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**Myths and Legends of Our Own
Land –Volume 06 : Central States
and Great Lakes**

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THE CENTRAL STATES AND GREAT LAKES

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THE CENTRAL STATES AND THE GREAT LAKES

AN AVERTED PERIL

In 1786 a little building stood at North Bend, Ohio, near the junction of the Miami and Ohio Rivers, from which building the stars and stripes were flying. It was one of a series of blockhouses built for the protecting of cleared land while the settlers were coming in, yet it was a trading station rather than a fort, for the attitude of government toward the red men was pacific. The French of the Mississippi Valley were not reconciled, however, to the extension of power by a Saxon people, and the English in Canada were equally jealous of the prosperity of those provinces they had so lately lost. Both French and English had emissaries among the Shawnees when it had become known that the United States intended to negotiate a treaty with them.

It was the mild weather that comes for a time in October, when Cantantowit blesses the land from his home in the southwest with rich colors, plaintive perfumes of decay, soft airs, and tender lights a time for peace; but the garrison at the fort realized that the situation was precarious. The Shawnees had camped about them, and the air was filled with the neighing of their ponies and the barking of their dogs. To let them into the fort was to invite massacre; to keep them out after they had been summoned was to declare war.

Colonel George Rogers Clarke, of Virginia, who was in command, scoffed at the fears of his men, and would not give ear to their appeals for an adjournment of the meeting or a change of the place of it. At the appointed hour the doors were opened and the Indians came in. The pipe of peace was smoked in the usual form, but the red men were sullen and insolent, and seemed to be seeking a cause of quarrel. Clarke explained that the whites desired only peace, and

he asked the wise men to speak for their tribe. A stalwart chief arose, glanced contemptuously at the officer and his little guard, and, striding to the table where Clarke was seated, threw upon it two girdles of wampum—the peace-belt and the war-belt. "We offer you these belts," he said. "You know what they mean. Take which you like."

It was a deliberate insult and defiance. Both sides knew it, and many of the men held their breath. Clarke carelessly picked up the war-belt on the point of his cane and flung it among the assembled chiefs. Every man in the room sprang to his feet and clutched his weapon. Then, with a sternness that was almost ferocious, Clarke pointed to the door with an imperative action, and cried, "Dogs, you may go!"

The Indians were foiled in their ill intent by his self-possession and seeming confidence, which made them believe that he had forces in the vicinity that they were not prepared to meet. They had already had a bitter experience of his strength and craft, and in the fear that a trap had been set for them they fled tumultuously. The treaty was ratified soon after.

THE OBSTINACY OF SAINT CLAIR

When the new First Regiment of United States Infantry paused at Marietta, Ohio, on its way to garrison Vincennes, its officers made a gay little court there for a time. The young Major Hamtramck—contemptuously called by the Indians "the frog on horseback," because of his round shoulders—found especial pleasure in the society of Marianne Navarre, who was a guest at the house of General Arthur St. Clair; but the old general viewed this predilection with disfavor, because he had hoped that his own daughter would make a match with the major. But Louisa longed for the freedom of the woods. She was a horsewoman and a hunter, and she had a sentimental fondness for Indians.

When Joseph Brandt (Thayendanegea) camped with his dreaded band near the town, it was she who—without her father's

knowledge, and in the disguise of an Indian girl—took the message that had been entrusted to a soldier asking the tribe to send delegates to a peace council at the fort. Louisa and Brandt had met in Philadelphia some years before, when both were students in that city, and he was rejoiced to meet her again, for he had made no secret of his liking for her, and in view of the bravery she had shown in thus riding into a hostile camp his fondness increased to admiration. After she had delivered the message she said, "Noble warrior, I have risked my life to obtain this interview. You must send some one back with me." Brandt replied, "It is fitting that I alone should guard so courageous a maiden," and he rode with her through the lines, under the eyes of a wondering and frowning people, straight to the general's door. Soon after, Brandt made a formal demand for the hand of this dashing maid, but the stubborn general refused to consider it. He was determined that she ought to love Major Hamtramck, and he told her so in tones so loud that they reached the ears of Marianne, as she sat reading in her room. Stung by this disclosure of the general's wishes, and doubting whether the major had been true to her—fearful, too, that she might be regarded as an interloper—she made a pretext to return as quickly as possible to her home in Detroit, and left no adieu for her lover.

