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A plain
NARRATIVE
of the
UNCOMMON SUFFERINGS
and
REMARKABLE DELIVERANCE
OF
THOMAS BROWN
Of Charlestown, in New England;

who returned to his Father's House the Beginning of Jan. 1760, after having been absent three Years and about Eight Months:

CONTAINING

An Account of the Engagement between a Party of *English*, commanded by Maj. *Rogers*, and a Party of *French* and *Indians*, in Jan. 1757; in which Capt. *Spikeman* was killed; and the Author of this Narrativ having received three Wounds (one thro' his Body) he was left for Dead on the Field of Battle:—

How he was taken Captive by the *Indians* and carried to *Canada*, and from thence to the *Mississippi*; where he lived about a Year, and was again sent to *Canada*, During all which Time he was not only in Constant Peril of his own Life; but had the Mortification of being an Eye-Witness of divers Tortures and Shocking Cruelties, that were practised by the *Indians* on several *English* Prisoners;—one of whom he saw burnt to Death, another tied to a Tree and his Entrails drawn out, &c &c

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WILLIAM ABBATT

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A NARRATIV

AS I am but a Youth, I shall not make those Remarks on the Difficulties I have met with, or the kind Appearance of a good God for my Preservation, as one of riper Years might do; but shall leave that to the Reader as he goes along, and shall only beg his Prayers, that Mercies and Afflictions may be sanctified to me, and relate Matters of Fact as they occur to my Mind.

I was born in Charlestown, near Boston in New-England, in the Year 1740, and put an Apprentice by my Father to Mr. Mark White of Acton, and in the Year 1756, in the Month of May, I inlisted into Major Rogers's Corps of Rangers, in the Company commanded by Capt. Spikeman.

We march'd for Albany, where we arriv'd the first of August, and from thence to Fort Edward. I was out on several Scouts, in one of which I kill'd an Indian. On the 18th of Jan. 1757, we march'd on a Scout from Fort William Henry; Major Rogers himself headed us. All were Voluntiers that went on this Scout. We came to the Road leading from Tionderoga to Crown Point, and on Lake Champlain (which was froze over) we saw about 50 Sleys; the Major thought proper to attack them and ordered us all, about 60 in Number, to lay in Ambush, and when they were near enough we were order'd to pursue them. I happened to be near the Major when he took the first Prisoner, a Frenchman: I singled out one and follow'd him: they fled some one Way and some another, but I soon came up with him and took him. We took seven in all, the rest Escaping, some to Crown Point, and some return'd to Tionderoga: When we had brought the Prisoners to Land the Major examined them, and they inform'd him that there were 35 Indians and 500 Regulars at Tionderoga.

It being a rainy Day we made a Fire and dry'd our Guns.

The Major tho't best to return to Fort William Henry in the same Path we came, the Snow being very deep; we march'd in an Indian-File and kept the Prisoners in the Rear, lest we should be attack'd: We proceeded in this Order about a Mile and a half, and as we were ascending a Hill, and the Centre of our Men were at the Top, the French, to the Number of 400, besides 30 or 40 Indians, fir'd on us before we discovered them: The Major ordered us to advance. I receiv'd a Wound from the Enemy (the first Shot they made on us) thro' the Body, upon which I retir'd into the Rear, to the Prisoner I had taken on the Lake, knock'd him on the Head and killed him, lest he should Escape and give Information to the Enemy; and as I was going to place myself behind a large Rock, there started up an Indian from the other Side; I threw myself backward into the Snow, and it being very deep, sunk so low that I broke my Snowshoes (I had Time to pull 'em off, but was obliged to let my Shoes go with them) one Indian threw his Tomahawk at me, and another was just upon seizing me; but I happily escaped and got to the Centre of our Men, and fix'd myself behind a large Pine, where I loaded and fir'd every Opportunity; after I had discharged 6 or 7 Times, there came a Ball and cut off my Gun just at the Lock. About half an Hour after, I receiv'd a Shot in my Knee; I crawled again into the Rear, and as I was turning about receiv'd a Shot in my Shoulder. The Engagement held, as near as I could guess, 5½ Hours, and as I learnt after I was taken, we Killed more of the Enemy than we were in Number. By this Time it grew dark and the Firing Ceased on both Sides, and as we were so few the Major took the Advantage of the Night and escaped with the well Men, without informing the wounded of his Design, lest they should inform the Enemy and they should pursue him before he had got out of their Reach.

