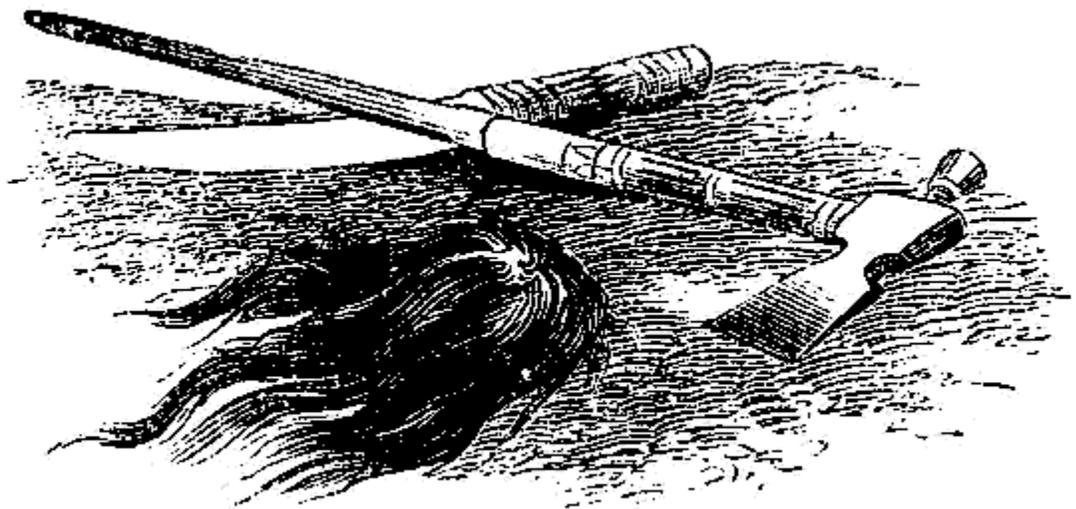


The Captivity by the Indians, of Richard Rue, George Holman, and Irvin Hinton in 1781

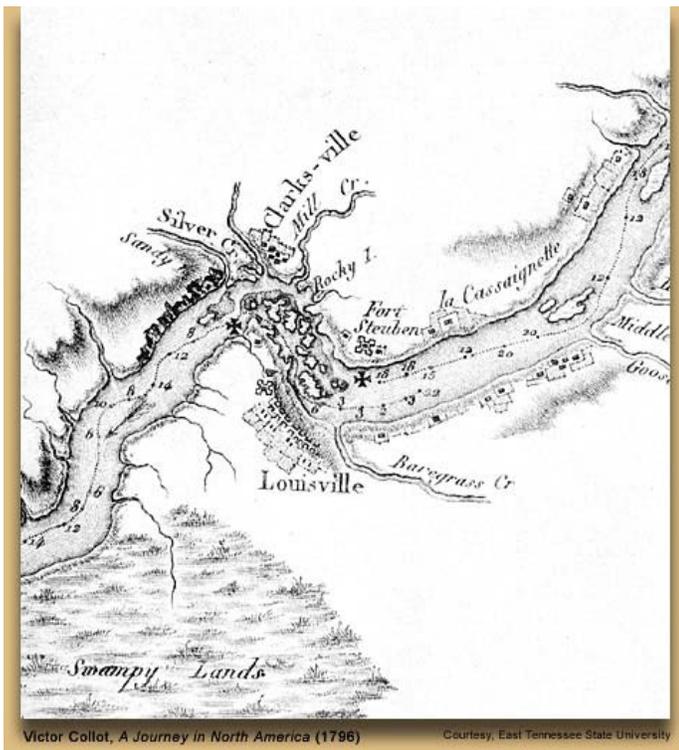
Excerpted from the book, *Recollections of the early settlement of the Wabash Valley*
by Sandford C. Cox, Lafayette, IN, 1860.



Chapter XIX

Narrative of the captivity by the Indians, of Richard Rue, George Holman, and Irvin Hinton.

On the 11th day of February, 1781, a wagoner by the name of Irvin Hinton, was sent from a blockhouse at the village of Louisville, at the Falls of the Ohio river, to Harrodsburg, for a load of provisions for the fort. Two young men, named Richard Rue and George Holman, the former aged nineteen years, and the latter sixteen, were sent as guards to protect the wagon from the depredations of any hostile Indians that might be lurking in the canebrakes or ravines through which they had to pass in going to and returning from Harrodsburg. There had been no late reasons for apprehending danger from the Indians so early in the season, although there was a general expectation that about the time the leaves were as large as a squirrel's ear, there would be a general attack on the frontier inhabitants of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Kentucky.



Soon after the party set out on their journey, a severe snow storm set in, which continued with unabated fury until after noon, filled the wagon ruts, and wreathing the copse and canebrakes in a rich white robe, until mother earth appeared to lie prone in a winding-sheet of spotless purity. Lest the melting snow might dampen the powder in their rifles, the guards fired them oft intending to reload them as soon as the storm ceased. Hinton urged on his horses, while Rue walked briskly a few rods ahead of the wagon, and Holman about the same distance behind. As they ascended a hill about eight miles from Louisville, Hinton heard some one say "ho" to the horses. Supposing that something was wrong about the wagon, he stopped, looked around and asked Holman why he called to him to halt. Holman said that he had not spoken. Hinton then said: "Rue, was it you that cried 'ho'?" Rue replied

in the negative, but said that he heard the voice distinctly, and supposed that it was Holman, or himself, that had spoken.

At this time a voice cried out, "I will solve the mystery for you. It was Simon Girty that cried 'ho!' and he meant what he said!" at the same time emerging from a sink-hole a few rods from the roadside, followed by thirteen Indians, who immediately surrounded the three Kentuckians, and demanded them to surrender, or die instantly. Rue instinctively raised his gun to his face to shoot down Girty, but on remembering that it was empty, he took it down, and the little party, making a virtue of necessity, at once surrendered to this renegade white man and his Indian allies. Being so near two forts, Girty made all possible speed in making fast his prisoners. He stripped the harness from the horses, selecting the lines, and such ropes and leathern straps as might be needed on the journey, and prepared for an immediate flight across the Ohio river. After securely binding the prisoners, by passing ropes under one arm and over the opposite shoulder, they cut off the legs of their pantaloons about four inches above the knee, and started them off through the deep snow, as

fast as the horses could trot - leaving the wagon, containing a few empty barrels, standing in the road. A tall Shawnee warrior rode one of the best of Hinton's team horses, and led Rue as his captive. A Delaware Chief rode another of the horses, leading Holman with a portion of the lines with which the wagoner had guided his lead horses. Hinton, although he had a wife and six children, whom he had that morning left at the Falls, was likewise put into leading-strings, and hurried along after a fierce-looking Shawnee, mounted upon another of his horses. The remaining horse Simon Girty, the generalissimo of the band, appropriated to his own use, alternately dashing along at the head of the company, then falling back and talking with the prisoners, whom he told if they value³d their lives, they must keep profound silence, and make no attempt to escape. The party arrived at the Ohio river before dark that evening, where three large bark canoes were secreted in a cove on the south bank of the river, some twelve miles above the Falls. The prisoners, weary and benumbed with cold, were placed in one of the canoes, under the care of Girty and their respective captors, and two other Indians, who paddled the canoe. The rest of the Indians brought over the other crafts, swimming the horses over by the lower side and stern of the canoes.

