

Machara

By Jeannette Holland Austin



No one knew where Anna came from. She possessed the high brow and long slender nose of the highlands and the narrow rugged chin of the lowlands. Her physique rather fat and dumpy, compounded by her diminished height and her flat feet. Her appearance was the mark of a highlander, She wore a white blouse with ruffled sleeves and along plaid skirt reaching to the ankles. Gossip had it that she was widowed, however, the snood wrapped around her dull reddish hair indicated otherwise.

She simply showed up one day in Philadelphia, alone and homeless, begging for work. It was supposed that she had come across in one of the ships carrying Scottish emigrants and gossip abounded how the Scots had thrown aside one of their own. Eventually she acquired the lowest sort of work in one of the shops as a scully maid. Her wages amounted to her meals and a rat-infested room. She went unalarmed, as the vessel upon which she crossed the Atlantic had the varmints scurrying about. The mates attempted to cure the population by the sprinkling of arsenic around food barrels. The journey from Edinburgh had suffered numerous storms which veered the ship off its destination for North Carolina where the highlanders planned to join a settlement of Scots along the Cape Fear River. But the rainy storms and wind blew the vessel further north, to the New England colonies, and the captain made his excuses for dropping anchor in the Philadelphia harbor. If the truth be known, Mrs. Killiary was a woman persuaded to emigrate by a tacker collecting passage money near her village in the highlands. Generally considered an unwed maid past her prime and seeing no future prospects, she managed to sell her belongings for the cost of passage. And she was not going to settle for a meager existence in the shop either. She read the advertisements about town until one was tacked on a post advertising that passage would be paid for women to wed soldiers at a military post in the western Allegheny Mountains. Inquiry with the Land Office.

The daunting advertisement had its appeal. Hers was the first inquiry. The land manager rushed to show her a map of the region. "The fort is located on the western border between Virginia and Indian Territory. This here is Shawnee country", he emphatically stated, "are you certain that you want to risk it?"

She nodded. He continued. "I will need to cull amongst the immigrants accepting land grants that far west. Should a reliable wagon master apply for the task, the local militia guarantees to furnish supply wagons with teams of oxen for his trouble, as well as supply ample blankets and foodstuffs. The soldiers out west forfeited a year's pay to finance the delivery of wives into the territory. Of course tis a hazardous journey across the mountains which guarantees no pleasantries for women travelers."

She was shown a large map of the region. "This is the fort, and this is Shawnee country," the land officer said. "The soldiers at Ft.____ forfeited one year's wages for supplies, wagons and oxen to transport women into the territory. If you agree to wed the first name on their list, then I shall cull from amongst the emigrants who is seeking a land adventure out west."

"What is the name of the first soldier?" She asked.

"Keiffer. Sgt. Keiffer. A common German name, I'm sure."

"The name will suit me well."

"Then you agree to go?"

"Yes."

Months passed. It was late summer before the land congregation manager encountered Reverend Bradford, a presbyterian minister and his poor meager group from the highlands of Scotland. The group had sold all their belongings in the old country to come to America, and it was doubtful that they had the money to purchase wagons and mules. Upon arrival, the reverend went swiftly to the land office to learn of the opportunities for a land grant in the Virginia colony. As indeed he nor his company could ill afford the cost of wagons and oxen for thirty members and their children, he was easily persuaded. "The army will furnish eight wagons outfitted with blankets, beans, rice, and some potatoes as a starter. Also, to ensure the safety of the woman, the army is making you a gift of flinklocks and bullets to protect yourself against the Shawnee. There is ample game to be killed out from Philadelphia and along the Wilderness Road which crosses the Cumberland Gap in Maryland down across Virginia and into Kentucky."

Reverend Bradford was not worried about food. "What about the Indians?"

"The Shawnee ehre vicious.. Should you venture too far, they will take scalps and women as

slaves. You will require plenty of shot to protect yourselves."

"Where do I get it?"

"Is there a blacksmith in ye company?"

The reverend nodded, thinking of one of his most faithful deacons, Angus Watson.

"There is plenty of ore in those mountains, waiting for a blacksmith's flame."

The reverend calculated that his company possessed sufficient funds to purchase four more wagons, oxen and some horses.

The congregation were to meet at the ---- pass. Anna was in the Reverend's wagon along with his five girls. Anna's army portion of a side of beef sent by the army was sufficient to feed the minister's family for weeks to come. In the meanwhile, deacon Watson trained the young boys how to load and shoot a rifle.

Josh and Angus. The Cairn in the Highlands

It was a clear day in the scenic hills of the highlands when they buried the mother of Josh and Angus. The father and two sons had dug the grave near the rock cottage just as the fog lifted and cleared a passage over the wagon road for visitors. While the four married daughters prepared food embellishment, the grave-diggers stood with their shovels over a clump of rocky dirt. The freckled face, blue eyes and carrot-top of the lad Josh contrasted the clear pale skin of the elder brother and his brownish hair tied behind the neck with a thin ribbon. Where Josh was stubborn and courageous, Angus was practical, forthright and honest. The father, who had spent a life time tending the long-horned wavy-brindle cattle of his laird and suffered now in his declining years, , donned a tattered tartan and kilt with a leather sporran around his waist and gillie brogues upon his feet. The poorly situation of the Macdonalds exemplified the poor highlander who was never able to better themselves.

"She was a kindly woman," he declared, "who bore six healthy children without complaint, and raised them as true children of the clan."

The sad and dismal comments of his neighbors lasted until sun down, with the tacksman who collected the rents for the laird having the final say. His comments observed that his laird was removing ancient squalloring cottages which impeded the growth of grass to make way for the growing herds and that the old tenants were immigrating elsewhere. The tacker had a new occupation of assisting farmers to acquire passage across the sea to America. Thus far, he had secured a congregation of some fifty Presbyterians of men, women and children from the valley who sold all their goods and values to go to America and apply for land grants along the western frontier.

"What say you?" The tacker prodded the mournful father.

The father summoned Josh who was tearfully shoveling the last parcel of dirt over the freshly dug grave of his mother planted in the kitchen garden near the crumbling thatch cottage. Afterwards he built the cairn with roughly hewn stones.

"Josh, your brother Angus is anxious to migrate."

"What about you, pa?"

"There is enough money for two."

"But pa, this is where I was born!"

"The clan chiefs hath long since departed these hills and There is ne'er left for you here on these worn highland trails. Tis is time for you and Angus to find your way in the world."

"What do I 'ave to take upon myself a wild country?"

"Tis your love of the bow and arrow, and expert aim of the rifle which are so desperately needed in the New World," Mr. Smith affirmed.

"Long live the memory of the coe," his father said as he inserted a sprig of heather into the seam of his tam.

Josh was the youngest, fourteen years of age. He paused while his eyes trolled the steep-sided Glencoe valley, the place where every Macdonald remembered that some thirty-seven of the Clan were murdered by a company of the Campbell militia in 1692. An oath of allegiance had gone out to the highland chiefs from King William II that they should take his oath of allegiance. MacDonald of Glencoe had arrived too late to take the oath of the king, and the king swore to wipe out the clan for its disobedience. At the time the Campbell's were guests of the MacDonalds, and turned on their hosts and massacred them. His eyes wandered to the peak of the Buachaille Etive Mor and paused to watch a golden eagle as it swooped over the Bidean nam Bian.

"Angus is ambitious and eager, whilst I hath no particular design," he murmured.

