

## **The Miami Slaughterhouse**

In the 1780's, a Squirrel could reach Cincinnati from Pittsburg and never touch the ground. In part because of this heavy tree canopy, the land between the Little Miami River and the Great Miami River was known to have some of the richest farm land ever seen.

The land between the Miami's was a special hunting ground for the Indians. They would not give it up without a fight.

In 1966, while researching a high school term paper, I found a diary written by Mary Covalt called "Reminiscences of Early Days about the construction and defense of Covalt Station primarily set during the years 1789 until 1795. "

My story tonight is about ordinary men and women coming down the Ohio River to settle in the land between the Little Miami and Great Miami Rivers. The Covalts who came down the Ohio and built Covalt Station in the area now known as Terrace Park were my ancestors. Mary Covalt's diary along with other letters and personal accounts gives us the chance to use a zoom lens to focus on how life was lived was during this period. This story takes place in the Old Northwest Territory, and more specifically in the Ohio Territory and very specifically in the land between the two Miami Rivers.

Not many of us would want to personally experience the sacrifices made to develop this land. Innocently, these pioneers came to a place that would embroil them in a life and death struggle for the next five years. These five years in the Old Northwest Territory would settle once and for all if America's future growth would be west of the Allegheny Mountains. These five years in the land which became known as the Miami Slaughterhouse would alter the Ohio land forever.

Allow me to take the zoom lens and twist out. The battle for this land is interesting in the context of the times and the shifting power and economies of four nations: France, Great Britain, The Indian People of the Old Northwest and the new United States of America.

The French Bourbon government of Louis XVI in the mid 1780's was in a long-term financial crisis, partly due to the loans made to support the American Revolution. The financial and political difficulties facing the monarchy and the French nation were immense. The tax burden fell primarily on the commoners, creating understandable tension and popular hostility. The French needed to be repaid loans from the United States as they had bankrupted themselves financing multiple foreign wars. These financial crises set the French Revolution in motion

The Treaty of Paris signed on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1783 ended the Revolutionary War. The treaty forced the British government to cede control of all the land east of the Mississippi and north of Florida to the new United States. But the British did not control all of the land they gave up. Further, they did not consult with their Indian allies who did occupy the land.

The Treaty of Paris further stipulated that pre-war debts owed by the Americans to British subjects were to be honored. These provisions were unpopular and states blocked their enforcement. As a result, the British refused to vacate military forts in the Old Northwest Territory. The British actively encouraged Indian resistance by supplying them with guns and ammunition. In exchange, the British were "hair buyers;" they bought the scalps of white settlers.

The Indian people of Ohio had occupied this land for hundreds of years. They had not all made peace with the United States. They resented the pioneers coming down the Ohio and across the Allegany's to settle in Ohio. These lands were hunting grounds integral to their existence. Further struggle might prolong liberty; but to cease struggling was to surrender it.

After the Revolutionary War, the United States Government was initially organized using the Articles of Confederation. The federal government had little power and practically no way to raise money to operate the government. US foreign debts equaled \$11,000,000, primarily owed to France. The government in an effort to pay war debts began selling land in the Ohio to individuals and syndicates.

In April of 1789, George Washington became the first President of the United States after the new constitution was drafted and ratified by a majority of the States. Washington focused significant time on the development of the Ohio land and the treatment of the Indians. He wanted the Ohio land shared with the Indians. He knew they were formidable adversaries fighting for their own independence. Washington envisioned sanctuaries under tribal control bypassed by the white settlers. He hoped that over time the Indians would become full-fledged American Citizens. Outright confiscation of Indian land would constitute a moral failure staining the character of the nation.

Besides, there was no money to equip an army to deal with the Native Americans. In 1788, the standing Army of the United States was less than 700 officers and men. To keep the peace, the government created treaties with the Indians. In December of 1788, the government asked Arthur St. Clair, governor of the Northwest Territory, to sign another treaty with the Tribes to establish a harmonious relationship between the settlers and the natives and outline an agreement for the development of the Ohio lands.

