

RANDAL LAUGHLIN – CAPTURE OF LAUGHLIN – CHARLES CAMPBELL,
DICKSON, GIBSON AND OTHERS

Randall Laughlin came to this country from Ireland when a young man, probably about the year 1770. He arrived in this country prior to the Revolutionary war, and purchased the improvement right to a large tract of land lying part in Blacklick and part in Centre township, on which a small quantity of ground had been cleared.

He remained some time, built a small cabin and otherwise increased his improvement; after which he returned to Franklin county where he had formerly lived a short time.

Sometime in the winter of 1777, he was married, and the next spring came back to his farm, intending to remain here permanently. But he was sadly disappointed. Sometime in the spring or summer, owing to the presence of hostile Indians in the neighborhood who were prowling about in all directions, but more especially in the north, he with his wife went to Wallace's fort, a short distance south of Blairsville, where a number of persons were congregated.

During their stay at Wallace's, the farmers went out occasionally to the different farms in small parties, always armed with their rifles, and prepared to meet the savage for. His horses having strayed away from the fort, and supposing that they had returned to the farm, Laughlin, accompanied by Chas. Campbell, Dickson, and John Gibson and his brother went in search of them.

While the party were in Laughlin's cabin preparing some dinner, they were surrounded by a number of Indians, led by a Frenchman, and summoned to surrender, the leader telling them if they would submit nine of them should be injured, but in case they resisted, their bodies should be burned up with the cabin. After consultation, it was resolved to surrender. They were permitted to write a statement on the cabin door of what had happened, and assure their friends that they all expected to escape death, and return home again.

The captives were next marched off, well guarded by the Indians, and the first station of any importance they reached, was Kitanning, then an Indian village on the Allegheny, and at present the seat of justice of Armstrong county.

Here the party remained several days, and the prisoners had to run the gauntlet and undergo drill, to the great amusement of the savages. For the first day they suffered for want of food, and a roasted ground-hog, served up in Indian style, was devoured with great relish.

From Kitanning the captives were taken to Detroit, where they were delivered to the British, and thence conveyed to Quebec. At this place they passed a severe winter, and were exchanged in the ensuing autumn.

In the Meantime, Mrs. Laughlin had made her way to Franklin county as best she could, and in eighteen months after his capture, Laughlin returned to the same place and found her in good health and well cared for, with their first born son over a year old.

Charles Campbell and John Gibson likewise returned to their homes, but two of their companions died on the way.

Laughlin remained in Franklin county until after the close of the war, when he returned to his farm in this county. He, with others of that period, suffered much from the depredations of the Indians, and for want of mills, churches and other comforts and conveniences. He subsequently took an active part in public affairs and died at a good old age. For more data in relation to his personal history, see sketch of the Laughlin family.

Charles Campbell, who is spoken of above, was subsequently well known as Gen. Campbell. The public positions he occupied are noted in the sketch of the Campbell family.

We have in our possession the original journal kept by him during the period of his captivity, which we transcribe and insert here verbatim. It must be borne in mind, that this journal was subjected daily to the inspection of the British officers, after they had got control over Campbell and his comrades; and this fact will account for the meagerness of its statements, and the want of minute details.