After crossing the Ohio river, the prisoners were hurried with great speed into the wilderness of the North-Western Territory, towards Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta. The party made no halt until late the first night, when they encamped without striking a fire, about half a mile from the trace, some twenty miles north of the Ohio river. Here a brief parley was held between Girty and the Indians, in which the point was discussed, whether it would not be best for the party, in order to elude pursuit, to strike immediately for the Indian town of Vincennes, on the Wabash river. Girty and a few of the party were in favor of hastening to Vincennes, while the majority were of the opinion that it would be safest to proceed at once to Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta. Finally it was decided to make a feint by traveling awhile in the direction of Vincennes, then change their course and steer through the White river country to the Auglaize.



At dawn next morning the party were threading the wilderness, in the direction of the town on the Wabash, with precipitate haste, keeping a spy a few hundred yards in advance of the main body, and another about as far in the rear. They traveled late the second night also, diverging about as far from the path as they did the previous night, and encamped again without striking a fire – a precaution always observed by the Indians on marches of this kind, to prevent any pursuing party finding their encampment, and surprising them while asleep. On retiring to rest each night, the invariable rule was to place the captives in the middle, with their hands tied behind them, and then a large, active Indian was placed on each side, with tomahawks within reach, so that if an attack was made on them in the night, they would be ready to meet an invading foe, or dispatch the prisoners, if about to be rescued by their friends.

Girty was morose and taciturn. The few words he spoke were generally in the Delaware language. Rue had been in several campaigns against the Indians, and had obtained a smattering of several of the Indian Dialects. Girty at length thought he could perceive by the shades that passed over Rue's countenance at times, that he was not entirely ignorant of the Indian language, and took occasion during his temporary absence (which he artfully contrived for the purpose), to enquire of

his fellow captives if he had not been in some of the campaigns and battles against the Indians. They were admonished to tell the truth – that if the Indians ever caught them in a lie, death would be the inevitable consequence. They hesitated giving an answer. The question was pressed with a menacing flourish of the tomahawk. They replied that he had been in several campaigns against the Indians. How many? Three or four, was the response. Rue chanced to overhear this colloquy. He thought his hour had come. But knowing that bravery was esteemed one of the highest virtues by the savages, he approached the camp fire as if he knew nothing of what had transpired, sat down his brass kettle of water he had been ordered to bring, and took a seat on a log by the side of Girty, in a quiet, confident manner. The old bogus savage appeared moody. At length he muttered out, “Rue, was you ever out in a campaign against the Indians?” “Yes, I was.” “How many?” “Four,” replied the captive. “Was you with General Clark at the taking of Vincennes?” “Yes.” “Was you with him when he made his dash against Chillicothe, and destroyed the Piqua towns and Loramie’s store?” “I was,” was the ready reply. At this Girty sprung from the log, rage convulsed his whole frame, while with a ghastly frown he muttered: “You played hell there! didn’t you! I have a mind to split your skull with this hatchet!” but he changed the weapon in his hand, and struck the prisoner a blow on the head with the handle.



Simon Girty Armed to the Teeth

Simon Girty was a white man, a Pennsylvanian by birth. He was brave, ambitious, and unscrupulous. He espoused the cause of the Indians (whose prisoner he had been for many years, in his early boyhood), and led them to many bloody massacres of his white brethren. From the time of his treacherous apostasy, he vied with the most cruel and relentless savages to circumvent his old friends, and put them to death by the most cruel and ingenious tortures. He was present at the burning of Colonel Crawford, and several other brave soldiers; and so far from attempting to save them from the most excruciating death, he coolly looked on, with a demonic satisfaction, and told them that they were but getting their just deserts.



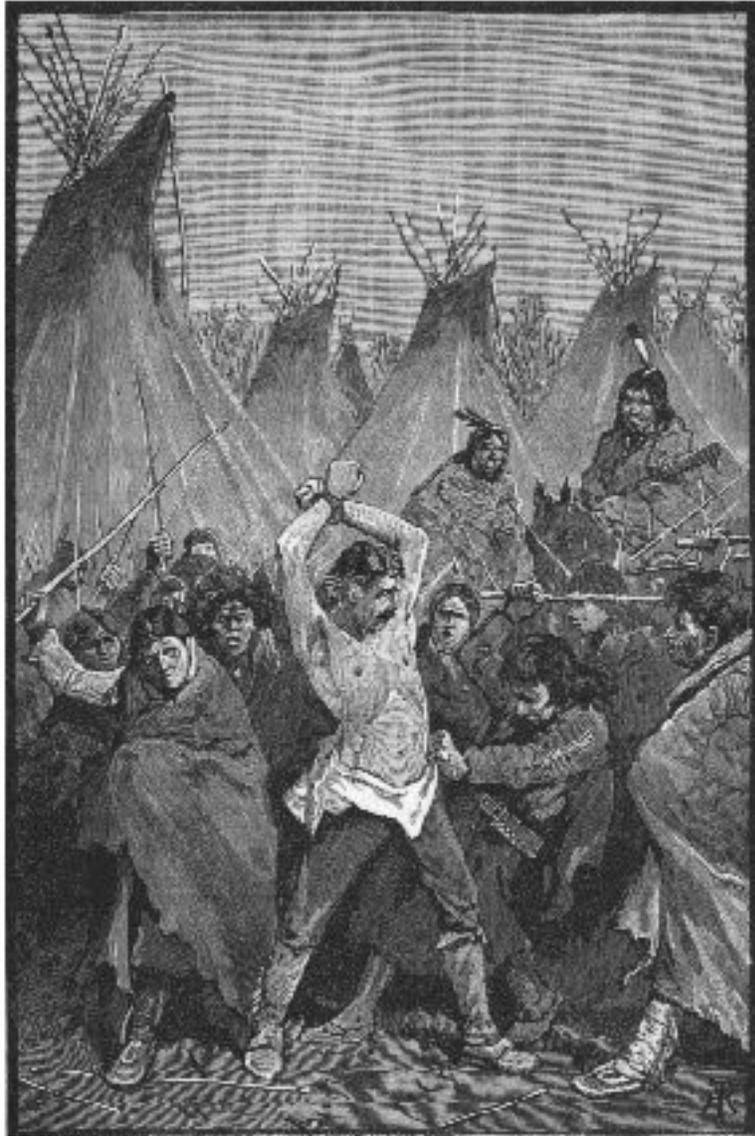
The Ohio River was a natural boundary between settlers and Indians.

