

From the McCombs Family Archives 1751-1836

STORY OF MARGARET REPLOGLE ROOF, WIFE OF PETER ROOF

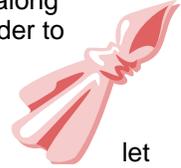
In the City Cemetery of South Bend, Indiana, there is a stone erected to the memory of one Peter Roof and also to his wife, Margaret Replogle Roof. Peter Roof, son of Michael and Agnes Roof, of Colorain Township, Bedford County, Pennsylvania, is one of the two Revolutionary Soldiers buried in the City Cemetery, and this narrative deals mainly with the girlhood of his wife, Margaret Replogle Roof.

Margaret Replogle, daughter of Rhinehart Replogle Sr. was born in Bedford County, Pennsylvania in May 1751. She was stolen by the Indians on a gala day in that community. The neighbors were having a husking party in which the men of the neighborhood spent the day husking corn and the women met at the same place and spent the time quilting. In the evening the young people met and had their Husking Party or "Husking Bee", as it was called.

Margaret's mother was at the quilting. Her father had for some reason remained at home. During the day the dogs were greatly disturbed and the father went out several times to investigate the cause of the dogs uneasiness. Later her brother went out but he also returned without finding the reason for their barking. When it was time for the mother to return home, Margaret and her brother went to accompany her. On the way the Indians sprang from behind the trees where they were hiding, seized Margaret and carried her away. The brother out ran the Indians and on reaching home fell in a swoon in the doorway.

On this same day the Indians also captured a man young man who had attended the husking party, with his wife and their little babe eight or nine months old, burned their home so that the

people would think they had been burned and would not seek for them. Those captives, including Margaret, were forced to wade along the banks of a stream all night in order to elude the whites who would be searching for them. Margaret tore her silk handkerchief, which was red, and her apron into shreds and let them catch on anything growing along the banks or projecting over the water, hoping they would be soon by those looking for her. But those little shreds never told their story to whom it was intended and Margaret remained with the Indians seven years.



The little babe that had been captured found conditions so much different from its little cradle by the fireside of the fireplace that it cried and sobbed all night, and on into the next morning, while the mother sought in vain to comfort it. The Indians thought its cries might betray them.

An old Indian approached him with his tomahawk and told the mother if the babe uttered another cry he would split its head open. The little one seemed to have sensed the

situation because it at once ceased crying, and from then on not one sound was heard.

On their raids the Indians took household articles that they could make use of. The young father was made to carry a very heavy load, one that

he was hardly able to bear. The mother carried the babe and Margaret only a long handled pan. The Indians cruelty was shown in the treatment accorded the father. One day he was forced into a contest in which the Indians were lined up on both sides of a course he was given to run. When he was not able to make the run in the prescribed time, they struck and lashed him into unconsciousness Margaret



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(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

was also made to try the run of the lashers; here her long handled pan come to her rescue. When she was making the run one of the Indians struck her, as quick as a flash she struck her assailant on the head with the pan. The Indians, quick to recognize skill gave Margaret the Indian cheer and her assailant withdrew in discomfort

At another time when they were roving about, game and other food was scarce. They had not been able to obtain food for the tribe for several days. While they were holding council in the evening, Margaret overheard them discussing the killing of her for food. A young bravo begged for her life and asked that they wait until the next day.

If they were unable to find food until the next evening he would give his consent to the slaying to save his people. The next day they came upon a trader's horse that had died upon the trail. Here they pitched camp and remained until all the meat of the dead horse was consumed. In the evening when she thought the Indians were all asleep she cut herself a piece

of the meat and put it over the fire to broil. When it was done, one of the Indians arose, took the meat and ate it. After waiting a long time, feeling sure that all slept, she prepared a second piece. It met the same fate. Then she waited until she felt she could wait no longer and broiled a third piece. She was luckier this time and declared it was the most savory piece of meat she had ever eaten.

At another time when they had been without food they told her to go and make a fire by a log, and that she must not look back. She went as bidden but kept watch as much as possible to ascertain what was going on. Whenever the fire started to burn, she would stir it out with a small stick. The Indian thought she was stirring it about to make it burn. Soon she heard the Indian "Joy Shout". Looking up she saw some of the young Indians, who had been hunting, running and shouting and bearing a door on their shoulders. Her life had been spared once more. The deer was roasted on the fire that had been intended for her. She said that never afterward did she feel safe while with

the Indians.

