Our History Scrapbook:—

Indians Gave Early Blacksmith Venison, Skins For Guns He Made

Editor's Note — Following is another in a series of articles about the settlement and development of Richmond. The 150th anniversary of the arrival of the first permanent settlers on the site of Richmond was celebrated here in August. The articles were written by Luther M. Feeger, associate editor of The Palladium-Item.

No. 42

By Luther M. Feeger

John Hunt, who built a log cabin and blacksmith shop about a mile east of the site of Abington in 1807, was a gunsmith of note in the pioneer period.

The late Rev. E. E. Hale, sr., blacksmith and Friends minister, informed the writer of this article, a number of years ago, that Hunt made guns for Indians.

After describing the manner in which, Hunt, his grandfather, made the guns, Hale said:

"There were considerable mountings in those early days, especially if the guns were made for the Indians, for whom my grandfather did a lot of work.

"It used to be quite interesting to me, as a lad, to listen to my grandmother tell of her early life.

"She would tell me of the Indians coming to the shop from out on West river, Greensfork and Nolan's fork to get their guns repaired or to get powder and lead.

Entirely Unsanitary

"They would stay for several days or for a week waiting for their work. She would give them food and they would sleep in the shop. She also would tell how unsanitary they were.

"They would bring a deer's stomach with the contents emptied out but with the inside lining unwashed. They would tie one end with sinews of the carcass. Mother would fill the receptacle with milk and the opening would be closed.

"The Indians would then take it to the shop and throw it under the bellows and sometimes it would lay there for several days. When they got ready to start for home, they would see the contents were still there."

Mary Hunt

Mary Hunt was the wife of John Hunt, early blacksmith who is the subject of the accompanying article.

Indians pass his father's house, sometimes 50 or 60, going to Hamilton, Ohio, to trade, and they were very friendly.

"The last crowd of Indians he saw was when General Harrison reviewed the Eighth Regiment of Militia just south of Richmond, where he had come to warn the people of danger. There were about 50 sitting on the fence looking at the review.

Told Of Kidnaping

"Mr. Ralsback related several interesting incidents connected with the Indians, one of which was their stealing Lydia Thorp, a little daughter of Boaz Thorp, near Milton.

"The Indians were tracked by men and dogs. But they escaped, and nothing was seen of the girl, until, about 10 years after, they saw her at the forks of the Wabash left, and was seen by them no more."

In a paper read before the Old Settlers' picnic in 1900, Isaac H. Julian of San Marcos, Tex., a native of Wayne county, said:

"Henry Bryan and Thomas McCoy, as may be inferred from their names, were Irishmen. Bryan was a man of education, a surveyor by profession.

"McCoy was one of the very first settlers of Wayne county, in 1805, along with Hugh Cull, Richard Rue and George Holman.

"McCoy became quite noted because of an adventure he had with Johnny Green, the Indian 'brave,' of whom the region under notice was one of the favorite haunts.

"I give the account as I had it from my mother (Rebecca Julian) and others many years ago.

"A scouting party, organized to reconnoiter the frontiers, passed into the neighborhood of the Indian town on Blue River (then at peace with the whites) where Green happened to be, and, at his request, agreed to let him accompany them to the white settlements, promising that he should receive no injury.

Went Back On Word

"But no sooner had they got him fairly into their power than they bound him, and some of them insisted on taking his life.

"He was taken to Colonel Hunt's, seven miles south of Centerville, where a number of men collected to decide the fate of the prisoner.

"Such was the division of sentiment on the subject that a conflict came near ensuing. A large majority, however, were for his immediate death.

"This was stoutly opposed by Thomas McCoy, a stalwart Irishman, and others. But, finding their remonstrances ineffectual to prevent the treacherous, dastardly determination of the majority from being executed, McCoy, in the face of his enemies, cut the ropes which bound the captive, mounted him behind him on his horse, and carried him beyond the reach of danger.

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Phone Firm Will Move Headquarters

LAFAYETTE, Ind. (AP) — General Telephone Co., announced Tuesday it is preparing to move its Indiana headquarters to Fort Wayne.

The move is being made as a sequel to a recent merger of Theodore Gary & Co. properties with General.

With the Gary properties, including the exchanges in Fort Wayne and Terre Haute, General will have more than a quarter of a million telephones in service in the state. General's headquarters have been in Lafayette since 1941.

Both General and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) announced that an agreement reached Monday calls for a one-year contract with a "substantial"...