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Romance of Indian History; or Thrilling Incidents of the Early Settlement of America

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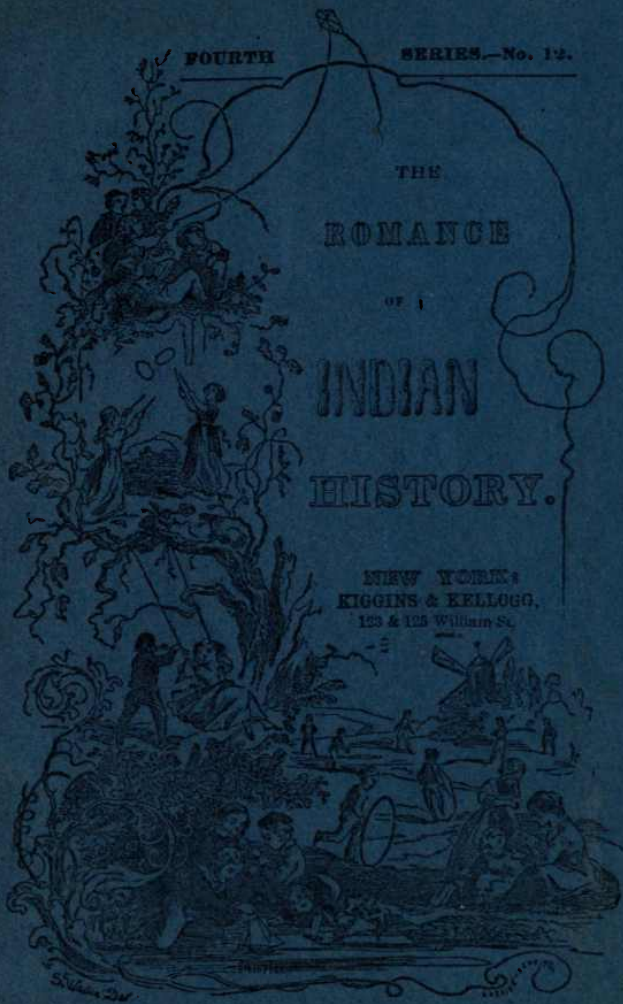
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THE
ROMANCE
OF
INDIAN
HISTORY.

NEW YORK:
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ROMANCE
OF
INDIAN HISTORY;

OR

THRILLING INCIDENTS IN THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF AMERICA.



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KIGGINS & KELLOGG, PUBLISHERS,
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The Mohawk Chief Kiodago.

THE

ROMANCE OF INDIAN HISTORY.

KIODAGO AND HIS CHRISTIAN WIFE.

" And who be ye who rashly dare
To chase in woods the forest-child ?
To hunt the panther to his lair—
The Indian in his native wild !"

My young readers, if they have studied the early history of their country, may have read of the famous expedition undertaken, in 1696, by the governor-general of New France (as the French settlement on our shores was then called), against the confederated Five Nations of New York; an expedition which, though it carried with it all the pomp and circumstance of European warfare into their wild-wood haunts, was attended with no adequate results, and had but a momentary effect in quelling the spirit of the tameless Indian.

Some years previous to this event, when the "Five Nations" had invested the capital of New France, and threatened the extermination of that thriving colony, a beautiful half-blood Indian girl, who had been adopted by and was being educated under the auspices of the governor-general, was carried off, with other prisoners by the retiring foe. Every effort had been made in vain during

the occasional cessations of hostilities between the French and the Iroquois, to recover this child, and though, in the years that intervened, some wandering Jesuit from time to time averred that he had seen the Christian captive living as the con-



Kiodago and his Wife.

tented wife of a young Mohawk warrior, yet the old nobleman seems never to have despaired of reclaiming his "nut-brown girl." Indeed, the chevalier must have been impelled by some such hope when, at the age of seventy, and so feeble that he was half the time carried in a litter, he ventured to encounter the perils of an American wilderness, and place himself at the head of the heterogeneous bands which now invaded the country of the Five Nations under his conduct.

