

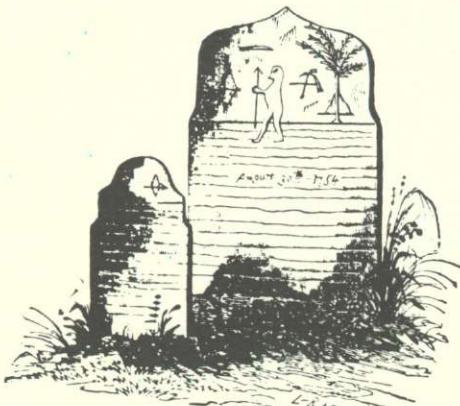
## STORY in PRINT

Many years later Mrs. Susannah Johnson recounted the story of her family's and her companions' capture in a book printed in 1796 called "The Narrative of The Captivity of Mrs. Johnson". Mrs. Johnson's diary-like account described their sufferings in vivid detail and was among the most famous of all the popular "Indian Captivity" books. The Narrative was published in a second edition in 1807 and Mrs. Johnson was at work on a third edition in 1810 when she died. This edition appeared posthumously in 1814. The Narrative was republished numerous times over a long period of years, the most recent of which was privately printed in 1973 by Rodney Williams of Charlestown, S.C.

"A New England Pioneer", published by Mary Billings French in 1926 included family details and other information placing the Johnson Indian Capture in proper historical perspective. This book contained photographs by Clara E. Sipprell, famous Vermont photographer. In 1963 Mary French Rockefeller reprinted her mother's book in facsimile.

Elizabeth George Spear's "Calico Captive", a fictionalized account of the Johnson Family Indian Capture was published in 1957. The heroine is Mrs. Johnson's sister Miriam Willard. Concerning the background for "Calico Captive", Mrs. Speare writes: "The true story of the capture of Susannah Johnson and her family intrigued me so much that I traced the original narrative to a collection of rare books at Trinity College." "Calico Captive" is currently in it's tenth printing.

## INDIAN STONES 1857



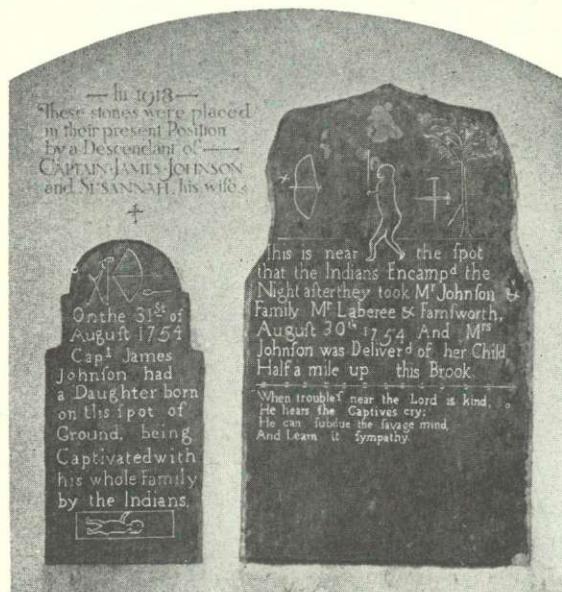
INDIAN STONES MONUMENT - PRESENT DAY

TOWN OF READING  
READING BICENTENNIAL COMMITTEE  
READING HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
READING • VERMONT  
05062

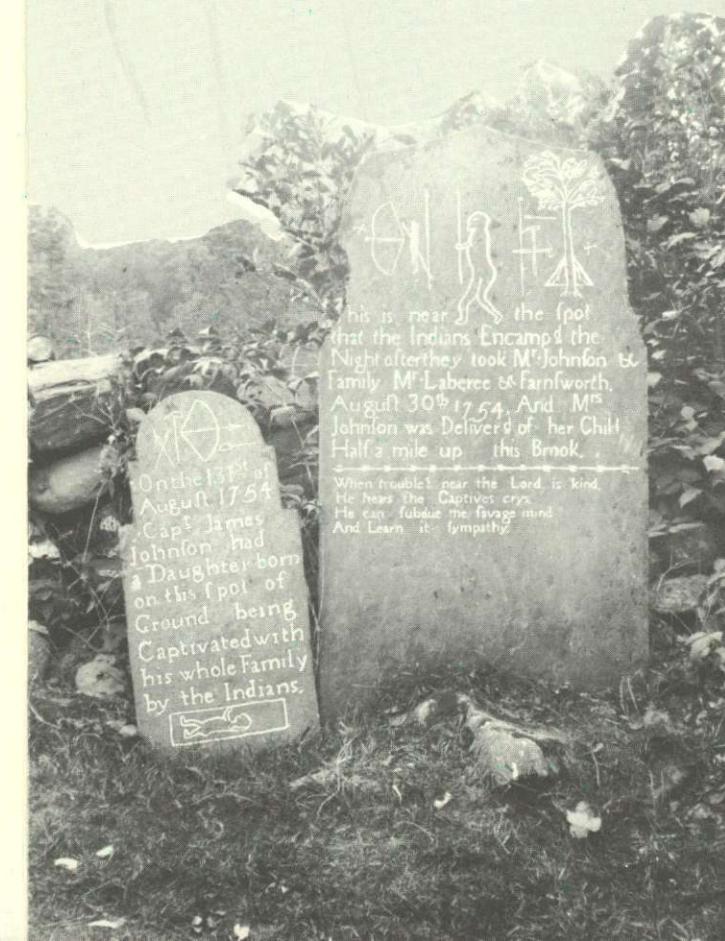


BE IT EVER REMEMBERED that these colonial frontier families suffered, endured, and recovered from their 1754 capture and captivity. They went forward to settle New England.

FARNSWORTH  
JOHNSON  
LARABEE  
WILLARD



## INDIAN STONES



## INDIAN CAPTURE

The Indian Stones on Route 106 in Reading commemorate one of the most intriguing events in the early history of Vermont. At dawn on the 30th of August 1754 James Johnson, his family of three children and pregnant wife Susannah, were captured at Fort No. Four in Charlestown, N.H. by a party of eleven Abnaki Indians. Taken captive along with the Johnsons were Miriam Willard, Mrs. Johnson's sister; Peter Labaree; and Ebenezer Farnsworth.

Following the attack, the entire group began a forced march, up the Connecticut River, across Vermont, to Canada by the way of Crown Point and Lake Champlain. At the end of the first day, the captives and Indians camped for the night near Knapp Brook in present-day Reading. The next day, August 31, Mrs. Johnson gave birth to a daughter in a rude shelter built by the Indians about one-half mile up Knapp Brook in the present town of Cavendish. The daughter was named Elizabeth Captive Johnson.

Enduring many hardships, the captives continued north with their captors to Montreal where the prisoners were turned over to the French for ransom or sold. After six long years the Johnson family was, by various means, reunited in Charlestown. The other captives had been released as well.

## COMMEMORATIVE MARKERS

About 1799, Susannah Johnson had two slate slabs prepared, the larger one bearing a brief description of the capture and the smaller one commemorating the birth of her daughter. Mrs. Johnson carefully verified the locations of the 1754 encampment and birthplace by making a number of visits to the sites, some with her original companions. The smaller slab was to have been placed up the Knapp Brook Road (Gulf Road) where the child was actually born but for some reason this was not done.