"Tis true that Angus is anxious for adventure and that yours is the natural love of the forest and hie of the hunt. Your arrow flies in formation with the birds whilst your rifle, though rusty it be, is in perfect alignment to kill the red deer. Go along to protect your brother, if for no other reason."

The Destination: Philadelphia

After two long months, the vessel "Queen Mary" alas arrived on the American shore. His opinion was that the vessel had taken on too many passengers, yet there were no storms upon the sea

during the early winter voyage and they arrived in fairly good order. Although he was crowded in the belly of the ship with the Irish, Scottish and Germans, he came with an exuberant congregation of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who began in the Scottish Isles and had its last embarkation in Antrim. Rev. Bradford had petitioned for land in the vicinity of the Dismal Swamp in North Carolina, wishing to join an earlier colony of Scots, however was unable to book passage into the Albemarle Sound. The Germans onboard the vessel discussed "Wilderness Road" and the Reverend lent his ear. The probabilities of acquiring land grants in unconquered regions of the Alleghany Mountains had his attention and as soon as their ship docked, applied with the----district office for a grant of land of some 30,000 acres in Shawnee territory. He was warned of the dangers with the Shawnee, but he did not care. His responsibility was for the survival of forty families including children.

The sadness which had lingered during the voyage over the loss of his mother suddenly left Josh Macdonald as he stepped onto the pier and saw the vibrant, bustling city of Philadelphia. The city was filled with Irish, Scottish and German immigrants fresh off the ship. The Scots were preparing to travel to Albemarle Sound while the Irish and Germans sought transportation along Wilderness Road to mountain country. While the Rev. was delayed in his negotiations for the grant and certain of the Scots found temporary work on the docks to pay for well-needed supplies. But so many foreigners in the city seeking work and anxious to move on, the congregation found itself taking residence in the slums and begging for work. Spring passed quickly and the Rev. did not have his land grant until the middle of summer. Finally, he managed to secure four wagons and oxen, maps, blankets, rifles, axes, shovels and a variety of seeds. Also, several bay mares. Over forty parishioners and their families would travel a rugged wilderness road through the mountains of Virginia to a place called Piney Run. It had taken longer than expected to acquire enough money for supplies, and he feared that their late summer departure would encounter the dreaded snow which had entrapped and impeded so many settlers before him. He armed most all of the twenty male adults who could shoot with a rifle and axe, weapons to kill bear and elk and an axe to cut trees and brush. The women on the journey were responsible for cooking, washing and the children. The Rev. had five little daughters and a wife expecting a baby several months ahead. Just before they departed Philadelphia, he met a German woman begging passage to a far west fort where she was to marry a member of the mounted patrol protecting the frontier nearest to the falls of the Ohio River, Sgt. Kieffer. As she spoke little English, he referred to her as Mrs. Kieffer and enlisted her to care for his five girls. Mairi, the oldest, objected when she first set her eyes upon the German woman, and called her Machara, meaning plain. Since only the children called her Machara, the woman assumed that it meant aunt, or grandmother. Since the Reverend had possession of many blankets and stores in his wagon, Mrs. Kieffer felt that she would be well taken care of.

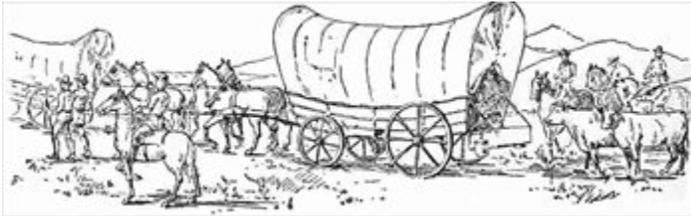
As the company of immigrants assembled with the wagons and oxen, the Reverend explained the forthcoming dangers.

"We are departing late in the year, therefore, must prepare to spend the winter in the Allegheny Front, which, according to this map is west of the Cumberland Valley and part of the Appalachian escarpment. There be plenty of waterfalls and game along the way. Also, there should be ample time to establish camp shelters and stores before the snow. In the spring, we

shall tackle the mountain trails, going all the way to the James River Mountain. At times, we will be in the heart of the land of the Shawnee tribes, but that is the danger of this country."

Josh and Angus were designated as drivers of one of the supply wagons. Additionally, the wagon held all of their possessions. Not enough clothes, surely for a frigid winter but they each wore work boots with a soft comfortable insole durable for hiking. Their preparation for winter was the faded woollen tartans along with extra tams absent the Macdonald heather sprig. Little did they know but there was heather in America to support the Scottish way.

Wilderness



The stratigraphic ridge of the Allegheny Mountains extends northeast to southwest from south to Blue Knob (Pennsylvania) to a saddle point at the Savage Mountain anticline. When the wagons reached the anticline, and crossed the Appalachian escarpment into the Allegheny range, the winds blew heavily at their backs. It was at this point that the Appalachian Mountains separated from the Blue Ridge range and a terrain of crags would deliver them to the unconquered western territory. The anticline offered a splash of color in its blue chickory, wild flowers, bee balm, squaw root and milkweed ever-green plants. Mrs. Kieffer used the forest as her source of flavorings, first filling her baskets with bright yellow mushrooms for soups and stews as well as herbs of every description. Her basket served as a plenthora of mints and seeds to be dried for future use. Josh shot a good many squirrels each day which were seasoned with the white part of lemongrass, wild shallots and herbs. Although Angus' aim was not as inaccurate, he managed to provide other game. The wagons of the Scots and a handful of Germans passed slowly and sometimes single-filed across the road, until it alas met by narrow trails and slashed trees. From that point on, they were confronted with broken wagon wheels and other malady.

For one, there was insufficient grass for the oxen, and the men were sent with their animals along a rocky summit scurrying for grass and foliage until deacon Watson discovered a valley of grass below the summit and cheerfully informed the Reverend. "Tis sufficient to feed the herd for the winter. And the falls of a large river are nearby to provide adequate water."

Rev. Bradford, realizing that his plan to reach a satisfactory elevation before winter was foolish, dismissed the idea and shrugged his shoulders. "Aye," he agreed, "We can camp at the falls." The deacon was so pleased with himself that he ordered the axes be brought out and a number of trees felled to make shelters to protect against the wind and snow.

As the winter wore on, the food stores were consumed and the immigrants found themselves scrounging around in the woods for edible herbs. Mrs. Keiffer maintained a hot fire for her kettle of herb cures, sampling whatever weeds she could find in the ledges and crevices of the mountain rock. As the winter wore on, her watery brew became an early morning staple for the men before they went out to hunt. Angus and Josh were the first to load their guns with shot and it was during those early hours that Angus taught Anna how to load and shoot.

A handful of determined Scotsmen left camp early every morning, but as their search took them further from camp, they found less game. That morning as they counted shot, it was necessary to weed out the poorest of hunters. That left Josh and Angus, Deacon Watson and Alexander MacGillivray. When they reached the apex of their mountain climb, Deacon Watson knelt and said a prayer. As he prayed, a yellow sun arose above the lower valleys in blazing prisms of silvery shadows and revealed a thick burrow of giant unhewn trees inside a forest maze of rotting leaves. As far as the eyes could see the prisms of light danced in the path of animals concealing their tracks. The beauty of the mountains and waterfalls was breath-taking. Deacon Watson pressed forward with a fierce determination which soon pulled his lower lip into a frown. "We will climb higher," he said.

