

ANNALS
OF
BUFFALO VALLEY,
PENNSYLVANIA.

1755--1855.

COLLATED BY

JOHN BLAIR LINN.

HARRISBURG, PA.
LANE S. HART, PRINTER AND BINDER.

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1877.

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Aaron K. Gift, Esquire, of Middleburg, furnished me with the following narrative of this occurrence, as related by his grandfather, Jeremiah Gift, who died at an advanced age, in 1843. The Gift, Herrold, and Lepley families came to Middle Creek valley in the year 1771. John Adam Gift, (great-grandfather of A. K.,) settled on the left bank of Middle creek, three miles west of where Middleburg now stands; owned and occupied the farm now owned by John H. Walter. His three sons were Jacob, Anthony, and Jeremiah. The militia were then drawn in classes. Jacob had been drawn, and served a tour in the eastern part of the State. The lot in 1779 fell upon John Adam, the father. Jacob insisted on serving in his stead. Michael Lepley and — Herrold were drawn at the same time. They were stationed at Fort Freeland, near which lived a family named McKnight, father and son. They secured a guard consisting of fourteen persons, among whom were Jacob Gift, Michael Lepley, and Herrold, to go to milk their cows. The cows were driven into a pen, and while milking, they were surprised by a party of thirty Indians, who fired upon them. They were so completely surprised, they could make very little resistance. Lepley, with others, and old Mr. McKnight, were killed. Herrold ran for the fort. As he ran along a field which sloped towards the fort, the soldiers in the fort heard the report of a rifle, and saw him fall, and an Indian scalp him. Jacob Gift also tried to make his escape, but was overtaken. When the pursuing soldiers came up, they

found evidence of a hard fight; the ground was bloody, his rifle broken in pieces, and himself tomahawked and scalped. He had sold his life as dear as possible. Young McKnight was the only one who escaped. He jumped Warrior run, and a tomahawk struck the top rail of the fence just after he cleared it. He was the only one left to tell the tale. Upon Jacob Gift's father the stroke fell heavy. He said, "It was my lot to go, but my son went and gave his life for mine." Michael Lepley left a widow, Mary A., and some children. She drew a pension for many years afterwards.

In May, John Sample and wife were killed. The inhabitants had mostly left the Valley. The militia were out, under Colonel Kelly.—*William Lyon's letter, May 13.* This marauding party consisted of from fifteen to seventeen Indians. Christian Van Gundy, senior, was one of a party, with Henry Vandyke, who went up to bring these old people away. (They lived on a farm lately owned by Abram Leib, near Ramsay's school-house, in White Deer, where their graves may still be seen.) Van Gundy was a sergeant, and had six men in his party. Six more were to follow them the next day. After Van Gundy got there, he had slabs put up against the door, and water carried upon the loft. After dark an Indian came around the house, barking like a dog, and rubbing against the door. They paid no attention, but lay down, and slept until about three, A. M., when Van Gundy got up, and lighted a fire. The Indians then surrounded the house, and, mounting a log on their shoulders, tried to beat in the door. Those inside then fired, wounding two, whom they saw carried off. An Indian then came around behind the house, and set it on fire. Van Gundy mounted the loft, knocked off some of the roof, and put out the fire. In this encounter he was struck on the leg by a spent ball, which marked him for some time. Another of the party had his side whiskers shot off. When daylight came they put it to vote, whether they should remain in the house or try to get off. Two voted to stay, four to go. On opening the door they found an Indian chief lying dead in front of it. Van Gundy took the Indian's rifle, Vandyke his powder horn, (which was still in the possession of John Vandyke, in Illinois, some years ago.) The Indians came on suddenly, with loud yells, and the men separated. Van Gundy, with his two guns, took into a ravine, and tried to get the old people to follow him. They refused, and followed