

HART'S SLEEPING PLACE || ||

"The man Hart, whose name is perpetuated, in connection with his log, by the valley we have spoken of, was an old German, who followed the occupation of trading among the Indians. He was probably the first permanent white settler along the Juniata west of the Standing Stone; and long before he settled, he crossed and recrossed the Allegheny mountains by the old warpath, with his pack horses.

" 'John Hart's Sleeping Place' is mentioned in 1756, by John Harris, in making the estimate of the distance between the rivers Susquehanna and Allegheny. Hart's Sleeping Place is about twelve miles from the junction of the Burgoon and Kitanning runs, and still retains its name. When he took up his residence along the river he hewed down an immense tree, and turned it into a trough, out of which he fed his horses and cattle; hence the name, 'Hart's Log.'

"It is stated that upon one occasion, when Hart was an old man, some savages came into his settlement on a pillaging expedition. They knew Hart, and went to his cabin, but he happened to be from home. On his log they left a tomahawk, painted red, and a small piece of plate upon which rude hieroglyphics were drawn – one resembling an Indian with a bundle upon his back, over whose head were seven strokes, and whose belt was filled with scalps. In front of this drawing was the sun rising, and behind them the picture of the moon.

"On Hart's return, he soon found that the Indians had been about. The meaning of the articles left, he could readily decipher. The red hatchet upon the log signified the Indians were about, but to him they laid down the hatchet. The picture of the rising sun signified that they were going to the east. The strokes indicated the number of warriors, and the bundle of scalps intimated that they would both plunder and murder. The moon signified that they would return at night.

"Hart, although he felt safe under such an assurance, had no desire to encounter the red skins, so he scratched upon the reverse of the slate the outline of a heart, and laid by the side of it a pipe, which, interpreted, meant, 'Hart smokes with you the pipe of peace,' and left.

"On his return next day, he found the Indians had returned, and passed the night at his log, where they had left a quantity of pewter plates, mugs, &c. It afterwards appeared that they had been at several houses, but the inmates had fled. From one they stole a quantity of silver money, and at the house of a Drunkard, they stole the pewter ware. At the log they attempted to run the metal into bullets, but finding it a failure, they left the heavy load in disgust."