Capt. Spikeman, one Baker and myself, all very badly wounded, made a small Fire and sat about half an Hour, when looking round we could not see any of our Men; Captain Spikeman called to Major Rogers, but received no Answer, except from the Enemy at some Distance; upon this we concluded our People were fled. All hope of Escape now vanish'd; we were so wounded that

we could not travel; I could but just walk, the others could scarce move; we therefore concluded to surrender ourselves to the French: Just as we came to this Conclusion, I saw an Indian coming towards us over a small Rivulet that parted us in the Engagement: I crawl'd so far from the Fire that I could not be seen, though I could see what was acted at the Fire; the Indian came to Capt. Spikeman, who was not able to resist, and stripp'd and scalp'd him alive; Baker, who was lying by the Captain, pull'd out his Knife to stab himself, which the Indian prevented and carried him away: Seeing this dreadful Tragedy, I concluded, if possible, to crawl into the Woods and there die of my Wounds: But not being far from Capt. Spikeman, he saw me and beg'd me *for God's sake!* to give him a *Tomahawk*, that he might put an *End* to his *Life!* I refus'd him, and Exhorted him as well as I could to pray for Mercy, as he could not live many Minutes in that deplorable Condition, being on the frozen Ground, cover'd with Snow. He desir'd me to let his Wife Know (if I lived to get home) the dreadful Death he died. As I was travelling as well as I could, or rather creeping along, I found one of our People dead; I pull'd off his Stockings (he had no Shoes) and put them on my own Legs.

By this Time the Body of the Enemy had made a Fire, and had a large Number of Centries out on our Path, so that I was obliged to creep quite round them before I could get into the Path; but just before I came to it I saw a Frenchman behind a Tree, within two Rods of me, but the Fire shining right on him prevented his seeing me. They cried out about every Quarter of an Hour in French, *All is Well!* And while he that was so near me was speaking, I took the Opportunity to creep away, that he might not hear me, and by this Means got clear of him and got into our Path. But the Snow and Cold put my Feet into such Pain, as I had no Shoes, that I could not go on: I therefore sat down by a Brook, and wrapt my Feet in my Blanket. But my Body being cold by sitting still, I got up, and crawl'd along in this miserable Condition the Remainder of the Night.

The next Day, about 11 o'Clock, I heard the Shouts of Indians

behind me, and I suppos'd they saw me; within a few Minutes four came down a Mountain, running towards me: I threw off my Blanket, and Fear and Dread quickened my Pace for a while; but, by Reason of the Loss of so much Blood from my Wounds, I soon fail'd. When they were within a few Rods of me they cock'd their Guns, and told me to stop; but I refus'd, hoping they would fire and kill me on the Spot; which I chose, rather than the dreadful Death Capt. Spikeman died of. They soon came up with me, took me by the Neck and Kiss'd me. On searching my Pockets they found some money, which they were so fond of, that in trying who could get most, they had like to have Kill'd me. They took some dry Leaves and put them into my Wounds, and then turn'd about and ordered me to follow them.

When we came near the main Body of the Enemy, the Indians made a Live-Shout, as they call it when they bring in a Prisoner alive (different from the Shout they make when they bring in Scalps, which they call a Dead-Shout). The Indians ran to meet us, and one of them struck me with a Cutlass across the Side; he cut thro' my Cloaths, but did not touch my Flesh; others ran against me with their Heads: I ask'd if there was no Interpreter, upon which a Frenchman cry'd, *I am one*: I ask'd him, if this way they treated their Prisoners, to let them be cut and beat to Pieces by the Indians? He desired me to come to him; but the Indians would not let me, holding me one by one Arm and another by the other: But there arising a Difference between the four Indians that took me, they fell to fighting, which their commanding Officer seeing, he came and took me away and carry'd me to the Interpreter; who drew his Sword, and pointing it to my Breast, charged me to tell the Truth, or he would run me through: He then ask'd me what Number our Scout consisted of?—I told him 50: He ask'd where they were gone? I told him, I supposed as they were so numerous they could best tell. He said I told him wrong; for he Knew of more than 100 that were slain; I told him we had lost but 19 in all: He said, there were as many Officers. On which he led me to Lieut. Kennedy. I saw he was much Tomahawk'd by the Indians. He ask'd me if he was an Officer: I told him, he was a Lieutenant:

And then he took me to another; who, I told him, was an Ensign: From thence he carried me to Captain Spikeman, who was laying in the Place I left him; they had cut off his Head, and fix'd it on a Pole.