This meeting between St Clair and a few minor Indian Chiefs resulted in The Treaty of Fort Harmar signed on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1789. The terms reinforced a former treaty that forced the Indians to give up all but a small portion of their land in Ohio. The Indians agreed to the treaty mainly because they expected a large gift distribution. The Indian chiefs attending the conference had originally hoped to convince the Whites to abandon the Ohio land altogether. But the Whites were steadfast.

The tribes that had not been represented at the meeting naturally refused to be bound by this treaty. Even tribes with whom the treaty was made denied that they had relinquished their rights to the lands at all.

These four nations were all attempting to adapt to changing power structures and economies. The United States and France were altering their systems of government. The British and the Indians were in an alliance to maintain the hunter/gatherer economy of the Old Northwest. The US government was hopeful

that the agrarian economy of the settlers could peacefully co-exist with the Indian nations.

After the treaty of Harmar, Americans flocked to the new Ohio Territory. During the year 1789, at least twenty thousand settlers came down the Ohio River. Included in this group was the author of the diary, 15 year old Mary Covalt, her parents Captain Abraham Covalt and Louisa Covalt and her nine brothers and sisters.

### **Why did they come?**

Major Benjamin Stites originally scouted the land between the Miami's while on a trading expedition in Kentucky; Stites had led a party in pursuit of a band of Indian horse thieves. The Indians built a raft and crossed the Ohio River near the mouth of the Little Miami River. Stites and his men followed them as far as present day Xenia. While they never overtook the Indians, the land he saw seemed an ideal place to settle. I quote, "his mouth watered for this area."

Many people wrote that the Ohio farm land was incredibly rich. The timber was excellent and the many rivers that laced the area were navigable by canoe. Game and fish were plentiful. One farmer wrote, "If a poor man, who had nothing but his hands, should ask me, 'Where shall I go to establish myself in order to live with the most ease, without the help of horses or oxen?' I would say to him, 'Go to the banks of one of the creeks in the Scioto bottoms; scratch the surface of the earth and deposit there your wheat, your corn etc. and leave the rest to nature. In the meantime amuse yourself with fishing and the chase.'"

One writer quoted John Milton to describe the land -

A wilderness of sweets; for nature here

Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will

Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,

Wild above rule or art; the gentle gales,

Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense

Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole

Those balmy spoils.

Stites convinced his friend John Cleves Symmes to purchase the land between the two Miami Rivers. The Symmes Purchase, as it was called included 311,000 acres. Symmes had served in the Continental Congress. He paid about \$225,000 for the land or 60 cents an acre.

Symmes transferred 20,000 acres of his tract to Benjamin Stites in late 1787. The acreage that Stites purchased was land around the Little Miami River at what is now Lunken Airport. Major Stites landed his party of pioneers at this site on November 18<sup>th</sup> 1788. He called the new settlement, Columbia. Stites may have been in a hurry to get out of Pennsylvania. He had been a member of the Goshen Baptist Church in Pennsylvania. The Goshen Baptist Church Book notes that Benjamin Stites was cut off from the fellowship of the church for, "having married another wife, while the former wife is yet alive."

Abraham Covalt, Mary Covalt's father purchased 1300 acres of land between the Miami's from Benjamin Stites. A family record says Covalt scouted the territory with Stites in 1787.

How the Captain and Stites and or Symmes knew each other is not clear. They may have met in 1787 when Symmes and Sites were organizing their colonies by selling land to individuals in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The Covalt family lived in Sussex County New Jersey until 1774 as did Symmes. Covalt, like Stites, was also a member of the Goshen Baptist Church in Pennsylvania.

Captain Covalt was a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation American. He was an adventurer from a family of adventurers. His great grandfather Bethuel was born in Wales and was a cupbearer to King Charles the Second. Later, he emigrated from Great Britain to New Jersey.

