

The Story of the Rice Boys

Captured by the Indians

August 8, 1704

AS WRITTEN BY

REV. EBENEZER PARKMAN

May, 1769

WESTBOROUGH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1906



FOUR RICES CAPTIVATED.

1704.

On Aug. 8th, in the year 1704, at the south part of Marlboro', then called Chauncy, now Westboro', as Several Persons were busy in Spreading Flax, on a plain about fourscore rods from the House of M^r. Thomas Rice (who was for several years Representative for Marlboro') and a number of Boys with them, two of which were Sons of the said M^r. Thomas Rice ; & three others, sons of M^r. Edmund Rice ; Seven, some say Ten, Indians, suddenly rushed down a woody Hill close by, and Seizing & scalping the least of the Boys, (one of y^e three last mentioned, & about five years old) they took the other four captive, the two sons of M^r. Thomas Rice, Namely Asher and Adonijah, the oldest about 10, the other about 8 years ; and the other two of M^r. Edmund Rice, of about 9 & 7, their Names, Silas and Timothy ; and carryd them away to Canada ; those persons who were spreading Flax, escaping to the House safely.

Asher, in about four years, returned, being redeemed by his Father. This was bro't about by the kind Mediation of the Rev. M^r. Lydius, then Minister of Albany. [It is a little observable, that when the old Indian sachem,

Ountassogo (the Chief of the Cagnawagas at the Conference wth. Gov^r. Belcher at Deerfield) made a Visit to Boston, & stop'd a while here in this Town, the forementioned Asher Saw him and knew him to be one of those Indians, who rushd down the Hill, as above, when the Children were captivated.] This Mr. Asher Rice is now living in Spencer. His Brother Adonijah grew up in Canada; but marryd first a French, afterwards a Dutch woman; settled in Husbandry, on some Land a little way off from Montreal, on the North Side of the great River; has had a good Farm there for many Years, as we have been certifyd; and he is, very probably, now living there at this Day.

As to the two other Boys, Silas and Timothy, (Sons of Mr. Edmund Rice aforesaid) we have had credible Information from time to time, y^t they mixd with the Indians; lost their Mother Tongue; had indian Wives, & Children by them and liv'd at Cagnawaga. Their Friends among us had news of them not long since, that they were then alive; So that they may be in all probability there still.

But respecting Timothy, the younger of them, who is by much the most noticeable, the Acc^{ts}. we have always had, have represented him, as having been for many Years, the Third of the Six Chiefs of that Tribe before mentioned. This Advancem^t I understand was upon the Death of his Master, or Foster-Father, who adopted him to be his Son, instead of a son which he, the former Chief,

had lost. But however, Timothy had much recommended himself to the Indians by his own superior Talents ; his Penetration, Courage, strength & warlike spirit ; for which he was much celebrated. This was evident to me when in Conversation with the late Mohawk Sachem Hendrick & Mr. Kellogg, at the Time of their being in the Massachusetts ; and his Name was among them the same that we had known him by, viz

UGHTZORONGOUGHTON.

—But he himself, in process of Time, came to see us.

By the Interposition of Col. Lydius, & y^e Captain Tarbel (who was carryd away from Groton) a Letter was sent me, bearing date July 23, 1740, which certifyd that if one of their Brethren here, would go up to Albany, & be there at a Time specify'd, they would meet him there ; & that One of them at least, would come hither to visit their Friends in New England. This Proposal was readily comply'd with and it succeeded. For the Chief abovesaid came hither. The said Mr. Tarbell came also with him as an Interpreter & Companion. They arrived here Sept. 15th. They view'd the House where Mr. Rice dwelt, & the Place from whence the Children above spoke of, were captivated ; of both which he retained a clear Remembrance ; as he did likewise of Several elderly Persons who were then living ; tho' he had forgot our Language. His Excell^{cy} Gov^r. Belcher sent for them ; who accordingly waited on him at Boston. They visited also Tarbels

Relations at Groton; and then returned to us in their Way back to Albany & Canada.

Col. Lydius, when at Boston a while ago, Said this Rice was the Chief who made the Speech to Gen^l. Gage (which we had in our public Prints) in behalf of y^e Cagnawaga's, Soon after the Reduction of Montreal. This last may be further enquired into; but the rest which I have here writ, is from good Authority, as I humbly Suppose. In particular as to the Captivating; three Persons who were Present, & escap'd the Indians Hands, as abovesaid, are now alive, and testifie to this Acc^t.

I am &c.

EB^R. PARKMAN.

Westboro'
May 1769.

NOTE:—The above article was written on the first two pages of a folded sheet of paper, $12\frac{1}{4}$ by $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches, with a wide margin at the back edge. The title at the head is on the fourth page. The paper is much discolored and is worn in the creases and at the edges, but the writing is very clear and legible.

It has been carefully treasured by the descendants of Mr. Parkman, whose great-great-granddaughter, Mrs. W. R. Gould, has presented it to the Society.

THE DEDICATION OF THE MEMORIAL TABLET.

The Westborough Historical Society, on its field day, Sept. 5, 1904, met at the junction of the land of J. W. Brittan and F. V. Bartlett, on West Main Street, where a boulder given by L. A. Belknap had been placed.

At 9.30 o'clock, the Committee on marking historic sites, C. S. Henry, I. M. Beaman and E. C. Bates, reported that it was believed that the capture took place near where the flag was set in the rear of the Bartlett barn.

The tablet was unveiled and the president, S. I. Briant, said, "As president of the Westborough Historical Society it gives me pleasure to accept this your work, as now before us and to declare it in every way well done ; the stone rightly located and firmly placed and the tablet appropriately inscribed and securely set. May it serve to remind the passer-by of the heroic sacrifices of our fathers two centuries ago and of the kind Providence that was with them, is with us today and will be forever with the generations yet to come."

Prayer was offered by Rev. W. C. Townsend. The choir with cornet then led in the singing of "Our Father's God, to Thee."

Later, at the Eli Whitney place, Judge W. T. Forbes of Worcester gave an interesting address on the Rice boys. Having visited Canada several times, he was enabled to present many facts new to most and exhibited several Indian relics used by the "Cagnawagas."

