

James O'Hara

Printed anecdote, "Indian Fidelity", mentioning James O'Hara, undated

Box 1, Folder 20

Darlington Family Papers, 1753-1921, DAR.1925.01, Darlington Collection, Special Collections Department, University of Pittsburgh

FROM POULSON'S AMERICAN DAILY ADVERTISER.

Indian Fidelity.—The following interesting anecdote was a few days since received from the venerable narrator, with permission to publish it. From the same respectable individual, the reading world has been lately favoured with much valuable information relative to the aborigines who formerly occupied the country which we now inhabit, the perusal of which, cannot fail to produce respect for the Indian character, and regret, that a race of men so noble, should have been mercilessly swept away by the genius of civilization! X.

On seeing the death of Gen. O'Hara announced in the public papers, the following occurrence respecting him, was brought to my recollection.

Some time after the commencement of the revolutionary war, when the Northern Indians were beginning to make inroads on the people living on the east side of the Ohio River, this gentleman having come out to the upper Meravian Town, on the Muskingum, on business, and there taken lodging with a respectable and decent family of Indians in the Village—I had one evening scarcely laid down to sleep, when I was suddenly roused from my bed by an Indian runner (or Messenger) who in the night had been sent to me 9 miles, with the following verbal message: "My friend! see that our friend O'Hara, now at your town, be immediately taken off to the settlement of the White People; avoiding all paths leading to that River. Fail not in taking my advice, for there is no time to lose—and hear my Son further on the subject."

The fact was, that eleven Warriors from Sandusky, were far advanced on their way, to take or murder O'Hara; who at break of day would be at this place for the purpose. I immediately sent for this gentleman, and told him that I would furnish him with a conductor, on whom he might depend—and having sent for Anthony, (otherwise called Luke Holland;*) informed him of the circumstance, and requested his services; he, (the Indian) wished first to know, whether my friend placed confidence in him, and trusted to his fidelity; which question being answered by O'Hara himself, and to his full satisfaction; he replied "Well! Our lives cannot be separated!—We must stand, or fall together! but take courage, for no enemy shall discover us!"

The Indian then took Mr. O'Hara through the woods, and arriving within a short distance of the Ohio River, pointed out to him a hiding place, until he, by strolling up and down the River, should discover White People on the opposite shore; when finally observing a house, where two white men were cleaning out a canoe for use, he hurried back to bring on his friend, who, when near the spot, advised his Indian conductor to hide himself, knowing those people to be bad men, he feared they might kill him, for his services. The Indian finally seeing his friend safe across the river, returned and made report thereof.

The young Indian, who had been the bearer of the message from his Father to me, had immediately returned on seeing O'Hara off, in order to play a further deception on the war party, for the purpose of preventing them even from going to our town, fearing, that if there, and not finding their object, they might probably hunt up for his track, and finding this, pursue him. He indeed effected his purpose so completely, that while they were looking for him in one direction, his conductor was taking him off in another.

The Father of the young lad, who was the principal cause that O'Hara's life had been saved, had long been admired by all who knew him, for his *philanthropy*; on account of which, the Traders had given him the name of "*the Gentleman*." Otherwise, this Indian was not in connection with the Christian Indian Society, though a friend to them. He lived with his family retired, and in a decent manner.

While I feel a delight in offering to the relatives and friends of the deceased, as also to the public, this *true* and *faithful* picture of *Indian fidelity*—I regret that, on necessarily having had to recur to the names "Anthony" and "Luke Holland," I am drawn from scenes of pleasure, to crimes of the *blackest hue*. The *very* Indian just named, who at *that* time joyfully reported to me his having conducted his friend *out of danger*, to a place of safety, some years after approached me with the doleful news, that every one of his children, (all minors,) together with his hoary-headed parents, *had been murdered by the white people*, at Gradenhatten, on the Muskingum.

JOHN HECKEWELDER.

* See Heckewelder's Historical Account of the Indians. Chap. XX.

X O'HARA, James, a native of Ireland, came to America as a soldier in 1772. He first engaged in the Indian trade, and thus made himself useful to the government, and was employed in frequent missions to the Indian tribes. He served in the army under Wayne as quarter-master general. He purchased a large tract of land in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, and may justly be considered one of the founders of that place. He died 1819, aged 66.

JOSEPH A. ... son of the preceding was born at ... July, 1812. He ... after visiting Holland for some time, ... and became professor of Greek and Latin, and afterwards of ... at ... He died in the flower of life, 10th November, 1842. He published a Dissertation on the Worship of God, by J. C.—a History of Rome and Germany—besides a Latin translation of ...

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