The Covalt name and its variations are found in the Normandy area of France. A Covalt ancestor writes that the very first Covalt was a servant of William the

Conqueror of Normand, France, serving his master with a gift of telling stories and playing music.

Abraham Covalt was born in Sussex County, New Jersey in 1743. When Covalt was 19 he was conscripted by the British to serve in the French and Indian Wars. He served in the British Navy and was present at the Storming of Monticento in the West Indies

He met and married Lois Pendleton at the age of 20. They were married by the Reverend Elkanah Fuller in Sussex County, New Jersey. Abraham Covalt probably, met his wife while in the British navy when in port in Stonington, Connecticut.

Before to the Revolutionary War, the Covalts moved to the southern part of Bedford Co. Pennsylvania. During that War, he served in the Bedford County Militia, and held the rank of Captain in the sixth Company. Covalt's son Bethuel Covalt held the rank of Ensign in the same company, and he later served under Captain Henry Rush as did another son, Timothy Covalt.

## **OHIO**

To make the journey to Ohio, Covalt and his men built two flatboats to carry their families and their livestock and goods, including the stones of a grist mill to grind corn. Seven other families (the Robert McKinney's, Jonathon Pittman's, John Webb's, John Hutchens, David Smith's, Joseph Hinkle's and Timothy Covalt joined the Captain in the flatboats. Additional friends and relations were on the trip; including Richard Fletcher, Levi Buckingham, and men named Beagle, Clemmons, Coleman, Murphy and Gerston; 45 individuals in all. The river trip took 19 days.

The larger boat was 55 feet long and held the families. The smaller boat was 45 feet long and carried the livestock and farming implements. On board there were 20 head of cattle, pigs, sheep and seven fine horses.

Early flatboat travelers were subject to Indian attack, so the boats were built as floating forts, with only one door, heavily barred. Windows, if any, were small and had sliding shutters. These boats were difficult to steer and would frequently hang up on sandbars and tree stumps. Mary Covalt Jones, in her diary, states

that one of two boats became stranded on the ice in the river and was freed only with the united exertions of the men in the boats.

The Covalt group landed at the Stites Settlement, Columbia in January of 1789. They lived in tents in this new town while the men built a permanent fortification.

Covalt and his men constructed a stockade fort, called a station. The station was situated on an elevated plain on the west bank of the Little Miami River approximately nine miles north of Columbia, in what is now the village of Terrace Park. The plain around the fort was separated from the hills on the north (today, Indian Hill) by a deep ravine and small stream, known as Covalt's Mill Run, but more recently referred to as Redbird Creek. The settlers who built the station referred to the location as Bethany Town.

Covalt Station had a strong blockhouse at each corner. Seventeen cabins were arranged between the blockhouses to form outer walls. The roofs sloped inward to protect against Indian attacks. Openings between the cabins were closed by tall pickets.

A ground plan shows it was rectangular. It enclosed some 40,000 square feet—almost as big as Fort Washington.

When the fort was completed, the families begin clearing land and planting crops. The Covalt group also built a grist mill so they could make bread. This was not a small undertaking. A grist mill involved the construction of a dam across a considerable stream in order to intensify the flow rate of the water. There was a tub wheel or a small overshot wheel turned by the water which then turned the mill stones. The stones themselves would have weighed hundreds of pounds. Mills of this type were capable of grinding a few bushels of meal a day. The millwright was Joseph Hinkle. This was the first mill in the Symmes Purchase.

These new settlers faced immediate threats to their survival; hunger and Indian attacks.

If the pioneers brought enough food and could survive the ice in the river, a winter trip down the Ohio was best. It allowed the Settlers to make camp when

the forests did not provide as much cover for the Indians or wild game. The men would have time to build their houses and forts and clear the forests so they were ready plant crops in the spring.

