

BLACK JACK

THE NARRATIVE OF A BURIED TREASURE

From Legends Collected in Central Pennsylvania

By HENRY W. SHOEMAKER

The discovery of a box of gold money, mostly Spanish pieces, which had been buried on an island in the Susquehanna near Selinsgrove, recalls the ancient tradition of the cause of Black Jack's coming to the wilds of Central Pennsylvania. This remarkable character called variously "The Black Rifle," "The Black Hunter" and "The Wild Hunter of the Juniata," whose name will endure as long as Jack's Mountains stand, was none other than plain Jacob Schwartz, of Front Street, Philadelphia. The son of a Spanish sailor and a German lodging house keeper's daughter, he seemed hardly destined for the bold life of a borderer.

But the story of the buried treasure sent him to the frontier, where he fell in love and married, and for self-protection alone became a relentless foe of the redmen. His swarthy complexion gave rise to many conjectures. Some declared that he was a half-breed Indian, but his hatred of the red race does not bear this out. Several historians have hinted at Negro blood being the cause of his darkness, but there was nothing Negroid in his features or manner, and his descendants, who are among the most persons in the State, are the best refutation.

The one great disappointment of his life was when General Braddock refused his services in 1755, and he proclaimed to the end of his days he would have saved the general's life and prevented the awful massacre, if he could have acted as scout for the party. It is said that because of his dark complexion and heavy black hair, Braddock suspected that he possessed Jewish blood. These were the "unmountable reasons" why he would not make a desirable "brother officer." But that is only another evidence of the ex-Cold Streamer's shallowness. A closer scrutiny of the "Wild Hunter's" face would have revealed little affinity with the Semitic race. His eyes were grey, and his mouth, at that time unaccented by the beard which he later wore, was small and tight-lipped. There was no undue prominence to the cheek bones, the nostrils of his high nose were those of a European rather than of an Oriental.

When Black Jack's services were rejected, his band of frontiersmen were also told that "they were not wanted." The rest of the party accepted their fate good-naturedly, but the Wild Hunter, suspecting the true reason, never forgave or forgot. After Tom Faucett's confession that he was the slayer of General Braddock there can be no truth to the intimation spread by some of Black Jack's ignoble foes that he was concerned in the cowardly deed. Though he suffered much from the trickery and cruelty of the red men, and on several occasions from the treachery of the whites, Black Jack's life was at all times vigorous and valorous. As one of the most picturesque figures in the history of the Juniata Valley, he deserves more attention paid to his memory, and were it not for the historian Jones, who wrote him down correctly, he might still be confused with the Indian trader, "Jack" Armstrong, who was murdered in the Narrows in 1744.

But to go back to the Wild Hunter's beginnings, his father whose visits to Philadelphia were infrequent at best, finally ceased to come at all, his last appearance being when the son was only four years of age. Whether he was lost at sea, captured by pirates, or followed the traditional sailor's prerogative of finding a girl in another port is uncertain, at any rate he was no longer a part of Black Jack's history. The mother, later marrying a man of her own race called Schwartz, gave the little boy his stepfather's name, and there was nobody who frequently told his wife of an adventure he had taken part in several years antedating his first meeting with her.

Some one in authority at Madrid had devised a scheme to map out an inland waterway between the Atlantic seaboard and New Spain. The route was to be up the Susquehanna thence through the Great Lakes, or by some utopian canal to the Spanish possessions in the West. As the ownership of the vast territory was not fully decided in 1709, much less Pennsylvania west of Chester county, the ultimate intentions of Spain can be judged according to one's point of view. Probably disguised as harmless traders of the party, which was elaborately outfitted, sailed up the Susquehanna to a point near the present town of Duncannon, where they transferred their equipment into bateaux and canoes. With Indian guides they started up the river, everything running smoothly until they came to a night in a tiny island a dozen miles below the Shawnee metropolis of Shamokin. Though the guides were all Shawnees, and the intentions of the Spaniards of the most friendly nature, a night attack, headed by the chief from Shamokin, was sprung on the innocent campers. All the Spaniards and their Indian guides were killed or left for dead. The canoe, which contained a chest of gold coins, supposedly to be given to some high officials in the southwest, had been hidden in a dense wood thickets. It was overlooked by the marauders, who carried away all else, even stripping the corpses of their clothing. The father of Black Jack, his name has been lost in the maelstrom of history, was scalped and thrown on a pile with the other victims. He suffered unparalytic agonies until lapsing into merciful unconsciousness. When he recovered his senses, he was shivering with the cold, a fit subject for river fever or ague, but there was nothing to wear, so he had to accustom himself to conditions. Dragging himself to the water's edge, he drank copiously, which rather steadied his nervous system. Then he thought of the hidden chest with its chest of gold. Limping to the spot he was surprised to find it untouched. And he was made happy by the sight of a small red blanket, enough to make a cloak, resting under the oaken chest. He quickly threw it around him, and pushed the canoe into the current. A paddle was in the boat, so he felt that he could soon steer himself out of the hostile country.

