

History, legends of local Indians retold

This story appeared in the Mount Joy Bulletin 40 years ago. We don't know who wrote it. Neither does Mrs. Catherine Stone of 374 Donegal Springs Road, Mount Joy, whose mother clipped this item from the paper in 1946.

At any rate, this place well deserves some little note. The country around is beautiful, but a vast wilderness when the first white settlers came. Inhabited by Indians, and many of them not very friendly. These settlers were principally from the north of Ireland, and known here as the "Scotch Irish" most of them were Presbyterians. These first proprietors, came early in the eighteenth century, they chose it for their home, because of the beauty of the country and its supposed fertility. Their churches and townships they named after persons and places in good old Ireland and England: for instance Donegal, Derry, Rapho, and Mount Joy. The Germans, that came in later preferred, the hills to the limestone valleys, and made their settlements in the northern part of the county.

What we have of the history of our country, especially the early history is traditional, yet not withstanding true; and some of what I intend giving now, although traditional, is not to be found in any of our published histories. It comes from a source entitled to credit. A former resident of our town, and well known by many of our citizens, left this place, with his family, many years ago, and sometime in the year 1885, got as far northwest as Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. A very common man, whose whole and sole aim, was to get to the truth of everything. Such was Aaron Bender, the man from whom I have what I here relate from which you will learn, that not very far from this, and long before it was settled by the white people, one of the hardest fought battles, that ever was fought on the continent of America took place.

In his letter to me he said he put up his Log Cabin near an Indian settlement and was not long there, until the 'Old Chief', who heard that I was from the land of the good old Penn, towards the rising sun, he sent me word that he wanted to see me. I went to see him, he was well on in years, but sprightly; appeared to be well pleased, and very friendly, and in his broken English, gave me a hearty welcome. Said I was the first 'smoky or pale face'

he had ever seen that was from the land of the 'good old Penn' and wanted to have a talk with me.

He said his ancestors and predecessors came from that land, and that their home was on the Susquehanna River. He then drew out an old parchment or Hieroglyphic chart, and traced out and named every brook and creek along the whole course of the river from the head waters to tide.

At the mouth of a stream that emptied into the Susquehanna, which according to his map, is the Swatara creek; he said that at this place a numerous band of Indians, known as the 'Arroquas' (probably the Iroquois) had their Head Quarters; and that a days journey in a canoe down the Great River to the mouth of a stream he called Canada (no doubt the Conestoga) at which place a tribe called the Canadagas (probably Connodaghts or Conestoga Indians) had their home.

This tribe claimed that the dividing line of their hunting grounds, was the creek that emptied into the Big River near the Big River, near the Big Osres, which in their language means the Big Rock, and now known as the Chiques rock. He stated that up this stream, a short distance from the river, it divided into two branches, meaning the Big and Little Chiques Creeks, that the land or territory lying between these creeks or streams, was once the cause of war and much blood shed, between these two tribes,

owing to the misunderstanding respecting the proper boundaries.

The Aroquas claimed east towards the rising sun as far as the east stream Big Chiques. The Canadagas claimed west, toward the setting sun, all the territory bounded by the west stream. Their contentions and scribes about this disputed ground, continued long, but was finally decided by a pitched battle, fought near the junction of the two creeks, got up in the following manner. Each Chief or head warrior of each Tribe, to select as many Bravers, or warriors, from his Tribe, as there were days in twelve moons.

These armies, some 700 men with their Chiefs and leaders, met there, in a clear day in the fall of the year. The battle was to commence at sunrise, and continue until sun set, and the party that in the evening remained master of the grounds, was to be declared conqueror, and hold the disputed Territory.

The battle was a fearful and terrible one, neither party yielding, at the close of the day, there remained but seven of the Arroquas, and five of the Canadagas, and the fight was renewed, and after a short time, the seven Arroquas drove the five Canadagas from the ground, the fight was over, and the disputed territory awarded to the Arroquas. This battle was fought

about one hundred years before the Treaty of Penn, under the Big tree on the Delaware at Philadelphia. He contained his talk, and said that the Prophet of the Arroquas, about a year after this battle had a dream or vision, in which it was made manifest to him, that the departed spirits of the Braves slain in the battle, contending from the disputed ground could not become reconciled, and without reconciliation, they would not be allowed by

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