

THE LEGEND OF STIGWANDISH

(How Camp Stigwandish Got Its Name)

Prior to the War of 1812, an Indian by the name of "Stigwandish" (meaning "Standing Rock") lived in Ashtabula County in the neighborhood of Jefferson, OH. He was known as a "good Indian", he made friends with the settlers and everyone in the locality thought highly of him.

When the War of 1812 was declared, the Indians, under Joseph Brandt, fought with the British. Most of them left for the Canadian border where they organized war parties. Stigwandish was compelled to go with the tribes but before he left, he promised his white friends that he would warn them, at the point of losing his life, if at any time he heard of a plan to raid the locality.

When Stigwandish heard that a raid was being planned through Erie and Ashtabula counties, he left the tribes to warn his friends of the impending raid. Now on guard, area residents made necessary preparations. Through spies, the British learned of this activity and canceled their proposed raid.

Stigwandish disappeared and no one knew what had happened to him. Quite often the old settlers discussed him and wondered why he had disappeared. Years later, an old settler, on his deathbed, confessed to the murder of Stigwandish. He said the Indian's body could be found in a hollow tree on the banks of what is now known as "Indian Creek". In fact, that's how Indian Creek got its name.

A party was organized to search along the banks of the creek. The body of Stigwandish was found, but about all that remained were a few bones, his tomahawk, and leather moccasins. It has been said that both the leather moccasins and tomahawk were in the possession of a woman in Ashtabula whose grandfather was in the search party.

The man who murdered Stigwandish did so because of a vow he had made to kill every Indian he came across. It seems that during the war his two sons were stationed at an outpost in the Firelands region, near Sandusky. The Indians had raided this outpost and cruelly tortured and murdered two or three men on guard. This man's son was found dazed and wandering several miles away from the scene, his head scalped. He died several days later. The old man repented his act when he found he had killed the Indian who had warned the settlers and saved hundreds of pioneers from a cruel death.

The camp was named "Stigwandish" in honor of this Seneca Indian because he represented the true "Scout Spirit." He knew he would meet certain death at the hands of the Indians if he betrayed them and, perhaps, even at the hands of the settlers. But he was true to his friends. Like a "Standing Rock," he kept his word.