The erection of the Indian Stones marks the first known time in the history of Vermont that an individual regarded a past event of sufficient significance to be worthy of a commemorative marker. On this basis, the Indian Stones have been declared the oldest historic site markers in the state of Vermont, and possibly in the United States.

The slate slabs were free-standing from 1799 to 1918 and were located on the east side of Route 106 below the village of Felchville, north of the Knapp Brook Road bridge. In 1918, Laura Billings Lee, a family descendant, arranged for placing the slate slabs in a single protective block of granite and trees were planted along side. In 1947 because of road realignment, the Vermont Highway Department moved the monument diagonally down the road to the west side of the highway and south of the brook. This latter location proved most unsatisfactory due to road hazards and the markers themselves became the subject of potential damage.

## CURRENT PROJECT

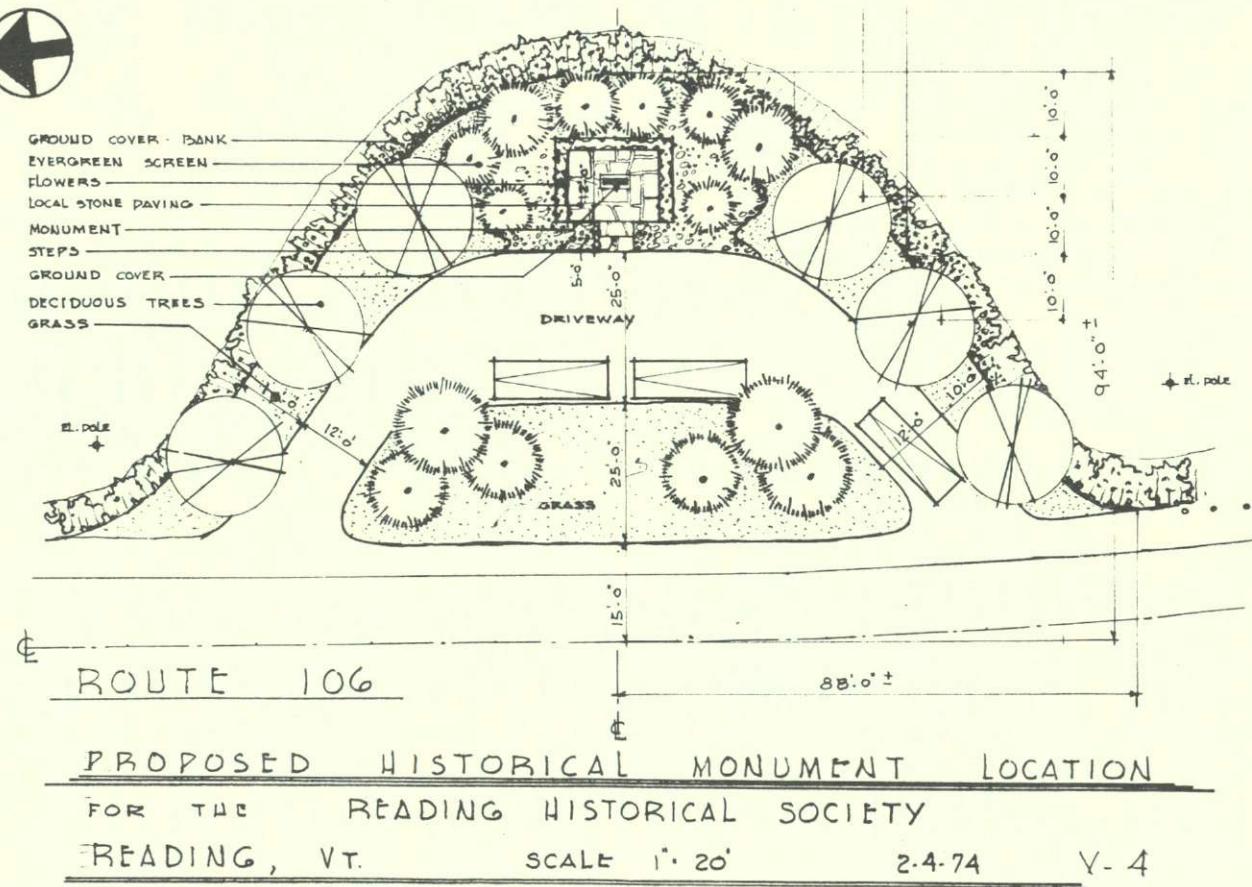
Local groups in Reading jointly undertook the development and preparation of a new and improved but historically correct site for the historic markers in 1973.

The site has been designated as a Historic Place in the National Register since 1974, a very significant honor for the town of Reading. In 1975 the project became an official part of Reading's Bicentennial observance.

The Indian Stones were relocated to the new site in August 1975, placing them within a few feet of their original 1799 location in a park-like setting, with ample room for suitable landscaping, off-road parking, and freedom from hazards.

1976 plans call for completion of the project. Trees will be planted, stone-work installed, and other final touches added in late Summer and early Fall. A rededication program is scheduled for August 31, Captive Johnson's birthdate.

**BELOW - Monument is shown in architect's layout in final setting, with provisions for landscaping and parking.**



Hist. Soc.

July 21, 1975

J. Mason Burnham, President  
Reading Historical Society  
Reading, Vermont 05062

Dear Mr. Burnham:

This letter will serve as formal approval of this Division on behalf of the State for the removal of the "Indian Stones" on Route 106 in Reading to the new site across the road which is being developed by the town for this purpose.

Sincerely,

William B. Pinney  
Director

WBP:ds

cc: James L. Barnsgrove, Jr.  
Chairman, Board of Selectmen

# READING *Historical Society*



3 July 1975

Reading, Vermont

Mr. William B. Pinney, Director  
Historic Sites Division  
Agency of Development and Community Affairs  
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Dear Mr. Pinney:

Re: "Indian Stones" Relocation Project

As we discussed recently, the program to relocate the so-called "Indian Stones" to a newly developed, but historically correct, site across the road on Route 106 in Reading is proceeding.

1975 plans call for moving the monument containing the slate slabs and completion of site development. The 1976 schedule contemplates final landscaping, signs, and rededication, hopefully in August.

Your letter of 20 November 1973 to Mr. James L. Barngrove Jr., Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, indicates that your division would grant permission to move this monument as it is assumed by all concerned to be on state land. The new site is on land now owned by the Town of Reading.

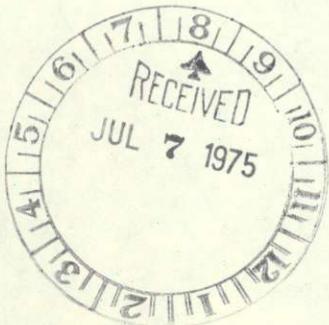
It is now timely to have formal approval for the relocation. As this project has evolved, the Reading Historical Society has become the co-ordinating agency. Will you kindly forward your letter of authority to me, with a copy to Mr. Barngrove.

There are other aspects of this project which will require additional discussion with your division and we will keep in close contact with you. Please let me know if you have questions.

With kind regards.