The prisoners had heard of his unparalleled cruelty, and from the time it was announced they were the captives of Simon Girty, they felt that they were subject to the caprice of a cruel and bloodthirsty man, who would kill or spare, as interest or passion might dictate. The dastardly blow he had given Rue over the head with his tomahawk handle, accompanied by a volley of curses, tended to increase the settled hatred and disgust of the captives, who were forced to conceal their dislike as much as possible, and

affect a feeling of contentment, when they expected every hour that some one, or all of them, might feel the edge instead of the handle of the tomahawk, which was often brandished over their heads through sheer wantonness of their brutal captors.

The third day after crossing the Ohio, the party, finding that they were not pursued, relaxed their speed, and turned aside for the purpose of browsing their horses, and resting themselves and their prisoners, who were all much fatigued by the forced marches, and lack of rest, the two preceding days and nights.

Their scanty store of provisions having given out, hunters were sent out, who, after a few hours' absence, returned with a small deer and two turkeys. These were dressed and hastily broiled on the coals, without salt, and were divided out among the company. Turtle soup, or cooked frogs, would not have been a more savory dish to a Frenchman, than were these fragments of wild game to the famished, travel-worn prisoners; who now felt they were beyond the reach of aid from their friends, and were doomed to a fearful captivity, among exasperated savages, who considered themselves and the whole Indian race trampled upon and abused by the steady and systematic encroachments of the white man, who had driven them from the shores of the Atlantic across the Alleghenies,



Running the Gauntlet

and were seeking to drive them west of the Mississippi river. The prisoners remembered the cruel circumvention and cold blooded murder a few years before, of the noble Cornstalk, a leading Chief of the Shawnees, his brave son Ellinipsico, and the young Chief Red Hawk, near the mouth of the Great Kanawha, and did not know but they might be the three victims that would be sacrificed to appease the manes of these lamented chieftains.

From this point the party changed their course for Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, passing through the White river and Blue river countries, crossing the head waters of the Wabash east of where Fort Wayne was afterwards built. On arriving within a day's journey of Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, on the Auglaize, a runner was dispatched to inform the Indians of the return of Girty and his party, and to make preparations to have the prisoners run the gauntlet on entering the town. When the party had arrived within a few miles of the town, they were met by several Chiefs and warriors, who come out to do themselves the honor of meeting the returning band, and assist in arranging the preliminaries of the gauntlet, a time-

honored custom of the Savages. A brief parley ensued. Girty called the prisoners before him. He told them that within a few hours they would arrive at the village, where they would find the Indians drawn up in two lines, one line on each side of the path, for two or three hundred yards from the council-house. They must pass between these two lines of warriors, who would strike at them with clubs and knives as they passed. If they were knocked down, it was against the rule to hit them while down. They must get upon their feet again, and run for the council-room with all speed. When they gained the goal, they were free from further assaults. There they would be tried for their lives. If the council thought it best to spare their lives, they would so decide. If they were condemned to death, the council would determine the time and manner of their execution.

On arriving within sight of the village, they saw the lines drawn up on either side of the path, and the grim, painted savages awaiting the approach of the prisoners. It was decided that Hinton should first run the gauntlet. He received severe whacks and blows over the head and shoulders, from the clubs and sides of the tomahawks of the Indians, before he reached the council-house, which afforded much sport to the Indians, who evinced their hilarity in the most vociferous yells, and roars of laughter. After a few more hasty directions from Girty, as to the rules of the race, and in what manner he must behave himself in the different phases of the chase, Rue was next started down between the lines, and an Indian after him with an uplifted tomahawk. He far outstripped his pursuer, dodged most of the blows aimed at him as he passed, and gained the council-house amidst the noisy shouts of the savages.

Holman was reluctant to enter the race. He told Girty that he would not be able to pass through so severe an ordeal – that he thought it unfair to put a stripling like himself, wasted with famine, and s worn down with hardships, to so severe a test. A powwow was held. The program was changed. The men retired from the lines, and their places were filled with squaws and boys, with knives, clubs and switches in their hands. A comical smile played upon the faces of all but Holman, who was started down the lines, followed by an Indian with a long switch. The chase was spirited. Switches and clubs rattled over his head, shoulders and body, as he darted between the lines to the council-house, amidst the loud and prolonged whoops and ha ha's of old and young, who looked upon the last race as the lighter after-piece or farce, that succeeded the weightier tragedy, relaxing the stern visage of war, and extracting a laugh from the somber Chief of a dozen battles, and the wearer of twice as many scalps.

The feast was spread. Chiefs and warriors partook of the bountiful repast. The prisoners were supplied with food, and told to await with patience the decision of the council, which would that afternoon decide their fate.

The savage Sanhedrim was soon in session. An old dark-visaged Chief presided. Speech after speech was made, during which many violent gestures were made, and angry glances cast toward the corner of the room where the prisoners sat, which boded no good to the unfortunate trio, who understood but little of their harangues. The council broke up. The prisoners were told that their cases were not finally disposed of, but were continued for the presence of other Chiefs and warriors, who lived on the Scioto and big Miami, who were expected to arrive in a few days.



Shawnee Chief Cornstalk

Hinton's mind was filled with gloomy forebodings of a cruel fate impending over him. He thought he saw in the trial (which had been continued for the presence of other chieftains, equally, and perhaps more cruel than those who had sat in the former council) unmistakable signs of a hard fate. Visions of his wife and children at home, were in his slumbers by night, and filled his thoughts by day. Could he escape from the ruthless savages and again press those loved ones to his bosom? Or, must he passively await whatever doom they might determine to inflict upon him? were questions that constantly presented themselves to him. He cautiously whispered his feelings and intentions to his fellow captives, who could only sympathize with him in his manifold sorrows. He said that the affection he bore for his wife and children would impel him to desert upon the first opportunity. He knew that the chances of escape were greatly against him - that if he was recaptured he would be killed forthwith, without doubt. His fellow prisoners remonstrated against his attempting to escape, as hazardous in the extreme. They advised him to remain with them and abide the trial - that some circumstance might transpire to their advantage. But Hinton was determined in his plans, which were kept entirely secret, and a few nights afterward it was announced that "Red Head," as the Indians called him, had escaped, taking with him an Indian's gun and accoutrements. There was a general flashing of eyes and tomahawks around the encampment. "Look well to the other prisoners," broke from many savage lips, while menacing words and gestures evinced how deep was their chagrin at the unexpected escape of the prisoner, whom they least expected meditated such a thing. From the first day of his captivity, Hinton affected a quiet, stoical indifference, and appeared to be the most docile and happy one of the three. The advantages of age and experience enabled him to school his feelings and hide his real intention, so that his sudden exit struck the whole village like a clap of thunder from a clear sky. Pursuit was immediately instituted. Scores of infuriated savages thronged the woods in every direction to find some trace of the fleeing fugitive, who it was supposed would aim for the Falls of the Ohio, but as a matter of precaution might in the outset start in some other direction to elude pursuit. A stricter guard was placed over the remaining prisoner, who were plainly told that should they attempt to escape, and fail to do so, they would immediately be put to death, and they could not promise in how mild or severe a manner; that Hinton's escape had exasperated the tribes, and that the two remaining prisoners would most likely receive less clemency at their pending trial.