I beg'd for a Pair of Shoes, and something to Eat; the Interpreter told me, I should have Relief when I came to Tionderoga, which was but one Mile and a $\frac{1}{4}$ off, and then delivered me to the 4 Indians that took me. The Indians gave me a Piece of Bread, and put a Pair of Shoes on my Feet.

About this Time Robert Baker, mentioned above, was brought where I was; we were extremely glad to see each other, tho' we were in such a distress'd Condition: he told me of five Men that were taken. We were ordered to march on toward Tionderoga: But Baker replied, he could not walk. An Indian then pushed him forward; but he could not go, and therefore sat down and cried; whereupon an Indian took him by the Hair, and was going to kill him with his Tomahawk: I was moved with Pity for him, and, as weak as I was, I took his Arms over my Shoulders, and was enabled to get him to the Fort.

We were immediately sent to the Guard House, and, about half an Hour after, brought before the Commanding-Officer, who, by his Interpreter, examined us separately; after which he again sent us to the Guard-House. The Interpreter came and told us, *that we were to be hang'd the next Day, because we had kill'd the 7 Prisoners we had taken on the Lake;* but was afterwards so kind as to tell us, this was done only to terrify us. About an Hour after came a Doctor, and his Mate, and dressed our Wounds; and the Commanding-officer sent us a Quart of Claret. We lay all Night on the Boards, without Blankets. The next Day I was put into the Hospital, (the other Prisoners were carried another Way) here I tarried till the 19th of Feb. and the Indians insisted on having me, to carry to their Homes, and broke into the Hospital; but the Centinel call'd the Guard and turn'd them out; after which the commanding Officer prevailed with them to let me stay 'till the 1st of March, by which Time I was able to walk about the Fort.

As I was one Day in the Interpreter's Lodging, there came in 10 or 12 Indians, with the Scalps they had taken, in order to have a War-Dance: They set me on the Floor, and put 7 of the Scalps on my Head while they danc'd; when it was over, they lifted me up in triumph: But as I went and stood by the Door, two Indians began to dance a Live-Dance, and one of them threw a Tomahawk at me, to kill me, but I watch'd his Motion and dodg'd the Weapon.

I lived with the Interpreter 'till the first of March, when General Rigeav¹ came to the Fort with about 9000² Men, in order, as they said, to make an Attempt on Fort William Henry. Their Design was to scale the Walls, for which Purpose I saw them making scaling-Ladders. The Day before they marched the General sent for me and said, *Young Man, you are a likely Fellow; it's Pity you should live with such an ignorant People as the English; you had better live with me.* I told him I was willing to live with him. He answer'd, *I should, and go with him where he went.* I replied, Perhaps he would have me to go to War with him: He said *That was the Thing; he wanted me to direct him to Fort William Henry, and show him where he might scale the Walls.* I told him I was sorry that a Gentleman should desire such a Thing of a Youth, or endeavor to draw him away from his Duty. He added, *He would give me 7000 Livres on his Return.* I replied that I was not to be bought with Money, to be a Traitor to my Country and assist in destroying my Friends. He smiled, and said *In War you must not mind even Father nor Mother.* When he found that he could not prevail with me, by all the fair Promises he made, he ordered me back to the Fort; and had two other Prisoners brought before him, to whom he made the same Proposals as he had to me; to which they consented. The next Day I went into the Room where they were, and asked them if they had been with the General; they said they had, and that they were to have 7000 Livres apiece, as a Reward. I asked them if that was the Value of their Fathers and Mothers, and of their Country? They said they were obliged to

¹ Rigaud, the brother of the Marquis de Vaudreuil, Governor of Canada.