Yours very truly,

J. Mason Burnham, President



Advisory Council  
On Historic Preservation  
1522 K Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20005

*clear brush  
straighten and repair*

EN. Rev-  
Windsor

February 27, 1976

Mr. Charles F. Goodspeed  
Deputy Assistant Administrator  
States and Communities Division  
American Revolution Bicentennial  
Administration  
2401 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20276



Dear Mr. Goodspeed:

On February 25, 1976, the Advisory Council received an adequately documented determination from the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) that the proposed "Indian Stones" historic site project would not adversely affect the "Indian Stones," Windsor County, Vermont, a property included in the National Register of Historic Places. After review of ARBA's determination, the Executive Director notes no objection to the determination of no adverse effect.

In accordance with Section 800.4(d) of the Advisory Council's "Procedures for the Protection of Historic and Cultural Properties" (36 C.F.R. Part 800), you may proceed with the undertaking.

A copy of your determination of no adverse effect, along with supporting documentation and this concurrence, should be included in any environmental assessment or statement prepared for this undertaking in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Your continued cooperation is appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

*John D. McDermott*  
John D. McDermott  
Director, Office of Review  
and Compliance

March 25, 1974

James Barngrove, Chairman  
Board of Selectmen  
Reading, Vermont 05062

Dear Mr. Barngrove:

I understand that you are making good progress in preparation of a new site for the Indian Stones. If you will let us know about the time you are ready to relocate the Stones at the new site, we will send a letter of authorization for the move so we will be in compliance with 22 VSA 347 and 348 which relate to moving historical artifacts from state property.

For our own information we would appreciate learning how the Stones will be moved when the time comes and how they will be reerected. We would be willing to fund an appropriate sign or marker for the site if the town so desires. If you will let us know your thoughts in this regard, we might plan a get together to discuss size, shape, and material of the sign as well as the text for the wording. Possibilities that come to mind are the standard historic site marker which is cast aluminum painted green with gold letters or the standard State Park sign which is quite attractive with the lettering routed out of wood and painted in, or a regular hanging wooden sign with hand painted lettering.

Sincerely,

William B. Pinney  
Director

WBP:md

cc: Errol Locke, Reading Historical Society  
Edwin Johnson, Southern Windsor County Reg. Plng. Comm.

MEMORANDUM

TO: WILLIAM B. PINNEY  
FROM: COURTNEY FISHER  
SUBJECT: "INDIAN STONES"

A letter to James Barngrove, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, Town of Reading, with a copy to Errol Locke, Reading Historical Society, and a copy to Edwin Johnson, Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission.

Letter should state the following:

1. Congratulations to the Town of Reading and to the Reading Historical Society with regard to the progress they have made in the preparation of a new site for the "Indian Stones".
2. Restate that the Division of Historic Sites owns the "Indian Stones".
3. Ask for the following information and state that once the Division has the following information then the Division will give the Town of Reading permission to move and reerect the "Indian Stones".
  - A. When will the "Indian Stones" be moved?
  - B. Who will move the "Indian Stones"?
  - C. How are the "Indian Stones" to be moved?
  - D. How are the "Indian Stones" to be reerected?
4. Once A through D have been determined, propose a meeting between the Division, the Town of Reading, and the Reading Historical Society to discuss historic interpretation and a commerorative/explanatory plaque.
5. Inquire about a rededication ceremony.
6. Inform Barngrove that the SHLO has nominated the "Indian Stones" to the National Register of Historic Places. (?)
7. If the Division can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate... (?)

WILLIAM B. PINNEY  
DIRECTOR



STATE OF VERMONT  
AGENCY OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
HISTORIC SITES DIVISION  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602  
(802) 828-3226

November 20, 1973

Mr. James Barnsgrove  
Chairman  
Board of Selectmen  
Reading, Vermont 05062

Dear Mr. Barnsgrove:

I have been informed of the possibility of moving the "Indian Stones" located on the edge of 103 to a safer spot across the road. I am enclosing a copy of 22 VSA subsections 347 and 348 pertaining to designation of historical artifacts and removal of artifacts.

I am told that the monument is situated within the highway right-of-way. If this is the case, it would be on state land and can be designated an historical artifact under subsection 347. Once established as an historic artifact on state owned land, permission to be moved can be given in writing by the Board of Historic Sites. We would be glad to cooperate in the preservation of the stones by giving this permission to the town. It is our understanding that the monument would then be moved by the town to a plot of land across the road and situated a safer distance from the highway.

The original occasion which the stones commemorate was not only an important one but we believe that the stones may well be the oldest bona fide historic site markers in this country. On the strength of this we believe that the site may be eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. If you will keep me posted on your plans for this project, I will furnish the town with a statement of the designation of the stones as historic artifacts and a letter of authority to move them.

Sincerely,

*William B. Pinney*  
William B. Pinney  
Director

**POOR QUALITY**  
**ORIGINAL** C10

facilities are available, or will be available for any plant located in the park, are or will be financed from funds those provided by the authority hereunder.

that the total industrial park will be planned by architects acceptable to the authority.

at no more than 80 per cent of the fair market value, for use, of one industrial site within the park as shown by an appraiser acceptable to the authority is financed by loan.

that the project is within the scope of this chapter, will be used and benefit, and may reasonably be expected to create employment opportunities.

that the project complies with applicable zoning, planning and regulations of the municipality in which it is to be located.

that the local development corporation is responsible and has furnished evidence to demonstrate its ability to carry out the planned.

that evidence has been presented demonstrating the feasibility of the site as a location for industry and that additional evidence has been presented that an adequate supply of labor is available within the labor market area to serve an industry located there.

that the project will be without unreasonable risk of loss to the community and that the local development corporation is unable to obtain reasonable terms the funds required for the project without assistance of the authority.

This act shall take effect from passage.

Dated: March 9, 1970.

AN ACT TO ADD 22 V.S.A. §§ 347 AND 348 RELATING TO THE DESIGNATION OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS AND TO THE PROTECTION OF HISTORICAL ARTIFACTS ON STATE LANDS.

(H. 19)

Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of

Sec. 1. 22 V.S.A. § 347 is added to read:

§ 347. Designation of historical artifacts

The board of historic sites may designate as an historical artifact any object of historical, archaeological or paleontological interest which is found or situated in, upon or under any lands owned or held by the state of Vermont, including lands under public waters. The board may report to the Vermont historical society all designations of historical artifacts under this section. The term "object" as used herein includes objects of both natural and man-made origin but does not include buildings.

Sec. 2. 22 V.S.A. § 348 is added to read:

§ 348. Removal of artifacts; excavation, penalty

A person shall not take, remove or appropriate from public waters of the state of Vermont or lands owned or held by the state of Vermont, including lands under public waters, any historical artifact so designated under the preceding section, or dig or make any excavation in any lands owned or held by the state, including lands under public waters, for the purpose of removing any object designated as an historical artifact, except with written permission from the board of historic sites. A person violating this section shall be fined not more than \$1,000.00 or imprisoned not more than two years, or both.

Approved: March 10, 1970.

NO. 185. AN ACT TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR RELOCATION OF PERSONS DISPLACED BY FEDERAL OR FEDERALLY AIDED HIGHWAY PROJECTS.