Next morning the most of the pursuers returned. Some eight or ten only had pressed on to a point where they expected to intercept Hinton on his way to the Ohio river. They were right in their calculations, for late in the afternoon of the second day after his escape, a man was seen gliding through the woods about half a mile from the trace that led from Sandusky to the old Chillicothe town. At times he would stop, and from some log or high piece of ground overlook the surrounding country, as if he were a spy. Thus he walked into the midst of an ambuscade of his wily pursuers, who, after watching his motions for awhile, crawled from one hiding place to another until they had completely invested him, before he was aware of danger. They uttered a simultaneous and prolonged yell, and rushed upon the lone fatigued traveler, whom they recognized to be Hinton, firing two or three shots as they pressed around him, without any other effect than increasing his consternation at his truly appalling condition. He was seized and disarmed, and told to



prepare for a cruel death; that they had often admonished him of the danger of attempting to escape, and that "Indians would not lie" – they would be found as good as their word; that night he would be burned at the stake, that the severity of his punishment might deter others from attempting an escape. He told them that he did not care so much for his own life; that it was his love for his wife and children in Kentucky that caused him to break away from his captivity; that as for himself, he could soon have become reconciled to their mode of life, and made himself happy by hunting and fishing. His touching appeal to the heart of the husband and father, in behalf of the dear ones far away whose welfare now caused a deeper solicitude than his own desperate condition, failed to excite the sympathy of his inexorable captors, who immediately set about making preparations to burn their devoted victim. He earnestly implored them to shoot or tomahawk him, and not protract his sufferings unnecessarily; but they turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, and consummated their arrangements for his death. After partaking of their evening repast, which they shared with their fatigued and hungry victim, they drove a stake into the ground in the center of a circle of dry sticks and brush which they had gathered for the purpose. They then proceeded to strip and black the prisoner - a preliminary usually attended to in such sacrifices. After tying the prisoner to the stake, burning faggots were applied to the brush in several places; the war-whoop thrilled through the dark surrounding forest like the chorus of a band of infernal spirits escaped from Pandemonium, and the scalp-dance was struck up by those demons in human shape, who for hours encircled the roasting victim brandishing their tomahawks and war-clubs, and venting their indignant execrations on the helpless sufferer, who meekly submitted to his immolation, and died about midnight from the effects of the slow intense heat, which literally roasted him to death. As soon as he fell upon the ground, the Indian who first discovered him that evening in the woods sprang in, sunk his tomahawk into his skull above the ear, and with his knife stripped off the scalp, which he bore back with him to the town as a trophy, and which was tauntingly thrust into the faces of Rue and Holman, with the interrogation, "Can yon smell the fire on the scalp of your old red-headed friend? We cooked him and left him for the wolves to make a breakfast upon: that is the way we serve runaway prisoners."



Shortly after the cruel murder of Hinton, a deputation arrived from Detroit, stating that the contemplated movement against the whites on the Kentucky borders had been postponed; that calls had been made for a general rendezvous of the Indians at Detroit; and for those at Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, Chillicothe, and intervening points to come on, bringing with them any captives they might have in their possession. Girty and his party, with the principal portion of the warriors then at Wa-pue-ca-nat-ti, took up their march for the point designated. At the end of the third day's march, the party approached an Indian village situated on the Maumee River, a few miles above the spot where the city of Toledo now stands. It was determined that the prisoners should be made to run the gauntlet again at this place; and as the Chillicothe Chiefs, and those residing at the Mad River towns were present, it was determined that the postponed trial of Rue and Holman should be brought to a final conclusion. A general halt was made. Their approach was heralded to the town. The usual lines of painted savages were drawn up on either side of the path. The order of the chase was the same as at Wa-pue-ca-nat-ti, except that Holman's portion was not diluted with women and switches. A tall, active Indian was placed behind Rue with an old sword in his hand. At the given signal Rue darted down the line, receiving many blows from the clubs and hatchets of the Indians in the line, which stunned him so that his pursuer overtook him and hit him a couple of severe strokes over the head, which well nigh felled him to the ground. At this point he had reached a brush fence that enclosed several angles of the village, and, making a bound, cleared the fence and alighted on the other side; but finding his pursuer had crossed the fence at almost the same instant of time, Rue affected to stumble and fall to the ground. The Indian waved the sword over his head and motioned for him to get up and run. The prisoner laid still. The Indian stepped off eight or ten paces, and again told him to get up and run. The prostrate prisoner motioned with his hand for him to get back over the brush fence, which the Indian did, Rue feigning inability to proceed. The Indian with the sword then walked back some ten or twelve paces from the fence, and urged the prisoner to run. As nimble as a cat Rue sprang from the ground, and darted into the council house before his pursuer could get within ten paces of him, amid the deafening yells of the savages, who seemed to admire the stratagem used to avoid the ponderous blows of his pursuer. Holman was then passed down the line, and made the goal with about as much flagellation as his savage tormentors thought he would be able to bear.



The usual feast was then spread. After the feast was over, the Chiefs and warriors indulged in the scalp dance, which the prisoners regarded as an ill omen to precede the council that was to decide

their fate for well or for woe. The dance ended. The grim warriors seated themselves in a circle around a prominent Chief, who rose and harangued them for several minutes in an animated style and then took his seat. One Chief and warrior after another rose and addressed the council, until all the chief dignitaries had spoken. At times the debate became quite stormy, and it was with difficulty the presiding sachem could keep order.

The vote was finally taken, and it was evident to the prisoners that a hard verdict had been rendered against them. The glances, gestures, and general demeanor of the council spoke the language of doom. In about a quarter of an hour after the council broke up, Girty informed the prisoners of their impending fate. The council had decided that they should be burned at the stake that night. The necessary preparations were made - dry sticks and brush were gathered and piled around in two circles, in the center of which a stake was firmly driven into the ground. The faces and hands of the two prisoners were blackened in the customary manner, and as the evening approached the two doomed young men sat looking upon the setting sun for the last time, as the golden orb seemed to settle down behind the distant tree tops, throwing back a radiant smile upon the ruddy clouds, as if to remind the sufferers of that brighter sphere which awaits the spirits of the just, after they have passed through the dark valley of the shadow of death - whether that death lie by fire, water, or lingering disease.

They prayed earnestly to God to turn aside the horrid fate that awaited them, if consistent with His divine will - that all power in heaven and earth belonged to Him - that He who had sustained Daniel in the den of lions, and the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, could turn the hearts of these fierce savages, and melt them to pity. But, if it was not consistent with His will to avert the impending death, to prepare their souls for heaven and immortal happiness, and fill their hearts with fortitude to pass through the fiery ordeal with firmness and resignation.

