-great-grandfather who married, Sarah Isabella Kerr. They had nine children of whom the first, Samuel Madison Dunlap was McKee Dunlap's great-grandfather and Samuel's brother Clarence Milton, was Billy's great-Grandfather. Samuel Madison married Mildred McCorkle and Clarence Milton married Margaret Jean McCown. They produced Billy's father, Halstead McCown Dunlap, who married Lois Webster Alphin, Billy's mother, to

produce Billy and his two brothers, Thomas Henry Dunlap and Halstead McClure
“Hootie” Dunlap.

Following McKee’s line down, his father, James McKee Dunlap Sr. was the third of Samuel Madison and Mildred McCorkle four sons. James and his wife, Mary Carrington Owen Dunlap had four children, the oldest of whom, James McKee Dunlap Jr.(April 16, 1949-) is the person heading up the restoration of the cemetery. His siblings: Robert Logan Dunlap (Nov. 7, 1951-March 2015); Nancy Bowyer Dunlap Dugger (April 2, 1956-); Owen McCorkle Dunlap (April 4 1961-)

Thus, both Billy Dunlap, who grew up on Kerrs Creek about a mile west of the Cemetery and his brothers, and McKee Dunlap who grew up in Lynchburg but graduated from VMI (class of 1971) and his brothers are great-great-great-great grandsons of Pioneer John McKee and Jane “Jenny” Logan McKee. Jenny died in one of the raids but which one remains a mystery.

The following is an imaginary recreation of Jenny Logan McKee’s final day on earth that I wrote based on several accounts of the story:

Jane Logan McKee didn’t see the Indian silhouetted on the hill above her home, until she was halfway to the cow shed. The milk bucket dropped from her hand. The other clutched her belly as if to protect her unborn child. Thank God her other six children were at Timber Ridge ten miles away, was her first thought. Husband John had sent

them only yesterday. An Indian had been sighted in the neighborhood in the past few days by the Telford boys coming home from school and seeing a “naked man”. But no alarm had been raised. The Indians, though long since gone west over the Allegheny mountains and into Ohio Valley, often wandered through the valley from time to time. After all this had been their communal hunting ground. One Indian wasn’t cause for alarm. For a moment her fear subsided. Then he raised his arm and Jane could see the outline of a tomahawk.

“John!” she screamed. “Indians!” Her mouth went as dry as the creek bed in front of her snaking its way up the hill, her legs as heavy as the rocks strewn down its steep-sided center. Her husband came around the side of the barn.

“Jane!” The sinkholes. Make for the sinkholes!” She started forward, slipped, caught herself and stumbled up the hill behind their house. John caught up to her, took her hand and pulled her forward. The ground was uneven and the rock loose. She grabbed her skirts up in one hand as a cry came from behind. “Miss Jane! Mr. John! Don’t leave me.” Jane turned to see their black maid struggling up behind them. “Please don’t leave me!”

Then a yell, the likes of which Jane had never heard, rent the sweet-scented summer air. There had been times, many times, she’d been scared in this wild frontier land—bears, wild cats, unknown illnesses, hunger—but now she was blood-cold terrified. A surge of adrenalin shot through her. Another glance round and she saw the Indian starting up the hill. There was no way they could outrun him and John didn’t have his gun, not being in the mind to take it out on his early morning rounds of the farm. Certainly he had in their early days but that was 30 some years ago, back in the late

1730s when they'd first arrived on the Kerrs Creek. If they could only make it to Jacob Cunningham's block house by the Big Spring. But it was a quarter mile over open fields. They would be an easy target and who knew what they might find down there where the old Indian path came through. Thoughts churned in Jane's head. It hurt to breathe. The hill got steeper. She knew what she had to do.

"John, go on," she panted. "Go on without me."

"Jenny, I'm not leaving you." He gripped her hand tighter and tried to coax a faster pace. For a moment, hearing her nickname, the term of endearment he used at their most intimate moments, gave wings to her feet but she couldn't sustain the pace. Her belly ached. She slowed.