² There were actually only about 1600.

go. I said the General could not force them; and added, that if they went on such a Design they must never return among their Friends; for if they did, and Baker and I should live to get Home we would endeavour they should be hang'd. At this Time a Smith came and put Irons on my Feet: But the General gave those two Men who promis'd to go with him, a Blanket, a Pair of Stockings and Shoes. They were taken out of the Guard-House, and marched with the French as Pilots. The General did not succeed; he only burnt our Battoes, &c, and returned to Tionderoga.³ The poor Fellows never had their Reward, but instead of that were sent to the Guard-House and put in Irons.

Soon after this I was taken out of Irons, and went to live with the Interpreter till the 27th of March, at which Time the Indians took me with them in order to go to Montreal, and set me to draw a large Sled with Provisions, my Arms being tied with a Rope. By the Time we got to Crown Point, I was so lame that I could not walk. The Indians went ashore and built a Fire, and then told me I must dance; to which I complied rather than be kill'd. When we sat off again I knew not how to get rid of my Sled, and I knew I was not able to draw it: but this Fancy came into my Head: I took three Squaws on my Sled and pleasantly told them *I wish'd I was able* to draw 'em. All this took with the Indians; they freed me of the Sled, and gave it to other Prisoners. They stripp'd off all my Cloaths, and gave me a Blanket. And the next Morning they cut off my Hair and painted me, and with Needles and Indian ink prick'd on the back of my Hand the Form of one of the Scaling-Ladders which the French made to carry to Fort William Henry. I understood they were vex'd with the French for the Disappointment.

We travelled about nine Miles on Lake Champlain, and when the Sun was two Hours high we stop'd; they made a Fire, and took one of the Prisoners that had not been wounded, and were going to cut off his Hair, as they had done mine. He foolishly resisted them, upon which they prepar'd to burn him; but the Commanding

³ March 18-19, 1757.

Officer prevented it at this Time. But the next Night they made a Fire, stripp'd and ty'd him to a Stake, and the Squaws cut Pieces of Pine, like Scures,* and thrust them into his Flesh, and set them on Fire, and then fell to pow wawing and dancing round him; and ordered me to do the same. Love of Life obliged me to comply, for I could expect no better Treatment if I refus'd. With a bitter and heavy Heart I feigned myself merry. They cut the poor man's Cords, and made him run backwards and forwards. I heard the poor Man's Cries to Heaven for Mercy; and at length, thro' extreme Anguish and Pain, he pitched himself into the Flames and expired.

From thence we travelled, without any Thing worthy of Notice happening, 'till we came to an Indian Town, about 20 Miles from Montreal. When we were about a Gun's shot from the Town, the Indians made as many live Shouts as they had Prisoners, and as many dead Ones as they had Scalps. The Men and Women came out to meet us, and stripp'd me naked; after which they pointed to a Wigwam and told me to run to it, pursuing me all the Way with Sticks and Stones.

Next Day we went to Montreal, where I was carried before Governor Vaudreuill and examined. Afterwards I was taken into a French Merchant's House, and there I lived three Days. The third Night two of the Indians that took me came in drunk and asked for me; upon which the Lady called me into the Room, and as I went and stood by the Door, one of them begun to dance the War-Dance about me, designing to kill me; but as he lifted up his Hand to stab me, I catch'd hold of it with one of mine, and with the other knock'd him down, and then ran up Garret and hid. The Lady sent for some Neighbours to clear the House of her Guests which they did. It was a very cold Night, and one of the Indians being excessive drunk, fell down near the House and was found in the Morning froze to death. The Indians came to the House, and finding their Brother dead, said I had kill'd him; and gathering a number together with their Guns, beset the House and demanded

* Skewers.

me of the Lady, saying I should die the most cruel Death. The Lady told me of it, and advis'd me to hide myself in the Cellar, under the Pipes of Wine; which I did. They searched the House and even came down Cellar, but could not find me. The Lady desired a Frenchman to tell the Indians *That he saw me without the City, running away*: they soon took after me, every Way. The Merchant pitying my condition, cover'd me with a Blanket and carried me in his Conveyance about five Miles, to a Village where his Wife's Father lived, in order to keep me out of the Way of the Indians. When the Indians that pursued me had returned, and could not find me, they concluded that I was concealed by the Merchant; and applied to the Governor that I might be delivered to them in order that they might kill me for killing their Brother; adding, by way of threatening, that if I was not delivered up to them they would turn and be against the French. The Governor told them he had examined into the Matter, and found that I did not kill the Indian nor know any Thing about it; but that he froze to Death. On this they said they would not kill me, but would have me to live with them. The Governor then informed them where I was, and they came and took me with them to Montreal again, and dressed me in their Habit.