But if Indian attacks or bad weather prevented the settlers from hunting or farming, food shortages were imminent. One of the men at Columbia site wrote that in the spring of 1790, there was not enough food for the 200 persons in the settlement. There was no meat, little milk and no flour. To survive they mashed and boiled the roots of bear grass which was found on the river bottoms. Sometimes they baked it with what little corn meal was available.

Indians routinely besieged the stations and forts built in the Symmes Purchase. Normally they worked as ambush parties. Rarely did they mount organized attacks.

Just five days after the Covalt party had landed and while they were still living in tents in Columbia settlement, the Indians stole 5 of the 7 horses the Covalt party brought with them from Pennsylvania.

At this same time the people at the Columbia settlement lost not only horses, but a considerable number of household articles and farming implements. The Columbia people blamed the local Shawnee Indians led by Blackbeard.

The Indian raids were so menacing that a committee of citizens from Columbia and newly-founded Cincinnati once offered rewards for Indian scalps "with the right ear attached."

In the fall of 1789, Indians killed one hog and stole another horse from the Covalt Station. The settlers pursued the Indians and were able to catch the one Indian leading the horse. They scalped him and took his gun, tomahawk and knife and brought them to the fort.

There was one organized attack on Covalt Station.

Here is Mary Covalt's account of the story.



*“The soldiers, being always in readiness at the report of guns, started in the direction of the sound. The savages saw them coming. They, the Indians, ran around the hill and attacked the fort, knowing that the soldiers would have to return to the fort to protect it. They fired several bullets at the fort; I was the one that shut the gate, all the men being absent.”*

*Mary Covalt was 16 at the time.*

In June of 1790, Abraham Covalt Jr. was hunting with four others when they were attacked by the Indians. The following account of the incident is from the narrative of Thomas Fitzwater.

“Toward noon on the first day in which L. Buckingham, R. Fletcher, P Beegle and Clemens and Covalt started on their hunt, Covalt began to get uneasy and began to urge the others to return home, saying there might be Indians about. They told him there was no danger, by this did not satisfy him. The nearer night approached the more nervous he became, and the more he urged them to return. This uneasiness in Covalt’s mind Buckingham always viewed as a bad omen...

Three guns were fired about twenty yards distant. Buckingham looked forward and saw Covalt and Fletcher start to run down the river. He also saw three Indians jump over a log, yelling and screaming like demons. As Buckingham wheeled to run up the river he looked back several times, but saw no one in pursuit. He heard the Indians raise a yell down in the bottom, thirty or forty rods distant. He knew the Indians had caught Fletcher or Covalt or both.”

Covalt had been wounded. Fletcher and Covalt ran together about a hundred yards when Covalt said, “For God’s sake, Fletcher, make your escape, for I am a dead man.” He was shot through the chest. He did not die immediately after he fell. He had fought the Indians as long as he had strength. He received several wounds in the face before he died.

When they found Covalt’s body the next morning, his scalp, gun, tomahawk, and part of his clothes were gone. He was 20 at the time of the attack.

Mr. Daniel Doty of the Columbia settlement was one of the men who found the body of Abraham Covalt Jr. He writes, "I then saw for the first time a scalped man, and was naturally much shocked. He records that "When a person is killed and scalped by the Indians, the eyebrows fall down over the eyeballs and give them a fearful look."

The men brought the body to the fort to pay their last respects and bury him in their little cemetery.

In January 1791, the temperature was below zero. The Indians chose this time to attack Colrain Station. The fort was built on the east bank of the Great Miami River. A garrison of a few dozen soldiers and single cannon defended the fort. The Shawnee Chief Blue Jacket led two hundred warriors against the fort. They surrounded it and attempted to breach the walls. The battle raged all day and had it not been for the cannon, the Shawnees would have prevailed. Here is part of Lieutenant Kingsbury's report to General Harmar at Fort Washington.

