

On page 7 there is an error -

November 1785 should be November 1780. The letter date which is consistent with his release in 1784 is the date given in "The Story of Captain Jasper Parrish," Buffalo Historical Society, VI, 533, and in the other material in this folder -

two articles from the Ontario County Times

an unsigned, undated copy of a letter to Mr. Ochs.

A brief Narrative of Jasper Parrish who was taken captive by the Indians in the Revolutionary War, and remained a prisoner among them six years and eight months.

He with his father were captured on the 5th July 1778 by a small party of the Mousie Indians, and were conducted by them up the Delaware River to a place called Cookhouse where they arrived in six days after being taken prisoner.

Ten days after their arrival at Cookhouse they were separated by the Indians, his Father being taken from him, to be given up to the British at Fort Niagara where he was surrendered to them, and two years thereafter was exchanged as a prisoner of war and returned to his family.

When captured they were about six miles from home and had with them 5 horses which the Indians also took with them. Cookhouse where they were first conducted to, was a small place where eight families of the Mousie tribe of Indians resided. While in this situation Jasper Parrish belonged to a Capt or War Chief of the same tribe by the name of Capt Mounsh who became his master. In a few days after reaching Cookhouse Capt Mounsh left his prisoner in the charge of an Indian family and went off to the West and was gone a long time, during which time the Indians offered no violence to him, who being a boy only eleven years old was permitted by them to ride one of their horses, and was in other respects treated by them with much kindness. After a long time his master Capt Mounsh returned to Cookhouse to receive his prisoner and conduct him to Chemung. While he had been left thus, he was taken very severely sick with the dysentery owing to change of diet and habit, and in this situation the Indians endeavored to relieve him by administering some of their remedies, but he was so afraid they would poison him that he refused at first to take their medicine. At length he consented to take it, and it gave him immediate relief and in the course of a few days he recovered entirely. It was a black syrup made of roots and herbs. The Indians generally appeared to be friendly to him, and took good care of him; as the same they would frequently say that by & by they would take the Yankee boys scalp accompanied with motions & gesture of taking the scalp. This conduct of the Indians kept him in continual apprehensive until his master Capt Mounsh came on from the Westward to receive him.

On the first of October he set out with his prisoner from Chemung, - the first settlement of Indians they came to was on the Big Bend on the Susquehanna River, - they continued on without delay till they reached Chemung where they remained the following Winter. On their arrival at their place and before and before they entered the Indian Village his master and himself were both riding on horse back. Capt Mounsh gave

the Indian scalp Holloo very loud which is a long drawn sound, the accent on the last a and pronounced like quaga. At this the Indians men and boys came running from every part of the village to the center.

This was a very noted place to make their prisoners run the gantlet. As soon as they came to the center of the Village the Indians set up a horrid yell, and came running to Capt Mounsh and his prisoner as they were riding and getting hold of Jasper tore him with great violence from his horse on to the ground and like so many tigers began to beat him with clubs, whips and handles of tomahawk. At length and after he had received a terrible beating, his master interfered, and spoke very loud to them in the Mousie language and said "that is enough".

At this they all stopped beating him, and after a short time he was able to get up off the ground and stand up, where then he was conducted to an Indian hut or cabin, where he remained until the next day being completely covered with black and blue bruises. In a few days after he was sold by his master at this place to a Delaware Indian family, who resided on the south side of the Tioga River, and who paid for him the sum of Twenty dollars. Immediately after he was sold his former master left that place and went West Fort Niagara, where in a drunken frolic he was stabbed and killed by another Indian. Jasper remained with the Delaware family on the Tioga River during the winter and spring of 1779. During the winter he was very scanty class, and his suffering from both cold and hunger were very great, the winter being very long and intensely cold. His food was the same as the Indian family and constituted of venison, wolf, dog, fox and muskrat meat, and some wild fowls. Very little corn was to be found at this among the Indians and salt was not to be had, and there were no white People short of Niagara to whom they could apply for relief. During the winter he was compelled by the Indians with two Indian boys (the snow being very deep) to go down the River a distance of 30 rods, then to throw off their blankets and jumped into the River through a hole in the ice and then putting on these Blankets to return to the cabin. This was done and the Indians told him to make him tough so that he might stand the cold weather without feeling it so much. This he was obliged to go through with repeatedly in the coldest weather. When the spring opened and the warm weather came on, he with the Indians was accustomed to go a hunting, fishing, and a digging ground nuts to procure something to support themselves, and continued this mode of living until the middle of Summer; when he and three Indians went up the River Tioga to a place called Chimney Narrows on a hunting trip for a few days. While encamped here near the River the Indians killed several deer. In three or four day after they arrived here the Indians got out of lead, and one evening as they were sitting by the fire, one of them remarked that he would get some tomorrow. Parrish thought it was very strange that he should be able to obtain lead in one day when there were no white people of who they could procure it nearer than Niagara. However the next morning the three Indians took their guns and went off as usual as he supposed hunting. In the afternoon the Indian who spoke of getting lead returned with about a