(H. 58)

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. When federal funds are available for payment of direct financial assistance in situations caused by highway acquisition, the state highway department may match such federal funds to the extent permitted by federal law and to provide such direct financial

WILLIAM B. PINNEY  
DIRECTOR



STATE OF VERMONT  
AGENCY OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS  
HISTORIC SITES DIVISION  
MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602  
(802) 828-3226

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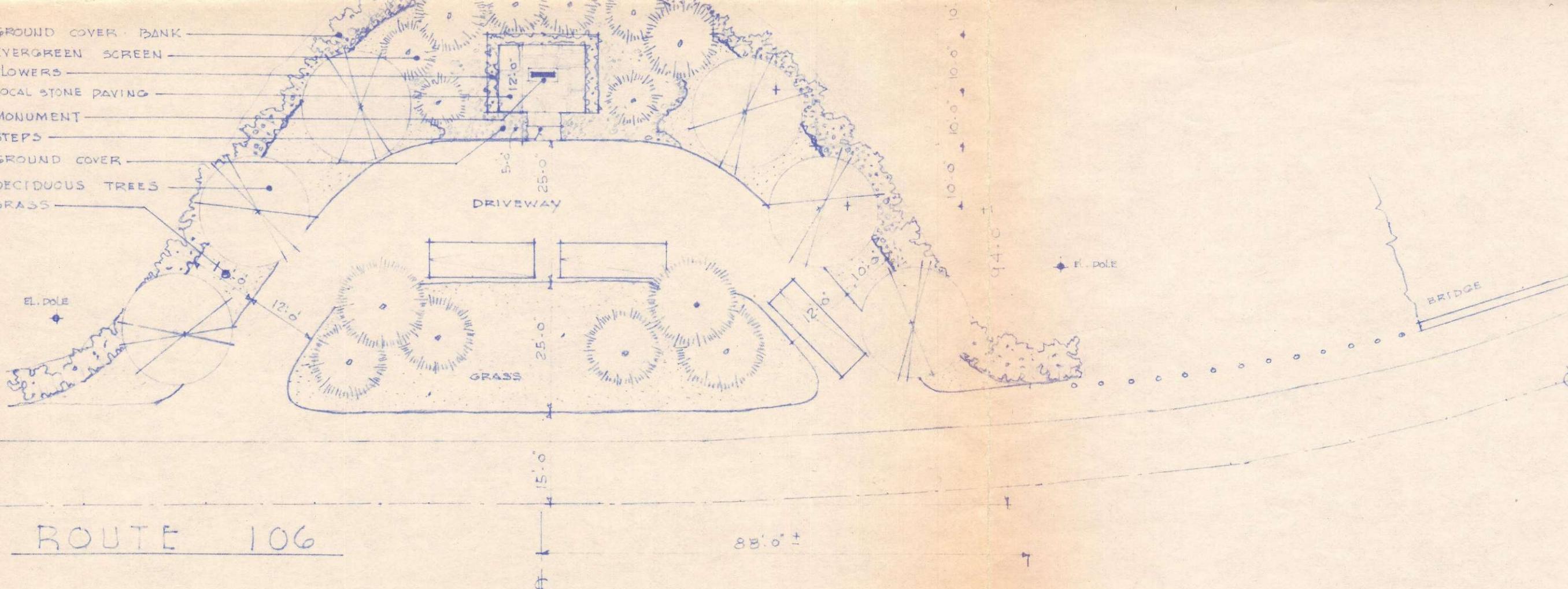
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*William B. Pinney*  
William B. Pinney  
Director



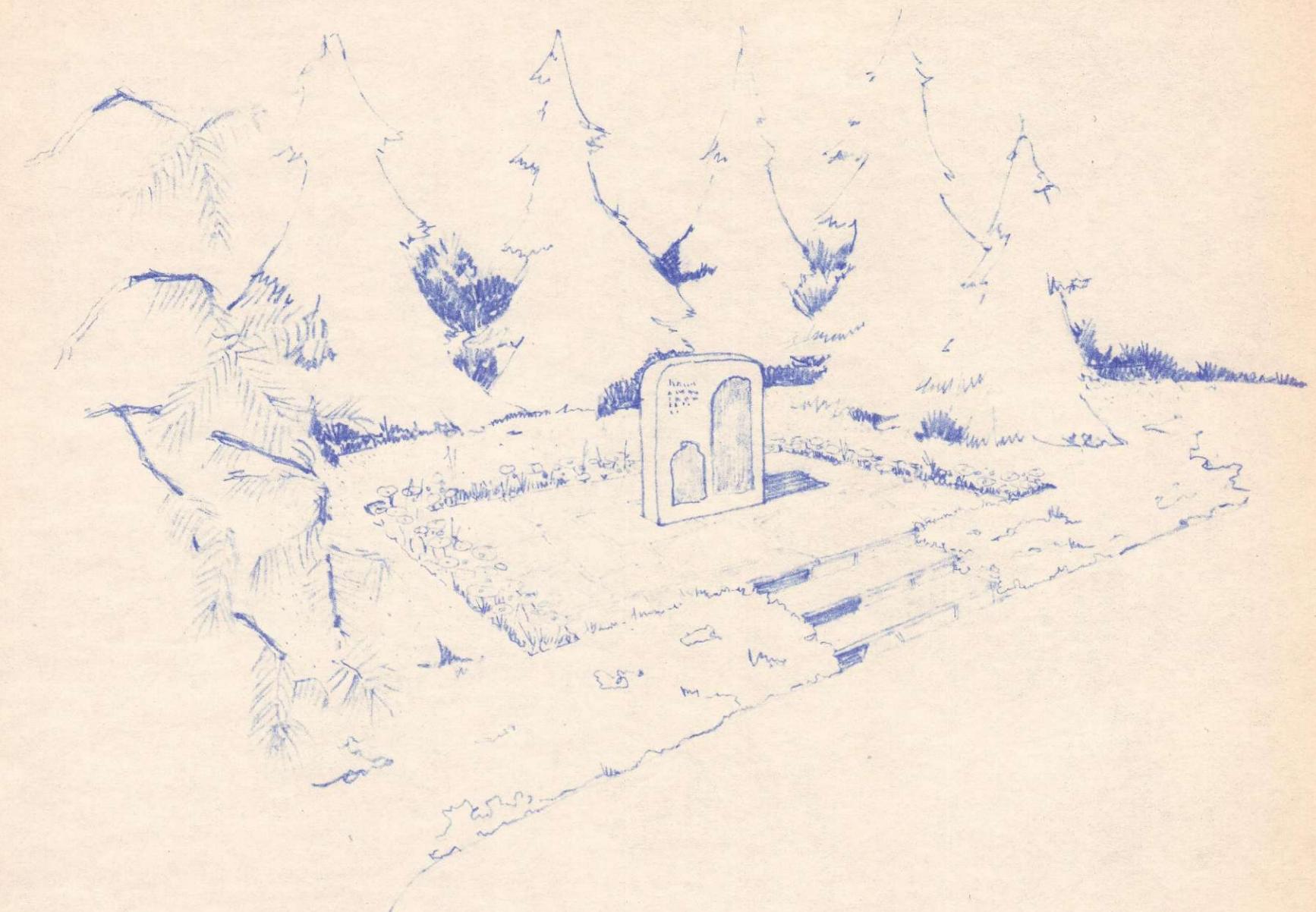
GROUND COVER - BANK  
EVERGREEN SCREEN  
FLOWERS  
LOCAL STONE PAVING  
MONUMENT  
STEPS  
GROUND COVER  
DECIDUOUS TREES  
GRASS



ROUTE 106

PROPOSED HISTORICAL MONUMENT LOCATION  
FOR THE READING HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
READING, VT.