By late afternoon, with no game still in sight, Angus found himself wishing that Anna should come upon some squirrels while looking for herbs. The other Scotsmen, MacGillivray, paused to wipe condensation off his bullets before reloading. A whistling gale of strong wind suddenly blew a cloud of white snow across the hills, filling in the passes and gorges.

"We best get on back to camp, Watson said, shivering.

"Leastwise the tacker won't be comin this evening," McGillivray said jokingly. His voice was high and terse with sarcasm. "I gave the tacker every cent to me name," he said.

"We all sacrificed," Watson affirmed. "Gave up everything."

"If it weren't for Mrs. Keiffer's finding herbs and plants, none of us would have food," Josh interjected.

"Don't call her Mrs. Keiffer, she ain't married yet!" Angus corrected.

But Josh's eye was keen on a slender pine tree bent over in a heavy clump of snow, and lifting his rifle, squinted his eyes, and fired.

"What was that he shot?" Watson asked. "It sounded like a screamiing woman!"

Not answering, Angus tucked his rifle under his arm and followed Josh deep into the wood. Several more gun shots were heard, and finally the boys emerged carrying a brown wild cat with grayish-white hairs on the under-belly.

"It's an adult male cougar!" Watson yelled as Josh and Angus went to work gutting and skinning the critter. "I calculate there is enough to feed most everyone in camp, if Mrs. Keiffer shares her herbs and divides the meat into tiny morsels."

Upon their return to camp, the reverend's children ran out to greet the hunters. The oldest, Melanie, grabbed hold of the cougar. "Careful, he ain't bled out," he said."

But while the camp was busy sharing the meat and preparing the evening meal, the snow weighed down all of the wagons and the oxen feeding upon roots on the ridge fell into deep crevasses necessitating the men to work all night long using ropes to pull them up. Few were saved.

As the winter months wore on, the settlers realized that despite the odds they must move on if they were to survive. It was February before they were able to harness starving cattle to wagons and clear the path of obstructions, but finally discovered the Wilderness road cut by earlier settlers and wagon trains.

Watson, upon seeing the cut trail, turned and looked back at the jagged rocks and mountains which they had traversed. "We hath left the worst of it behind," he said, "a trail which provided neither food nor sustenance, and killed our toughest oxen. We come now to the end of that misery, and our hearts ehre filled with the hope of finding civilized beings."

During the last of February, Mrs. Bradford went into the woods to give birth to her baby. The reverend was busy shoveling snow out of his tent and shouted for Mrs. Kieffer. She came running, however was impeded by her feet sinking deep into the snow. A cold chill penetrated the soles on her shoes, striking a nerve in her body. An excruciating pain shot through her feet as her toes turned blue. She stopped dead in her tracks.

"Ehre ye unable to move, Mrs. Kieffer?" He called.

"My feet are frozen!"

While Mrs. Bradford screamed, Anna warmed her feet to the fire and wrapped them in bandages. Then, when she could stand, removed a black kettle of boiled tree bark to take to the ailing woman.

The reverend did not wait, rushing past her. Like a big hippopotamus, Mrs. Bradford knelt between two tree stumps. She had been warned not to eat a mess of bad raccoon meat, yet had a meal of it the night before. Anna administered the root bark, a tonic designed to ward off pain, but Mrs. Bradley's screams were eerily loud. When finally babe dropped beneath her body into a bed of leaves, Anna swept her up in her arms.

"It is another girl," Mrs. Bradley declared with some modicum of disappointment. "You would think that the good Lord would see how badly we need a boy!"

The reverend and his girls shrouded in blankets surrounded their mother. The youngest cried, while Melanie spurted: "A girl can work as hard as a boy!"

"Mother, you are yet young, and can have many more children," the reverend said kindly. "We shall name her Rose because she was born in a country with no flowers," the reverend said quietly, "and because she will be the first child of hope baptised in the new church building." Then he lifted her into his arms and walked to the campfire.

Anna spent the evening nursing the ill-effects of the frozen toes. Angus sympathised, and remembering the tree branches she'd set aside for making balm, delivered them. "Can you use the resin from these branches to make a balm?" He asked. "And I brought you a skin from the bear I killed yesterday."

Tears came to her eyes as she was overwhelmed by his unexpected kindness. From here on, she would scoop a larger serving of meat from her stew for Angus.

Not too long afterwards, everyone was in good spirits at the bright yellow blossoms of daffodils emerged through the melting snow. The camp bustled with excitement for the first sign of spring and the opportunity to break camp. Mrs. Bradford, holding her reddish runt, gave Anna a pair of shoes made of bear hide and sent her out into the woods to search for a fresh supply of wild berries and herbs. The melting snow made it easier to walk through the heavy glades and defined the creeks and rivers. Since winter and its first dusting of white snow across the mountain ridges, she had found chicory, lingonberry and wolfberry. Now, after the felicitous birth of Mrs. Bradford's last daughter, she came upon a trail of Mulberry trees with dark leathery foliage growing in the rich moist soil of the ridge, and gray squirrels feasting upon its sweet and juicy red fruit.

This was the sort of fruit she sought after Mr. Bradford consulted his map and confirmed that they had entered a trail which would cross the Cumberland Gap and the Ohio River. His finger pointed to an X in the mountains along the James River. "This is a far West fort," he said, "and the destination of Mrs. Kieffer. The land in the valley should provide a rich underlay of soil for our crops, a place where we may reside in peaceful solitude."

"When will we reach that point?" Deacon Watson asked.

"From now on, we should be blessed with fair weather, spring and summer, and have ample time to build our houses before the next winter snow."

The Cumberland Gap, measuring over 1300 feet in altitude, was a natural break through the rugged Appalachian Mountain range served as a footpath for buffalo seeking greener pastures. From time to time, they would lose the trail, and find it again. The journey across the mountains was fraught with valleys and hills, cliffs and crevices, but as the sun warmed the days and nights and all of nature's hidden animals appeared before them, they had ample food. Deacon Watson found ore along the way for his shot, forging the metal with his hammer over a hot, glowing flame. He was also able to repair broken wagon wheels and shape some cooking

vessels.

Finally the company reached the valley and while the women and children washed in the cool springs of the James River at the foot of the mountain, the men left camp to stake out acreage for a settlement. It was found in a open valley surrounded by mountains, forest land and streams. The water source would be supplied by the river. The reverend claimed the valley for settlement. But Angus and Josh found a narrow path up the mountain and as they gazed upon the green valley below, an eagle spread his wings and swooped across the blue sky.

"Tis a sign," Angus declared, "this is our Buachaille Etive Mor. "

"We ehre taking the old country with us, lad?"

"Aye, the old memories live forever in the Macdonalds," Angus nodded, as he stooped down and plucked a yellow dandelion to put in the hub of his plaid tam. Later that day after they had staked out the location for a cabin and barn, they meandered down the hill and joined the others.

Excitement was in the air. Mrs. Bradford had her children gathered about her in song, while the reverend found an ideal location for his church. "No more shall we roam nor shall we fear the intercession of the British, knowing the good Lord hath brought us to this wilderness for good cause," the reverend declared. "For tis in this country that the traditions of our fathers shall be remembered and upheld."

"And I shall smyth ye a bell can be heard for miles in this valley," Deacon Watson said.

Anna delivered to Sgt. Kieffer.