peck of lead ore tied up in his blanket, dropped it down by the fire and directed Parrish to make up a large fire with dry wood which he did in a few minutes. The Indian placed the ore on top of the fire and scraped away the ashes under the fire so as to give a place for the lead to run in as it melted, then with an iron ladle he dipped up the lead and poured it on to pieces of bark as it melted till the whole was separated from the cross. Parrish thought that he must have obtained from 5 to 12 lbs of pure lead. Three days after the Indians returned with him to Chemung. By this time Parrish had been a captive with the Indians about one year during which time he had seldom heard the english language spoken. He had acquired enough of the language to understand their conversation very well and could speak it very well so as to be understood by them. Parrish remained at this place with the Indian family that bought him until the last of August 1779 at which time Genl Sullivan was marching with this army into the Indian country to chastise them for their many enormities. The Indians were collecting a large force at Newtown near K Imyra to attack him, and selected a point about 4 miles below Newtown where they intended to make the contemplated stand and to surprise him if possible while he was advancing. The Indians had placed the baggage squaws and provisions about 1 mile back from where they were laying in wait for Sullivan, and had gather together a large war party among whom were some few whites and were very confident of success. Soon after the battle commenced the Indians found that they could not stand their ground, as Sullivan was making an attempt to surround them and they immediately despatched a runner to the place where the squaws baggage and prisoners were left directions for them to pack up and retreat up the River to Painted Post. Parrish was left with the squaws and baggage, who together with a number of young Indians immediately moved off up the River. The Indians being hard pressed soon retreated from the battle ground, and next day overtook them at Painted Post. The party of Indians who had charge of Parrish immediately took up their line of march westward by the way of Bath, Genesee, Tonawanda and so on to Fort Niagara then a British Post. Here they remained till late in the fall, furnished with salt provision by the British, which the Indians being unaccustomed to occasioned a great deal of disease and death among them. While they were making very short stops until they arrived there. In a very short time afterwards, the whole of the six Nations of Indians were encamped on the plain around the Fort. encamped near the Fort they had a general drunken frolic during which one Indian killed another; upon this this Indian law of retaliation was resorted to by the friends of the dead Indian and in less than an hour afterwards they became so infuriated that five Indians were laying dead before the Chiefs could restrain their Warriors. While at Fort Niagara with the Delaware family Parrish understood the British were offering a guinea bounty for every Yankee scalp that was taken and brought in by the Indians. He was afterwards informed that they offered the above bounty for the purpose of getting the indians to disperse in small war parties on the frontier of the States, as they were becoming very troublesome at Fort NIagara. Parrish was with them

in camp at this place about six weeks. At a certain time a number of the Indians belong to the same family as his master got drunk in the evening, two of the drunken Indians were left alone with Parrish at the camp and were sitting on the side of the fire opposite to him they soon fell into conversation how they could procure some more rum; After a short time one of them observed to the other, that they would kill the young Yankee, and take his scalp to the Fort, and sell it and then would be able to buy some more rum. The young Yankee understood all the conversation and put himself on his guard in case they should make any attempt against him. In a few minutes one of the Indians drew a long half burned brand from the fire, and hurled it at Parrish's head; But he being on the alert, dodged the brand and sprang up and ran out into the bushes which surrounded the encampment. The Indians attempted to follow him, but being drunk and the night dark, Parrish escaped from them keeping away till next morning when the Indians become - he returned again to camp. While he was in Camp with the Indians near Niagara five died out of this masters family including his wife. One day Parrish's Indian master took him into Fort Niagara where he offered to sell him to the White People, none of whom appeared willing to purchase him. At length his master met with a large fine portly looking Mohawk Indian by the name of Capt David Hill who bought him off his Delaware master for the sum of Twenty dollars without any hesitation. Capt Hill was then living on the plain immediately below and adjoining the fort. He led Parrish immediately away and conducted him to his home or cabin, where having arrived Capt David said to him in English "this is your home; you must stay here". His reflections were not very pleasant on his change of masters; after becoming well acquainted with the Delaware language, to be under the necessity of acquiring a new one the Mohawk differing entirely from the Delaware and to make new acquaintances and friends after being attached as he did to his Delaware master. The exchange of masters proved however to be a very fortunate and happy. Parrish resided with Capt David Hill's family five years and upwards, during all which they furnished him with the necessary Indian clothing and with abundant of comfortable food. He passed all that time in traveling with the Indians and in hunting and fishing and working, but they never compelled him to do any hard work or any thing beyond his ability or endurance.