It was not long after that war broke out between the settlers and the Indians, for Brandt now had a personal as well as a race grudge to gratify, though when he defeated St. Clair he spared his life in the hope that the general would reward his generosity by resigning to him his daughter. At all events, he resolved that the "frog on horseback," whom he conceived to be his rival, should not win her. The poor major, who cared nothing for Louisa, and who was unable to account for the flight of Marianne, mourned her absence until it was rumored that she had been married, when, as much in spite as in love, he took to himself a mate. After he had been for some time a widower he met Marianne again, and learned that she was still a maiden. He renewed his court with ardor, but the woman's love for him had died when she learned of his marriage. Affecting to make light of this second disappointment, he said, "Since I cannot be united to you in life, I shall be near you in death."

"A soldier cannot choose where he shall die," she answered.

"No matter. I shall sleep in the shadow of your tomb."

As it fell out they were indeed buried near each other in Detroit. Thus, the stupidity and obstinacy of General St. Clair, in supposing that he could make young folks love to order, thwarted the happiness of four people and precipitated a war.

THE HUNDREDTH SKULL

In the early part of this century Bill Quick, trapper and frontiersman, lived in a cabin on the upper Scioto, not far from the present town of Kenton, Ohio. One evening when he returned from the hunt he found his home rifled of its contents and his aged father weltering in his blood on the floor. He then and there took oath that he would be revenged a hundredfold. His mission was undertaken at once, and for many a year thereafter the Indians of the region had cause to dread the doom that came to them from brake and wood and fen,—now death by knife that flashed at them from behind a tree, and the next instant whirled through the air and was buried to the hilt in a red man's heart; now, by bullet as they rowed across the rivers; now, by axe that clove their skulls as they lay asleep.

Bill Quick worked secretly, and, unlike other men of the place and time, he did not take his trophies Indian-fashion. The scalp was not enough. He took the head. And presently a row of grinning skulls was ranged upon his shelves. Ninety-nine of these ghastly prizes occupied his cabin, and the man was confident that he should accomplish his intent. But the Indians, in terror, were falling away toward the lakes; they were keeping better guard; and ere the hundredth man had fallen before his rifle he was seized with fatal illness. Calling to him his son, Tom, he pointed to the skulls, and charged him to fulfil the oath he had taken by adding to the list a hundredth skull. Should he fail in this the murdered ancestor and he himself would come back to haunt the laggard. Tom accepted the trust, but everything seemed to work against him. He never was much of a hunter nor a very true shot, and he had no liking for war; besides, the Indians had left the country, as he fancied. So he grum-

bled at the uncongenial task appointed for him and kept deferring it from week to week and from year to year. When his conscience pricked him he allayed the smart with drink, and his conscience seemed to grow more active as he grew older.

On returning to the cabin after a carouse he declared that he had heard voices, that the skulls gibbered and cracked their teeth together as if mocking his weakness, and that a phosphorescent glare shone through the sockets of their eyes. In his cups he prattled his secret, and soon the whole country knew that he was under oath to kill a red-skin-and the country laughed at him. On a certain day it was reported that a band of Indians had been seen in the neighborhood, and what with drink and the taunts of his friends, he was impelled to take his rifle and set out once more on the war-path. A settler heard a shot fired not long after. Next day a neighbor passing Tom Quick's cabin tapped at the door, and, receiving no answer, pushed it open and entered. The hundredth skull was there, on the shelves, a bullet-hole in the forehead, and the scalp gone. The head was Quick's.

THE CRIME OF BLACK SWAMP

Two miles south of Munger, Ohio, in the heart of what used to be called the Black Swamp, stood the Woodbury House, a roomy mansion long gone to decay. John Cleves, the last to live in it, was a man whose evil practices got him into the penitentiary, but people had never associated him with the queer sights and sounds in the lower chambers, nor with the fact that a man named Syms, who had gone to that house in 1842, had never been known to leave it. Ten years after Syms's disappearance it happened that Major Ward and his friend John Stow had occasion to take shelter there for the night—it being then deserted,—and, starting a blaze in the parlor fireplace, they lit their pipes and talked till late. Stow would have preferred a happier topic, but the major, who feared neither man nor devil, constantly turned the talk on the evil reputation of the house.