The next morning Anna was bathed and dressed in a clean frock and her long salty hair was parted down the middle and combed neatly into a bun resting upon the nape of her neck. She was a grown woman when she and her father migrated from the Highlands to Philadelphia. The father acquired temporary work around the docks which required heavy lifting. His concern for finding a husband for his spinster daughter worried him until he read an advertisement for

brides posted on the dock, and urged her to apply. The strange new life in Philadelphia among dock hands and strangers was soon to change. The deal was quickly settled for his comely daughter to share a wagon train in the company of presbyterians, and he said farewell to her one late summer afternoon as a train of wagons passed out of the city. Her heart sank in despair as she watched the old highlander return to the purgatory of the docks and its heavy tonnage. In time, she would find comfort in being in the company of the Bradfords.

The journey had demanded toiling with heavy bags of potatoes and water barrels and the carrying of the Bradford children. For months she'd suffered backaches and pains in her legs, but said nothing.

Angus Macdonald and Deacon Watson were chosen to transport Anna to the fort and harnessed two oxen to climb the narrow slopes of an upland summit which led to the fort. She kissed the children goodbye and climbed into the wagon.

The wagon was spotted by the guard, and news quickly spread that Sgt. Kieffer's bride had arrived.

Neither Sgt. Kieffer nor the other soldiers had seen a woman for more than two years. He quickly washed his face and groomed his beard before rushing to the chaplain where an assembly of soldiers anxiously waited the arrival of Mrs. Keiffer. As soon as the wagon came to a stop, the soldiers took her to the chaplain, with deacon Watson and Angus Macdonald stumbling along behind. She was engulfed by a fanfare of excitement and happiness. One soldier played a harmonica, while another strummed his guitar. The chaplain urged Kieffer to take her hand in his before performing a brief ceremony. Kieffer had little time to assess the desirability of his bride. His eyes quickly honed down upon her plump body and flat feet. She was ordinary, for sure, perhaps ugly. Not what he wanted. She came from a poor breed of Highlanders who'd been forced to emigrate. Had he known before hand that she was ugly, he might have refused to take her.

Nevertheless, he had cast his wares in the lottery, and won. The eyes of the chaplain were firmly upon him. He was obliged by army standards to marry her. He did not listen to the promises given in the ceremony and afterwards quickly took her to a small furnished side-room in the barracks.

Saying nothing, he set about lighting a fire in a pot-belly stove and shaking the dust from an army blanket which lay folded upon a wooden bed and flat mattress. As he worked, she stared at the deep wrinkles in his brow, and black wirey beard. Dressed in his uniform, his strong muscled arms fit tightly in the sleeves and when he unbuttoned his shirt, the black hairs on his chest swelled around his neck. There was a knock on the door and he opened it to receive a chicken and some potatoes for supper. She went about the job of plucking the chicken and boiling the potatoes. He did not speak to her until after she has prepared the supper.

"What do they call you?" He asked while lighting a candle for the table.

"Anna."

"I do not know anything about having a wife," he said finally. "But should you have it in your head to be stubborn, remember that it was me hard-earned money which brought you here. I expect no argument in cooking my meals and darning my socks."

"Is there anything else?"

"You will not go outside the stockade," he warned, "especially while I am gone on patrol. The countryside is harsh and unsafe for a woman such as yourself."

Early the next morning the sergeant went on patrol. While he was gone, Anna scrubbed down the floors and walls of the bare room, then peeled the rest of the potatoes for supper. Sgt. Kieffer was pleased to find everything clean and dapper when he returned.

The days which she spent alone in that little room seemed to be one long trespass of time observing the sergeant arise at day break and dress to go on patrol, and waiting until after dark for his return. Sometimes he was gone for days and weeks at a time. She often thought of the journey in the dead of winter across treacherous mountains in the company of the Scottish Highlanders. Also, of Mrs. Bradford and her children, Deacon Watson and Angus MacDonald. There was one thing which she had learned from the Scots, and that was to keep busy working at the business of surviving. She asked for a chicken coop and chicks, and because she worked without complaint, he granted her request. Within a year or so, he had fenced off a yard behind the barracks for a rooster and hens.

But her lonely awkward existence with Sgt. Kieffer soon came to an end. One morning as his regiment patrolled along the falls of the Ohio River, they were attacked by the Shawnee. Sgt. Kieffer and others were stuck from behind with an axe, and scalped. The Indians made off with scalps and horses while half the company lay dead on the ground. Several days later, one of the survivors delivered Kieffer's horse, still saddled and equipped with his rifle and sword, to Anna.

"We lost half the company," Pvt. Johnson said. "The Shawnee tromped on us in a single vicious attack and gave no quarter."

"What am I to do with the horse and rifle?" She asked.

Pvt. Johnson did not answer. His thoughts were bent on something else. "Mrs. Kieffer, you need a husband to protect you, ma'am. May I come calling?"

She gave him a long hard stare. "You are being disrespectful of Sgt. Kieffer!"

"Ma'am, I did not mean to disrespect Sgt. Kieffer, for he was a fine soldier and swordsman. It is simply that a woman cannot survive the harshness of this land without a man to protect her, and owing to the fact that I also participated in the lottery...."

Ann furiously grabbed the reins of the mare and took her around back. Later that afternoon, she traded her eggs for hay to feed the horse. She would have to make her way as a widow.

But Pvt. Johnson did not give up, and often rode past her chicken coop, with the forboding warning, "Don't wait too long, Mrs. Kieffer."

The Settlement

The highlanders founded a village of plush meadow grass and yellow dandelions for their new home. It was situated several miles from the fort. Angus and Josh sought a farm to themselves separate from the village and crossed the narrow point of the James River to settle on a knoll overlooking the village. It had its advantages, a splendid view of the village and the construction of houses and the church. The meadow of lush green grass was fenced off for the cattle grazed and the rich soil which surrounded the settlement produced bountiful crops from the seeds they'd brought from Scotland. The first serman preached inside the church building by Rev. Bradford gave thanks to the Lord for the nurturing land and beauteous mountains.

When news reached Angus that Anna was widowed, he went immediately to the fort. If there was one thing which stood out it was the fact that wives were not plentiful in the wilderness.

"Why do you want her?" Josh asked.

"We need a woman on the place, to cook, wash, and help with the chores."

"There are some girls in the village."

"No," he said emphatically, "those girls ehre too young to do what is needed. If ere we are to make a go of the place, we need a stout woman like Mrs. Kieffer."

As he saddled up, a light summer rain trinkled from the skies wetting his clothes, and he rode swiftly to the fort. An hour later as he approached the fort, his wet clothing had dried in the mid-afternoon sun. He asked directions to Mrs. Kieffer's room. At best, her quarters were a make-shift dwelling of one small dismal room. The widow was busy gathering eggs from the nests in the coop and did not glance up. He rode around to the pen and tied up his mare.

"Mrs. Kieffer?" He called out.

She finished gathering eggs into a large basket and latching the chicken coop walked over to where he stood. Her dress and apron were muddy, having stood knee-deep in mud during the morning rain. Upon seeing her dirty face and salty hair straggling down her back, like Sgt. Kieffer, he was disappointed. But when she showed him her chicken coop and horse, he remembered his reasoning to acquire a wife, and the idea of an exchange popped into his head.

Just as the soldier had done previously, he went straight to the subject of marriage. In exchange

for her horse and chickens, he promised to fence off a yard for her chickens and to plow up the soil for a kitchen garden.

While it was true that Angus was a likeable young man several years her junior, Mrs. Kieffer was not fast to accept. Her experience thus far with marriage had little pleasure to it, and despite the warnings of Pvt. Johnson, she was not anxious to repeat the experience.

"A soldier came yesterday, and also asked," she told him.

