INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS

JOHN CONNER
Author(s): SARAH C. CHRISTIAN
Source: *The Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (JUNE, 1907), pp. 87-88
Published by: Indiana University Press
Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/27785107
Accessed: 04-04-2024 14:35 +00:00

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at https://about.jstor.org/terms

Indiana University Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Indiana Quarterly Magazine of History*

JSTOR

This content downloaded from 190.164.153.176 on Thu, 04 Apr 2024 14:35:14 +00:00
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

JOHN CONNER.

BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER, MRS. SARAH C. CHRISTIAN.

My Grandfather Conner was associated with the earliest Indiana history. While it was still a territory he carried the dispatches from Ft. Washington, now Cincinnati, to Ft. Wayne, over an Indian trail, and with a Delaware guide. He was a member of the first legislature that met at Corydon. He was the founder of Connersville, and was the trusted friend and counselor of the red man.

When he first located at Connersville, he, with several other men, was building his cabin, which as yet had neither roof nor floor, when an emigrant wagon drew up and stopped, and the new-comer asked to be directed to Connersville. My Grandfather, standing in the door, laughed heartily and said, "My friend, you are right in the heart of the town."

Around this cabin was a heavy wall with a gate which fastened on the inside. This was for protection from the Indians. Grandfather had no fear of them, but they hated his white squaw.

One day when Grandmother and Jim, Grandfather's son by his Delaware squaw wife, who was then dead, were alone, the cabin was attacked by Indians. The gate had been accidentally left open, but they barred the door. Jim, terrified, hid under the bed, saying to Grandmother, "They will kill you, they have come to kill you. They are going to the top of the house and will come down the chimney." She told Jim to tell them that she would put a straw bed in the fireplace, and set fire to the first one who attempted it. Then they cut a large hole in the door and were going to crawl through, but Jim told them that she was standing by the door with the ax raised to chop off the head of the one who tried to come in. Grandfather came while they were there, and they all ran off as fast as they could go.

One Sunday evening while they were still living there, the chairs and stools of the cabin were all occupied by visiting neighbors when the girl who lived with Grandmother "had a beau." The embarrassed young man slipped back into a corner. There was a large dye kettle filled with blue dye, covered with

This content downloaded from 190.164.153.176 on Thu, 04 Apr 2024 14:35:14 +00:00
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms

a cloth, standing there, and the young man sat down in it, falling in head and heels, in his tow linen suit. The last seen of him he was fleeing from the place like a blue streak in the moonlight. The expression, "went like a blue streak," may have originated in that incident.

An Indian council was held at Anderson at which Tecumseh was to preside. Grandfather, upon learning that Tecumseh could not be present, disguised himself to represent the great Shawnee and went to the council. The chieftains representing the tribes sat down upon the ground in the form of a crescent, and Grandfather in his disguise of paint, feathers and blanket, took the seat intended for Tecumseh. He filled, lit the pipe and smoked a little. Then passed it to the nearest chief who also smoked, passed it to the next and soon until it had gone round the semi-circle. Good as Grandfather's disguise was, one of the old Indians recognized him. He looked him over from one side, walked around and looked at him from the other, then exclaimed, "You no Tecumseh—you big John Conner." Up to that time not a word had been spoken, but now they all jumped to their feet and whooped and yelled, taking it as a great joke.

Once, in company with a friend, Grandfather was traveling in the north part of the State. They stopped for the night in an Indian village. During the evening Grandfather, who thoroughly understood the Indians' language and customs, felt that there was something wrong, and after retiring to their tent he told his friend not to go to sleep, for he felt that they were in great danger. His friend only laughed at him and went to sleep, but Grandfather lay awake, apprehensive, and listening intently. About midnight he became conscious that there was some one at his tent. The flap moved, a hand was thrust in and grasped him by the wrist, and some one said, "Conner." Grandfather answered him and he said, "Wake your friend,—you are in great peril. If you are here in the morning, you will be killed." He awoke his friend, and they slipped out of the village, got their horses, which the friendly Indian had concealed some distance away, and left. The Indian who saved their lives was Grandfather's trusted friend, Tecumseh.*

*A story curiously like this is told of one "Captain W.," (supposed to be Wilson) by Judge Law in his "Colonial History of Vincennes" (pp. 99-105).

This content downloaded from 190.164.153.176 on Thu, 04 Apr 2024 14:35:14 +00:00
All use subject to https://about.jstor.org/terms