

and stumps. It was cut with a reap hook and either threshed out with flails or tramped out in the field on the ground with horses. In either case there was always dirt or gravel enough left in the wheat to sharpen your teeth, if not your appetite. When the wheat was threshed it was winnowed with a sheet, taken to a water mill on horse back, ground on a corn cracker, bolted by hand and taken home to be baked in a skillet for breakfast on Sundays. In the fall season we took our wheat to Crawfordsville, where we got good flour. From 1837 to 1842 or '43 times were extremely hard. Everything we had to buy, except sugar and coffee, were very high. For our surplus produce we had almost no market. In 1839 and '40, prior to the completion of the Wabash and Erie canal, we hauled our wheat to different points on the Ohio river, where we received from 38 to 40 cents per bushel. In 1841 I hauled a load of wheat (25 bushels) to Hamilton, O., from Floyd township, Putnam county, a distance of about 150 miles, for which I received 38 cents per bushel. In the fall of 1839 Capt. John Roberts of Jackson township, Maj. Ash of Greencastle, and John Allen of Floyd township, bought and packed hogs for which they paid \$1.25 per cwt. gross. They sold their bacon in New Orleans for \$1.50 per cwt. Roberts and Ash broke up. Allen said he saved himself but lost his money.

Indian Torture Post in Delaware County

THE allusion in the foregoing reminiscences to the old Indian torture stake that stood within the present bounds of Delaware county is one of the few testimonies to the existence of that barbarous relic. Of the various local histories and books of reminiscence only one, as far as we know, makes mention of it. This is the Rev. W. C. Smith's *Indiana Miscellanies*. Mr. Smith describes the stake as of oak, about ten feet high, with the rough outline of a human face cut on either side. The fires, according to this writer, had been kindled in a circle around the stake at a distance of some five or six feet. When he saw it the ashes formed a perceptible ridge, and an outer circle, where the Indians had danced, was packed so hard that nothing would grow there.

By inquiring through the columns of the *Indiana Farmer*, the present writer elicited three communications that contained considerable interesting information touching the all but forgotten tradition of the old torture post, and these we reproduce in the order in which they appeared in the *Farmer*.

MR. CARTWRIGHT.

At the suggestion of friend George S. Cottman, of Irvington, I would with your permission add my testimony in regard to that old Indian stake in Delaware county. Sometime in the summer of 1841 or '42 father, mother and myself visited relatives then living in Yorktown, a small village about five or six miles west of Muncie. On our return home, then in Union county, Indiana, we were accompanied by Israel Shoemaker, brother of the late James Shoemaker before referred to, who was well acquainted in the vicinity, and when about half way from Yorktown to Muncie he pointed out to us the historic place now under consideration. The surrounding grounds were to some extent grown up with timber and underbrush, leaving a space of some 25 or 30 feet in diameter destitute of any growth except a little grass. The stake or post had been about seven or eight feet high and about 16 or 18 inches in diameter, but had rotted off at the top of the ground and fallen down. A much used path led from the road to the post. There is no betrayal of memory in the above statement. Although many are the years that have come and gone, my recollection of the scene is as vivid as those of yesterday. As to how late this post was used I am unable to state.

ISAAC CARTWRIGHT.

Fillmore, Ind.

MR. EDDY.

At your request for information about the old Indiana torture stake in Delaware county, I will give you and your readers the facts as I saw them in the year 1842. In the fall of that year, in company with my father and uncle, I journeyed to Delaware county from Fayette county. As we arrived within three or four miles south from Muncie my father asked me if I wished to take a look at the torture stake where the Indians used to torture their prisoners. As I was anxious to do so we left the team in care of my uncle and walked a short distance south from the main road through a beautiful grove of wild plum trees and underbrush. No doubt this was the same path that friend Isaac Cartwright speaks of. We found the circle with a carpet of fine blue grass growing over the ground. The post was lying on the ground in the center of the circle on a heap of fine coals. The post I should suppose had been about eight feet high from the ground. About

five or six feet from the ground there was a portion of the post cut out or rounded out, as my father explained to me at the time, for the purpose of fitting the prisoner's head in at the time of torture; as the Indians bound their prisoners fast to the stake at all times of burning.