"What did he offer?"

She turned towards the cabin, and shook her head. "How is it that a soldier can protect a woman when he is so oft on duty?" She asked.

"The truth is that whilst the Shawnee roam these parts, there is little protection that a man can offer a woman," he said thoughtfully. "Yet, Josh and I aim to protect you as good as many man in these parts. You ehre a woman with a willing heart and strong back. And we need you." Then, taking her hand, he squeezed it and said quietly. "We ehre friends."

In exchange for her chickens and the Sgt's horse, he promised a barn, milch cow, and wagons.

Thus, they cut a deal and were wed. Afterwards, her chickens were couped and the sergeant's mare was tied to the wagon. Upon leaving the fort, she glanced back at her unhappy memories inside the tall stockade fence.

Her new home was situated below the acme of a mountain, alongside a narrow run which led to higher runs and mountain goats. As they traversed the run, a new spiral for the church was visible as the sound of a bell churned out the event. A town was in the making, and Angus wanted to be part of the progress. He would build a fine cabin for his new wife, in appreciation for all that she would bring to the marriage. While he was gone, Josh had gone high into the hills and discovered a source of wild goats, and now Mrs. Kieffer would take charge of the goats, plant a vegetable garden and tend her chickens.

"I recall that the children called you Mrs. Kieffer. What is your Christian name?" Angus asked.

"Anna," she answered. "Anna."

Cornstalk. October 1774.



Josh admitted that bringing Anna to the farm helped to deliver prosperity to the Macdonalds. He figured she was worth his labor in the construction of a larger cabin with a wide chimney and hearth, especially considering that she might bear Angus some children. She worked from daylight to dark. Angus soon built a barn and fenced off a small paddock where he broke horses. Meanwhile, Anna's chicken yard grew in size with the birth of new chicks and provided sufficient eggs for bartering in the village. The village grew exponentially with his houses and shops and the view from the mountain was one of excitement and activity. As flowers bloomed throughout the region and the children from the village played in the meadows, it seemed as though paradise had come down from Heaven.

However, bands of restless Shawnee began attacking white settlers as they drove their wagon trains across the Alleghanies searching for new land, and those who reached the village outpost described a treacherous journey of hardship and thieving redskins who took scalps. Still, the fort was the only safety net, with the soldiers going out on patrol every day. But the big hole in this safety net was the fact that less and less soldiers were returning.

For this reason, Deacon Watson assembled two militia units, one under Captain Lyle, and the other under Captain Wilcher and it wasn't long before the governor called out all of the Virginia militia. The first to arrive at the falls of the Ohio River were the militia representing the village and as soon as they approached the falls, were met by a conclave of Indians led by the great chief, known (in English) as Cornstalk.

The proud Shawnee Indian, known as Cornstalk by the white man, sat erect on his pony

clutching a pole of white feathers in his right hand. Wrapped around his forehead was a string of beads and his neck bore the souvenirs of battle. He possessed the high cheek bones and narrow nose of the English and his battle-worn expression reflected his out rage at the white man's presence in the Ohio country after the Treaty of Fort Stanwix demanded the Iroquois cede the Kentucky lands, while Cornstalk stood firm in claiming the area as Shawnee hunting grounds. But the Virginia Governor had ordered his armies to the falls of the Ohio River.

Hundreds of Shawnee and Mingo warriors crowded the falls in eager anticipation of battle. As soon as Captain Watson saw Cornstalk's commanding presence, he was impressed. His physical presence, command of the English language with its proper enunciation followed by vicious attacks and scalplings, had made an impression upon some of the officers who'd heard him speak at Camp Charlotte.

Captain Lyle led the first group of militia to reach the falls. "He is to be both feared and respected," Lyle said, as he attempted to give count of the warriors. His small company of men from were the first militia to arrive, and seemed miniscule compared to the number of braves.

As soon as his boats were moored, the Shawnee came thundering down upon them. Many lives were lost that day, on both sides and despite the odds the highlanders won the day until finally, Captain Lyle hustled towards the great leader, with a white flag in one hand, and a treaty in the other. The great chief reluctantly conceded and entered his mark upon the document while swearing revenge in his heart.

Josh helped to load the dead in the boats while Capt. Lyle ran along the banks saying: "Hurry," he said, "the braves are wont to chase us."

"But the treaty!" Watson insisted.

"Where is our royal governor or his representative to sign the treaty? And where were the other militia companies promised for this fight!" Lyle said angrily.

Angus had taken an arrow in the arm and blood streamed down into his fingers and the flesh swelled and smarted while Josh broke off the end. The river was calm at first, but later on, the boats were tossed about by turbulent waters and a down pour of chilly October rain while Watson's anxious glances were back at the falls.

Four Years Later

It was a sunny morning when Angus and Josh ventured off on a hunting trip for mallard and wood ducks. They took one of the canoes on the bank of the river and sailed down stream.

They had a lucky find of paddle ducks during late afternoon, and afterwards made camp in a cove of thick emerald green moss and cooked the fowl over a smoldering fire of hot black coals. The Macdonald boys discussed plans to build another barn and acquire more cattle. It did not matter that their chores already occupied them from early morning to dark. The Macdonald clan

was known for its laboring causes.

The next morning they arose early and hid in a blind waiting for ducks to enter the river. The sky was soon filled with ducks alighting on the pond and within an hour or so, the canoe was chock full of game. Angus and Josh took the oars and rhythmically rowed across the clear blue river, chatting along the way. The fresh easy ripples of the lake and morning breeze pushed them gently along. Except for the monotonous chirping of some brown wrens and blue-jays, they were joyously and peacefully alone. Nothing could happen now. The milch cow they purchased from Mr. Watson was producing enough milk for the three of them, and Anna had doubled her population of chicks and egg production. Angus figured on acquiring several black angus cows and a strong bull. A smile was on his lips and he could almost taste success.

As they neared the bend and the run to the farm, a dark ominous cloud of smoke obscured the mountains high and the clear blue sky with foul, choking, miasmatic fumes. The stench burned his nostrils with the smell of charred chickens. They quickly landed and ran up the run to the farm. But there was no farm. Only buildings burning in their ash.

"Anna!" Angus screamed. "Anna! Where are you? Please answer me!"

But the sound of his screams were smothered by the misery of his own despair as he ran towards the site of the cabin.

"The milch cow is gone," Josh said solemnly as he removed several arrows from a nearby tree. "Cornstalk."

"They took Annie."

Angus slung his rifle over his back and a quiver of arrows. "Come on, Josh, whilst we can still pick up the trail."

They followed the foot steps imprinted in the ash until the trail disappeared into the wood. The tracks took them far into the woods and along a narrow creek in the lowlands. They followed for several days before coming to the place where the trail went cold, a lush meadow of yellow dandelions.

Finally, Josh said what Angus already knew. "Several hours have passed since they took her, and now the trail is cold."

Neither brother had taken time to rest or search for food, and they collapsed into the grass falling into a deep sleep. Josh awoke first and shot some squirrels. He had a hot crackling fire when Angus awoke to the smell of roasting squirrels.

"We slept most of the day," he said pointing to the moon, "we can try again in the morning, but I don't think that we are gonna find the trail."

"I have to find Anna," Angus insisted.

"We cannot run faster than we've already been," Josh said.

The expression on the face of Angus changed from that of hopeless sorrow to the realization of abject despair. It was a familiar story to the brothers who'd hunted so fiercely in the highlands, perfecting their aim, and working the trail. Nothing else need be said of it. The trail was cold.