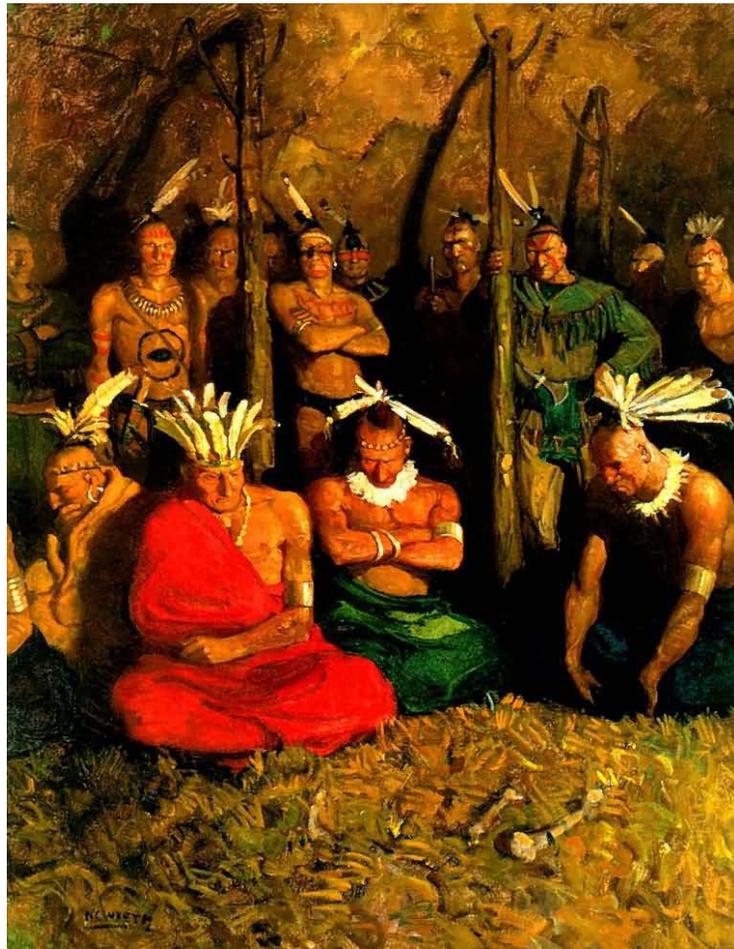
An unusual excitement appeared to run through the fragments of the assembly, that lingered around the council house. High words and angry looks evinced a want of unanimity among the different tribes that composed the assembly. What was the cause of the dissatisfaction the prisoners could not learn, nor could they ascertain that it had any connection with the sentence in their case. At a pause in the contention, a noble looking Indian approached where the prisoners were sitting, and spoke a few words in the Mingo language to the guards. He then took Holman by the hand, lifted him to his feet, cut the cords that bound him to his fellow prisoner, caused the black to be taken off his face and hands, put his hand kindly upon his head, and said: "I adopt you as my son, to fill the place of one I have lately buried - you are now a kinsman of Logan, 'the white man's friend,' as he has been called, but who has lately proven himself to be a terrible avenger of the wrongs inflicted



upon him by the bloody Cresap and his men. Girty, with evident reluctance, interpreted what he said. Holman felt that his prayer was answered, as far as concerned his own safety, and he almost fell to the ground at the sudden and unexpected announcement of his deliverance. But the sad fate that awaited his companion, neutralized his excess of joy, and he felt that life itself would be dear, if he had to witness the excruciating torture and death of his friend, whom he loved as a brother.

The commutation of Holman's sentence, and the adoption of him into a family nearly related to Logan, sent a momentary thrill of pleasure through the breast of Rue, who, although doomed to die in a few hours, still entertained a faint hope that something might transpire to avert, or at least postpone his doom; and should he even that night suffer at the stake, his friend might be spared to tell at some future time of the sad fate of Hinton and himself.

After a brief interval, two Indians approached Rue with leathern thongs in their hands, cut loose the cords that bound his feet, raised him from the ground, stripped him, passed a cord under one arm and over the opposite shoulder, which they tied securely; around this they passed the long, coiled leather strap, and made it fast. These were regarded as the notes of preparation for the burning, and Holman and Rue embraced each other most affectionately, with a sorrow too deep for utterance or description, which would have melted less obdurate hearts to pity.



Rue was then led to one of the stakes in the center of the circle of dried brush wood to which he was tied fast. At this time a general contention pervaded the encampment – not a few tomahawks were brandished in the air, and scores of knives were seen glittering in the hands of exasperated Indians, who seemed to be in a general ferment.

Just as the lighted faggots were about to be applied to the dry brush that encircled the devoted prisoner, a tall, active young Shawnee, a son of the victim's captor, sprang into the ring, and, with his tomahawk, chopped off the cord that bound him to the stake, led him out of the ring amidst the deafening plaudits of a part of the crowd, and the execrations and threats of others who appeared determined that the death penalty should be executed on the prisoner forthwith. The cool, defiant manner of the young Indian who released the captive from the stake, held at bay the more cruel and bloody-minded, who, at a respectful distance, gnashed their teeth and inveighed against the lawless rescue, which the young brave had the temerity to make in the face of the very council that had condemned the prisoner.

Regardless of threats and remonstrances, he caused water to be brought, and the black to be washed from the face and hands of the prisoner, whose clothes were again placed upon him, when the young brave said: "I take this young man to be my brother, in the place of one I lately lost. I loved that brother well, I will love this one too. My old mother will be glad when I tell her that I have brought her a son, in place of the dear departed one. We want no more victims. The burning of "Red-Head" ought to satisfy us. These innocent young men do not merit such a cruel fate. I would rather die myself than see this adopted brother burnt at the stake."

A loud enthusiastic shout of approbation showed that the young Shawnee had triumphed, while the more ruthless shrunk back from the lightning of his eye, which flashed defiance at all who chose to demur to his conduct on the occasion. He thought that a proper courtesy had not been shown to his father's claim to the young man he had captured. Some were in favor of reassembling the council and reconsidering the vote that sentenced the prisoners to the stake; While others, constituting a large majority, thought such action unnecessary, as the decree had been virtually revoked by what had transpired, with the concurrence of an overwhelming majority: who were won by the address and intrepid daring of the young brave, whose love for his lost brother had caused him to peril his own life to gain a substitute for the loved and lost.

This sudden and unexpected change in affairs, although it resulted in the rescue of the prisoners from a cruel death nevertheless produced some discord among the different tribes composing the party, some of whom abandoned the trip to Detroit, others returned to Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, a few turned their course towards the Mississinnewa, and the Wabash towns, while a portion continued on to Detroit. Holman was taken back to Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, where he remained the most of the time during his captivity. Rue was taken first to the Mississinnewa, then to the Wabash towns. Two years of his eventful captivity were spent in that region of country watered by the Wabash and Illinois rivers and their tributaries. He gave accurate descriptions of many localities along these rivers after a lapse of over fifty years.