Among the half-breed spies, border scouts, and mongrel adventurers, that followed in the train of the invading army, was a renegade Fleming, of the name of Hanyost. This man, in early youth,

had been made a sergeant-major, when he deserted to the French ranks in Flanders. He subsequently took up a military grant in Canada, sold it after emigrating, and then, making his way down to the Dutch settlements on the Hudson, had become domiciled, as it were, among their allies, the Mohawks, and adopted the life of a hunter. Hanyost, hearing that his old friends, the French, were making such a formidable descent, did not now hesitate to desert his more recent acquaintances; and offered his services as a guide to Count de Frontenac the moment he entered the hostile country. It was not, however, mere cupidity or the habitual love of treachery which actuated the base Fleming in this instance. Hanyost, in a difficulty with an Indian trapper, which had been referred for arbitrament to the young Mohawk chief Kiodago, (a settler of disputes,) whose cool courage and firmness fully entitled him to so distinguished a name, conceived himself aggrieved by the award which had been given against him. The scorn with which the arbitrator met his charge of unfairness, stung him to the soul, and fearing the arm of the powerful savage, he had nursed the revenge in secret, whose accomplishment seemed now at hand. Kiodago, ignorant of the hostile force which had entered his country, was off at a fishing station, among the wild hills, when Hanyost informed the commander of the French forces that by surprising this party, his adopted daughter, the wife of Kiodago, might be restored to him; a small, but efficient force was instantly detached from the main body of the army to strike the blow. A dozen musketeers, with twenty-five pikemen, led severally by the Baron de Bekancourt and the



Kiodago at the Fishing Station.

Chevalier de Graïis, the former having the chief command of the expedition, were sent upon this duty, with Hanyost to guide them to the village of Kiodago. Many hours were consumed upon the march, as the soldiers were not yet habituated to the wilderness; but just before dawn, on the second day, the party found themselves in the neighborhood of the Indian village.

The place was wrapped in repose, and the two cavaliers trusted that the surprise would be so complete, that their commandant's protege must certainly be taken. The baron, after a careful examination of the hilly passes, determined to head the onslaught, while his companion in arms, with Hanyost, to mark out his prey, should pounce upon the chieftain's wife. This being arranged, their followers were warned not to injure the female captives while cutting their defenders to pieces and then a moment being allowed for each

man to take a last look at the condition of his arms, they were led to the attack.

The inhabitants of the fated village safe in their isolated station, aloof from the war-parties of that wild district, had neglected all precaution against surprise, and were buried in sleep when the whizzing of a grenade, that terrible, but now superseded engine of destruction, roused them from their slumbers. The missile, to which a direction had been given that carried it in a direct line through the main row of wigwams which formed the little street, went crashing among their frail frames of basket-work, and kindled the dry mats stretched over them into instant flames. And then, as the startled warriors leaped all naked and unarmed from their blazing lodges, the French pikemen, waiting only for a volley from the musketeers, followed it up with a charge still more fatal. The wretched savages were slaughtered like sheep in the shambles. Some overwhelmed with dismay sank unresisting upon the ground, and covering up their heads after the Indian fashion when resigned to death, awaited the fatal stroke without a murmur; others, seized with a less benumbing panic, sought safety in flight, and rushed upon the pikes that lined the forest's paths around them. Many there were, however, who, schooled to scenes as dreadful, acquitted themselves like warriors. Snatching their weapons from the greedy flames, they sprang with irresistible fury upon the bristling files of pikemen. Their heavy war-clubs beat down and splintered the fragile spears of the Europeans, whose corslets, ruddy with the reflected fires mid which they fought, glinted back still brighter sparks from the hatchets of flint which

crashed against them. The fierce veterans pealed the charging cry of many a well-fought field in other climes; but wild and high the Indian whoop rose shrill above the din of conflict, until the hovering raven in mid air caught up and answered that discordant shriek.