"What can we do now, brother?"

"We best go see to the needs of the Bradfords and Watsons."

They returned to the village carrying an elk meat tied on a tree branch which Josh had honed to size and diameter with his knife. The agitated scots were digging graves behind the church building, and the windows were boarded up, with no future hope for a shipment of glass nor iron nails and the charred wooden planks on the building were being removed and resized.

Angus told Rev. Bradford that he planned to revisit the farm and retrieve nails from the ashen heap to help rebuild the church.

"You gonna rebuild, ain't yet?" The reverend asked Angus.

"I do not have it in me heart to rebuild," he said tearfully.

Josh sat down in the dirt and redrew the trail they had followed in the woods and added a long river line eastward. "Me neither, lad. I think I know the way back East," he said. "We can row one of those militia boats a long ways in the James River before having to cross the smokies."

"You mean return to Philadelphia?"

"No. Mr. Watson said that the war with the British is spreading southward into the Carolinas. They are offering generous land grants as bounties to the soldiers. We can fight that war, Angus, if you are so inclined."

Angus stared at the drawing in the dirt. "Ehre ye certain that this river goes all the way to the coast?"

"Yes, but I am uncertain as to how far we can row a canoe."

"More than anything, I want to find Anna," he said while closing his eyes and inhaling the lingering smell of the singed feathers and soot of Annas chickens. He would always smell that rot, even if they cleared the farm of its debris. But he knew that he could not find Anna, and that had to move on.

Anna's Ordeal with the Shawnee

A rope was around her neck and she was dragged up a steep incline behind one of the warrior's ponies. The rocky terrain caused her to stumble, which agitated the warrior, and he pulled harder on the rope. There were several children taken from the village who could not keep up and were dropped from the cliff. Anna paused to glance backwards as the children's little bodies rolled down an incline, but was jerked forward. The rope was both a condemnation and salvation of white slaves. The Shawnee were ruthless and vindictive, and were frequently at war with the tribes throughout the region. Had she witnessed the war at the shoals between Cornstalk and the militia, she would have been more prepared for the worst. But hearing of their ruthlessness had not convinced her. She kept thinking that the warriors would stop and make camp before they reached the top of the hill, but they did not stop until they rose high above the apex and stared down at the steep surrendering incline.

Although she bore no resistance, her neck was swollen when she reached the apex. Her master was called Red War and he stood over her with his arms folded contemptuously. At that moment he assigned her the name of "Machara", because she was ugly and stubborn.

He pointed to seven more peaks before they would reach the Ohio River and explained that it was the Great Spirit who split the Shawnee from the other tribes and caused them to cross the treacherous peaks and claim the wild buffalo herds which occupied valleys of the river. No white man had ever crossed the peaks. That night as she slept between the crevice of a rock, she thought of Angus and wept as Red War's words "no white man has ever crossed the peaks" and her new name "Machara" echoed in her thoughts .

The next day, in her great desperation to survive, Anna listened closely to conversations. By the time they reached the great flowing river at the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers and the camp of the Shawnee, she could articulate a few Indian expressions.

That evening the Chief Cornstalk would greet the warriors ceremoniously with a feast, with each warrior bringing forth his prize. Since Machara was the only slave who survived the ordeal, Red War brought her proudly forth. Determined to present a valuable prize and obtain glorious recognition, he caused her to be bathed in the river and dressed in a plain tribal dress made from deer skins and her salty hair was combed in a long queue behind her back. The squaw who groomed her was Moneta, a young girl anxiously anticipating her marriage with Red War.

Red War displayed Machara proudly and described her stubborn unwillingness to fall off the mountain. Then he did something strange. He removed the rope around her neck so that the cuts and burns were imminently visible. Cornstalk laughed heartily, then made Red War a present of several horses.

That night Red War tied Machara to a stake outside of his tent. A cool breeze blew across the valley of the great river which flowed westward into the wild unexplored country of the buffalo. Only the Shawnee understood the great valleys mountains which lay ahead. The Shawnee followed the buffalo to the summer vegetation and ranges, and the place of camp would change many times. And then as the mountain peaks turned white with snow and the valleys

prepared to transition into a colder climate , the buffalo changed course, going into montane areas to graze upon sedges. And the Shawnee prepared to move southward.

But before that happened, the squaws brought the medicine man to examine Machara who was big with child. The medicine man spent a long time listening to her stomach and punching it before he finally gave the signal of two fingers. He pronounced that the birthing would occur when the whitish blossoms of the crab apple trees growing alongside the river filled the air with fragrance and its petals danced in the wind like spring snow.

Medina, still unwed, imagined that Red War was the father and furiously spit on her. When she took her petition to Red War, he was preparing for a prolonged hunt with the bucks. And despite his earlier fascination with Machara and her stubborn nature, pronounced that he had no need of feeding white children and would kill them as soon as they were born.

The camp moved a great distance south along the river to a milder climate where they made camp for the winter. Machara, with the rope still upon her neck, was controlled by a chain, and was no longer permitted to sleep outside of Red War's tent. Instead, she was taken to the woods and chained to a tree.

It was February before Anna observed new buds appearing in the branches of crabapple trees, and knew that her time was near. A white fur trader by the name of Silas John came into camp. He had a wagon full of beaver pelts and deer skins. Silas John had been around a long time and treated the trade as a sacred ritual of the Indian. His rheumatism allowed a slow alit from his wagon, and brushing wood debris from his clothes, bowed to the venerable chief, Hokoleskwa, which translated into Cornstalk, a vicious warrior, yet a handsome man with a charismatic personality. The shawnee were winding down their summer campe and preparing to move north again. Cornstalk was plagued with complaints from Red War concerning his slave woman and would use this opportunity to send her away with Silas John. The negotiations were long and hard, and the only item that Cornstalk wanted was the rifle, and because there were two children expected, also insisted upon his shortened sword, an old British infantry hanger and a damascus dagger with a persian horn handle pressed with maple birds.

Afterwards, Silas John walked down to the river minus his handy rifle and two good blades towards where Machara stood bent over washing clothes. The process took longer than usual, owing to her large stomach and several squaws beat her upon the head as she worked.

"Machara!" He called out, but she dare not look around. Then, screamed towards the squaws, "Git!"

They ran.

"You are going with me," he said. "I just traded my rifle and two good knives for you! But I have me pocket knife to cut you loose."

She turned around and stood still while he cut the rope from her neck. He stared disbelievingly

at the gashes and scars about her neck and the strange way that the rope had angled her neck and shoulders. "You be deformed," he said, "but I can still use you to care for me in me old age. Besides, the Shawnee are abandoning this camp and plan to leave you behind, so you best go with me."

She stared at the old trader. He was a man of great trials, and his scouting years has left his skin dry and pressed in wrinkles from his forehead to the jaw. His eyes blinked continuously from the glare of the sun reflecting off the river.

"I am Machara," she declared.

"I don't want you for a slave," he said with some degree of agitation. "The Indians don't know it yet, but I usually trade with the Cherokee in the Carolinas, but wandered a far piece from there, and was lost. I have a house back east in Cowpens where I was born and want to die. I'll help ye deliver those babies. All that I want is for you to take care of me, and bury me."

"If ever I was prone to be grateful, tis now," she said tearfully as she climbed in the wagon.

The white efflorescent crabapple trees led a path through the woods and its small tart apples provided food before they were deep in the boscaje of the forest.