Although separated from her friends, she was always kindly treated and during her entire sojourn with the Indian she was never asked to share her tent, even with a child.

One of the young bravos aspired to her hand. He placed his blanket over the door of her tent. An Indian woman told her if she was willing to be his mate, she should take his blanket into her tent but if she did not wish to accept his offer or she would allow it to remain there three days. She could not meet such a fate and always hoped for a release from the Indians. Thus the young brave received his answer.



The clothes of the white babies that were stolen were kept. At the birth of an Indian babe it was given to Margaret to be dressed in the white man's clothes. The little papoose thus dressed was passed about among the tribe. After all had seen and admired the little one it was given back to her, The clothing was then removed and the Indian baby dressed in skins. The white baby

clothes were put away and kept.

The Indians sold her to the French. The French sold her to the English and the English set her free at Detroit, which was then Fort Detroit. A woman with a two year old child was set free at the same time. When freed, they started at once on their journey back to their separate homes in Pennsylvania. They walked the entire distance. They were passed by traders upon the trail but as only women of ill repute were found upon the trails they were not asked to ride. Their food consisted of what they found along the way.

Samuel J. McCombs gives that Margaret reached home after an absence of twelve years as he recall hearing it told. While lying sick in a village on her way home she overheard them speaking of a boy that had been found wandering about, who could only speak the Indian tongue. She asked that they bring him to her. He prove to be the little fellow who had been stolen that day of the corn husking

(Continued on page 3)

in Pennsylvania.

Her parents hoped that if still living that she would communicate with them in some way; but as many days had passed into many months and many months into many years, their hope had long died; but not so with her brother.

When nearing home, while sitting on a log to rest, a man approached. She recognized him and asked where he was going. He replied that he was going to a nearby village to see if he could obtain some information in regard to his long lost sister who had been stolen by the Indians. That is he obtained not a word of her today he would be sure she was dead. As he started on his way she called him by name and told him that she was his long lost sister.

Beside himself with joy and so overcome with what he had heard, without a word he turned and ran to carry the glad news to the anxious ones at home.

We can but surmise the conversation in the home that morning prior to his setting out. Mother and father trying to deter him. Brothers and sister chiding him for the foolish notion that any news could come of her after so many years, and his determination to follow the impulse that was ever driving him on.

She told of the great rejoicing that attended her home coming, and of the great assemblage of neighbors from far and near wept and rejoiced with great rejoicing over her safe return.

We can only conjecture the harrowing experience the girl must have had in her search for her home and in her wanderings about, alone in the wild country.

Records of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, show that Margaret and her husband, Peter Roof, were given warranty deeds for four hundred acres each in that county in 1794. Later they came to Zanesville, Ohio, and in 1830 came to South Bond, Indiana. Their children with the exception of Eva, were married in Zanesville, Ohio.

On coming to South Bend Margaret recognized the locality. She said that she had been all through this territory while with the Indians. She told of the different tribes visiting back and forth and that on their journeying through here their visits they went on, much farther west.



She died October 10, 1636, Peter Roof, her husband, died October 25, 1834 Their oldest son, Jacob Roof, died soon after coming to South Bend, according to the cemetery records was the first to be buried in the City Cemetery at South Bond, Indiana. Their son Peter Roof is also buried there. Their oldest daughter, was the wife of Frederick Bainter, who built the first brick house in South Bend. Their other daughter Eva, was the wife of John Cripe, one of the first settlers in German Township, St. Joseph Co., locating there in 1830.

Peter Roof was also captured by the Indians when a young man when pale faces were on one of their raids but he escaped their vigilance.

I am indebted to my mother, the late Mrs. William McComb, daughter of Eva Roof Cripe of South Bend, Indiana, to Mrs. John Jordon of Bedford, Pennsylvania, to Mrs. Catherine Kreighbaum, Cleveland Ave., South Bend, Ind. and to Mr. S.J. McCombs Sr. of Niles, Michigan, and to the History of Sommerset, Bedford, and Fulton Counties of the State of Pennsylvania, for information and verification of this article.

Sarah Amanda McComb

(1859 – 1942)

Descendants

Margaret Replogle / Peter Roof

(1751-1836 / 1753-1834)

Eva Roof / John Cripe

(1790-1863 / 1788-1847)

Eva Cripe /William McCombs

(1816-1897 / 1818-1885)

Samuel McCombs / Emma Johnson

(1848-1934 / 1852-1932)

Roy McCombs / May Kownover

(1878-1947 / 1881-1967)

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