*"Monday morning at half past Seven the Indians surrounded this garrison and demanded our surrender. I informed them that we were happy to see them that we had plenty of Men Arms Ammunition and provision...They then began a very heavy fire but have wounded but one man. We have killed and wounded not less than twelve or fifteen. But they have killed most part of the cattle and burnt all the buildings outside the Garrison and have destroyed most of the corn belonging to the inhabitants.*

*They threatened to starve us out or storm our works and to set fire to our Garrison; but could not bring any of their plans to bear. I have the pleasure of sending you two scalps and hope before long to send you several more but have them to take first. Capt. Sloan killed the Indian with the large scalp and will be glad to keep it after you have seen."*

Blue Jacket planned to recommence the attack at dawn but he called it off because of the frigid temperature.

However, before they left, the Shawnees took their one prisoner and killed him as warning for what lay ahead for the pioneers if they persisted in their settlement of the Ohio country.

A William Wiseman detailed the ordeal.

*“Blue Jacket ordered him stripped him naked. They then pinioned his outstretched hands and feet to the earth, kindling a fire on his naked abdomen, and thus, in lingering tortures they allowed him to die. His screams of agony were ringing in our ears during the remainder of the night.”*

In this same month of January, General Harmar sent Captain Cornelius Ryker Sedam with a detail of twelve soldiers from Fort Washington to the Covalt settlement as a guard against future Indian attacks.

Sedem reported to Harmar that he could not defend the Covalt Station with so few men. Here is part of his report which gives some indication of the inability to feel safe at any time.

*: Sir, ...you informed me your wish to strengthen this plase. There is 17 fighting men beside the troopes. And one half of them is a hunting Every Day so you may judge my situation at this plase, the Fort is as large as Fort Washington and in very bad repare. It is not in my power to put it in a plase of defense without more men. I enclose you a plan of it. The hunters daily inform me of signs that thay see when thay are out. On the 25th in the morning, the sentinel Saw one near the Fort. But if they come I hope I will be abel to inform you how the affair went.”*

On February 28, 1791 the Covalt Station inhabitants petitioned General Harmar for additional soldiers. They wrote:

*We the inhabitance of Bthany Town and Else where do once more Etempt to Solicite The Most honourabe General Harmer Commander in Chief in the Western territory to... send som few Troopes and Suffer us not to Brak up for we don't only do our Selves a kindness by keeping our garesn but the Collumbia people and your Town also by our mill in Supplying them in bread and if we move from here our mill is usless Either to our Selves or to the other inhabitants ... If your Excelancy*

*doth not Simpethise with us then we must make the Shift we can &c but if you honour is pleased to approve our Request, on our part we do all in our power to Defend this Settlement. In hopes of address we humble Petetionars as in Duty Bound Shall Every Pray. Feb the 28<sup>th</sup> 1791.*

*Yesterday the Indians have killed Able Cook in the Narrows betwixt Columbia and the big bottom garrison.*

In March of 1791 Captain Covalt was ambushed by the Indians. The captain had been cutting timber at his house. He was with two of his sons, and Joseph Hinkle, the Mill Wright. They were making shingles at the time when they were attacked. Hinkle's head was half cut off with a tomahawk, and then scalped. Captain Covalt was wounded in two places; one ball passed through his chest, the other through his arm. He told his sons to make their way to the fort. He ran, with ax in hand, about a hundred yards and fell across a log, with his arm under his head. Mary Covalt says: "the scalping knife soon robbed it of the auburn locks the clustered around his noble brow,"

A French writer of the period describes the act of scalping. "The savage seizes his knife, and makes an incision around the hair from the upper part of the forehead to the back of the neck. Then he puts his foot on the shoulder of the victim, whom he has turned over face down, and pulls the hair off with both hands, from back to front...When a savage has taken a scalp, he stops and scrapes the skin to remove the blood and fibers on it. He makes a hoop of green wood, stretches the skin over it like a tambourine, and puts it in the sun to dry a little. The skin is painted red, and the hair on the outside combed. When prepared, the scalp is fastened to the end of a long stick, and carried on his shoulder in triumph to the village."