A Time to be Born

Remembering Mrs. Bradley, Anna went deep into the woods and crouched between two tree stumps. As the pain bore down, she squinted her eyes and tried to remember the face of Angus. But ultimately birthing pain was too excruciating to focus on the thoughts of the genteel nature of Angus as compared to the impatient and demanding Sgt. Kieffer. Sadly the Scottish lad would never know that he had two sons.

When she screamed, Silas John, who was fast asleep on the ground, sprang into action. The old bones arose awkwardly and creaked towards her. He quickly built a fire with some sticks and while water boiled in a pot held his pocket knife over the flames. He had performed the birthing process before, while trading with white settlers along the woody trails. There was always a young woman caught unaware of life in the wild. Sometimes he camped where cabins were being built, and other times, down by the streams while prospectors panned for gold. Although he was mostly alone on the trail, the land was vibrant and screeching with birds and honking with geese. And beneath his feet in the forest was rich loamy soil good enough for any settler. And the settlers had hunting knives and tools which they happily traded for buffalo fur when caught in a winter blizzard.

The old man grunted as he lowered himself to his knees with some difficulty and pulled the first babe from her womb, then another. "Boys," he said as he cut the umbilical cord. Then, laying the children on the ground, he rushed to the wagon and removed several old ragged blanket. "This is all we've got to wrap them in," he murmured.

Anna, still trembling from the ordeal, stood to her feet and cuddling the babes in her arms found a place in front of the hot bristling fire and boiling water.

"They don't look like you, ma'am," the old man said.

And suddenly, the squealing babes opened their brown eyes and she remembered the face of Angus. "They are Macdonalds, Angus and Josh," she said .

"Aye, so ye be from the Highlands?"

"Yes."

"Too bad their father ain't here to help ye," he muttered just before he found a sleeping log and snored himself back to sleep.

A gentle breeze blew the trees artfully against a dark sky of twinkling white stars and Anna imagined that she smelled the faint fragrance of crabapple blossoms somewhere deep in the forest. A good time for birthing, she thought, as tears flowed from her eyes. Oh Angus, I do remember you!

The Journey Home.

True to his word, Silas John was lost. The trail through the Allegheny mountains was slow and prodding, but when they crossed the divide into the Blue Ridge, he got his bearings.

"When we get to the Broad river, look for Thicketty Creek," he told Anna. "My home is on Green River Road adjoining a cow pasture. Everyone knows that pasture. It is where cattle and horses graze on the peavine."

"How will I know the Broad river?" She asked.

"It will be after the days turn cool and flocks of birds take to the open skies in a southward spiral. Then we will hear the geese honking on the Pacolet tributary and you will understand that old Silas John found the trail due East one last time."

Cowpens was a tiny settlement situated near the Carolina border and offered nothing of interest save the pasture and a few scattered houses. As soon as Silas found the field of peavines and the Green River Road, his joy was complete. He was home.

The old unpainted plank board house sat off the road, run down and grown over in briars and vines, but that did not stop his enthusiasm. He hurried to the well and drew up water in an old rusted bucket. Anna, holding the babies, attempted to sit on a dilapidated porch, but was forewarned by snakes and varmits.

She was thinner than before and the rubicund appearance of old beatings on her back and arms

gave the appearance of the long-suffering anguish of a slave. She walked around the house and found the site of the old vegetable garden once plowed by the parents of Silas John, a sadly neglected field tall in weeds and briars. It was a labor forgotten, as though no one had ever lived there. Her own efforts had ended the same way and there was much work to be done just to survive. Another beginning, she thought, just as before, except Silas John had declared that he was ready to die. And worse, she was still the Machara. The sound of his voice broke her thoughts as it echoed that word.

"Machara, come look! After all these years, the old well is still fresh!" Silas John called gleefully.

The Battle of Cowpens.



Three years had passed since Angus and Josh left their home in the far west and joined the South Carolina Militia of Andrew Pickens as sharpshooters. The war had moved South. A scraggly bunch of country boys hid in the woods around Ninety Six causing havoc in the back country, thus preventing British soldiers from winning the South for Lord Cornwallis. As the British armies moved into the Carolinas, the army of General Daniel Morgan was sent to the Catawba River by General Washington. The purpose was to cut the supply lines and hamper operations. Meanwhile, Colonel Banastre Tarleton, hated and despised by the militia companies for his cruelty and butchery at Waxhaws when he gave no quarter under a flag of surrender, was sent to block Morgan's actions.

As Tarleton traveled, word spread quickly among the beguiled and paltered Carolinians, and bands of farmers formed new militia companies to go against Tarleton. A strong determination

rested within their hearts as they prepared to exact their revenge.

These events set the stage for a fierce battle in a cow pasture near Cowpens. On the morning of January 12, 1781, Tarleton's scouts located Morgan's army at Grindal Shoals on the Pacolet River and began an aggressive pursuit. Tarleton, fretting about heavy rains and flooded rivers, gained ground as his army proceeded toward the flood-swollen Pacolet. As Tarleton grew closer, Morgan retreated north to Burr's Mill on Thicketty Creek. Four days later with Tarleton reported to have crossed the Pacolet and much closer than expected, Morgan and his army made a hasty retreat, leaving their breakfast behind. Soon, he intersected with the Green River Road and with the flood-swollen Broad River six miles to his back, Morgan decided to make a stand in the pasture at the crossroads and spread word for the militia units to rendezvous at the Cowpens.

The field itself was some 500 yards long and just as wide, a park-like setting dotted with trees, but devoid of undergrowth, having been kept clear by cattle grazing in the spring on native grasses and peavine. As the army approached, the free-ranging cattle scattered. Morgan noted that there was also sufficient forage for his horses.

The Overmountain men, having camped at the Cowpens on their journey to the Battle of Kings Mountain, knew the geography. They joined the militia camps which were locating in a swale between two small hills. During the night the militia of Andrew Pickens entered camp, tired and exhausted.

General Morgan knew all too well that his soldiers were going up against Tarleton the butcher, and anticipating the fearful distress and desire to get revenge, moved among the campfires and offered battle plan, and lashing out against the British. He recalled the militia known as the Old Waggoner of French and Indian War, speaking emotionally of past battles, talking of the days and the hero of Saratoga.

Afterwards, Angus and Josh took their sleep among the sharpshooters who would be first to face Colonel Tarleton's Dragoons. The ground was still wet from the rains which had filled the creeks and they laid their blankets carefully in the bog. After three years of living in the rough outdoors, sleeping under wagons and in hollows, they thought nothing of it. They still wore the old familiar clothes, a ragged Macdonald tartan slung across the shoulder and the cameronian rifles used in the royal scots regiments back home. That night, as Angus tried to sleep, he began a review in his head of his father's tales of service in the 43rd Foot of the Royal Scots and how he'd proudly brought to that company two rifles from his service in the Black Watch detachments which had assisted in policing the Highlands. Just as the dawn arose over the field, he wondered how the glory achieved by his father compared to the Old Waggoner, and Sarasota. He asked Josh.

"What does it matter? The glory came in his telling it."

The sky was clear and the winds bitterly cold as the scouts rode into camp bearing the news of Tarleton's approach. The General had slept but a few winks, and he moved among his men in the eerie morning light, shouting, "Boys, get up! Benny's coming!"