SCALE 1:20' 2.4.74



MILDRED F. BANZHAF, A.I.A.  
ARCHITECT

SO. READING RD. READING VT. (TEL) 484-5528

**POOR QUALITY  
ORIGINAL**

PGS. 1-8

SOCIETY

STORY OF THE MONTH

Ethan Allen Anecdote

of our loyal members sends in the  
anecdote, saying that it was  
the late Milo S. McLaren of Bar-  
mont. One of these days, we  
begin collecting all the Ethan Al-  
lenies, those that are authentic, and  
what are not. The Allen tradition is,  
so deep and strong in Vermont,  
manufactured stories will probably  
on the horizon for many years.

story. During the period of Ethan  
confinement in Pendennis Castle  
and, a minstrel show was staged.  
Ethan was allowed to attend.  
characters appeared on the stage.  
st to appear was introduced as  
Gates. "What is your profession  
life?" he was asked. He replied:  
tinker." The next American gen-  
parody form who appeared stated  
civil life he was a tailor, while the  
when he was questioned, said he  
trobble. This was too much for  
Ethan, who broke loose from his  
jumped onto the stage and shout-  
cheers for the Continental  
Great Britain, licked by tink-  
ers, and cobblers, by God!"

Montpelier, Vermont.  
W. Peach, Director; Mrs.

Sec. 34.66  
P. L. & R.

GRANITE BLOCK 57" WIDE 57" HIGH 8" THICK  
THE VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, MONTPELIER, VERMONT

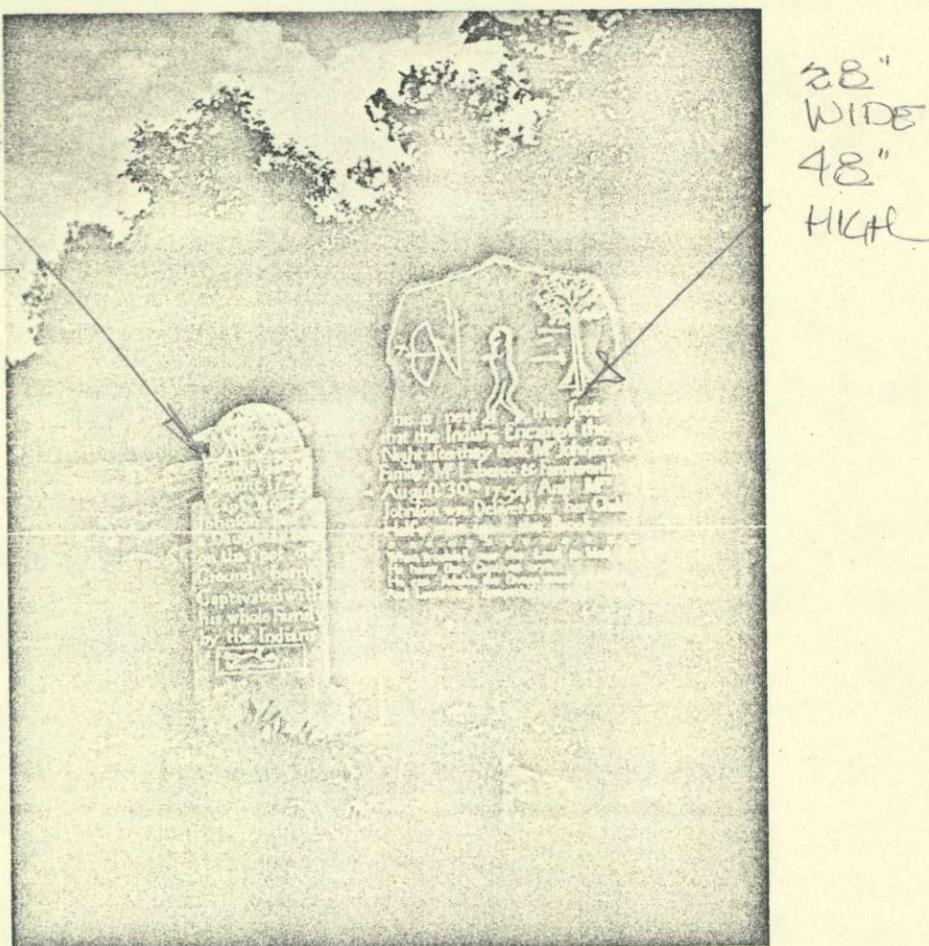
# News & Notes

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR ALL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY

Volume 2

April 1951

Number 8



MRS. JOHNSON'S STORY OF HER VERMONT JOURNEY

These stones were erected to commemorate the capture of Captain James Johnson's family and others by the Indians at Charlestown, N. H., and the birth of Mrs. Johnson's daughter in Caven-  
dish, Aug. 31, 1754, while the captives were on their way through Vermont to Canada.

The inscription on the stone at the left reads — "On the 31st of August, A. D. 1754,  
Captain James Johnson had a daughter born on this spot of ground; being captivated with  
his whole family by the Indians.

If mothers e'er should wander here,  
They'll drop a sympathetic tear  
For her, who in the howling wild,  
Was safe delivered of a child."

The inscription on the stone on the right reads — "This is near the spot the Indians encamped the night after they took Mr. Johnson and family, Mr. Labarree and Farnsworth, August 30, 1754; and Mrs. Johnson was delivered of her child half a mile up this brook.

When trouble's near the Lord is kind  
He hears the captive's cry;  
He can subdue the savage mind  
And learn it sympathy."

The peaceful valleys and quiet hills of Vermont give little inkling now of the *via dolorosa* many an English captive found among them along the ancient Indian trails. Mr. Philip H. Cummings, the speaker at the annual dinner [News and Notes, March 1951] emphasized the importance of these bitter journeys, pointing out that they were evidence of the pioneer man's determination to survive, and that out of that determination emerged the basic pattern of the early Vermont.

The records of these journeys into captivity through Vermont and from Vermont into Canada are far from being complete — and may never become so; but in the story of the capture and journey of Mrs. Johnson we have the picture which in all probability holds true for journeys unknown and unrecorded.

In the year 1740, Charlestown [now Charlestown, N. H.] was the most northerly of the settlements along the Connecticut River. Beyond the settlement was the wilderness. A fort was erected in 1744. Both the settlers and the fort itself were under attack soon after its construction. There, in 1748, the famous five-day action was fought by Capt. Phineas Stevens and his garrison of about 30 men in which he defeated 500 French and Indians.

In June 1749, Mrs. Johnson and her husband arrived at the fort and found five families there — "... the gloomy forest and the warlike appearance of the place, soon made me homesick." A period of peace followed, and Mr. Johnson moved to his farm outside the fort and began trading with the Indians, but immediate war was not unexpected — "The fears of the night were horrible beyond description, and even the light of day was far from dispelling painful anxiety. While looking from the window of my loghouse, and seeing my neighbors tread cautiously by each hedge and hillock, lest some secreted savage might start forth to take their

scalp, my fears would baffle description."