While they chatted a door opened with a creak and a human skeleton appeared before them.

"What do you want? Speak!" cried Ward. But waiting for no answer he drew his pistols and fired two shots at the grisly object. There was a rattling sound, but the skeleton was neither dislocated nor disconcerted. Advancing deliberately, with upraised arm, it said, in a husky voice, "I, that am dead, yet live in a sense that mortals do not know. In my earthly life I was James Syms, who was robbed and killed here in my sleep by John Cleves." With bony finger it pointed to a rugged gap in its left temple. "Cleves cut off my head and buried it under the hearth. My body he cast into his well." At these words the head disappeared and the voice was heard beneath the floor, "Take up my skull." The watchers obeyed the call, and after digging a minute beneath the hearth a fleshless head with a wound on the left temple came to view. Ward took it into his hands, but in a twinkling it left them and reappeared on the shoulders of the skeleton.

"I have long wanted to tell my fate," it resumed, "but could not until one should be found brave enough to speak to me. I have appeared to many, but you are the first who has commanded me to break my long silence. Give my bones a decent burial. Write to my relative, Gilmore Syms, of Columbus, Georgia, and tell him what I have revealed. I have found peace." With a grateful gesture it extended its hand to Ward, who, as he took it, shook like one with an ague, his wrist locked in its bony clasp. As it released him it raised its hand impressively. A bluish light burned at the doorway for an instant. The two men found themselves alone.

THE HOUSE ACCURSED

Near Gallipolis, Ohio, there stood within a few years an old house of four rooms that had been occupied by Herman Deluse. He lived there alone, and, though his farming was of the crudest sort, he never appeared to lack for anything. The people had an idea that the place was under ban, and it was more than suspected that its

occupant had been a pirate. In fact, he called his place the Isle of Pines, after a buccaneers' rendezvous in the West Indies, and made no attempt to conceal the strange plunder and curious weapons that he had brought home with him, but of money he never appeared to have much at once. When it came his time to die he ended his life alone, so far as any knew—at least, his body was found in his bed, without trace of violence or disorder. It was buried and the public administrator took charge of the estate, locking up the house until possible relatives should come to claim it, and the rustic jury found that Deluse "came to his death by visitation of God."

It was but a few nights after this that the Rev. Henry Galbraith returned from a visit of a month to Cincinnati and reached his home after a night of boisterous storm. The snow was so deep and the roads so blocked with windfalls that he put up his horse in Gallipolis and started for his house on foot.

"But where did you pass the night?" inquired his wife, after the greetings were over. "With old Deluse in the Isle of Pines," he answered. "I saw a light moving about the house, and rapped. No one came; so, as I was freezing, I forced open the door, built a fire, and lay down in my coat before it. Old Deluse came in presently and I apologized, but he paid no attention to me. He seemed to be walking in his sleep and to be searching for something. All night long I could hear his footsteps about the house, in pauses of the storm."

The clergyman's wife and son looked at each other, and a friend who was present—a lawyer, named Maren—remarked, "You did not know that Deluse was dead and buried?" The clergyman was speechless with amazement. "You have been dreaming," said the lawyer. "Still, if you like, we will go there to-night and investigate."

The clergyman, his son, and the lawyer went to the house about nine o'clock, and as they approached it a noise of fighting came from within—blows, the clink of steel, groans, and curses. Lights appeared, first at one window, then at another. The men rushed forward, burst in the door, and were inside—in darkness and silence. They had brought candles and lighted them, but the light revealed nothing. Dust lay thick on the floor except in the room where the clergyman had passed the previous night, and the door that he had then opened stood ajar, but the snow outside was drift-

ed and unbroken by footsteps. Then came the sound of a fall that shook the building. At the same moment it was noticed by the other two men that young Galbraith was absent. They hurried into the room whence the noise had come. A board was wrenched from the wall there, disclosing a hollow that had been used for a hiding-place, and on the floor lay young Galbraith with a sack of Spanish coins in his hand. His father stooped to pick him up, but staggered back in horror, for the young man's life had gone. A post-mortem examination revealed no cause of death, and a rustic jury again laid it to a "visitation of God." MARQUETTE'S MAN-EATER