De Grais, in the meanwhile, surveyed the scene of action with eager intentness, expecting each moment to see the paler features of the Christian captive among the dusky females who ever and anon sprang shrieking from the blazing lodges, and were instantly hurled backward into the flames by fathers and brothers, who even thus would save them from the hands that vainly essayed to grasp their distracted forms. The Mohawks began now to wage a more successful resistance, and just when the fight was raging hottest, and the high-spirited Frenchman, beginning to despair of his prey, was about launching into the midst of it, he saw a tall warrior who had hitherto been forward in the conflict, disengage himself from the fight, and wheeling suddenly upon the soldier, who had likewise separated from the party, brain him with a tomahawk, before he could make a movement in his defence. The quick eye of the young chevalier, too, caught a glance of another figure, in pursuit of whom, as she emerged with an infant in her arms, from a lodge on the farther side of the village, the luckless Frenchman had met his doom. It was the Christian captive, the wife of Kiodago, beneath whose hand he had fallen. That chieftain now stood over the body of his victim, brandishing a war-club which he had snatched from a dying Indian near. Quick as thought, De Grais levelled a pistol at his head, when the track of the flying

girl brought her directly in his line of sight, and he withheld his fire. Kiodago, in the meantime, had been cut off from the rest of his people by the soldiers, who closed in upon the space which his terrible arm had a moment before kept open. A cry of agony escaped the high-souled savage, as he saw how thus the last hope was lost. He made a gesture, as if about to rush again into the fray, and sacrifice his life with his tribesmen, and then perceiving how futile must be the act, he turned on his heel, and bounded after his retreating wife, with arms outstretched, to shield her from the dropping shots of the enemy.

The uprising sun had now lighted up the scene, but all this passed so instantaneously that it was impossible for De Grais to keep his eye upon the fugitives amid the shifting forms that glanced continually before him; and when, accompanied by Hanyost and seven others, he had got fairly in pursuit, Kiodago who still kept behind his wife, was far in advance of the chevalier and his party. Her forest training had made the Indian mother as fleet of foot as the wild gazelle. She heard, too, the cheering voice of her loved warrior behind her, and pressing her infant in her arms she urged her flight over crag and fell, and soon reached the head of a rocky pass, which it would take some moments for any but an American forester to scale. But the indefatigable Frenchmen are urging their way up the steep; the cry of pursuit grows nearer as they catch a sight of her husband through the thickets, and the agonized wife finds her onward progress prevented by a ledge of rock that impends above her. But now again Kiodago is by her side; he has lifted his wife to the cliff

above, and placed her infant in her arms; and already, with renewed activity, the Indian mother is speeding on to a cavern among the hills, well-known as a fastness of safety.

Kiodago looked a moment after her retreating figure, and then coolly swung himself to the ledge which commanded the pass. He might now easily have escaped his pursuers; but as he stepped back from the edge of the cliff, and looked down the narrow ravine, the vengeful spirit of the red man was too strong within him to allow such an opportunity of striking a blow to escape. His tomahawk and war-club had both been lost in the strife, but he still carried at his back a more efficient weapon in the hands of so keen a hunter. There were but three arrows in his quiver, and the Mohawk was determined to have the life of an enemy in exchange for each of them. His bow was strung quickly, but with as much coolness as if there were no exigency to require haste. Yet he had scarcely time to throw himself upon his breast, near the brink of the declivity, before one of his pursuers, more active than the rest, exposed himself to the unerring archer. He came leaping from rock to rock, and had nearly reached the head of the glen, when, pierced through and through by one of Kiodago's arrows, he toppled from the crags, and rolled, clutching the leaves in his death-agony, among the tangled furze below. A second met a similar fate, and a third victim would probably have been added, if a shot from the fusil of Hanyost, who sprang forward and caught sight of the Indian just as the first man fell, had not disabled the thumb-joint of the bold archer, even as he fixed his last arrow in the string. Re-

sistance seemed now at an end, and Kiodago again betook himself to flight. Yet anxious to divert the pursuit from his wife, the young chieftain pealed a yell of defiance, as he retreated in a different direction from that which she had taken. The whoop was answered by a simultaneous shout and rush on the part of the whites; but the Indian had not advanced far before he perceived that the pursuing party, now reduced to six, had divided, and that three only followed him. He had recognised the scout, Hanyost, among his enemies, and it was now apparent that that wily traitor, instead of being misled by his artifice, had guided the other three upon the direct trail to the cavern which the Christian captive had taken. Quick as thought, the Mohawk acted upon the impression. Making a few steps within a thicket, still to mislead his present pursuers, he bounded across a mountain torrent, and then leaving his footmarks, dashed in the yielding bank, he turned shortly on a rock beyond, recrossed the stream, and concealed himself behind a fallen tree, while his pursuers passed within a few paces of his covert.