In the summer of 1792, three men were surprised by the Indians a quarter of a mile from Covalt Station. Their names were Beagle, Murphy and Coleman and an unknown soldier from Fort Washington. They were about a quarter of a mile from the fort when they heard the Indians, and ran for the station. Beagle was ahead and would have escaped, but he tripped on a grape-vine and was caught and bound. The soldier was killed. The three men were taken to Detroit, where

Beagle and Murphy were sold to the British. The Indians would not part with Coleman. They took him away with them. At the parting he is said to have wept like a child, for he realized the fate in store for him – burning at the stake. He was never heard from again.

A description of “Burning at the Stake” is found in the book, “The Frontiersman” by Allan W. Eckert published in 1970. He describes the victim Colonel William Crawford tethered to a pole, stripped of all of his clothing and prior to his death he was repeatedly burned, shot at using large quantities of gun powder but no ammunition, his privates were left shredded and smoking. His ears were severed and he was scalped. He was finally tossed onto the fire to end the ordeal.

### **Indian Wars**

George Washington was forced to acknowledge his vision of secure Indian sanctuaries would not and could not be enforced. He approved a military expedition into the Ohio Valley to stop the Indian attacks. In his heart he believed that the chief culprits were white groups determined to provoke hostility.

This first expedition was in 1790. Josiah Harmar, commander of the Army in the Northwest Territory, marched from Fort Washington with 320 regular soldiers and roughly 1100 militiamen, primarily from Pennsylvania and Kentucky. The militiamen were poorly trained. Many did not know how to load and fire a musket; several others did not have a gun. Harmar was determined to destroy the native villages.

The natives at first fled as Harmar’s army approached. The Americans burned several villages. But the natives regrouped... On October 20, the combined tribes, led by Little Turtle, of the Miami’s, attacked a detachment from Harmar’s army led by Colonel John Hardin. Hardin’s force consisted of several hundred militiamen and a few regular soldiers. Most of the militiamen fled the battle without firing a shot. The regular soldiers put up a brief resistance, but the natives killed most of them. Two days later, Harmar sent another detachment after Little Turtle’s warriors. Once again, the natives inflicted heavy casualties

upon the Americans. He retreated to the safety of Fort Washington. Harmar lost 183 men killed or missing in this campaign.

Arthur St. Clair, the governor of the Northwest Territory led a second expedition. St. Clair moved his Army up the Western part of Ohio in September 1791. On November 3, his men arrived on the banks of the Wabash River, near some of the Miami villages and camped for the evening.

Little Turtle and his warriors ambushed the Americans on the morning of November 4. Many of the militiamen under St. Clair immediately fled. St. Clair led the regular soldiers in a bayonet charge. St. Clair had two horses shot out from under him. The natives encircled the soldier's camp. For three murderous hours the Indians completely overwhelmed the soldiers. It was said that the snow turned to a red slush. The remaining U.S. soldiers finally fought their way out and began a lengthy retreat. Of the 1,400 soldiers involved in the battle, 632 soldiers were killed and another 257 wounded. An additional 220 camp followers were killed. The Indians only lost 66 men. It was the worst defeat in history of the American soldiers fighting the Indians. By comparison, only 268 soldiers were killed at the Battle of the Little Big Horn, also known as Custer's last stand. The rout was so complete; the bodies of the soldiers were not recovered or buried. St. Clair resigned from the army but remained governor of the Northwest Territory. Another son of Abraham Covalt, Cheniah, was captured in this battle, but he later escaped.

Washington ordered General Anthony Wayne to lead another American force against the Indians. Wayne trained his men well. His army totaled 3500 men and he built a series of forts up the Western part of Ohio including Ft. Recovery built on the site of St. Clair's tragic loss. During this campaign Wayne continuously send out overtures of peace to the Indians but these overtures were refused. Wayne took his time making sure his men were well supplied and prepared. On August 20, 1794 the final engagement occurred in an area now known as Fallen Timbers. Wayne had superior numbers and his men fought bravely. A fixed bayonet charge by the soldiers forced the Indians to retreat. Then Wayne's army

scorched the earth around the Indian villages depriving them of food and shelter for the coming winter.