Until it was worn away by the elements a curious relief was visible on the bluffs of the Mississippi near Alton, Illinois. It was to be seen as late as 1860, and represented a monster once famous as the "piasa bird." Father Marquette not only believed it but described it as a man-eater in the account of his explorations, where he mentions other zoological curiosities, such as unicorns with shaggy mane and land-turtles three feet long with two heads, "very mischievous and addicted to biting." He even showed a picture of the maneater that accorded rudely with the picture on the rocks. It was said to prey on human flesh, and to be held in fear by the Indians, who encountered it on and near the Mississippi. It had the body of a panther, wings like a bat, and head and horns of a deer. Father Marquette gave it a human face. The sculpture was undoubtedly made by Indians, but its resemblance to the winged bulls of Assyria and the sphinxes of Egypt has been quoted as confirmation of a prehistoric alliance of Old and New World races or the descent of one from the other. It has also been thought to stand for the totem of some great chief—symbolizing, by its body, strength; by its wings, speed; by its head, gentleness and beauty. But may not the tradition of it have descended from the discovery of comparatively late remains, by primitive man, of the winged saurians that crawled, swam, dived, or flew, lingering on till the later geologic period? The legend of the man-eater may even have been told by those who killed the last of the pterodactyls.

MICHEL DE COUCY'S TROUBLES

Michel De Coucy, of Prairie de Rocher, Illinois, sat before his door humming thoughtfully, and trying to pull comfort out of a black pipe.. He was in debt, and he did not like the sensation. As hunter, boatman, fiddler he had done well enough, but having rashly ventured into trade he had lost money, and being unable to meet a note had applied to Pedro Garcia for a loan at usurious interest. Garcia was a black-whiskered Spaniard who was known to have been a gambler in New Orleans, and as Michel was in arrears in his payments he was now threatening suit. Presently the hunter jumped up with a glad laugh, for two horsemen were approaching his place—the superior of the Jesuit convent at Notre Dame de Kaskaskia and the governor of the French settlements in Illinois, of whom he had asked advice, and who had come from Fort Chartres, on the Mississippi, to give it in person. It was good advice, too, for the effect of it was that there was no law of that time—1750—by which a Spaniard could sue a Frenchman on French territory. Moreover, the bond was invalid because it was drawn up in Spanish, and Garcia could produce no witness to verify the cross at the bottom of the document as of Michel's making.

Great was the wrath of the Spaniard when Michel told him this, nor was it lessened when the hunter bade him have no fear—that he might be obliged to repudiate part of the interest, but that every livre of the principal would be forthcoming, if only a little time were allowed. The money lender walked away with clenched fists, muttering to himself, and Michel lit his pipe again.

At supper-time little Genevieve, the twelve-year-old daughter of Michel, did not appear. The table was kept waiting for an hour. Michel sat down but could not eat, and, after scolding awhile in a half-hearted fashion, he went to the clearing down the road, where the child had been playing. A placard was seen upon a tree beside the way, and he called a passing neighbor to read to him these words: "Meshell Coosy. French rascal. Pay me my money and you have your daughter. Pedro Garcia."

Accustomed as he was to perils, and quick as he generally was in expedient, Michel was overwhelmed by this stroke. The villagers offered to arm themselves and rescue the child, but he would not

consent to this, for he was afraid that Garcia might kill her, if he knew that force was to be set against him. In a day or two Michel was told to go to Fort Chartres, as favorable news awaited him. He rode with all speed to that post, went to the official quarters, where the governor was sitting, and as he entered he became almost insane with rage, for Garcia stood before him. Nothing but the presence of others saved the Spaniard's life, and it was some time before Michel could be made to understand that Garcia was there under promise of safe conduct, and that the representatives of King Louis were in honor bound to see that he was not injured. The points at issue between the two men were reviewed, and the governor gave it as his decision that Michel must pay his debt without interest, that being forfeit by the Spaniard's abduction of Genevieve, and that the Spaniard was to restore the girl, both parties in the case being remanded to prison until they had obeyed this judgment.

"But I have your promise of safe conduct!" cried the Spaniard, blazing with wrath.