"Go John," she gasped, "Leave me. Otherwise our children will have no parents." She slipped her hand from his. And stood on the slope clutching her stomach. He looked at her. Their eyes held in a moment that spoke of the eternal. Then he whipped around and bounded ahead. Before plunging into the thicket near the top of the hill, he looked back one last time. "God bless you, Jenny," he called out. As he stared at his wife, clambering up the steep pitch on all fours, he was torn by the decision he'd made and considered returning to her side. Just then, the Indian bounded into view and, without slowing, brought his tomahawk down on Jane's head, an image that would forever burn in John McKee's head. He turned and ran. He had six children to protect.

McKee could hear the Indian, grunting as he scrounged around in the tangle of blackberry canes and downed trees near the top of the hill, searching for him. McKee's heart thrummed against the earth, and the musty smell of mushroom and leaf mold filled his nose as he pressed into the rich loam of the forest floor, trying, praying to be

invisible. The grunts faded but still McKee didn't move. He forced himself to breathe. Shallow, silent breaths. The light began to fade and the caw of crow coming in to roost for the night in the tall oaks around him, assured him he'd outlasted his enemy. As furtively as a fox scouting a chicken coop, McKee rose to a crouch, remained motionless, and listened. The wind had picked up, souging through the cedars at the edge of the woods. The frogs at the spring house were tuning up for the night. Though it was July, McKee shivered and with dread-heavy heart headed back down the hill to where he'd last seen his wife.

The over-hanging cedars slapped his face and he stumbled on the rocks. His ears rang with the thrum of numb disbelief of all that had happened since he and Jenny had sat down to their porridge together this morning.

He arrived at the spot where he expected to see Jane's body. It...she...wasn't there. He looked up and down the creek bed, and hope stirred. Was it possible the blow hadn't killed her?

"Jenny?" he called out softly, moving slowly around the edge of the site "Jenny? You there?" A few drops of blood stood out against the deepening gloom of approaching night. He followed their trail, ducking under the tangle of tree limbs. An edge of linen skirt caught his eye and McKee rushed forward joyfully, knelt down beside her and took her hand. It was cold and unnaturally taut. He squeezed it tenderly, but she stirred not. Sticking out from beneath the kerchief she'd managed to wrap around her head, were strands of blood-damp hair. A sob rose so deep within him as to take tangible form, like a volcano, and burst out of his mouth like a stream of fiery pain. He pulled her into his arms, and rocked her back and forth, pushing the fragments of hair

back from her grey face. Of all the blows and challenges the frontier had thrown at him since he first arrived in Ker's Creek in 1738, this was the only one he'd never imagined, could never imagine. For a long while he sat there, whispering her name, and licking away the salty tears that caught in his mustache.

The yip of coyote, answered by another and then another brought him back. He knew he couldn't sit there, wishing her back to life. If he didn't get her buried, the night animals, the coyotes and foxes, the wolves, would get her. Or more Indians. Who knew what the situation was. He laid her back on the soft, warm earth and went to get a shovel.

There are several versions of how Jenny Logan McKee's fate played out and whether she was killed in the first or the second raid. Rev. Brown has Jane being killed in the first raid, when one Indian "pushed on to the house of John McKee, where J.H. Laird now lives." This would make it the home of Steve and Christina Hart today near the turn-off to the interstate where the Saturday morning farmer's market is on Rt. 60 just west of the intersection for the turn-off to I-81.

Other versions have Jane still alive, though barely, when her husband came back for her, and dying at home several hours later. Another has the barking of the family dog giving her hiding place away. Another that she and John were escaping when their black servant came screaming after them not to leave.

The list of bodies assumed to be in the Cemetery includes Jennie Logan McKee but there's no conclusive proof that she's actually there. Rev. Brown has her "buried where

she was found, and there her sleeping dust rests to this day—in a sink in one of Dr. Hamilton's fields.”

The WPA report from the late 30's/early 40's says the assumption is that John McKee built a two-story log cabin on the land in 1820 that was used as the dwelling until about 1850 when it was converted into the two story frame structure seen today. Pioneer John would have been somewhere around 113 years old in 1820. Tough as this pioneer stock was, I doubt that old John would have been building a cabin at that time in life. And John Jr., his only child with his second wife, Roseanna Cunningham, died in 1815. So...the mystery remains.

Whatever the truth may be, the life on Kerr's Creek was shattered by the first raid with every family affected by some loss, some with complete annihilation.