He had not gone far, however, when the canoe sprung a leak and on another island, where he worked for the balance of the day repairing the craft. But it had been weakened by the heavy weight of the chest, as well as of several brassy red men, and was unfit for a long journey. But the thought of abandoning the treasure, such as few men could earn in a lifetime was abhorrent to him. He pushed off a second time, but was barely able to beach on another islet, to avoid being completely swamped. There was a choice of two things. Either to remain on the island and build a new boat, or to temporarily abandon the treasure. He could not build a new boat, as he had not even a pocket knife. Indians were moving all over the river in canoes, sooner or later he would be caught and murdered if he tarried.

There was nothing left to do but to abandon the chest. The canoe would carry his weight, he felt certain of that. He broke off the top of the chest with a heavy stone, and took several handfuls of gold pieces. Then he replaced the lid, and buried the chest on dry ground in the center of the island. He had put the money he had taken in the bottom of the canoe and re-embarked. But the canoe started to leak again. He saw Indians in the distance. It was a perilous position. After considerable effort he managed to reach shore; it took all his skill to do so, as the river was high and the current strong. It was a cold night, though in the month of May, but he took off his cloak and fastened it into a sack to carry his money. He was now very hungry, not having eaten for forty-eight hours, his scalped head stung and smarted like a fiery cauldron, his teeth chattered, his very ribs shook with cold. Yet he meant to save the money at any cost.

There was an Indian path along the west bank of the river, and that he followed in the direction of Duncannon. All night long he walked, and all the next day. He was so crazed with hunger that he resolved to surrender himself at the first Indian camp he met, to exchange his life and his bag of gold for a square meal. Toward nightfall he saw an Indian in a canoe in midriver. Stepping out on a rock near the shore, he called to him lustily. The

river was wide at that point, it was opposite the mouth of Armstrong's Creek, but at length the redman heard the outcry. Heading his canoe toward the stranger, he paddled to him with great rapidity. The redskin, who belonged to the Saponi tribe, was amazed at what he saw. The scalped, naked, unshaven Spaniard made a motion that he was hungry, and shaking the bag so that the coins rattled, signified that he would give him some of the contents in return. The Saponi signaled to him to get into the canoe, and for a time it looked as if the unfortunate adventurer's troubles were over.

At the camp the squaws were engaged in barbecuing a buffalo calf. It was a pretty sight, the ruddy fire shining on their red capes against the darkening sky. Though the intentions of the rescuing Indian were probably of the best, the chief was at once suspicious of the newcomer's scalped head. He first ordered him to stand and feed, and then had him thrown and bound, and his bag of gold taken from him.

The Spaniard was so grateful to get the meal that he showed no resentment, he could stand anything on a full stomach. All summer and all winter he remained a captive with the Saponis. He helped them sow and harvest their crops, accompanied them on their hunting expeditions. Toward the end of the winter he was trusted gun and a bag of shot, and made his escape. Somehow to go about unhopped; and on one occasion he stole a or other his lucky star followed him, and he managed to reach Philadelphia.

He had barely arrived and was wandering aimlessly along the docks when he saw a boat getting ready to set sail for Spain. A crew was needed, and he allowed himself to be impressed and thus returned to his native land. He made a number of trips back to Philadelphia, always stopping at a certain boarding place on the river front, eventually marrying the landlady's daughter.

In Spain he had acquired a luxuriant black wig, so he was not the unrepresentable looking individual who had been left for dead on the secluded island below Shamokin. He of course told his wife of the buried treasure, drawing diagrams and telling her that some day he would go after it, and they would be rich and happy.

But he never got started on the trip, at least not to his wife's knowledge. Eventually he disappeared altogether, and when the widow, or whatever she was, could make her son understand she told him of the heritage which awaited him, that when he was old enough he must reclaim it. That was why Jack Schwartz left his city home for the perils of the frontier. And that was why he felt his first sentiments of hatred for the Indian race.