Interestingly, the British had built a fort nearby in complete defiance of the Treaty of Paris. The British used this fort to supply the Indians with guns and ammunition for the fight. But when the Indian retreated there after the battle of Fallen Timbers, the British would not allow them in the fort, fearful of starting a war with the Americans. The Indians felt betrayed by the British.

It would take another year to prepare and sign the treaty of Grenville. But the battle for the Ohio lands was essentially over. The Ohio Territory developed rapidly and in 1803 becomes the 17<sup>th</sup> State.

Mary Covalt towards the end of her journal says, "Old General Wayne soon compelled them to bury the hatchet and retire in peace." She continues, "Now the inhabitants began to disperse and the woodsman's ax was heard in every direction. If this (diary) should at any time fall in the hands of the friends, old pioneers, perhaps they will think of the many hairbreadth escapes and trials of their forefathers, and consider it an honour to be known as their descendants."

### **Epilogue**

Charles Alexandre de Calonne, Louis the XVI's finance minister, told the King in an August 1786 memorandum. "It is impossible to increase taxes, disastrous to keep on borrowing, and inadequate merely to cut expenses." The Bastille was taken on July 14, 1789. Louis the XVI was beheaded, but not scalped in July 1793.

Symmes originally wanted to purchase 1,000,000 acres of land. The Continental Congress, of which he was a member, wanted to sell it to him. But he mishandled survey and sales to such an extent that Congress restricted his purchase to 311,682 acres, including lands reserved for special purposes. Miami University is on land from the Symmes Purchase.

Stites' first wife, Rachel Stites, came to Cincinnati and began suing for a divorce. With Benjamin counter suing. She accused him of ill treatment. Rachel stated that he had bigamously married Mary Mills, and after tiring of her had again

married illegally a third time, Hannah Waring. Mary Mills, wife number two, was credited as being the first white woman that ever landed in Cincinnati. Mary evidently discovered that Stites was still married and left the Columbia settlement. She returned home of her parents in New Jersey with her son, John Gano Stites.

Flat boating on the Ohio and the Mississippi continued for decades. Abraham Lincoln took several trips on flatboats and was aware of the issue of boats hanging up on sandbars. Lincoln received a patent for a device designed to lift boats off of obstructions in the river. His inventions used air blown into bellows to free the boats. He is the only President to hold a patent.

Washington received many letters from Indian chiefs asking for help. They regarded Washington as their personal protector. "Brother," wrote one, "we give up to our white brothers all the land we could any how spare, and have but little left...and we hope you won't let any people take more from us without our consent. We are neither Birds nor Fish; we can neither fly nor live under water.... We are made by the same hand and in the same shape as yourselves.

Today there is a statue to the Miami Indian Chief, Little Turtle on the River Walk in Covington, Kentucky.

Bethuel Covalt and Rachel Blackford were married in 1790. Their marriage is thought to be one of the first marriage ceremonies in Hamilton County. John Smith a Virginian performed the ceremony. He was the first Baptist Clergyman in the region.

Captain Covalts widow survived him until the year 1838, when she died at the age of 100. She was blest with her mental powers to the last.

According to the History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Captain Covalt was one of the leaders of the Miami immigration who cherished no splendid visions of future wealth and greatness, his highest worldly ambition was to remain independent. He was a true type of the sensible, homely, brave and honorable American of the old Colonial day, and an equally distinctive type of the simple but



noble manhood which appears to such rare advantage in every age and state of society.

Today, in front of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Terrace Park, a historical marker identifies the place as the location of Covalt Station. It symbolizes the spot where a few brave and enterprising pioneer families created a place so that future generations could enjoy the beautiful land between the Miami's.

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