The mouth of the Tippecanoe River; the Wea Town, and Prairie; Black Rock; the mouth of Big Pine Creek, whose steep rocky banks presented, in many places, overhanging cliffs, crowned with lofty evergreen pines, were frequently alluded to in his descriptions of the Wabash country. Lake Peoria, on the Illinois river, at the upper end of the present city of Peoria, and the Kankakee swamps were also frequently spoken of in his descriptions of the West. The great natural meadows – prairies – described by the prisoners after their return from captivity, which they represented as resembling large open fields, extending as far as the eye could reach, without a tree, stump, or shrub of any kind: covered in summer with a rich carpet of grass, and flowers, and often with herds of grazing buffaloes, were regarded as of the Arabian Knights class of stories: it being impossible for those who have never seen these beautiful and extensive plains, to imagine how they would look.

The last few months of Rue's captivity were spent at Detroit. I shall not attempt to give a full description of the various incidents of his long and painful captivity, which lasted three years and a half, and was terminated in the following manner: Rue and two of his fellow captives whose names are not recollected with sufficient certainty to give them a place in these pages, come to the conclusion to make their escape, if possible. In anticipation of such an attempt, they had for some time been secretly preparing for their departure. At the time there were three or four different tribes of Indians assembled at the Trading House on the Lake shore near Detroit. A circumstance occurred

during the drunken revels of the Indians which produced great excitement. One of the Indians lost a purse containing some ninety dollars in silver. Search was instituted in vein for the lost treasure. - Who was the thief? Various were the conjectures, and insinuations of the exasperated tribes, who were about to make it assume a national character, when it was announced that there was a Sooth-sayer, or Prophet present, who belonged to another tribe from either of those who were disputing about the lost treasure, who, by conjuration, could detect the thief; and tell where the lost money was secreted, which stopped all wrangling, until the learned



Falls of the Ohio River

seer had tried his arts of necromancy. The professor of the black art, looking as solemn as an owl, unrolled a deer-skin upon the ground, with the flesh side up. He then drew from his belt a little bag of fine sand, which he emptied upon the deer-skin. - With a magic wand about the size and length of an ordinary rifle ram-rod, he spread the sand smoothly over the whole surface of the skin. The eager and deeply interested crowd with a solemn awe depicted in their countenances, encircled the magician, and awaited with breathless silence the result of his divination. - Meanwhile the Prophet, as he was termed, silently gazed at the glittering surface of the sand for many minutes, without any definite result. Then after muttering over some half articulated spell-words, and looking awfully wise, he took another long, steady gaze into the sand. Eureka! Eureka were not the words uttered by the venerable seer, but he said, "I see the thief, and the stolen treasure." "Who is he? Who?" shouted a dozen voices - "tell his name, point him out, be it whomsoever it may." But the Prophet, feeling hound by a proper spirit of philanthropy for his red brethren, and deeming that the disclosure might lead to the extermination of a tribe, or perhaps two or three tribes, before the matter ended, gravely declared the impropriety of divulging a fact that might terminate so disastrously. He exonerated all those who had been charged with the theft, and said that the lost money had been taken and carried

away by a member of a different tribe from any of those embroiled in the quarrel. This important announcement quieted the dissensions of those who were contending, and restored harmony and friendship among those who, but a few hours before, were ready to use the knife and tomahawk upon each other.

Rue and his comrades being witnesses of this display of the Prophet's professional skill, concluded at the first convenient opportunity to interrogate him in regard to the number, age, sex, and condition of their respective families at home; and whether they were all still alive, and resided where they did when they were captured.

A private chance occurred within a few days afterwards, the fee was agreed upon and paid, and the three prisoners and the seer seated themselves around the outspread deer-skin, covered with the enchanted sand. After a long silence, during which the Prophet looked steadily into the sand, he remarked that he saw Rue's folks passing about through the door-yard, giving the number of males and females, and their age and appearance with such accuracy that Rue at once considered him a genuine wizard. - The conjurer then lifted his eyes from the sand and remarked: "you all intend to make your escape - and you will effect it soon." Then gazing into the sand he continued: "You will meet with many trials and hardships in passing over so wild a district of country, inhabited by so many hostile nations of Indians. You win almost starve to death; but about the time you have given up all hope of finding game to sustain you in your famished condition, succor will come when you least expect it. I see dimly the carcass of some wild animal taken as game, what it is I can't clearly see. It will be a masculine of some kind - after that you will find plenty of game, and you will all arrive safely at your homes." They stoutly denied any intention or desire of escaping; but at the same time told the wizard that as they had paid him for his professional revelations, that they had implicit confidence that he would not divulge, except to themselves, any shadowings of the future that flitted over his sand-covered deer-skin.



The old Prophet, acting upon the principle of letting everyone attend to their own business, said nothing about the "coming events which cast their shadows before" in regard to the escape of the prisoners. Whether his silence proceeded from his not wishing to meddle with the determinations of the fates, or from a fear that any revelations he might make, affecting the interests of his patrons who had confided their all to his prophetic skill and honor, might injure his business; or simply from a sense of moral probity, it was difficult to judge.

At length the set time for their departure arrived, and they commenced their dubious journey thro' the wide wilderness, infested with wild beasts, and wild and bloody-minded savages, whose tender mercies, (with few noble exceptions) they had long since learned were cruel. They knew that as soon as they were missed they would be pursued, and they pushed ahead as fast as possible the whole of the first night, and encamped about daybreak, without fire in a thicket, almost surrounded by a swamp. Here they lay concealed the whole day. Having eaten the scanty amount of victuals they had been able to stealthily abstract from the camp the morning they left, they began to feel pressed with hunger, but dare not venture from their concealment, lest they might be discovered and recaptured by the Indians, whom they well knew would hang upon their trail and ferret them out if possible. They saw no game in their swampy retreat, and had they the sound of a gun might disclose

their hiding-place. They crawled around and tried to catch some frogs which they saw plunging about in the stagnant waters that surrounded them; but were unable to catch even one frog. At dark they ventured out from their lurking-place, and pursued their perilous journey thro' the woods, guided by the stars, when they shone, and when they were obscured, by the moss that grew on the north side of the trees - a fact well known to all woodsmen. Just before day they found a suitable place to ensconce themselves, where they laid down without striking a fire, weary and hungry. During the night they had made several fruitless efforts to catch rabbits, and other kinds of game that they had started up during their nightly journey. Although Rue was well acquainted with the country through which they were passing, (having traveled it over and over in company with his adopted brother, who saved him from the stake, and from whom he might have made his escape at different times) and where he might find any quantity of game; yet he well knew the imminent danger that would attend their appearance at a deer-lick, or fishing-place frequented by the Indians. Well knowing the cunning and persistent efforts that would be put forth by the Indians to retake them, they deemed it rashness in the extreme to fire off their guns, and were determined not to do so, except to prevent starvation. The morning of the third day found them so weak and exhausted by travel and hunger, that it was determined that Rue, who was a good hunter, should venture out in quest of game. He spent the most of the day in hunting but found no game, not even a bird nor a squirrel to appease their gnawing hunger. By this time they had reached the streams that led into the Wabash river, which Rue knew abounded with fine fish, but having no fish hooks with them, nor wire to construct any out of, they deemed it too hazardous to attempt to spear any by torch-light. So they traveled on all that night without eating, or stopping to rest, but with the returning beams of the morning they sought a secure hiding-place as usual. Their