Unfortunately for him, his mother's directions were faulty. From her he imagined that the chest was buried on an island in the Juniata and it was there he made his most valiant efforts to discover it.

After his marriage his attention was focused on more practical pursuits, providing for the larger, clearing land, fighting off Indian foes. For a time domesticity caused his interest in the treasure to wane. But when the Indians murdered his wife and two of his three children (the third was visiting its grandparents) his desire for revenge became coupled with the thirst to possess the fortune which it seemed the savages were withholding from him. It was only in the latter days of his life that he learned that the treasure was buried in an island on the Susquehanna, and not on the Juniata.

As the Indian war dwindled down to an occasional skirmish, it came to pass that he was reconciled with James Logan, the Mingo orator, who lived at that time at the famous Logan Spring near Reedsville. When Black Jack was not drinking his prejudices softened, and he often went unarmed to the home of Logan, who strangely enough made no attempts on his life. Yet the legend is current along the Juniata that it was Logan who instigated the murder of Wild Hunter's family. But this cannot be correct on account of the apparent friendship between the two men. Black Jack was an old man when Logan came to know him, yet Logan was enticed from drink and age, and infirmities soften the worst of hatreds.

James Logan's brother, Captain Logan, then living at Tuscarora, had married a Shawnee maiden, who confided to her brother-in-law that one of her relatives had been in the party which attacked the Spanish explorers on the Susquehanna. They learned when too late that they had missed the treasure chest and some of them had spent years hunting for it. James Logan was ruminating when he told this to the Wild Hunter, and together they went over the crumpled, torn, faded diagram which Captain Jack still possessed. Logan and Black Jack, strange partners, resolved to hunt for the treasure together. They spent an entire summer at the work, but Logan, becoming disgusted, abandoned the quest and following a sudden impulse left Pennsylvania for Ohio.

Evidently the Mingo orator and Black Jack became fast friends while on this prospecting tour, for in the year following, 1772, the Wild Hunter joined him in the West, and they passed a year hunting and trapping. But the desire to find the treasure was stronger than all other impulses with Black Jack, and in 1773, the year before his death, he returned to Pennsylvania, taking up his abode at the spring which bears his name at the foot of Jack's Mountains. He was now about sixty-three years of age, but his life of hardships had told on his Herculean frame. His beard was snow-white, much of the light had gone out of his cold grey eyes. There was a stoop to his giant, gorilla-like shoulders. He had not killed an Indian in ten years, was anxious to be friendly with everyone of the savages he met, but the redmen could not forget the blood he made in 1763 when he had himself slain three hundred of their people. He had parted his friends with Logan, he wanted him to return east for another search for the treasure, but the Indian was a marked man in Pennsylvania, he was afraid to return. But he was safer there than in Ohio, as the year of Black Jack's death also witnessed the foul murder of all of Logan's family by a renegade white man named Daniel Greathouse.

Unwilling to go to the Susquehanna country alone, because of his increasing feebleness, Black Jack wintered at his cabin, hoping to be strong enough to make the journey in the spring. But with the blooming of the paw-paw trees came no increased strength, and the trip seemed as far from consummation as ever. To a traveling Presbyterian preacher, who spent a night at his home, the Wild Hunter stated that he felt no remorse for killing so many Indians, that apart from his having revenge for the cruel slaying of his family, it was necessary to get the savages out of the country to make way for the settlements, just as the wolves and panthers had to be exterminated. He considered himself an agent of civilization, he would face his Maker with that plea. But he denied having killed as many as three hundred Indians, he had been drinking when he made that boast. The old hunter's words, which the clergyman's views of predestination, the pair parted in a friendly manner.

A few days after that the dead body of the Wild Hunter was found by his spring, a bullet through his heart. As he had not been scalped, few ascribed the crime to the Indians. In the dead man's clenched hand was found a much soiled and frayed paper, which fell to dust as the neighbors tried to pry it loose from the mangle-like fingers. The body of the Wild Hunter of the Juniata was laid to rest on the summit of the mountain which bears his name and which he loved so well. It is reliably stated that the next year when James Logan secretly revisited the Juniata Valley for the last time, he managed to locate the grave of his old-time foe and latter-day friend, and stood by the mound of rocks for a full hour in silent contemplation.

For many years the spirit of the Wild Hunter failed to find rest. Just as there are sleepless nights for the living body, there is sleeplessness for the soul. Every

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Keystone News - Chips

Happenings of the Past Week in Nearby Counties

Lad Shoots Self After Reprimand.

