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at the river washing saw them coming and started to run, and at the same time, tried to help their mother. In passing, an Indian threw a tomahawk at the old lady and severely wounded her in the wrist as she threw up her hand to save her face. The Indians did not pursue (the girls), but hurried on the cabin. As they entered, one of the girls, Barbara, ran out (toward the oak) and was knocked down (there) and her skull fractured, but she was not scalped. Susan, remaining in the cabin, closed the door and, when an Indian put his hand in to try to open it, she mashed and burned his fingers with a hot iron. By this time the father and men from the new house came up and attacked the Indians with hand spikes and other tools, and drove them off."

By the time John and his party arrived, darkness had fallen. John "was overjoyed to find his father and Susan unharmed, but pained to find his mother and other sisters and his brother Thomas all missing, and their fates unknown."

At first light the next morning, John and the party set out to search for the family. They tracked a trail of blood, and found his mother. Gwin writes, "When she was found, she was entirely out of her mind and did not recognize her son. In time she recovered, but constantly remembered the attack."



The Wilson oak stands sentry in a meadow at the Bolar crossroads, where it has seen more than 300 years of history pass. The late George Washington Cleek, Bath historian extraordinaire, eloquently lauded it more than 70 years ago: "This lofty oak stands over 100 feet tall, with a circumference of 27 feet, five inches. The elk and deer have torn the velvet off of their horns on the rough bark. It has 'heard' the lowing of buffalo herds, the scream of the panther, the howl of the wolves... the hoot of the owl, the 'whip' of the whip-poor-will, the beat of the pheasant, the gobble of the wild turkey hunting its mate." Owl, pheasant and turkey can still be found in the beautiful Jackson River valley. (Recorder photo by Charles Garratt)

It was later learned that Thomas had been captured by the Indians, and "carried off beyond Ohio," Gwin writes. Legend has it Thomas "was adopted by an old squaw, and he never got home, but died in captivity." The sisters Margaret and Elizabeth had managed to successfully escape the Indians by running

off into the woods and hiding there. While most of the Wilsons scattered as time went by, John, who earned the rank of major in the Revolutionary War, is buried in the church cemetery.

So, if you happen to stand on a knoll this weekend and gaze at the gnarled old oak, a silent sentry in a valley meadow, think back on the cabin it once shaded, and the drama that unfolded there some 245 years ago.

But back to the Stony Run church. William Wilson, the first elder, found it impossible to build a church and hold regular services, simply because of the constant threat of Indian raids. After 1770, according to "The New History of Highland County, Virginia, 1983," the Presbytery did send missionaries to this "wild west" territory of the state. Stony Run Church was partially organized in 1814 as a "missionary outpost of Windy Cove Presbyterian Church," Bath's oldest, founded in 1749. The present structure was built in 1856, and dedicated in June 1860. But then came the Civil War. The organization of Stony Run Presbyterian Church was not completed until Oct. 11, 1868, the Highland history book states.

A full decade prior to that, Highland County's first sheriff, Washington Stephenson, was buried there.

Washington and his wife, Susan Wilson Stephenson, had a baby, also named Washington, born May 16, 1858. Just

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