Gen. Clark

hunger now began to become insupportable, and although the woods and streams showed strong and fresh signs of Indians, it was determined that Rue, their Nimrod, must go in quest of game at all hazards. He scoured the woods for miles around, up hill and down dale, but strange to say, he could find no game of any description. A jay bird or a wood-pecker would have been a delicious morsel to these starving fugitives – but birds and beasts appeared to be, like themselves, hid amidst their woody fastnesses. About the middle of the afternoon Rue returned to camp, weary, dejected and luckless. Starvation now stared them in the face. Had they wandered thus far on their weary march to starve in the inhospitable wilderness, and their bodies become the food of the night prowling wolf – whose habits they had recently adopted, at least as far as nocturnal rambling was concerned. At length another one of the fugitives arose from his prostrate position on the ground, and said, “Suppose I try my luck, or lack of luck once more.” Then shouldering the best gun in the company, he walked slowly off, and was soon hid in the darksome forest that surrounded them. But his persistent effort on the part of their comrade brought no hope to the minds of Rue and the other man, who knew the want of skill on the part of the departed hunter. But the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong, which was fully verified by the fact that in less than three hours after he started from the camp, the amateur hunter returned tottering under a small three-pronged buck, which he had killed and partly dressed. As he threw it upon the ground the words of the conjurer – “It is a masculine – after killing it you will find plenty of game, and your hardships will mostly be over.” flashed across the mind of Rue, who now felt fully confirmed in the oracular wisdom of the

old Indian, whose prophetic ken had so far penetrated the future as to see the carcass of that deer, which so opportunely killed to save them from death by famine. If it was a mere coincidence, or shrewd guess of the seer they considered it strange beyond parallel. A fire was soon kindled, and a small portion of the deer was broiled. The experience and sound judgment of the prisoners prevented their eating too much of the delicious repast. They now had enough to last them several days, until they could kill more, and the last words of the conjurer threw the rainbow hues of hope over the remainder of their toilsome journey. When night arrived they pursued their journey with renewed strength and courage, carrying with them the fleshy portions of the venison, feeling comparatively safe. Although they had traveled many miles from where they started, and in all probability were far out of reach of their pursuers, yet they relaxed but little in the prudent course they adopted at the start, of night traveling, and lying by in the daytime, and thus they entirely avoided discovery by the red men of the forest, who thickly inhabited the region through which they had passed. Had they been discovered by the Indians who inhabited the different portions of the country through which they passed, they would most likely not have been recognized as white men, for their dress, gait, manners and general appearance were completely Indian, from the painted feathers and porcupine quills that crowned the turban that encircled their foreheads, to the beads and ribbons that adorned their moccasins, and variegated the fanciful belts that surrounded their waists, bristling with scalping-knife and tomahawk. They found game plenty, and would have had a sufficient quantity of ammunition to enable them to supply themselves with provisions to the end of their journey, had not an accident occurred, which reduced them again to a state of great destitution.

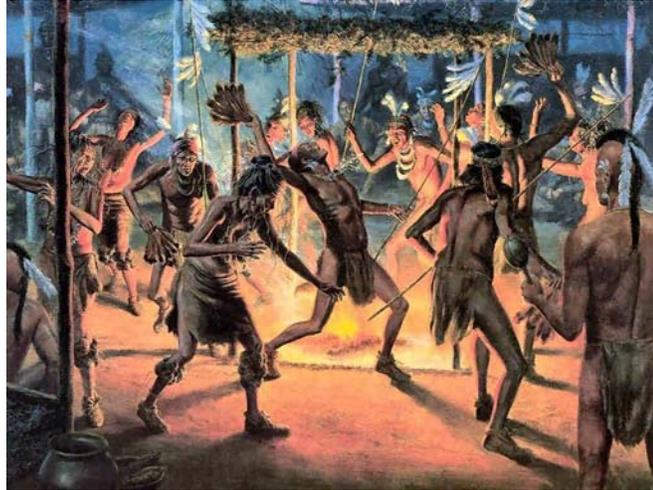
On the twentieth day after they made their escape from near Detroit, they struck the Ohio river, about fifty miles above the Falls. The sight of this beautiful river, which they had not seen for over three years, sent a thrill of joy through their bosoms, and they set to work to construct a rude raft out of logs, to bear them down its sparkling current to the village of Louisville, where their toilsome and dangerous journey would be brought to a close. But before they had floated half the way to Louisville their frail raft was dashed to pieces by the white-caps raised by a stiff gale that swept up the river, and the three passengers with their guns, blankets, and provisions were spilt out into the river. With difficulty they reached the Kentucky shore, and crawled up the bank looking, as they afterwards said, like drowned rats. They lost all their guns but one, the whole of their provisions, and the most of their ammunition and clothes. In this sad plight they struck out through the woods for Harrodsburg, where they arrived in safety, greatly fatigued and worn down by their long, perilous, and wearisome journey through the wilderness, and to the surprise and joy of their friends, who had long mourned them as dead.

Edward Holman, Rue's brother-in-law, after a lapse of two years from the time the latter was taken prisoner, concluded he had been murdered by the Indians, proceeded to administer upon Rue's estate, and sold a four acre out-lot, adjoining the village of Louisville, situated not far from where the Court House now stands, at very low figures, and the deed was regularly executed to the purchase.

On finding his worldly effects all settled up in good faith, and his out-lot improved and occupied by an innocent purchaser, he concluded to take no steps to disturb the premature administration; and I suppose his numerous descendants and heirs (one of whom is the writer of these pages – Richard Rue being the maternal grandfather of the writer,) feel but little inclined to disturb a proceeding, however extra-judicial, which had been so long acquiesced in by their worthy ancestor. Rue married a relative of George Holman, his companion in captivity: and was in several campaigns against the Indians, after his escape from captivity.

On the return of Homan's party of Indians to Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta, much dissatisfaction existed in regard to the manner of his release from the sentence of condemnation pronounced against him by the council. Many were in favor of recalling the council, and trying him again; which was finally agreed to, and the young man was again put on trial for his life, with a strong probability of his being again condemned to the stake. Both parties used strenuous efforts, one to condemn, and the other to acquit him. The votes were counted. The party in favor of the prisoner's acquittal prevailed by a majority of one, and the young captive was again rescued from the stake.