A broken hillock now only divided the chief from the point to which he had directed his wife by another route, and to which the remaining party, consisting of De Grais, Hanyost, and a French musketeer, were hotly urging their way. The hunted warrior ground his teeth with rage when he heard the voice of the treacherous Fleming in the glen below him; and springing from crag to crag, he circled the rocky knoll, and planted his foot by the roots of a blasted oak, that shot its limbs above the cavern just as his wife had reached the spot, and pressing her babe to her bosom,



sank exhausted among the flowers that waved in the moist breath of the cave. It chanced that at the very instant, De Grais and his followers had paused beneath the opposite side of the knoll, from whose broken surface the foot of the flying Indian had disengaged a stone, that, crackling among the branches, found its way through a slight ravine into the glen below. The two Frenchmen stood in doubt for a moment. The musketeer, pointing in the direction whence the stone had rolled, turned to receive the order of his officer. The chevalier, who had made one step in advance of a broad rock between them, leaned upon it, pistol in hand, half turning toward his follower; while the scout, who stood farthest out from the steep bank, bending forward to discover the mouth of the cave, must have caught a glimpse of the sinking female, just as the shadowy form of her husband was displayed above her. God help thee now, bold archer! thy quiver is empty; thy game of life is nearly up; the sleuth-hound is upon thee; and thy scalp-lock, whose plumes now flutter in the breeze, will soon be twined in the fingers of the vengeful renegade. Thy wife——But hold! the noble savage has still one arrow left!

Disabled, as he thought himself, the Mohawk had not dropped his bow in the flight. His last arrow was still griped in his bleeding fingers; and though his stiffening thumb forbore the use of it to the best advantage, the hand of Kiodago had not lost its power. The crisis which it takes so long to describe, had been realized by him in an instant. He saw how the Frenchmen, inexperienced in wood-craft, were at fault; he saw, too, that the keen eye of Hanyast had caught sight of



the object of their pursuit, and that further flight was hopeless ; while the scene of his burning village in the distance, inflamed him with hate and fury toward the instrument of his misfortunes. Bracing one knee upon the flinty rock, while the muscles of the other swelled as if the whole energies of his body were collected in that single effort, Kiodago aims at the treacherous scout, and the twanging bowstring dismisses his last arrow upon its errand. The hand of THE SPIRIT could alone have guided that shaft ! But WANEYO smiles upon the brave warrior, and the arrow, while it rattles harmless against the cuirass of the French officer, glances toward the victim for whom it was intended, and quivers in the heart of Hanyost ! The dying wretch grasped the sword-chain of the chevalier, whose corslet clanged among the rocks, as the two went rolling down the glen together ; and De Grais was not unwilling to abandon the pursuit when the musketeer, coming to his assistance, had disengaged him, bruised and bloody, from the embrace of the stiffening corpse.

The bewildered Europeans rejoined their comrades, who were soon after on their march from the scene they had desolated ; while Kiodago descended from his eyry to collect the fugitive survivors of his band, and, after burying the slain, to wreak a terrible vengeance upon their murderers ; the most of whom were cut off by him before they joined the main body of the French army. The Count de Frontenac, returning to Canada, died soon afterward, and the existence of the half-blood Indian woman was soon forgotten.

ADAM POE AND BIGFOOT.

My little readers, sitting by their cheerful fire-sides, in their pleasant homes, with all the comforts and luxuries of civilized life about them, can have but a faint idea of the hardships endured, the perils encountered, by the early settlers in this country. There are indeed chapters in its early history, which, related with the greatest simplicity of language, present a more startling array of thrilling incidents than the wildest tales of romance. It is within the limits of the last three hundred years, that upon the very grounds where we have built our comfortable homes, the untamed and unlettered savage held almost undisputed sway ; the dense forest shadowed the land from Panama to the frozen North, and every bay, and estuary, and lake, bore only upon its surface the bark canoe of the wild Indian. But now, the war-whoop is silent, and comfortable and stately dwellings occupy the seat of the humble wigwam. The hardy pioneers in the settlement of this country, fought their way inch by inch against the fierce redmen of the forest. To enable my little readers more fully to appreciate the perils they encountered, I will relate to them one of those scenes in which they were so frequently engaged, even down to within the last seventy or eighty years.