On August 29, "midway between daybreak and sunrise," the Indians came — "... in an instant a crowd of savages, fixed horribly for war rushed furiously in. I screamed and begged my friends to ask for quarter; by this time they were all over the house: some upstairs, some hauling my sister out of bed, another had hold of me, and one was approaching Mr. Johnson, who stood in the middle of the floor to deliver himself up; but the Indian, supposing that he would make resistance, and be more than his match, went to the door and brought three of his comrades, and the four bound him. I was led to the door, fainting and trembling; and there stood my friend Labarree, bound; Ebenezer Farnsworth, whom they found up chamber, they were putting in the same situation, and to complete the shocking scene, my three little children were driven naked to the place where I stood. On viewing myself I found I too was naked. An Indian had plundered three gowns, who, on seeing my situation, gave me the whole."

The alarm reached the fort, but Mrs. Johnson's father, second in command, urged Capt. Stevens not to pursue the Indians, fearing that all the prisoners would be killed.

So the long journey north began. At a distance of three miles, the Indians halted, "supposing that we, as well as themselves, might have an appetite for breakfast, gave the prisoners a loaf of bread, some raisins and apples." A horse came in sight, "known to all of us by the name of Scoggin, belonging to Phinehas Stevens." Mr. Johnson prevented an Indian from shooting Scoggin, and the Indians suggested that he be caught and Mrs. Johnson would ride him as she was in the last stages of pregnancy. So the horse was caught. "By this time my legs and feet were covered with blood, which being noticed by Mr.

Labarree, he with that humanity which never forsook him, took his own stock and presented them to me, and the Indians were 11 in number, men of manhood, "except one, a youth of sixteen who on our journey discovered a very mischievous and troublesome disposition." "According to their national practice, he who first laid hands on a prisoner, considered him a property. My master, who was the one that took my hand when I sat on the floor, was as clever an Indian as I ever saw, even evinced, at numerous times, a position that showed he was by no means void of compassion. The four who had my husband claimed him as their property and my sister, three children, Labarree, Farnsworth, had each a master. The time came for us to prepare to move. I almost expired at the thought. To leave my aged parents, brothers, sisters, friends, and travel with savages, through a dismal forest to unknown regions, in an alarming situation I then was in, with three small children, the eldest, Sylvester, who was but six years old. My daughter, Susanna, was four, and the other two. My sister, Miriam, was fourteen. My husband was barefoot and otherwise thinly clothed . . . had no shirt or breeches. My daughters had nothing but their shift and I only the gown that was handed me by the savages . . . we went six or seven miles and stopped for the night . . . sister, much to her mortification, lay between two Indians, with a blanket thrown over her, and passing under them; the little children had blankets and I was allowed one for my use. we took lodgings for the night, with a sky for a covering, and the ground for a pillow."

After "marching sorrowfully for an hour or two," the next day, "I was delivered with pangs of child-birth. The Indians signified that we must go on to a better place. When we got there, they showed some humanity, by making a booth for me fifteen or twenty miles from the nearest any civilized being, in the open wilderness, rendered cold by a rainy day. One of the most perilous hours, and supported with the least necessary, could yield convenience in that hazard."

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legs and feet were covered  
which being noticed by Mr.

Labarree, he with that humanity which never forsook him, took his own stockings and presented them to me, and the Indians gave me a pair of moggasons." The Indians were 11 in number, men of middle age, "except one, a youth of sixteen who in our journey discovered a very mischievous and troublesome disposition." "According to their national practice, he who first laid hands on a prisoner, considered him as his property. My master, who was the one that took my hand when I sat on the bed was as clever an Indian as I ever saw; he even evinced, at numerous times, a disposition that showed he was by no means void of compassion. The four who took my husband claimed him as their property, and my sister, three children, Labarree and Farnsworth, had each a master. When the time came for us to prepare to march, I almost expired at the thought. To leave my aged parents, brothers, sisters and friends, and travel with savages, through a dismal forest to unknown regions, in the alarming situation I then was in, with three small children, the eldest, Sylvanus, who was but six years old. My eldest daughter, Susanna, was four, and Polly, the other, two. My sister, Miriam, was fourteen. My husband was barefoot, and otherwise thinly clothed . . . had nothing but his shirt and trowsers. My two daughters had nothing but their shifts, and I only the gown that was handed me by the savages . . . we went six or eight miles and stopped for the night . . . My sister, much to her mortification, must lie between two Indians, with a cord thrown over her, and passing under each of them; the little children had blankets, and I was allowed one for my use. Thus we took lodging for the night, with the sky for a covering, and the ground for a pillow."

After "marching sorrowfully for an hour or two," the next day, "I was taken with pangs of child-birth. The Indians signified that we must go on to a brook. When we got there, they showed some humanity, by making a booth for me . . . fifteen or twenty miles from the abode of any civilized being, in the open wilderness, rendered cold by a rainy day — in one of the most perilous hours, and unsupported with the least necessary, that could yield convenience in that hazardous

moment. My children were crying at a distance, where they were held by their masters, and only my husband and sister to attend me . . . The Indians kept aloof the whole time. About ten o'clock a daughter was born. Then they brought me some articles of clothing for the child which they had taken from the house. My master looked into the booth and clapped his hands with joy, crying two monies for me, two monies for me. I was permitted to rest the remainder of the day. The Indians were employed in making a bier for the prisoners to carry me on, and another booth for my lodging during the night." The journey began again, but Mrs. Johnson's "carriers" became too faint to proceed further. The Indians held a council, and Mrs. Johnson's "master" made signs to Mr. Johnson that if I could ride on the horse I might proceed, otherwise, I must be left behind . . . I preferred to ride on the horse, rather than to perish miserably alone."

On the third day of the journey, Mrs. Johnson was taken from the horse and permitted to rest for an hour. The fare was lean, meal and water, and famine approached. The trail was harsh — "sometimes lying in miry plains, at others rising into steep and broken hills . . . our passage hazardous and painful." Scoggin was killed for the needed food. "To use the term politeness, in the management of their repast, may be thought a burlesque, yet their offering the prisoners the best part of the horse, certainly bordered on civility; an epicure could not have catered nicer pieces, nor in that situation served them with more neatness . . . After supper . . . The night was a scene of distressing fears to me, and my extreme weakness had affected my mind to such a degree, that every difficulty appeared doubly terrible. By the assistance of Scoggin, I had been brought so far, yet so great was my debility, that every hour I was taken off and laid on the ground to keep me from expiring. But now, alas! this conveyance was no more. To walk was impossible. Inevitable death, in the midst of woods, one hundred miles wide, appeared my only portion."

On the sixth day, Mrs. Johnson attempted to walk, and did for half a mile, then "the world grew dark, and she drop-

None but  
Men  
can Fie  
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way out  
Fitzgerald

3/11/1754

8/5/1754

9/4/1754

ped to the ground." She has sight enough to see an Indian lift his hatchet over her head; her little son screamed — "Ma'am do go, for they will kill you." "When I awoke my master was talking angrily with the savage who had threatened my life."

Her Indian master make a pack basket of bark in which her husband carried her the rest of the day. The next morning she was stronger and was able to travel alone, although stumbling and falling into a beaver pond in a branch of Otter Creek proved dangerous for her, but she was rescued by her husband. Mr. Labarree had been in charge of the infant, and he "supported it, by pieces of the horse flesh, which he kept for its use which by being first chewed in his own mouth, and then put into the child's, afforded it the necessary nutriment." *9/6/1784*

The eighth day, the prisoners were aroused at sunrise, and after breakfast, were ordered to "munch." "My poor husband took me upon the pack saddle . . . My little son, who had performed the whole journey on foot was almost lifeless. Mr. Johnson was emaciated, and almost exhausted; — often he laid on the ground to save his own life, and mine; for my weakness was too great to ride far, without requiring rest."