Meanwhile, Colonel Tarleton had marched since two in the morning after he had the news of approaching Overmountain men, and ordered formation on the Green River Road for the attack. The arrogant Colonel was confident of victory, reasoning that Morgan was hemmed in by the Broad River, and the undulating park-like terrain was ideal for his dragoons. Indeed, he rationalized that Morgan must be desperate to have stopped at the cow pasture. Little did he suspect that Morgan chose the pasture because it would prevent his soldiers from retreating across the flood-swollen Broad River where the fast-traveling Tarleton would catch up and cut them down with his sabers. And, as was Tarleton's style, he sensed a frontal assault.

The cattle grazing in the early morning light head the thundering hoofs of Tarleton's army, and scattered.

Within minutes, true to style, riding fast onto the field, Tarleton pressed his head on attack. His line extended across the meadow, artillery in the middle and fifty Dragoons on each side. Morgan signaled for the sharpshooters hiding behind trees. Their orders were to pick off Tarleton's Dragoons, especially the officers, thus preventing the initial attack to gain supremacy. The Macdonald boys ran at full tilt from the woods, firing and loading as they crossed into the pea vines bordering the meadow, then onto the soggy grass. With the Dragoons in retreat and their initial part completed, the sharpshooters retreated 150 yards back to join Pickens second line of militia.

The orders were to get off two volleys and retreat to the third line made up of Continentals, again 150 yards back. Some of the militia got off two volleys but as the British neared, retreated behind the Continental line. Tarleton sent his feared Dragoons after them.

As the militia dodged behind trees and parried saber slashes with their rifles, William Washington's Patriot cavalry suddenly thundered onto the field of battle, seemingly, out of nowhere. The surprised British Dragoons, already scattered and sensing a rout, were overwhelmed, and lost eighteen men in the clash. As they fled the field, infantry on both sides fired volley after volley.

Then, the British army advanced in a trot of beating drums, the shrill sounds of fifes, and shouts of halloo. Morgan, in response, cheering his men on, said to give them the Indian halloo back. Riding to the front, he rallied the militia, crying out, "form, form, my brave fellows! Old Morgan was never beaten!"

But Tarleton had held his Highlanders in reserve, and now entered the charge toward the Continental line pumping a wild wail of bagpipes adding into the noise and confusion. But something went wrong when Morgan's troops were were distracted by the noise and misunderstood it as a call to retreat. Some of Morgan's other companies along the line followed. Morgan rode up to ask the British commander if he were beaten. The officer pointed to the unbroken ranks and the orderly retreat and assured Morgan they were not.

Morgan quickly took advantage. He spurred his horse on while shouting to the retreating units

to face about, and then, upon his order, fire in unison. The firing took a heavy toll on the British, who, by that time had sensed victory and had broken ranks in a wild charge. This strange event, co-mingled with a fierce Patriot bayonet charge, broke the British charge and turned the tide of battle. The re-formed militia and cavalry re-entered the battle, leading to double envelopment of the British and British infantry began surrendering en masse.

Tarleton and some of his army fought valiantly on; others refused his orders and fled the field. Finally, Tarleton saw the futility of fighting on, and fled down the Green River Road.

Meanwhile, William Washington, racing ahead of his cavalry, dueled hand-to-hand with Tarleton and two of his officers. Washington's life was saved only when his young bugler fired his pistol at an Englishman with raised saber. Tarleton and his remaining forces galloped away to the camp of Cornwallis. Stragglers from the battle were overtaken, but Tarleton escaped to tell the awful news to Cornwallis.

The battle had lasted but an hour and a thick gray cloud of cannon smoke lay low over the cow pasture and road and combined with the early mist to cast eerie silvery shadows through the trees.

Morgan glanced about at the dismal residue of battle littering the field, and calculating that Lord Cornwallis would soon come after them, ordered that the dead be quickly buried.

During the burials, two exhausted beard-faced soldiers wandered down Green River Road and seeing an old shack and watering well alongside the road, stopped for water to fill their canteens.

From her porch, Anna had observed the saber fight and the hasty retreat of Colonel Tarleton as he hied down the road. The noise from the cannons and wailing of bagpipes had stopped. And then she went inside the house and discovered Silas John had died.

"May we take a drink of water?" Angus asked, while limping towards the well. She nodded and they drew up a bucket.

Having a victory under their belts, they spoke excitedly about pursuing Lord Cornwallis northward into Virginia.

"The war may end soon," Angus called out to Anna, "should the French arrive in time to blockade the York River, then we can hedge up Lord Cornwallis!"

Anna stood spellbound by his presence, the torn clothing of the soldier, the plaid Macdonald tam without its flower, the wiry bristles of his beard, and the small flicker of hope in his voice. The declaration of possible victory did not impress Anna. She was thinking of asking the soldiers to bury Silas John. "Don't you recognize me, soldier?" She finally asked.

He drew another bucket of water from the well before turning around to observe a thin woman whose hair was covered with a snood. While she awaited his response, a shawl covering her thin

shoulders dropped to the porch, revealing the effects of beatings and scars.

"No ma'am," he answered. "But tis plain to see that you have suffered a life of debasement and prostitution."

She wept sorely as she entered the house and awoke her two sons. When she reappeared on the porch, the twins clung to her skirts.

"Prostitution, sir?"

"There is no question but those boys be your children!" Josh whispered. "And the woman bears the tribal marks of the Shawnee on her arms."

Then, taking the twins into her arms, said: "For three years now, I hath nurtured these boys and been haunted by the image of your face, Angus Macdonald!"

Angus gasped. "Anna, tis you!"

Angus and Josh hugged Anna and the children.

"How did you escape from the Shawnee."

"Twas Silas John who traded for us."

"He traded with the Shawnee, for you?" Josh asked.

Her lips moved slowly, mincing a bitter frown. "Silas John was a white man who traded with the Indians. But when he was lost along the Ohio, he found the Shawnee camp. It twas he who did the trade. But that was not the first time that I was traded for a husband," she said indignantly. And now, I have to ask you to bury the old man, as he lies dead inside the house. A shovel is in the barn."

They went to work digging a grave and buried Silas John.

"Why did you not come after me?" She asked.

Angus, feeling guilty, hesitated. "We tracked you for weeks, til the trail went cold," he answered.

Josh nodded. "And then we went back and found all the buildings burnt too the ground, including the chicken coops, and the animals were gone."

"We tracked you long and hard," Angus insisted, "til the trail went cold. Afterwards, we saw no reason to rebuild. The Shawnee took everything. Deacon Watson took us in hand convincing us that you were dead or soon would be."

"Then we heard that we could get land back East if we fought in the war. So we did," Josh

continued.

"You promised to protect me."

Suddenly, as the picture of the fort and Anna with her chickens flashed through his mind, and his promise to protect his wife made his excuse seemed weak. Angus bowed his head and said softly: "I did not know that you were expecting....I would have given anything to have found you!"

"What are the names of the children?" Josh asked.

"I named the children after my dearest friends," she answered.

The rustic sounds of a bugle echoed throughout the region, signalling formation.

"We have to go," Josh said.

Angus kissed Anna goodbye. "We are nothing save soldiers whose sole purpose is to rid this country of the British, and so are charged to fight to the bitter end," he said, "but the hour be late, and we must rejoin our fellows. May I say good-bye to the children?" As Angus hugged the little children once again, tears came into his eyes. "I am your father," he said as tears streamed down his cheeks. "Will you remember me? When this fight is over, I promise to return and collect my family."

Anna stood on the porch watching. A heavy dusting cloud of cannon smoke lingered over the road and the fragile image of two bone-weary soldiers diminished as they caught up with the militia.

THE END

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