"And you shall have it when the girl returns," replied the governor. "You shall be protected in going and coming, but there is no reference in the paper that you hold as to how long we may wish to keep you with us."

Both men were marched away forthwith, but Michel was released in an hour, for in that time the people had subscribed enough to pay his debt. The Spaniard sent a messenger to a renegade who had little Genevieve in keeping, and next day he too went free, swearing horribly, but glad to accept the service of an armed escort until he was well out of town. Michel embraced his child with ardor when once she was in his arms again; then he lighted his pipe and set out with her for home, convinced that French law was the best in the world, that Spaniards were not to be trusted, and that it is safer to keep one's earnings under the floor than to venture them in trade.

WALLEN'S RIDGE

A century ago this rough eminence, a dozen miles from Chattanooga, Tennessee, was an abiding place of Cherokee Indians, among whom was Arinook, their medicine-man, and his daughter. The girl was pure and fair, and when a white hunter saw her one day at the door of her father's wigwam he was so struck with her charm of person and her engaging manner that he resolved not to return to his people until he had won her for his wife. She had many lovers, though she favored none of them, and while the Cherokees were at first loth to admit a stranger to their homes they forgot their jealousy when they found that this one excelled as a hunter and fisherman, that he could throw the knife and tomahawk better than themselves, and that he was apt in their work and their sports.

They even submitted to the inevitable with half a grace when they found that the stranger and the girl of whom they were so fond were in love. With an obduracy that seems to be characteristic of fathers, the medicine-man refused his consent to the union, and the hearts of the twain were heavy. Though the white man pleaded with her to desert her tribe, she refused to do so, on the score of duty to her father, and the couple forlornly roamed about the hill, watching the sunset from its top and passing the bright summer evenings alone, sitting hand in hand, loving, sorrowing, and speaking not. In one of their long rambles they found themselves beside the Tennessee River at a point where the current swirls among rocks and sucks down things that float, discharging them at the surface in still water, down the stream. Here for a time they stood, when the girl, with a gush of tears, began to sing—it was her death-song. The white man grasped her hand and joined his voice to hers. Then they took a last embrace and flung themselves into the water, still hand in hand.

When the river is low you may hear their death-song sounding there. The manitous of the river and the wood were offended with the medicine-man because of his stubbornness and cruelty, although he suffered greatly because of the death his daughter died, and he the cause of it. For now strange Indians appeared among the Cherokees and drove the deer and bear away. Tall, strong, and large were these intruders, and they hung about the village by day and

night—never speaking, yet casting a fear about them, for they would throw great rocks farther than a warrior could shoot an arrow with the wind behind him; they had horns springing from their heads; their eyes were the eyes of wild-cats, and shone in the dark; they growled like animals, shaking the earth when they did so, and breathing flame; they were at the bedside, at the council-fire, at the banquet, seeming only to wait for a show of enmity to annihilate the tribe.

At length the people could endure their company no longer, and taking down their lodges they left Wallen's Ridge and wandered far away until they came to a valley where no foot had left its impress, and there they besought the Great Spirit to forgive the wrong their medicine-man had done, and to free them from the terrible spirits that had been living among them. The prayer was granted, and the lodges stood for many years in a safe and happy valley.

THE SKY WALKER OF HURON

Here is the myth of Endymion and Diana, as told on the shores of Saginaw Bay, in Michigan, by Indians who never heard of Greeks. Cloud Catcher, a handsome youth of the Ojibways, offended his family by refusing to fast during the ceremony of his coming of age, and was put out of the paternal wigwam. It was so fine a night that the sky served him as well as a roof, and he had a boy's confidence in his ability to make a living, and something of fame and fortune, maybe. He dropped upon a tuft of moss to plan for his future, and drowsily noted the rising of the moon, in which he seemed to see a face. On awaking he found that it was not day, yet the darkness was half dispelled by light that rayed from a figure near him—the form of a lovely woman.

"Cloud Catcher, I have come for you," she said. And as she turned away he felt impelled to rise and follow. But, instead of walking, she began to move into the air with the flight of an eagle, and, endowed with a new power, he too ascended beside her. The earth was dim and vast below, stars blazed as they drew near them, yet