Two Indians sent on a hunting scout met the party at "east bay" on Lake Champlain with four canoes. "The life, which nine days painful suffering in the wilderness, had brought to its last moment of duration, now started into new existence, and rendered the hour I sat on the shore of Lake Champlain one of the happiest I ever experienced." "Twelve hours sailing would waft us to the settlements of civilized Frenchmen." *EITHER 9/7 or 9/8*

The party journeyed across the lake to Crown Point, where the French commander received them kindly, giving them a good dinner and a change of linen. The next day they started for St. John's. Going north, they met "a white woman in a canoe on her way to Albany." Mr. Johnson gave her a note to Col. Lydius of Albany with a request that he announce through the Boston newspapers that the captives were still alive. "The woman delivered the letter, and the contents were published."

Here the sketch of Mrs. Johnson's jour-

ney must end — beyond the borders of Vermont. All of the prisoners later returned to the "place whence we were taken."

\* \* \*

In September, 1797, Mrs. Johnson sought to find the spot of ground where her child was born, but she could not locate it to her satisfaction at that time. In August, 1798, as a result of another visit, she was convinced she had found the location. On a third visit, in 1799, accompanied by her fellow prisoner, Mr. Labarree, both agreed "as to the identical spot of ground within a few feet; and ascertained that it was on the northeast corner lot of land in Cavendish, and is about half a mile from the main road leading from Weathersfield to Reading, where is erected a monument with the following inscription — which the friendly reader may peruse if he should pass that way . . . "

Mrs. Johnson made arrangements for the placing of the monuments, prepared the inscriptions, and directed that the smaller stone should be placed upon the spot where her child was born, while the larger should mark the place where the Indians were encamped, but regardless of her instructions the stones were placed together on the main road leading from Weathersfield to Reading — and here they stood for a century. [Horace W. Bailey, Newbury, Vt., July, 1907: *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Johnson* — Third Edition, Windsor, Vt., 1814.]

Also by Mr. Bailey: "Elizabeth Captive Johnson, the third white person born in Vermont, lived to womanhood and became the wife of Colonel George Kimball. One of her daughters married Jason Wetherby, and her daughter married Oel Billings, the father of the late Frederick Billings of Woodstock, Vermont, one of the most distinguished sons of the Green Mountain State."

*← EITHER 9/9 or 9/10*  
**HERE IS A HOBBY FOR  
YOU AND OTHERS**

**Know Any Interesting Place Names?**

We are planning to assemble a complete collection of Vermont place names, and later publish them [hint — see that item entitled "How Is Your Forgittery? — and if you —] in book form available to everybody when we get the funds.

We are going to start with the "Vermont," and go down the line the counties to the towns and villages, then down to local place names in and villages, ponds, brooks, streams, "cricks," rivers, puddles, anything with a place name in Vermont. Each has a history connected with it, and this is bound to be impressive.

We can take care of the larger places, but the local names are going to be a problem unless we can have the help of our members and their friends far and near. Some of these names are going to perish unless we rescue them; and we want names even that are pretty faded now.

Here are some samples showing how to do it. Rev. V. B. Maloney, a VHSe long a loyal curator, sends these as long a sample. We are abbreviating them somewhat to save precious space, but you will see we want: first the name, and then the source of the name as you know it; you do not know the origin of the name, send it in anyway, and we will see what we can do, but give us any rough reference if you can and indicate where the name is used.

Here are Father Maloney's names:

1. *Battlerow Road*. A section in *Hill Park*. The evidence he lists seems clear that after the Civil War a family living there who staged some merry frolics among themselves; hence the name — a good name for more than one street place in America.

2. *Tyndall Hill*. "A generation hence people will wonder whence the name happened to know as my mother was a Tyndall. Her father was Gavin Tyndall; Gavin Tyndall and his brother, John, settled in that far-from-town area when they came over from Ireland. They lived there a great many years, had large families, and were quite well known. The hill came to be known as Tyndall Hill and is so shown on maps." In looking into these old names there are many by-products that are appealing and often lasting in value. Father Maloney adds this detail: "On the main road between Morrisville and Stowe is the Bessette Farm. Years back it was known as the York Farm because it was owned by some absentee landlord of New York. That was the first place my grandfather

CAPTURED 1754 -

RELEASED 1757

1759 RETURN TO CHARLESTOWN N.H.

## PART SECOND.

### HISTORY OF READING.

SUZANNA JOHNSON

#### CHAPTER I ELIZABETH CAPTIVE (JOHNSON)

1754. On the 30th day of August the little settlement at Charlestown, N. H., was surprised by a party of Indians from Canada. Capt. James Johnson, his wife and three children, his wife's sister Miriam Willard, Peter Labaree and Ebenezer Farnsworth were made prisoners and on the same day started on their tedious and painful journey to Canada. The first encampment was on the night of the 30th on a branch of Black River near the base of Little Ascutney. The men were made secure that night by having their legs put in split sticks, somewhat like stocks, and tied with cords, which were tied to the limbs of trees too high to be reached. Miss Willard much to her mortification, was compelled to lie between two Indians with a cord thrown over her and passing under each of them; the little children had blankets, and one was furnished for Mrs. Johnson who was in an advanced stage of pregnancy.

In the morning the captives were aroused before sunrise. The Indians struck a fire, hung on their stolen kettles and made some water gruel for breakfast. Mrs. Johnson was put upon a horse, with her husband by her side to hold her on; Mr. Labaree and Mr. Farnsworth each took a little girl, and thus marching sorrowfully on, these captives, the first white persons known to have stepped upon the soil of Reading, crossed Knapp's brook near the present residence of N. Parson's, and encamped on the north side of that brook, Mrs. Johnson having added to her multiplied afflictions the pangs of child birth. Leaving the main party at the encampment, Mrs. Johnson and some of the Indians proceeded about one-half mile up the brook and within the territory of the town of Cavendish the Indians erected a booth. The circumstances are best narrated by Mrs. Johnson:

"Here the compassionate reader will drop a fresh tear for my inexpressible distress; fifteen or twenty miles from the abode of any civilized being, in the open wilderness, rendered cold by a rainy day—in one of the most perilous hours, and unsupplied with the least necessary that could yield convenience in the hazardous moment. My children were crying at a distance, where they were held by their masters, and only my husband and sister to attend me; none but mothers can figure to themselves my unhappy fortune. The Indians kept aloof the whole time. About ten o'clock a daughter was born. They then brought me some articles of clothing for the child, which they had taken from the house. My master looked into the booth, and clapped his hands for joy, crying 'two moneys for me, two moneys for me;' I was permitted to rest the remainder of the day. The Indians were employed in making a bier for the prisoners to carry me on, and another booth for my lodging during the night. They brought me a needle and two pins and some bark to tie the child's clothes, which they gave my sister and a large wooden spoon to feed it with; at dark they made some porridge, and brought a cup to steep some roots in which Mr. Labaree had provided. In the evening I was removed to the new booth. For supper, they made more porridge and some johnny cakes. My portion was brought me in a little bark. I slept that night far beyond my expectation."

This night's encampment was in Reading.