Joseph Hoenstine, aged 12, of Queen, Blair county, shot himself with a revolver at the family home, apparently because he had been chastised for the disappearance of several automobile tire chains. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Hoenstine. Using a .32-caliber revolver the lad sent a bullet into his body just above the heart, the missile passed entirely through his body. He was rushed to the hospital at Roaring Spring by Dr. Charles O. Johnston where his condition remains critical. According to reports the lad's father had inquired about the disappearance of several automobile tire chains. The lad denied he had sold them and informed the father where they could be found in a nearby shed. While the father went in search for the chains the lad took a revolver from a shelf—a weapon that had been used only a few days before by the father to kill a dog—and sent the bullet crashing into his body.

Former Governor Stuart Dies.

Edwin S. Stuart, former governor of Pennsylvania and former mayor of Philadelphia, died Sunday at his home in Overbrook. He was 83. Stuart, governor from 1907 to 1911, was a native of Philadelphia. He first entered public life as a member of Philadelphia's old select council, to which he was elected in 1896. Upon retiring from the governorship, Stuart remained out of public office, resuming the management of the book store in which he got his first job at the age of 13. He remained in active charge of the business until his death. The only man ever to serve both as mayor of Philadelphia and as governor, Stuart was distinguished, too, for the early age—38—at which he was chosen mayor. It was during Stuart's term as governor that the capitol graft cases growing out of the finishing of the present State Capitol, were disposed of.

Celebrate Silver Wedding.

Mr. and Mrs. Alva B. Hendricks, of Mill Hill, celebrated their silver wedding anniversary this week, by holding open house for their friends. Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks were married by the Rev. W. H. Patterson at the parsonage of the Church of Christ, Blanchard. The ceremony was witnessed by Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Kune, uncle and aunt of the bridegroom. Mrs. Hendricks was formerly Miss Bertha Eason and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Adam C. Eason, of Beech Creek. The couple resided in Clearfield county until 1921 when they removed to Mill Hill. Mr. Hendricks is a farmer. They have a son and two daughters, Patsell, Bellefonte; Ruth, a member of the senior class at the Pennsylvania State College, and Dorothy, at home.

Woman Breaks Windows of Tenant.

Police of Lock Haven found no law under which they could hold Miss Ida Brindle, of Emporium, who gave herself up Saturday night and admitted that, with a baseball bat, she broke out a number of windows on the first floor of a house on Bald Eagle street. Miss Brindle told police she was the owner of the house and that the present tenants were in arrears in their rent payments and refused to vacate. She said she consulted a lawyer and found that it would cost \$50 to \$60 to evict them, that she had therefore adopted her own method to achieve their removal from the premises. Furthermore, she added, she would continue to break windows until they moved.

Flemington Man Critically Hurt.

Wilson Spotts, 23, of Flemington, victim of an alleged hit and run motorist late Saturday night, is in a critical condition at the Lock Haven Hospital with only slight hopes of his recovery. Spotts suffered a compound fracture of his left leg, a frontal fracture of the skull and contusions and bruises of the body. The accident happened while Spotts was walking along Route 220 at a point known as the Flemington cut-off, in front of the Howard W. Burnell home. The car was traveling toward Flemington, according to James and Conrad Setter and John Esenwine, who were walking behind Spotts. After the accident, they said, the car turned around and sped back toward Lock Haven.

Altoona Man Takes Own Life.

Leonard Ferrone, aged 66, was found dead at his home in Altoona, Monday afternoon. Mrs. Ann Kempton, Monday afternoon, death being attributed to a self-inflicted wound of the head. The discovery was made by Mrs. Kempton when she returned from a shopping trip and found her father lying on the dining room floor, a double-barrel shotgun between his legs. Mr. Ferrone is said to have been in ill health for some time, not having been able to take nourishment of any kind due to paralysis of the throat.

Mackeyville Man Hurt Cutting Wood.

Paul Schaffer, of Mackeyville, was seriously injured recently when a piece of steel became imbedded in his leg as he was cutting wood. Part of the steel wedge, with which he was splitting large wooden blocks, broke off and entered his leg near the knee. At the time he continued work and thought nothing of it, until the next morning when the pain became intense and he was taken to the Lock Haven Hospital.

Escapes Injury in Explosion of Stove.

McClelland Wier, of Lock Haven, escaped serious injury the other morning when the coal cook stove at his home blew up throwing hot coals over the kitchen. Just what caused the explosion had not been determined unless it was the formation of gas from the coal. Mr. Wier was burned on the arm and back but not severely.

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