About the middle of July, 1782, seven Wyandots crossed the Ohio a few miles above Wheeling, and committed great depredations upon the southern shore, killing an old man whom they found alone in his cabin, and spreading terror throughout the neighborhood. Within a few hours after their retreat, eight men assembled from dif-

ferent parts of the small settlement and pursued the enemy with great expedition. Among the more active and efficient of the party were two brothers, Adam and Andrew Poe. Adam was particularly popular. In strength, action, and hardihood, he had no equal—being finely formed and inured to all the perils of the woods.

They had not followed the trail far, before they became satisfied that the depredators were conducted by Bigfoot, a renowned chief of the Wyandot tribe, who derived his name from the immense size of his feet. His height considerably exceeded six feet, and his strength was represented as herculean. He had also five brothers, but little inferior to himself in size and courage, and as they generally went in company, they were the terror of the whole country. Adam Poe was overjoyed at the idea of measuring his strength with that of so celebrated a chief, and urged the pursuit with keenness which quickly brought him into the vicinity of the enemy. For the last few miles, the trail had led them up the southern bank of the Ohio, where the footprints in the sand were deep and obvious, but when within a few hundred yards of the point at which the whites as well as the Indians were in the habit of crossing, it suddenly diverged from the stream, and stretched along a rocky ridge, forming an obtuse angle with its former direction. Here Adam halted for a moment, and directed his brother and the other young men to follow the trail with proper caution, while he himself still adhered to the river path, which led through clusters of willows directly to the point where he supposed the enemy to lie. Having examined the priming of his gun, he crept cautiously

through the bushes, until he had a view of the point of embarkation. Here lay two canoes, empty and apparently deserted. Being satisfied, however, that the Indians were close at hand, he relaxed nothing of his vigilance, and soon gained a jutting cliff, which hung immediately over the canoes. Hearing a low murmur below, he peered cautiously over, and beheld the object of his search. The gigantic Bigfoot, lay below him in the shade of a willow, and was talking in a low deep tone to another warrior, who seemed a mere pigmy by his side. Adam cautiously drew back, and cocked his gun. The mark was fair—the distance did not exceed twenty feet, and his aim was unerring. Raising his rifle slowly and cautiously, he took a steady aim at Bigfoot's breast, and drew the trigger. His gun flashed. Both Indians sprung to their feet with a deep interjection of surprise, and for a single second all three stared upon each other. This inactivity, however, was soon over. Adam was too much hampered by the bushes to retreat, and setting his life upon the cast of a die, he sprung over the bush which had sheltered him, and summoning all his powers, leaped boldly down the precipice and alighted upon the breast of Bigfoot with a shock which bore him to the earth. At the moment of contact, Adam had also thrown his right arm around the neck of the smaller Indian, so that all three came to the earth together.

At that moment a sharp firing was heard among the bushes above, announcing that the other parties were engaged, but the trio below were too busy to attend to anything but themselves. Bigfoot was for an instant stunned by the violence of the shock and Adam was enabled to keep them



down. But the exertion necessary for that purpose was so great, that he had no leisure to use his knife. Bigfoot quickly recovered, and without attempting to rise wrapped his long arms around Adam's body, and pressed him to his breast with the crushing force of a boa constrictor! Adam, as I have already remarked, was a powerful man, and had seldom encountered his equal, but never had he yet felt an embrace like that of Bigfoot. He instantly relaxed his hold of the small Indian, who sprung to his feet. Bigfoot then ordered him to run for his tomahawk which lay within ten steps, and kill the white man, while he held him in his arms. Adam, seeing his danger, struggled manfully to extricate himself from the folds of the giant, but in vain. The lesser Indian approached with his uplifted tomahawk, but Adam watched him closely, and as he was about to strike, gave him a kick so sudden and violent, as to knock the tomahawk from his hand, and send him staggering back into the water. Bigfoot uttered an exclamation in a tone of deep contempt at the failure of his companion, and raising his voice to its highest pitch, thundered out several words in the Indian tongue, which Adam could not understand, but supposed to be a direction for a second attack. The lesser Indian now again approached, carefully shunning Adam's heels, and making many motions with his tomahawk, in order to deceive him as to the point where the blow would fall. This lasted for several seconds, until an exclamation from Bigfoot compelled his companion to strike. Such was Adam's dexterity and vigilance, however, that he managed to receive the tomahawk in a glancing direction upon his left wrist, wounding