"In the morning we were summoned for the journey, after the usual breakfast of meal and water. I, with my infant in my arms, was laid on the litter which was supported alternately by Mr. Johnson, Labaree and Farnsworth. My sister and son were put upon Scoggin, and the two little girls rode on their master's backs. Thus we proceeded two miles, when my carriers grew too faint to proceed any farther. This being observed by our sable masters, a general halt was called, and they embodied themselves for council. My master soon made signs to Mr. Johnson that if I could ride on the horse I might proceed, otherwise I must be left behind. Here I observed marks of pity in his countenance, but this might arise from the fear of losing his two moneys. I preferred an attempt to ride on the horse rather than to perish miserably alone. Mr. Labaree took the infant, and every step of the horse almost deprived me of life. My weak and helpless condition rendered me, in a degree, insensible to everything; my poor child could have no sustenance from my breast, and was supported entirely by water gruel. My other little children, rendered peevish by an uneasy mode of riding, often burst into cries, but a surly check from their masters soon silenced them. We proceeded on with a slow, mournful pace. My weakness was too severe to allow me to sit on the horse long at a time; every hour I was taken off and laid on the ground to rest. This preserved my life during the third day. At night we found ourselves at the head of Black River Pond. Here we prepared to spend the night, our supper consisted of gruel

and broth of a hawk. The prisoners were seen all went to rest. \* \* ed tediously off."

The route taken Reading into Plym

The child born Elizabeth Captive Col. George Kimball children. One of Sophia Wetherby, late of Woodstock, is therefore a direct

These captives w tained a parole of t redemption—the r as well as the hara tiation of the war be applied to the Asse on the 19th of De of the severity of t he was then charge money was taken f thrown into prison, small pox through months, Mrs. John cartel ship to Eng Johnson suffered i son returned and was retained in a

In September 17 to the spot of the Captive, and to those historical sp Mr. Peter Labaree were erected on t orate these events. inscription.

INDIANS  
FROM CANADA

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re in the hazardous mo-  
tance, where they were  
and sister to attend me;  
s my unhappy fortune.

About ten o'clock a  
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is hands for joy, crying  
I was permitted to rest  
ere employed in making  
another booth for my  
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was removed to the new  
edge and some johnny  
the bark. I slept that

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and broth of a hawk they had killed the preceding day. The prisoners were secured as usual. A booth was made for me, and all went to rest. \* \* \* The night was uncommonly dark, and passed tediously off."

The route taken by this party led through Felchville and South Reading into Plymouth.

The child born under circumstances so peculiar was named Elizabeth Captive Johnson, and subsequently became the wife of Col. George Kimball, and their union was blessed with several children. One of her daughters married Jason Wetherby, Esq. Sophia Wetherby, daughter of Jason, married Oel Billings, Esq., late of Woodstock, Vt., and her son, the Hon. Frederick Billings, is therefore a direct descendant of the little captive.

These captives were taken to Montreal, where Mr. Johnson obtained a parole of two months to return and solicit the means of redemption—the ransom money being the motive for the capture as well as the harassing of the English settlements in the prosecution of the war between the French and English. Mr. Johnson applied to the Assembly of New Hampshire and after some delay, on the 19th of December 1754, obtained £150. But on account of the severity of the winter he did not reach Canada until spring; he was then charged with breaking his parole, a great part of his money was taken from him by force, and he and his family were thrown into prison, where among other afflictions, they all had the small pox, though successfully. At the expiration of eighteen months, Mrs. Johnson with her sister and daughters were sent in a cartel ship to England, and thence returned to Boston. Mr. Johnson suffered imprisonment for three years and then with his son returned and met his wife in Boston. His eldest daughter was retained in a Canadian nunnery.

In September 1797 and in August 1798, Mrs. Johnson returned to the spot of the encampment on the night succeeding the birth of Captive, and to the spot of the birth, and having fully identified those historical spots, again visited them in 1799 accompanied by Mr. Peter Labaree, and subsequently two slabs of blue slate stone were erected on the stage road near Knapp's brook, to commemorate these events. The larger slab has upon it the following inscription.

This is near the spot  
that the Indians Encamp<sup>d</sup> the  
Night after they took Mr. Johnson &  
Family M<sup>r</sup> Labaree & Farnsworth  
August 30<sup>th</sup> 1754 And Mrs.  
Johnson was delivered of her child  
Half a mile up this Brook  
When troubl<sup>e</sup> near the Lord is kind  
He hears the Captives Cry  
He can subdue the savage mind  
And learn it sympathy.

By the side of this slab stands a slab much smaller and bearing the following inscription :

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of  
August 1754  
Cap<sup>t</sup> James  
Johnson had  
A daughter born  
on this spot of  
Ground being  
Captivated with  
his whole Family  
by the Indians.

*"If mothers o'er should wander here,  
They'll drop a sympathetic tear  
For her, who in the howling wild,  
Was safe delivered of a child."*

This smaller slab should be removed about half a mile up Knapp's brook and placed on the spot where the child was born, that spot being near the existing highway that has been built on the north side of that brook. The last visit paid by Mrs. Johnson to that interesting spot was in June 1808, in company with Col. Kimball and his wife, her daughter, E. Captive and Capt. Sherwin and Mr. Demell Grout. Speaking of this visit, Mrs. J. says :

*"After reviewing the scene, and contemplating on the striking contrast a few moments, to add to the sensibility, we sat down and partook of a repast, and regaled ourselves with liquor mixed with water from the same fountain that I and my child first partook of in that gloomy and sorrowful day of trouble and affliction. Then my fare was meagre meal and water, and steeped roots, and a large wooden spoon to feed my infant babe; now we had the best of liquid spirits, and eatables, which in comparison might be said to be dainties. The contrast is too great for pen to describe."*

The lapse of time furnishes a contrast between the ordinary refreshments of to-day and those of even no earlier day than 1808. It is to be hoped that even "the best of liquid spirits" hardly create such enthusiasm among the elderly ladies of to-day.

Reading is not known to have been the home of any tribe of Indians but constituted a part of the great hunting and fighting ground of the Indian tribes on the north and south.

## CHAPTER II—CHARTERS AND EARLY SETTLEMENTS.

The towns of Windsor, Reading, and Plymouth were severally chartered on the same day, July 6, 1761, each six miles square; but in surveying Windsor, it was laid six and one half miles east and west; this made the west line of Windsor about thirty feet east of Felchville Hotel. About 1780 Col. Nathan Stone of Windsor, discovered this fact and applied to the Royal Gov. Benning Wentworth of N. H., for a charter of the half mile strip; he de-

clined until the town between the towns, e

In 1786, Reading David Hapgood, Th Abel Jewett a comm Jan. 5, 1790, the a from the south-east to each town a gore.

This agreement wa thumel Cummings, C sor, Abijah Stone, I Sherwin for Readin Leonard Cummings,

The following is a Reading,

L. S. George Britain, France and To all persons to v

Know ye, that we, mere motion, for the c within our said Prov well beloved Benning mander in C of England, and of our conditions and reserv and by these Present grant in equal share said Province of Nev to their heirs and ass Grant, to be divided shares all that trae within our said Prov measurement 23000 a and no more, out of v and unimprovable lan thousand and forty ac of made by our said Ge office and hereunto ar Beginning at the sou 74° west six miles— quarters of a mile— and one half mile to south ten degrees wes mentioned—and that a township by the na shall inhabit the said