

Minor Notices

THE GAME OF GANDER PULLING.

(By an Octogenarian.)

[Descriptions of this same amusement may be found in previous numbers of the INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY. This description comes from Spencer county and its significance lies in that it shows the game was widespread in early Indiana.—Ed.]

AMONG the amusements in which our ancestors of a hundred years or more ago indulged occasionally was one called "Gander Pulling," which, though it may be called cruel, was not such as involved human beings, as only a poor gander lost his life. The game consisted in the effort to pull off the gander's head, the winner to get a small sum of money, put up for the occasion. The gander's neck was stripped of feathers and thoroughly greased. Then the poor bird was tied by his feet to the lower limb of a tree, just high enough to be reached by a man on horseback. The judges, or umpires, were selected from among the bystanders, to make the award, and to see that the game was played fairly. The branch to which the bird was hung had to be as long, strong and springy as possible, and every contestant had to ride without a saddle, with his horse at a gallop. Some twenty or thirty feet from the bird, a man was stationed on each side of the track, armed with a long switch, whose business it was to see that no rider should check the speed of his horse as he came near the bird. Imagine the frightened gander swinging wildly, and fanning his wings in mid-air in his efforts to escape, and one can easily see that a rider would have quite as many chances to miss the bird's neck entirely, as to grasp it. Every such failure, of course, provoked the merriment of the bystanders. Sometimes, too, a rider would lose his balance and fall from his horse because he hung to the gander too long, and thus in addition to some bruises, he lost his place in the game, which was mirth provoking, also for the crowd. Finally some tall fellow with one hand holding to the horse's mane and leaning forward as far as possible, would seize

the poor bird's head, giving it a sudden twist would break its neck, and then probably the man who followed would be able to take off the bird's head. It was not so much a contest for the purse, as for the rollicking fun that resulted, and as to cruelty, it was innocence itself, compared to a modern game of football.

The foregoing sketch is made up from descriptions given by ancestors and their friends during the writer's boyhood days [in Spencer county], and is new to the younger generation, in most particulars.

ISSAC MCCOY

THE following letter concerning Rev. Isaac McCoy, a pioneer missionary among Indiana Indians, is of interest:

"I am a grand-daughter of Rev. Isaac McCoy and great-grand-daughter of Mrs. Charles Polk, who was captured by Indians at Kinchelo Station, Kentucky.

"My grandfather McCoy died when I was six years old, but I remember him, especially his dignity and his gentleness. We, his descendants here, regard him as a truly great man. I have only one of his books, *The History of Indiana Missions*. His other works are in a vault in the State Capitol of Kansas, which vault was built especially to preserve them. He was never a resident of Kansas, only sojourning there for a brief period while establishing a mission for the Indians, but the State Historical Society asked for the privilege of keeping the books and my father consented.

"Did you know that my grandfather, Isaac McCoy, named a stream near Elkhart, Indiana, 'Christiana,' for his wife? and that a lake, mills, launch and a club all bear this name? He wrote when he called this hitherto unnamed stream for his wife, that the clear, placid, cheery little brook made him think of her, so he deemed it a fitting title."

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GEN. WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON BEADLE

GENERAL BEADLE died at Los Angeles, California, Nov. 13, 1915. He was a member of a large pioneer family of Parke county. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861. He entered the war as a private in the 31st Indiana and came out a brigadier general in the Ninth Corps. After the war he studied