There was general panic all over the country,” notes Rev. Brown, “and those who might have gone in pursuit were hidden in the mountains and hollows. Some had fled as far as the Blue Ridge.”

The second invasion, according to Rev. Brown and other accounts, happened, “on or about Oct. 10, 1765,” though the State Department for Human Resources, after extensive research, has determined the year to be 1763 and that the first raid was in October of the year 1759.

“The number of Indians in their second visit are generally estimated to be from forty to fifty,” writes Rev. Brown. “...For some time there had been vague reports of Indians....Eventually the wily savages made their approach, but more cautiously than before. They crossed the North Mountain and encamped at a spring, where Andrew Hayslett now lives, a position that secluded them from the point of view of any one passing over the mountain, and from which they could send out their spies to mark the state of affairs on the Creek. In this concealed position they remained for one or two days.

“Someone discovered their moccasin tracks,” reports Rev. Brown, “in a corn field and crossing up to the top of the hill, saw them in their camp. The alarm was given about the same time they started out for their awful work. The inhabitants of the creek fled with all haste, and collected together at the ‘Big Spring’ at the house of Jonathan Cunningham (husband of Margaret McKee, John and Jane Logan McKee’s daughter). The whole number gathered there is estimated at about one hundred....They were packing their horses in great haste to leave for Timber Ridge. William Gilmore and another man started to walk up the Creek to see if any danger was at hand. Some of the Indians who had crept up very close, immediately fired on them and both were shot down; and, with a war-whoop the whole body of savages rushed on the promiscuous crowd. Two or three brave young men, amongst whom was one of the Cunninghams, advanced to meet them and were killed. Then commenced a scene which beggars all description: the screaming of women and children, and the utter dismay which seized upon them all. This remarkable spring, with its pond, covers perhaps three acres of land, and was at

that time surrounded with a thick growth of weeds and brush, in which many tried to hide themselves. A Mrs. Dale, who was hidden a short distance off, witnessed the whole awful tragedy. She said the terror-stricken whites ran in every direction, trying to hide; and the swift savages, each singling out his prey, pursued them round and round through the weeds with yells. Some threw up their hands for mercy. Some were spared their life but the most were stricken down by the tomahawk. Any of them, who attempted resistance were shot down. They had but few arms, and in the circumstances any resistance was in vain. The wife of Thomas Gilmore, standing with her three children over the body of her husband fought with desperation the Indian, who rushed up to scalp him. A second Indian ran up and aimed to dispatch her with his tomahawk, when the first one, with whom she was contending, threw up his arm and warded off the blow, saying she 'was a brave squaw' a trait which the Indian never failed to admire. She and her son John and two daughters were made prisoners. Cunningham, the owner of the house at the spring, was killed and his house burned."

Louise Tardy, whose husband, Clarence, had owned the Big Spring, well remembered Clarence cleaning out the Big Spring and finding charred logs, "Must have been in 1967," she said. The government was putting out money through the Agricultural Sustainable Development Department. One of the Hotingers from up on Gilmore's Creek came down to watch the excavations and said his father used to skate on the pond there but it was just a marsh now, no pond left, until they excavated. Clarence put up a big berm to dam it. There used to be big rocks around it, four or five feet tall but they covered them over with earth when they excavated. It's an eight-acre pond now.

The people who own the farm around it, Buddy and Jill Powers, have turned it into a wedding venue.”

In a 1997 article in Lexington’s News-Gazette’s section, The Weekender, Clarence said, “We moved 30,000 yards of mud (enough to cover 50 acres with five feet of muck). Know what the workmen brought up? Pieces of big, old logs, all black where they had been burned.”

Like all the stories passed down over the years of what exactly happened on Kerr’s Creek, the logs’ truth is unknowable but it’s a bit of the puzzle that certainly seems to fit well.

Rev. Brown’s narrative continues: “Very soon the Indians made preparations to leave the bloody ground. The prisoners were gathered in a group. We can give, at this late date, only a very imperfect list of their names. Among them were the following: James Cunningham, Archibald Hamilton, Marion Hamilton, Mary Hamilton, Mrs. Jenny Gilmore, her son John, and two daughters, Betsy Henry, and Margaret Cunningham, the girl who was scalped two years earlier.

