

KENTUCKIANS I HAVE KNOWN OR HEARD ABOUT

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Society of Colonial Wars in the State of Ohio

A native Kentuckian has a deep and abiding affection for his home state, not unlike the passionate and irrational sentiment that an Irishman has for old Erin or that a Texan has for the Lone Star State. But, it is an innocent aberration in all, and all are entitled to the indulgent consideration of alien critics whose roots are less deep, and whose historical background is less attuned to the finer things in life.

In the army, a drill instructor, working with an intractable recruit from Kentucky once said that the typical Kentuckian is scarcely more trainable than a mule; that he is stubborn, irascible, balky, and visibly impatient under disciplinary restraint. Whether this is true in whole or in part we do not have time to inquire, but anyone familiar with history will remember the devastating performance of backwoods Kentucky riflemen and their homemade rifles - widow makers, that is - against the British and assorted enemies.

Kentucky, being the 15th state to be admitted to the Union, was a comparatively well settled area in the late 18th century, well before Ohio was anything more than wilderness. Kentucky was a part of Virginia until 1782, and before this, settlers had been constantly embattled with each other and with absentee land speculators over land titles. There were no surveys made before land was originally sold off, and many parcels were sold several times to different people - a situation guaranteed to provide employment for hundreds of lawyers for many years. Any settler who lived on his land and managed to hold on to it in spite of Indian attack and legal battles over title, is worthy of great admiration. These conditions allowed only the fittest to survive, and perhaps this accounts for much of the fiercely independent nature of so many early Kentuckians.

Most of the early settlers were completely illiterate, but in 1780, the first institution of higher learning west of the Appalachian mountains was chartered, and Transylvania University has made Lexington a seat of learning for almost 200 years.

Since most of the desirable farm land had been spoken for by 1800, people, in their endless search for cheap land, had begun to look northward to Ohio, and it is no surprise that so many Ohioans, proud of their Kentucky heritage, are able to trace their ancestry back to Kentucky and Virginia. There are several kinds of Kentuckians; native born, immigrants, (voluntary and involuntary), honorary, and so on. But it has been well said that once a Kentuckian, always a Kentuckian.

Among early pioneers, perhaps the first white woman to set foot in Kentucky was Mary Draper Inglis. References do not agree on the spelling; some spell it Inglis and some Ingles.

Mary Inglis was born in Philadelphia in 1732, daughter of George and Eleanor Draper Scotch-Irish immigrants. The Draper family moved to Virginia near Blacksburg in 1745, and a settlement was formed known as Draper's Meadows. It was not long after the settlement was formed that George Draper was killed by Indians. In 1749, Mary Draper was married to William Inglis, she at the age of 17. She was below average size of the Frontier women of the time, but she had a fine figure and is said to have been possessed of a gracious manner. She was quiet but had the strength of character and tenacity of purpose typical of the Scotch-Irish. She could stand beside her horse and leap into the saddle unaided. She could stand and jump as high as her head. In due course, she gave birth to two sons, and was carrying her third child when the Indians attacked.

A change was taking place in the primeval forests of the west. The final contest for control in the New World between the Briton and the Frenchman was at hand. France was already agitating the Indians in every lodge and village in the Ohio Valley. But the settlers at Draper's Meadows, Virginia, felt that they were out of the main stream of the conflict.

On July 8, 1755, there was a gathering at the Inglis homestead - so typical of frontier days - neighbors had come to help with the wheat harvest. Every man had brought his gun, but these were left at the house while they were in the fields. The women were at work preparing a feast for the harvesters when the Indians attacked. Most of the women and children were slaughtered. Children were picked up by their feet and their brains were dashed out against a log. The savages rounded up all the horses in sight and packed all the loot on them, including all the guns and ammunition. After setting fire to the house, they took Mary Inglis, her two boys, and Mrs. John Draper as prisoners. Mrs. Draper had been badly wounded in the arm in trying to save her young child. The men, seeing the flames, came running, but being without fire arms or horses, they were unable to launch an immediate pursuit. Further, each man, fearful of his own home, ran for it to ward off a similar attack. William Inglis was restrained from pursuit until an organized posse could be formed.