On the 1st of May we set off to go to the Mississippi, where my Indian Master belonged, and two other English Prisoners with them. For several Days the Indians treated me very ill; but it wore off. We went in Bark Canoes, 'till we came to Lake Sacrament,* the first Carrying-Place. We continued our Journey till we came to the Ohio, where General Braddock was defeated. Here they took one of the Prisoners, and with a Knife ript open his Belly, took one End of his Guts and tied to a Tree, and then whipt the miserable Man round and round till he expired; obliging me to dance, while they made their Game at the dying Man.

From hence we set off to go to an Indian Town about 200 Miles from the Ohio, where we arrived in 15 Days, and tarried three. The third Night one of the Indians had a mind to Kill me; as I was

* Lake George.

standing by the Fire he ran against me to push me into the Flames, but I jumped over, and Escaped being burnt; he followed me round and round, and struck me several Times with his Head and Fist; which so provoked me that as he was Coming at me again I struck him and knock'd him backwards. The other Indians laugh'd, and said *I was a good Fellow*.

The next day we set off for the Mississippi, where we arrived the 23d of August, having passed over thirty-two Carrying-Places from our leaving Montreal. When we came here I was ordered to live with a Squaw, who was to be my Mother. I liv'd with her during the Winter, and was employed in Hunting, dressing Leather, &c., being cloath'd after the Indian Fashion.

In the Spring a French Merchant came a Trading in Bark Canoes, and on his Return wanted Hands to help him; he prevailed with my Mistress to let me go with him to Montreal. When we came there, and the Canoes were unloaded, I went into the Country and liv'd with his Wife's Father, and worked at the Farming Business for my Victuals and Cloathing; I fared no better than a Slave. The Family often endeavoured to persuade me to be of their Religion, making many fair Promises if I would. Wanting to see what Alteration this would make in their Conduct towards me, one Sunday Morning I came to my Mistress, and said, *Mother, will you give me good Cloaths, if I will go to Mass?* She answered *Yes, Son, as good as any in the House*. She did so, and I rode to Church with two of her Daughters; in giving me Directions how to behave they told me *I must do as they did*. When we came Home I sat at the Table and ate with the Family, and Every Night and Morning was taught my Prayers.

Thus I lived 'till the next Spring, when my Master's Son-in-Law, that bro't me from the Mississippi, came for me to return with him, as he was going again there to trade. I refus'd to go, and applied to the Governor. I was then put into Gaol, where I tarried 5 weeks, living on Bread and Water and Horse-Beef. When some Prisoners were going to be sent to *Quebeck*, in order to be transported to Old France, I went with them. Here we laid in Gaol

6 Weeks. But happening to see one of my Master's Sons, he prevailed with me to go back with him and work as formerly; I consented, and tarried with him till the 8th of September.

