

MEMORIALS

OF THE

GRAND RIVER VALLEY,

BY

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Has Oblivion a right to the Past?

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"Well done, ox! Henceforth be thou identified with the corporeal system of the citizens of Grand Rapids, and I will enjoy the *profit* of thy living identity."

Historically, North Plains has the advantage of a tragedy, which is still shrouded in mystery. In the spring of 1838 the settlers and community were horrified by the murder of the family of Ansel D. Glass, before mentioned as one of the pioneer settlers of the town. Public opinion is still divided as to who was the perpetrator. Glass lived four miles from any neighbor. The last known of him he had cut his foot badly on the instep; this was done up by Major Mills, who, with his wife, went there at the request of Mrs. Glass. This was about the middle of March. Judge Brown, out hunting, came to Glass' house, found it partly burned, and saw the partly consumed remains of several persons; he spread the report, and soon an excited crowd gathered. A coroner's jury was empaneled, who investigated the case, but could arrive at no conclusion, except that Mrs. Glass and her two children were murdered. The excitement was intense; Glass could not be found. Some circumstances pointed to the Indians as the murderers, and the fear of the Indians almost paralyzed the people. Cobmoosa and the Indians came to the scene of the murder; they endeavoring to exculpate the Indians of the Valley, still saying it was Indians' work. An eye witness, Capt. Parks, says that the mien of that chief, as he addressed the Indians there, was of the most impressive dignity. Although his address was not understood by the whites, the eloquence of tone and action was comprehended and felt by all.

No effort was spared by the Indians to allay the fears of the settlers. By every imaginable act of kindness they tried to conciliate good will, but all in vain until the story of the discovery of Glass was circulated. Then confidence again returned, and the settler, when he bade his loved ones "Good night," did it without fear, and slept in peace.

Four Indians, not belonging to any of the river clans, had been loafing around for some time, and were not seen after the murder of the Glass family. The Indians laid the deed to them. Others believed that Glass was the murderer, and that

he had run away. No motive can be assigned for the deed being done by Glass; and besides, being crippled by a recent wound, he could not have run away.

Our opinion is, that these Indians got into a quarrel with Glass; took him from his house, murdered and secreted him; then returned and finished up the job by killing Mrs. G. and the children, and firing the house.

It was reported afterwards that Glass was seen and identified out by the Mississippi river. A warrant for his return to the State was got out, but never served, for the reason that there were no funds in the treasury to pay the expense. A prominent man in the county informed the writer that *he himself invented the story* of the discovery of Glass, to allay the settlers' fear of the Indians. No one felt safe. *He* was satisfied that the Indians of the Valley did not do the deed, and, to reassure the people, manufactured the story. His name is not here given. Those who know what it is to be afraid of Indians, will excuse the fraud. But until the above alluded to man shall see fit, over his own name, to tell his story to the public, the memory of Glass will be coupled with the belief in his three-fold murder.

Mr. McKelvy, who more properly belongs to Lyons, brought the first "civilized hogs" into the Grand River Valley. Those, who have seen the old-fashioned, yellow, long-nosed greyhound hogs of Michigan, will appreciate this act of McKelvy. Those, who in former times ate "Western pork," know well the difference between a civilized and a savage hog. The hog, unrefined by culture, is a savage beast; lean as a wolf; one-third nose; a sinister, gaunt, long-eared nuisance. Cultivated, he is the noble Suffolk, with his sleek sides stuffed with juicy pork; or the beautiful Chester, whose mild eyes and glossy sides seem smilingly to say, "eat me." What cannot culture do? 'Tis as useful in man as in the hog. Under culture, the old brutal swine, cursed by the Jew; a by-word for slovenly brutishness, is disappearing; yes, has disappeared. When will culture cause to disappear the brutish, superstitious, even unhogly, human swine? Alas, it is to be feared that "careful selection" and the knife will never exterminate the old kind, as in America they have done with the hog.