The prisoners were forced to walk, and here began an epic journey of hundreds of miles over some of the most difficult terrain in the eastern part of the country. Mary Inglis, some 8 months pregnant, was forced to carry her youngest son who soon tired of walking. The older boy also began to falter, and so Mrs. Draper, although severely wounded and suffering much pain, took the younger child and carried him until nightfall. On the second day, Mary Inglis realized that it would be impossible for her to bear up under the burden of her son, Thomas. She was convinced that if some other arrangement were not made for the conveyance of the children, she would soon see them murdered by the Indians. When a halt was made for food, she set about the preparation of the best meal to be made from the

material at hand. Her success was such that the Indians were highly pleased. When it was finished, she assisted them in managing the packs. She was then able to move about the camp without restraint and concealed her fears from the savages. When they were ready to set out again, she asked the chief for permission to ride one of the horses. He permitted her to do so, and to take up the children. She requested that Mrs. Draper be allowed to ride also, but this was refused. On the third night out, Mary Inglis gave birth to a baby girl, but this did not delay the march which lasted 29 days, down the New River and Kawha River valleys to the Ohio and to the Shawnee towns at the mouth of the Scioto River. Upon arrival, in the midst of much excitement, Mrs. Draper was forced to run the gauntlet, as was customary, but Mary Inglis was spared this ordeal. Mrs. Draper, although not recovered from her wounds, eyes blazing with defiance on the murderous rabble, sprang forward on the course between the lines and was immediately assailed by the merciless mob. Wounded as she was, she fought fiercely as she snatched weapons from her assailants. She overthrew warriors, beat down squaws, and brushed aside youths and dogs. When she reached the council house, she was suffering from many additional wounds and her arm had again been broken. On the third day after arrival, the children were taken away from their mother and sent away to other villages. In October Mary Inglis was sent with a party of twenty warriors, three Frenchmen and an Old Dutch woman down the Ohio to Big Bone Lick in what is now Boone County, Kentucky, near the greater Cincinnati airport. They were sent there for the purpose of making salt. At this point, Mary Inglis made up her mind to escape without further delay. She and the Old Dutch woman requested permission to go in search of wild grapes and so had a full day's start before they were missed. The only preparation for the trip was to get a blanket, a tomahawk, and a large knife for each. For weeks, they were to be in constant danger of meeting roving bands of Indians and recapture meant death. They had no guns to shoot game or to defend themselves. When they came to a river or a stream emptying into the Ohio, they had to traverse up the tributary far enough so that a crossing could be made. They managed to steal a horse near the Indian village opposite present day Portsmouth, Ohio and also found a supply of corn. They kept the horse until he drowned in the big Sandy River. The Dutch woman became quite a problem and tried to kill Mary Inglis, but Mary was able to elude her by crossing to the opposite side of the Kanawha. About the last part of November, after enduring unbelievable hardships, Mary Inglis arrived at the base of Salt Pond Mountain. Night was approaching; snow had fallen and it was bitterly cold. She was confronted by a gigantic sheer cliff, some 280 feet high, and with the base in the water. She tried to wade around it, but it was too deep. She had nothing to eat, and she could not find any place to curl up for the night. In despair, she threw herself on the bare ground and there lay in that pitiable condition, more dead than alive, until the next morning. She knew that she was only about fifteen miles from home, so she managed to scale the cliff, inch by inch. Getting down the other side was even more difficult, but after reaching the base, she dragged herself up the river valley and found a fenced-in corn field. As it turned out, it was the farm of Adam Harman, a neighbor of the Inglis family. Mary Inglis had been a captive for 5-1/2 months

before she was reunited with her husband. It took her some 40 days to return home after making her escape at Big Bone Lick. Mrs. Draper was released by the Indians after seven years. Mary's youngest son, George and the infant died shortly after being separated from their mother. Thomas Inglis, the oldest son, remained with the Shawnees for 13 years and was finally ransomed by his father. Some will argue that Mary Inglis was not a Kentuckian at all, but rather an unwilling visitor who, when she returned to her home, was not exactly overcome with glowing praise for this land of milk and honey.