A few years after this date I saw an old black and charred stake in the court house at Muncie, and was informed that it was the same torture stake that I saw in the circle south of Muncie. No doubt some pioneer of Delaware can give you a more full explanation of it than your humble servant.

GEO. W. EDDY.

Columbia, Ind.

MR. CECIL.

Mr. Chas. Fullhart handed me a copy of the *Indiana Farmer* of February 4, 1899, and cited me to an article written by Mr. Isaac Cartwright, concerning the location of the old Indian torture stake, and requested me to correct some mistakes in the article, as I am the owner, for more than fifty years, of the land on which the historic stake stood, three miles south-east of the city of Muncie in Center Township, Delaware County, Indiana, on the old Richmond and Logansport State road. I first saw the stake in 1832. It was then standing, but somewhat inclined to the south-east. It was some charred by the burning of the fagots. It stood near the center of the Indian village named Munsey, after the Indian chief. The place is now called Old Muncie or Old Town Hill. Soon after the tragedy, the Indians vacated the place and settled on the site where Muncie now stands, and called it New Muncie. The stake was eight or ten inches in diameter, and during the campaign of 1840 of William Henry Harrison for the Presidency, the Whig party took the stake away and sent parts of it to every State in the Union as a token of respect to him as an Indian fighter. The stake or post fell to the ground about 1836 or 1838. It stood fifty feet south of the road and a well-beaten path led each way to the post through the dense undergrowth that had grown up after the evacuation of the village. About two acres had been entirely cleared off. I first plowed the ground in 1861 and could tell where every hut had stood by the ground being burned. The huts had been built in a circle with the Council House in the center near where the post stood. The village stood on an elevation of 100 feet above White river with a deep gully on the south-west, and sloping gently to the south eighty rods to a creek called Juber, after an Indian chief. Beyond this creek forty rods stood an Indian trading post. Around this, several acres had been cleared and cultivated in corn. What I have written is

from my own observation.

I will write a few lines from tradition. The most certain account of the burning at the stake I got from my mother. She lived in Kentucky, near Lexington. The three men all lived where she was raised. I have forgotten the names of the two who escaped. The one that was burned was Smith. They were a scouting party from Gen. Wayne's command. The Indians captured them near where Hagerstown now stands and brought them here, and held a council of war over them and decided to burn Smith in the presence of the other two, for some crime they had done. They were accused of killing a squaw and wounding another. Smith was tied to the post and the fagots placed around him. The other two men were tied near by with raw hide strings. Just at that time there came up a most terrific rain and thunder storm. It was then night and the Indians repaired to their huts. The raw hide strings became so wet that they stretched till the other two men got loose, but the lightning betrayed them before they had time to loosen Smith. The Indians gave chase, following them by the lightning flashes to the creek above mentioned where they leaped over a large tree that had fallen and escaped in the darkness. The Indians abandoned the chase. The men were nine days in reaching their home in Kentucky. They lived on roots and whatever game they could catch in the unbroken forests. This traditional narrative is closely corroborated by an Indian by the name of Jake, of the Musco tribe. His wife, Sally, and his son, James Musco, not being friendly with the other tribes, remained here with the first white settlers in April, 1820. The old folks soon died and James lived and worked among the Whites many years in this neighborhood. He was quite old when he died, and I had the honor to help inter him in the Rees cemetery.

SAMUEL CECIL.

Muncie, Ind.

[After the appearance of these communications we received from Miss Florence Cowing, of Muncie, some notes gleaned from various pioneers of the locality. Mr. Cecil, she said, possessed many relics found on the site of "Oldtown," among them being silver brooches and rings, an iron tomahawk with "Montreal, Canada" marked on it, and a large iron kettle that was found beneath the stump of a mulberry tree. The roots had forced the bottom out of the kettle but the side remained intact, with a coating of grease upon it. The village the whites called Oldtown was, she gathered, called Ontainink by the Indian residents. These were a branch of the Delaware tribe known as the Munseys or Munsees. The name is said to have been derived from Minsi, an Indian word meaning wolf. A chief called Munsey or Montse was also remembered by some of Miss Cowing's reminiscents. If there was such a chief it may be considered as probable that the band got its name from him. For the burning of three Indians by this band in 1806 see Dillon, p. 425.—*Ed.*]