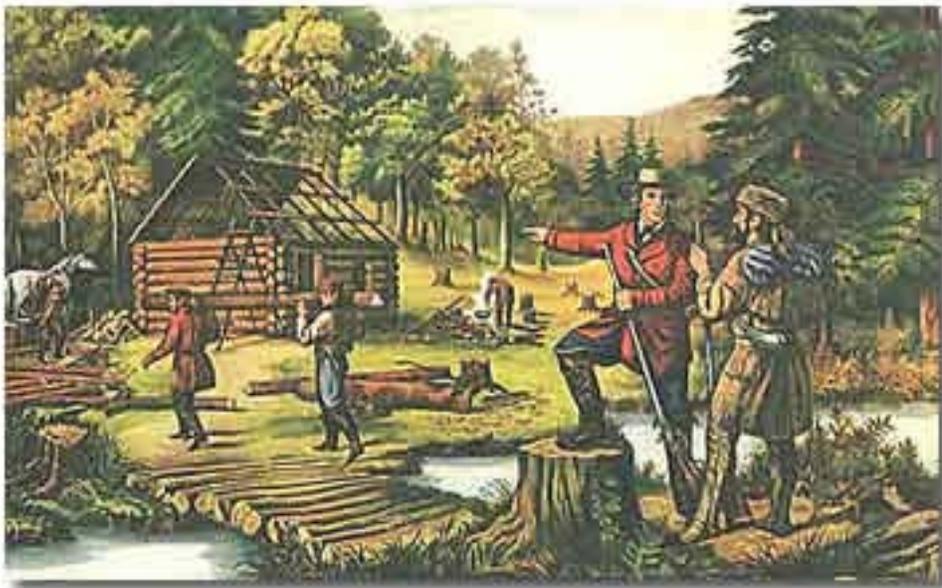
While with the Indians Holman saw them burn Richard Hogeland, a Kentuckian, who was taken prisoner at the defeat of Col. Crawford. They commenced burning him at nine o'clock at night, and continued roasting him until ten o'clock next morning before he expired. During his excruciating tortures he begged for some of them to terminate his life and sufferings with a gun or tomahawk. Finally his cruel tormentors promised they would, and cut several deep gashes in his flesh with their tomahawks, and then shoveled up hot ashes and embers and threw them into the gaping wounds. When dead they stripped off his scalp, cut him to pieces, burnt him to ashes, which they scattered through the town, to expel the evil spirits from it.



About three years and a half after Holman was taken prisoner, there was a cessation of hostilities for about one year. The protracted war had brought great distress upon the Indians, who wished to recruit themselves, and get more trading houses established to furnish them with the necessary supplies. Holman understanding their wishes, proposed if they would send a young Indian with him who knew the way to the Falls of the Ohio, he would make application to a rich uncle of his in Kentucky, from whom they could obtain as much goods as they wanted. Their necessities induced them to comply with Holman's proposal. He in company with another prisoner and a young warrior, started from Wa-pue-ca-nat-ta for the vicinity of Harrodsburg, Kentucky. They struck the Ohio river a few miles above Louisville, Ky., where General Clark was then stationed with troops and military stores. On arriving at the river, Holman and his two companions lashed their guns and blankets upon their backs, and taking advantage of the current, swam over to the Kentucky side of the river. They stayed all night with Gen. Clark, at Louisville, who, after learning the object of their mission, told them to call for whatever they wanted to procure the ransom of the two captives. Thus Holman and his fellow captive, for a small sum, paid in powder, lead, salt, handkerchiefs, &c., were ransomed by Gen. Clark, and in a few days Holman met his friend and fellow captive Rue, at Edward Holman's residence, in the vicinity of Harrodsburg, Ky. Rue had arrived only three days before, and the reader can imagine, better than I can describe, the transports of joy that thrilled the bosoms of those two noble young Kentuckians on being released from the perils, toils and sufferings of their protracted captivity, and restored to the society of their friends – who were equally delighted with their unexpected return. Rue and Homan were both in one or two campaigns against the Indians, under Gen. Clark, after returning from their captivity.

Both Rue and Holman lived many years in Woodford and Henry counties in Kentucky; and in the year 1805, they, with their families, removed to Wayne county, Indian Territory, and settled and lived close neighbors, on the same section of land, the remainder of their lives, about two miles south of where the city of Richmond now stands.

They assisted in the organization of the separate Baptist Church at Elkhorn, of which they continued worthy and useful members as long as they lived, and enjoyed the confidence and good will of all who knew them. The hardships and exposure Rue suffered during his captivity with the Indians, undermined his naturally strong constitution; and for the last twenty-five years of his life, he was so disabled by chronic rheumatism that he could not attend to any kind of manual labor, and for the most of the time was confined to his house and bed. He was gathered to his fathers some fifteen years ago; having lived to see all of a numerous family, mostly daughters, married and settled around him. Holman, who also raised a large family, mostly sons, lived to quite an advanced age, retaining his physical and mental vigor to an astonishing degree, until the last moment of his life. His oldest son, the Hon. Joseph Holman, was a member of the Constitutional Convention that framed the first Constitution of Indiana, in 1816; represented Wayne county in the State Legislature; and was by Gen. Jackson appointed to a place in the Land office at Fort Wayne, and now resides at the old homestead near Richmond. His second son, Rev. Wm. Holman, was for many years Presiding Elder, and Stationed Minister of the M. E. Church at the city of Louisville, Ky. Another son, Washington Holman, represented Miami county in the State Legislature many years since.



Many years after peace had been established, their old Indian relatives, as they called them, were in the habit of paying Rue and Holman annual visits, staying from one to two weeks at a time. I recollect that grandfather and Mr. Holman made a great parade over the old wrinkled Indian men and squaws that visited them; and ordered their ponies to be well cared for. For hours together these old companions of the forest, would sit and converse in broken English, and in the Indian dialect, by signs, motions, looks, and all manner of ways, which used to both astonish and amuse the younger members of the family, who were often called in to light their pipes, and report the condition of the ponies. First at Rue's, then at Holman's, and back again, once or twice during their stay, was the usual order of these periodical visits, which were continued during the lifetime of their Indian relatives. Nothing that Rue or Holman possessed was deemed too good for these guests from the forest, who were always dismissed with the utmost affection, and their ponies were loaded with presents in the shape of tobacco, salt, flour, and other knickknacks. I remember that on witnessing these acts of kindness on the part of my grandfather and Mr. Holman towards these swarthy children of the wilderness, I thought they evinced quite a peculiar taste: very different from mine, and the majority of mankind. But when we reflect that their lives had been spared, and their necessities supplied by these their adopted relatives, to the full extent of their abilities – we are constrained not

only to approve, but to admire such demonstrations of gratitude for favors conferred in the hour of extreme need.

Holman departed this life on the 24th day of May, 1859; aged 99 years, 3 months and 13 days, on his farm below Richmond, where he had resided for fifty-four years. He was calm and resigned to the will of his Divine Master. After conversing freely and affectionately with the relatives and friends who surrounded him, he gave directions in regard to his coffin, pall-bearers, and plan of burial, and died without a struggle, closing his own eyes.