JOHN FILSON, KENTUCKY'S EARLIEST HISTORIAN AND CARTOGRAPHER.

John Filson was born in southeastern Pennsylvania along the Brandywine, in 1747. Raised on the farm but trained away from it, he pursued studies in Latin, Greek, French, History, and Mathematics, and eventually went into teaching. He inherited a modest estate from his father but was not inclined toward farming, and feeling the call of the West, like many others, he set out for Pittsburgh, and in due course arrived over the Ohio River-Maysville route to Lexington. He was at that time 36 years old, and he sensed the importance of land acquisition under the favorable economic and legal conditions then existing. Virginia's laws relative to her western lands and her depreciated paper currency - nothing but treasury warrants - made the matter of securing choice land in Kentucky quite easy and very attractive. Of course, no one then anticipated the legal tangles that were to come; due to the absence of surveys. In Dec., 1783, Filson acquired nearly 13,000 acres in the Elkhorn and Ohio River country of central and northern Kentucky. A considerable part of this, 5600 acres, was located on Big Bone Creek where he undoubtedly had an eye on the value of possible supplies of salt. Certainly, he did not buy the land for its agricultural values. He also bought land in Jefferson and Fayette counties.

During the period, 1783 to 1784, shortly after his arrival in Lexington, while teaching school, he started to gather material for his book, "History of Kentuckee" and the accompanying map. These were the days that he spent in interviewing Daniel Boone, James Harrod, Levi Todd, and many of the other early explorers, hunters, and settlers. From the lips of Boone, he took those colorful statements upon which most of the early romantic history of Kentucky is based, and it is essentially upon this that all of Boone's personal fame rests. He saved Boone from an oblivion that has swallowed up many others and has left to posterity a priceless tale of early days in Kentucky. For stirring action and regional description, this book has rarely been equaled as a piece of frontier writing in any part of this country. In 1784, Filson took his manuscript and map, and journeyed to Philadelphia to have it printed, and in the same year it was published. A book of 118 pages, copies were sold for \$1.25 each. Original edition copies today are worth perhaps over \$10,000.00.

By 1787, his private affairs had become much entangled, and his estate which had included thousands of acres in Kentucky ceased to exist. In such straits, he naturally turned to his old profession of teaching school. In 1788, Robert Patterson, High Sheriff of Fayette County, formerly his legal counsel, showed him a plan for establishing a town on the north shore of the Ohio River opposite the mouth of the Licking River. Later, in August, a promotion agreement was reached between Patterson, Filson, and Matthias Denman, the owner of a considerable tract at this point. Certain duties and obligations were set forth, and each was to share an equal third in the project. At this point, mystery envelopes the career of John Filson. On September 22 and 23 he was surveying his plan for the town which he had named Losantiville - city opposite the Licking's mouth. A few settlers were present as were his partners. If he kept a journal, it has been lost. There is no further account except an old letter from Judge J.C. Symmes, saying that Filson was murdered and scalped by Indians. Filson's identification with the Losantiville enterprise was hastily brushed over upon the arrival of Israel Ludlow, a Maysville Kentucky surveyor, who came to take his place. Filson's heir, his brother, Robert Filson, received nothing of the covenanted one-third interest in the town site. In 1790, when Governor Arthur St. Clair came down the Ohio, to Losantiville, he arbitrarily changed the name to Cincinnati. At one time, present day Plum Street was known as Filson Street, but for some reason it was changed to Plum. There is, however, a Filson Place in the downtown area of Cincinnati, and a small park area, to commemorate the name of the man who first laid out the streets of the City.

Summer Outing
The Literary Club
Forest Retreat, Carlisle, KY
June 10, 1968