“The most reliable accounts, which I could receive from aged people, and from the descendants of the sufferers, state that in the two invasions from sixty to eighty persons were killed, and from twenty-five to thirty were carried into captivity in the last invasion.

“It is proper that we should now follow this sorrowful company of prisoners in their wearisome march to the Shawnee towns North of the Ohio river, and near to where Chillicothe now stands. It is surely not imagination to say that, with weeping faces, they took their way up the Valley of the Creek, many of them never to look on their homes again. Several mothers, with infant children in their arms, were amongst the number. No tongue can tell the bitterness of their agony as they took the last look at the mangled bodies of members of their families and friends, who were to be left lying cold in death. As they passed up the Valley, they saw their homes which, only the day before, were filled with contented families. Now all was desolation.

“The incidents, which I will now give, were related by captives who were afterwards redeemed by their friends and brought back.

“Late in the evening of the day, they reached their first encampment, which was on a small flat of ground near the Creek, and just at the head of a meadow, now owned by Alfred Miller. Among the booty found at the ‘Big Spring’ was a supply of whiskey. Mr. Cunningham kept a small distillery there. This ‘fire water’ they carried to their encampment, and that night was spend in drunken frolic, which they continued until the next day. The prisoners were hoping all night that a company would be raised and come to their relief, as they could easily have been routed in their state of intoxication, and all the captives recovered. But there was a general panic all over the country, and those who might have gone in pursuit were hidden in the mountains and hollows. Some had fled as far as the Blue Ridge.

“The next day, two Indians were seen to return to the spring. Their object was probably to get more whiskey, or to see if any pursuit was likely to be made. They were seen by Mr. Dale to shoot at a man who ventured cautiously to ride up the creek and when he wheeled his horse to ride off, they clapped their hands and shouted after him.

“The captives related that the Indians took other prisoners as they passed on to Ohio. There were probably taken on the Cowpasture River, as it is known some were captured there about that time.

“At one of the encampments, a child became sick and fretful, when one of the Indians took it from its mother and dashed its head several times with great force against a tree, and then drew its bloody corpse over the neck and shoulders of a young girl sitting at the root of the tree. This the prisoners interpreted as a signal that she would die next, and their forebodings were realized the next day.

“Another mother, who was carrying an infant, became so much exhausted and worn down before reaching the Ohio River, that she could scarcely drag along at the rate they were marching. She had been aided by her fellow-captives all that their trying circumstances would permit. The Indians, at last becoming exasperated at their detention, one of them took the child, and running ahead, sharpened a pole with his tomahawk, laid the child on the ground, and running the pole through it, elevated it in the air. As the mother and other prisoners passed under it, its little hands were quivering in death!

“At one of the encampments, some of the prisoners found some leaves from a New Testament, and being anxious to preserve them, were drying them at the fire, when one of the Indians snatched them up and threw them in the fire; no doubt thinking they were some communication which they wished to send home.

“After crossing the Ohio, the Gilmores were doomed to part. The Indians, separating into several parties, divided the prisoners. Mrs. Gilmore and John fell in one party, and her two daughters to another. The last she ever heard of them was their heart-rending cries as they were torn from her. No intelligence was ever received in regard to their fate. After some time, the mother and son were also parted. She, being sold to French traders, was carried to Fort Pitt, while her little boy was left with the Shawnees. John was afterwards redeemed and brought back to Jackson’s River by Jacob Warwick, where he remained until his mother was also brought back; and mother and son once more embraced each other at the old home from which they had been ruthlessly torn about three years before. After passing through so many trying scenes, John settled, lived and died on the old homestead, where his son, William C. Gilmore now lives.

“A number of others were eventually sought out and brought back by their friends. Amongst the number was Mary Hamilton, who had a child in her arms when the attack was made at the spring. In trying to make her escape, she hid the child in a thick bunch of weeds, but she herself was captured. On her return, she went to the place where she hid the child and found its bones.

“The most of those killed were buried near the scene of the action, and near to the Creek, which in the long course of time has encroached upon the graves and washed a number entirely away. Some were buried where the old graveyard is near to Mr. McKee’s, and were the first to be laid in the depository for the dead.”

“When the captives had crossed the Ohio River, the Indians, feeling elated themselves at their success, requested the captives to sing for them; when, it is said, Mrs. Gilmore struck up with plaintive voice, the Old Hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm.”