In the month of November 1786 the Chiefs of the Six Nations held a general council with the British at Fort Niagara. At this Council Capt David took his prisoner into it, and into the midst of the assembled Chiefs, and in the most formal & public manner had him adopted into his family as a son. He placed a large belt of wampum around his neck; then an old chief took him by the hand, and made a long speech such as is customary among the Indians on similar occasions. He spoke with much dignity and solemnity, often interrupted by the other chiefs with exclamations of Nahoe which is a mark of attention and approbation. After the speech was concluded the Chiefs arose, and came forward and shook hands with the adopted Prisoner and the ceremony closed. His Indian father then came to him, and desired him to return home During

the following winter he remained with his Indian Father at Fort Niagara. In the following month of May Capt David Hill, and the Mohawk Indians removed to and made a settlement at a point higher up the Niagara River at a place now known as Lewiston.

Here Parrish resided among the Mohawks in the family of his Indian father and mother until the close of the Revolutionary War. During this long time he was frequently with Capt Hill traveling among other tribes and nations of Indians; invariably receiving at all times from his adopted Father's family, and from other Indians among whom they sojourned, and was kindly treated and his wants attended to, and not infrequently many acts of friendship and favor were bestowed by them upon him, during his captivity among them. In September 1784 a Treaty of peace between the United States and the Six Nations of Indians was held at Fort Stanwix (now Rome in Onondaga County) at which the Indians agreed to deliver up all prisoners captured and destined among them, belonging to, or captured in the United States. There were at this time among the Six Nations ninety three white prisoners, Parrish among the numbers. On the 29th day of November 1784 he left Lewiston accompanied by the Indians to be surrendered at Fort Stanwix.

Immediately afterwards he set out on his return to his own family and friends whom he had - heard from or of during his long captivity among the Indians; but whom he at length found residing in Goshen in Orange County, N. Y. He had heard the English language so rarely, and been so totally unaccustomed to speak it himself during so long a time, that he could with difficulty make himself understood speaking it very brokenly. He was destitute of education, and was able to devote but very little time and attention to school on his return home, receiving only nine month schooling.

With that exception he was wholly self taught and educated from his after reading and intercourse with the world. In November 1790, he was requested by Timothy Pickering commissioner on the part of Congress to act as Interpreter between the Seneca Nation of Indians and the Government at a Treaty held at that time at Tioga Point. He was called upon again by the same Commissioner to act as Interpreter at another Treaty at Newton Point (near Elmira) in July 1791. This treaty was held with the Six Nations of Indians. Here he gained a good deal of commendation and applause from the Commissioner and Indians for the very accurate and faithful manner in which he rendered the Indian language. In April 1792 he was appointed by the President Washington as a standing interpreter for the Six Nations of Indians and was instructed to reside at Canandaigua under the directions and instructions of Genl Israel Chapin then agent to the Six Nations. In November 1794 another Treaty was held with the Six Nations at Canandaigua, the Hon. T. Pickering presiding as Commissioner on the part of the U. S. where again he was the principal Interpreter. This Treaty now remains as the governing treaty between the U. S. and the Six Nations of Indians to the present time 1822. After serving as Interpreter 13 years he was appointed Sub Agent and Interpreter by the President of the U. S. on the 15th day of February 1803; which two appointments he held through all the successive administrations of the

Government down to the second term of Genl Jackson, transacting all kind of business between the U. S. and the Six Nations and also between the State of New York and the Indians. He has also officiated as Interpreter and been present at very many other Treaties during his term of Office. He was very desirous to civilize the Indians by inculcating among them habits of industry and instructing them how to cultivate their land, and by endeavoring to impress them with the use of property and the value of time. In his to effect this object, he has found a friendly disposition among the Oneidas and Tuscarora tribes as among the Senecas residing at Buffalo reservation, except Red Jacket to welcome missionaries and school masters and all instruction to ameliorate there condition. Teachers and missionaries meet with considerable encouragement among them, and the children of the above named tribes are receiving from schools verry great bennifit, and much good has already been accomplished, and great advance in 6 years towards improvements in husbandry, than has been made in 40 years before. They are tilling there lands much better, making good fences and buildings and more comfortable dwellings for themselves. The means that are placed in the hands of the Agent by the Government enables him to furnish each tribe annually with all necessary farming utensals and all implements of husbandry to enable them properly to till the land, and they are then instructed how to use them. They are thus enabled to rais a considerable surplus of grain beyond what is required for their own consumption, instead of being wholly dependent upon the precarious results of the chase. During the time I was prisnor among them six years & eight months, and for many years subsequent to the Revolutionary war, the use of the plow was entirely unknown among them, But they are now familiar with all most every essential farming implement. Notwithstanding this great advance towards improvement and all the efforts making by Government and other citizens to christianize the Six Nations the noted Red Jacket has been, and is vioolently opposed to all inovations upon there old customs and all changes in there condition. He says they were created Indians and Indians they should remain and that he never will relinquish their ancient pagan customs and habits.