There was at the next House an English Lad, a Prisoner; we agreed to run away together, through the Woods, that so, if possible, we might get home to our Friends. But how to get Provisions for the Way, we Knew not; till I was allowed a Gun to kill Pigeons, which were very plenty here. I shot a number, split and dried them, and concealed in the Woods. We agreed to set off on a Sunday Morning, and were to meet at an appointed Place: which we did, and began our Journey towards Crown-Point. After we had travelled 22 Days, 15 of which we had no Provision except Roots, Worms and such like, we were so weak and faint that we could scarce walk. My Companion gave out, and could go no further; he desired me to leave him, but I would not. I went and found three Frogs, and divided them between us. The next Morning he died. I sat down by him, and at first concluded to make a Fire, as I had my Gun, and eat his Flesh, and if no Relief came, to die with him; but finally came to this Resolution: To cut off of his Bones as much Flesh as I could and tie it up in a Handkerchief, and so proceed as well as I could. Accordingly I did so, and buried my Companion on the Day I left him. I got three Frogs more the next Day. Being weak and tired, about 9 o'clock I sat down, but could not eat my Friend's Flesh. I expected soon to die myself; and while I was commending my Soul to God I saw a Partridge light just by me, which I thought was sent by Providence. I was so weak that I could not hold out my Gun; but by resting, I brought my Piece to bear, so that I kill'd the Partridge. While I was eating of it, there came two Pigeons, so near, that I kill'd 'em both. As I fired two Guns, I heard a Gun at a Distance: I fired again, and was answered twice. This roused me; I got up and travelled as fast as I could towards the Report of the Guns; and about half a Mile off, I saw three Canadians. I went to 'em, and pretended to be a Dutchman, one of their own Regulars, that was lost in the Woods. They brought me to Crown Point; upon which I desired to see the Commanding Officer. He knew me again, and asked me

how I came there. I told him my story and what difficulties I had met with. He ordered me to the Guard-House, and to be put in irons. About an hour after he sent me a Bowl of Rice.

After I had been at Crown Point ten or twelve Days, the Commanding Officer sent me back, under a Guard of 12 Soldiers, to Montreal, in a Battoe, and wrote a Letter (as I afterwards understood) to my Master not to hurt me.

When I came to the House, one of his Daughters met me at the Door, and pushed me back, and went and called her Father. At this House there was a French Captain, of the Regulars, billeted; he was a Protestant. He hearing my Voice, called me to him and asked me where I had been. Upon my telling him he called me a Fool, for attempting a thing so impossible. My Master coming in, took me by the Shoulder, and threatened to kill me for stealing his Gun when I ran away. But the good Captain prevented him from using any Violence. The Captain asked me if I had been before the Governor; I told him I had not; and he then advis'd my Master to send his Son with me (who was an Ensign among the Canadians). When we came to a small Ferry, which we were to pass, I refus'd to go any further; and after a great deal of do, he went without me. On his Return, he said he had got leave of the Governor, that I should go back to his Father and work as formerly. Accordingly I lived with him 'till the 19th of November; and when Col. Schuyler was coming away, I came with him to Albany.

Here I was taken Sick, and some of the Light Infantry promised me if I would inlist, that they would provide for me; and having neither Friends nor Money, I was obliged to consent. They ordered me a Bed, and Care to be taken of me. Five Days after, they put me on board a Sloop, and sent me to Kingston, and put me into a Hospital, where I was three Months.

The Regiment remained here till May, when we went to Albany, from thence to Fort William Henry, and then to Tionderoga and Crown Point; both of which Places surrendered to General AMHERST.

On Sept. 19th, went Pilot of a Scout to Cachanowaga,⁴ with Lieutenant McCurdy, and on our Return, as we were on Lake Champlain, turning a Point of Land, and under great Way, we discovered in a large Cove a French Brig,⁵ but it was unhappily too late for us to make our Escape. We were pursued and taken Prisoners (being 7 in Number), and the next Morning sent to Nut⁶ Island; where we were stripp'd by the Indians, and dressed after their manner. From thence we were conducted to Montreal and examined before the Governor; after which we were ordered to Prison. I applied to the Governor, and told him That I had been a Prisoner there two Years, and had liv'd with such a Farmer, and desired Liberty to go to him again; upon which he sent for my Master's Son, and being inform'd of the Truth of what I related, consented.

I tarried with the Farmer till November 25th,⁷ when by a Flag of Truce 250 English Prisoners came to Crown Point, where I rejoined my regiment.

After repeated Application to General AMHERST I was dismissed, and returned in Peace to my Father's House the Beginning of January, 1760, after having been absent 3 Years and almost 8 Months.

“ O! that Men would praise the LORD for his Goodness, and for his wonderful Works to the Children of Men!”

“ Bless the LORD, O my Soul!”

⁴ Caughnawaga.

⁵ At that time the French had several armed vessels on Lake Champlain.

⁶ Isle aux Noix.

⁷ 1759.

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