

## Chapter I : ADVENTURES OF PIONEER CHILDREN

Much has been written about the men and women who left their homes in the East and settled in the far-off wilderness of the “North West Territory.” That great region included what is now Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan. The children of those early pioneers had an important part in making the history of our country. In wit, bravery, heroism and endurance in time of peril and hardship, they held their own with the pioneer men and women. If all the stories of these pioneer children could be written, it would fill a large book.

A little while after the Battle of Bunker Hill, a family by the name of Mullen, with some of their neighbors, traveled on foot over Boone’s Wilderness Road and settled in Kentucky. They built a log cabin for themselves not far from the Boonesborough Stockade Fort. Before they had been there long Mr. Mullen was killed by the Indians. His widow and the two boys were left alone in the cabin.

About dusk one evening three Indians were seen coming toward the Mullen cabin. Mrs. Mullen was sick in bed at the time. Fifteen-year-old Peter, the eldest of the children, caught a glimpse of the savages. At once he closed the cabin door and fastened it with the big oak bar. The Indians, finding the door shut, tried to get the family to open it.

“We are friends,” they said in a broken English, “and we are tired and hungry. We shall do you no harm.”

“You cannot come in. Go away,” said Peter.

That made the Indians so angry that they began to batter down the door. There was no gun in the cabin, but there was an old rifle barrel. The quick-witted lad seized that and pushed it through a loop-hole in the cabin wall. The Indians, thinking it was a real rifle, dashed into the woods, and a little while later a party of riflemen from the stockade arrived. Though the Mullen family did not know it, two boys who were on their way home from a hunting trip had seen the Indians as they were trying to break down the cabin door. They had rushed back to the stockade village and spread the news.

In the same year that General Burgoyne was defeated at Saratoga, a pioneer named Peter Clark

was living with his family at the Logan stockade in Kentucky. This fort was named for a famous Indian fighter of that time.

One moonlit night, while Mr. Clark was away on a hunting trip, his family aroused from their sleep by the furious barking of Tiger, their big watch dog. Mrs. Clark looked through a loop-hole in the wall and was horrified to see five Indians creeping up to the cabin. She called Sam, the oldest boy, and he hurried down from the loft. There was only one rifle in the cabin, but the boy knew how to use it. An Indian was trying to kill Tiger, the dog. Sam pushed his rifle through a loop-hole, and shot him. The other Indians now went round to the rear of the cabin and talked over what they should do. Sam reloaded his rifle, took careful aim at the group through another loop-hole, and dropped another savage.

The three redskins that were left then brought a big log from the woods and made ready to break down the cabin door. Sam fired again and wounded one of them. The other two, taking the wounded one with them, disappeared in the woods. Meanwhile the men at the stockade had heard the firing. They hurried to the relief of the family.

Just before the end of the Revolution two companies of British regulars and three hundred Indians made an attack on Bryan's Station. That was a large stockade fort in Kentucky, a few miles from where the city of Lexington now stands. Near it is a little river that flows into the Ohio. On the banks of the stream lived a settler named Turner.

One day Mr. Turner had to go on horseback to a mill about ten miles away, to get some corn ground. He left at home his three children - Jennie, a girl of fifteen; Isaac, a boy of seventeen; and Peggy, a girl of twelve. The mother had been captured by the Indians a short time before.

Mr. Turner expected to get home at sunset, but he could not do it. As it grew dark the children did the chores and fastened the door of the cabin with the oak bar. Carlo, the watch dog, had his usual place before the fire.

By and by the dog began to growl in his sleep; then he woke up, ran to the door, and barked.

"Jennie," said Isaac. "I believe that Carlo smells Indians. I wish father were at home."

"There hasn't been an Indian seen round here for a long time," replied Jennie.

After a while Carlo went back to the fire to finish his nap, but he still growled now and then.

Later in the evening Isaac happened to look through a loop-hole in the cabin, and in the bright moonlight saw several Indian skulking on the edge of the woods. A few moments later three of them tried to open the cabin door. When they found that it was fastened, they shouted that they would break it down unless it was opened. In some way they had learned that the children were alone in the cabin. When they found that they could not force the door, two of them climbed to the roof of the cabin and tried to slip down the great chimney, for the fire was low.

“Quick, Jennie!” cried Isaac. “Stir up the fire, and I will open up the feather bed.”

In a moment Jennie had the fire blazing and Isaac had piled the contents of the feather bed on the flames. Down the chimney into the fire tumbled one of the Indians, nearly dead from the heat and almost blinded from the smoke. Isaac killed him with an axe.

The second Indian made a misstep and fell down the chimney. With a terrific leap, Carlo seized him by the throat and held on till he was dead. That was too much for the third Indian, who was still outside. When he heard Isaac open the door to let Carlo out, he took to the woods and was not seen again.