him deeply but not disabling him. He now made a sudden and desperate effort to free himself from the arms of the giant, and succeeded. Instantly snatching up a rifle (for the Indian could not venture to shoot for fear of hurting his companion) he shot the lesser Indian through the body. But scarcely had he done so when Bigfoot arose, and placing one hand upon his collar and the other upon his hip, pitched him ten feet into the air, as he himself would have pitched a child. Adam fell upon his back at the edge of the water, but before his antagonist could spring upon him, he was again upon his feet, and stung with rage at the idea of being handled so easily, he attacked his gigantic antagonist with a fury which for a time compensated for inferiority of strength. It was now a fair fist fight between them, for in the hurry of the struggle neither had leisure to draw their knives. Adam's superior activity and experience as a pugilist, gave him great advantage. The Indian struck awkwardly, and finding himself rapidly dropping to leeward, he closed with his antagonist, and again hurled him to the ground. They quickly rolled into the river, and the struggle continued with unabated fury, each attempting to drown the other. The Indian being unused to such violent exertion, and having been much injured by the first shock in his stomach, was unable to exert the same powers which had given him such a superiority at first; and Adam, seizing him by the scalp-lock, put his head under water, and held it there, until the faint struggles of the Indian induced him to believe that he was drowned, when he relaxed his hold and attempted to draw his knife. The indian, however, to use Adam's own expression,



“had only been POSSUMMING!” He instantly regained his feet, and in his turn put his adversary under.

In the struggle, both were carried out into the current, beyond their depth, and each was compelled to relax his hold and swim for his life. There was still one loaded rifle upon the shore, and each swam hard in order to reach it, but the Indian proved the most expert swimmer, and Adam seeing that he should be too late, turned and swam out into the stream, intending to dive and thus frustrate his enemy's intention. At this instant, Andrew, having heard that his brother was alone in a struggle with two Indians, and in great danger, ran up hastily to the edge of the bank above, in order to assist him. Another white man followed him closely, and seeing Adam in the river, covered with blood, and swimming rapidly from shore, mistook him for an Indian, and fired upon him, wounding him dangerously in the shoulder. Adam turned, and seeing his brother, called loudly upon him to “shoot the big Indian upon the shore.” Andrew's gun, however, was empty, having just been discharged. Fortunately, Bigfoot had also seized the gun with which Adam had shot the lesser Indian, so that both were upon an equality. The contest was now who should load first. Bigfoot poured in his powder first, and drawing his ramrod out of its sheath in too great a hurry threw it into the river, and while he ran to recover it, Andrew gained an advantage. Still the Indian was but a second too late, for his gun was at his shoulder, when Andrew's ball entered his breast. The gun dropped from his hands and he fell forward upon his face upon the very margin of the

river. Andrew, now alarmed for his brother, who was scarcely able to swim, threw down his gun and rushed into the river in order to bring him ashore—but Adam, more intent upon securing the scalp of Bigfoot as a trophy, than upon his own safety, called loudly upon his brother to leave him alone and scalp the big Indian, who was now endeavoring to roll himself into the water, from a romantic desire, peculiar to the Indian warrior, of securing his scalp from the enemy. Andrew, however, refused to obey, and insisted upon saving the living, before attending to the dead. Bigfoot, in the meantime, had succeeded in reaching the deep water before he expired, and his body was borne off by the waves, without being stripped of the ornament and pride of an Indian warrior.

Not a man of the Indians had escaped. Five of Bigfoot's brothers, the flower of the Wyandot nation, had accompanied him in the expedition, and all perished. It is said that the news of this calamity, threw the whole tribe into mourning. Their remarkable size, their courage, and their superior intelligence, gave them immense influence, which, greatly to their credit, was generally exerted on the side of humanity. Their powerful interposition, had saved many prisoners from the stake, and had given a milder character to the warfare of the Indians in that part of the country. A chief of the same name was alive in that part of the country so late as 1792, but whether a brother or a son of Bigfoot, is not known. Adam Poe recovered of his wounds, and lived many years after his memorable conflict; but never forgot the tremendous "hug" which he sustained in the arms of Bigfoot.

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