**Ann Wasson**

* + **Written by Walter Sloane for the Franklin County School Annual. Donated by the Mary E. Dessen Estate to the Kittochtinny Historical Society which gave permission to print.**
* **The story of Ann Wasson is not one of youth and romance as has been portrayed of other Indian captives, but that of suffering and privation. The story of a noble pioneer woman who was willing to risk all that this country should be developed for her children. In the spring of 1756 we find Ann Wasson living with her second husband, John Wasson, and seven children-John, William, Robert and Jane Sloan, issue with her first husband, William Sloan, and Thomas, James and Elizabeth Wasson, issue with her second husband, John Wasson- on a plantation of 450 acres in Peters Township. Cumberland (now Franklin) County. The times were exceedingly dangerous. Since Braddock's defeat the previous fall the Indians bad been terrorizing this whole section. Many settlers had lost their lives and many been captured. Rev. John Steele's meeting house had been turned into a fort, which was a place of refuge for the women and children of the neighborhood, as well as a stronghold when attacked by the Indians. On April 5, 1 756, Fort McCord, just a few miles away, had fallen with the loss of many lives. Seedtime was at hand. John Wasson was busy tilling his land On May26, 1756, Ann Wasson leaving her seven children at Fort Steele, had gone to their plantation, risking her life that she may be at the side of her husband. Without warning they were attacked by the Indians. John Wasson was horribly mangled and scalped. Ann Wasson was taken captive. We find this account in the Pennsylvania Gazelle. Page 108. 1756. "On Wednesday 26th May, I 756, they (the Indians) came to the plantation of John Wasson in Peters Township, Cumberland County, whom they killed and mangled in so horrid and cruel manner, that a regard to decency forbids describing it, and afterwards burned his house and carried off his wife. A party of Steeles and Peters men went out after the enemy, but to no purpose."** **The authorities were notified. John Potter, the first sheriff of Cumberland County, took charge. The question arose as to what should done with the children. The older ones--young lads, nearly grown--told of an uncle, a brother of their mothers, who live near Newton, Bucks County. It was decided that the children should go to him. A notice was written** **Mr. Robert Means These are to certify to you your brother John Wasson last Wednesday was barbarously killed by the Indians and his wife carried captive and as the time is so exceeding dangerous in these parts and no relatives of the orphans here to take care of them the children desires to go to you and all things considered it appears to be most advisable and with them we send you an account of his estate as it is now situate his crops in the ground the young lads Can tell you best. His debts appears to be near fifty pound and if you incline to administer send word or come up with the young lads yourself, you being the nighest relation. This 29th of May, 1756 John Potter Will Maxwell, Hez Alexander, Win. Dunwody, Moses Thomson.** **Just where Ann Wasson spent her captivity is hot known. She was held captivity for three and one-half years. On November 27, 1759, a pass was granted to Teedyuscung, a famous Delaware King, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania to conduct four white captives, two women and two boys, to l) Philadelphia, to deliver to the governor. Ann Wasson is identified as one of these captives: Page 692, Vol. 3, First Series, and Pennsylvania Archives: "Timothy Horsfield's Pass to Teedyuscung. 1759. Northampton, 55. L. S.) These are to request all his Majesty's liege people to suffer the bearer, King Teedyuscung & Daniel, with seven other Indians, men & women having with them four white captives. \'iz. two women & 2 boys. to pass unmolested to Philada.. their business being to deliver the said captives to his honour the Governor. Given under my hand & seal at Bethlehem on the 27th Nov., I 759. Timo. Horsfirld." In December 1, 1759, Teedynscung delivered Ann Wasson to James Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor of the province of Pennsylvania. The official record of this delivery is found in an original manuscript, the property of the State of Pennsylvania, in the State Library at Harrisburg, which reads** **Memorandum of Ann Wasson She was taken ill the year 1756 in the beginning of May, at Caghnehseheeky in Cumberland County her husband John Wasson was then killed and scalped. She left seven children about two miles off, and she hopes they are alive some where. She is unable to support herself. She has two brothers some where in Chester or Bucks County. Memorandum of Maria Wagoner She was taken in the year 1757 in September and her husband was then killed and scalped his name was Conrad Wagoner they lived on Scarboro in Lancaster County, she has no children. Peter Newfang, a lad of about 11 or 12 years of age was taken in the year 1756 in May on the other side of the mountains, his mother was then killed. He can't talk a word of German. His father, Balhaser Newfang, is a private soldier in Battalion of Penna. Regiment. Endorsed on the back of the above record is the following: "Names of 4 prisoners delivered by Teedyuscung to Gov. 1st Dec.1759" James Hamilton was just beginning his second term as Lieutenant Governor of the province of Pennsylvania when Teedyscung delivered these four prisoners to him in Philadelphia. In fact he had not yet made his inaugural address. On December 4, 1759, he addresses Teedyuscung:** **Page 6, Vol. 3, Fourth Series, Pennsylvania Archives: James Hamilton, Lieu tenant Governor, to Teedyuscung chief of the Delaware, December 4, 1759. Brother: The sight of our flesh and blood, after a tedious captivity gives us great pleasure, and I thank you for the return of the four prisoners, and expect you will continue to (10 your utmost that all be returned to us as soon as possible. (Gave a string of Wampum.) Brother: You have acted a just part in bringing the six horses that have been stolen from the poor people on the borders by some of your unthinking young men. The condition of the prisoners is described by Lieutenant Governor Hamilton as being "naked and destitute" in a message he sent to the assembly on Dec. 7, 1759** **Page 12', Vol. 3; Fourth Series, Pennsylvania Archives: James Hamilton, Lieutenant Governor, to the Assembly, December 7, 1759. There are two Indian messengers in town from the Ohio, who, with Teedyuscung, to whom they were recommended to be conducted here, have been assisting in a council of Indians held at Atsintsing, an Indian town, situate on the Cayuga Branch of the Sasquehannah.** **Teedynscung, having delivered to me four prisoners, two elderly women and two boys, who are quite naked and destitute, I recommend it to you to enable me to make some provision for them, and likewise to send these messengers away well pleased with their reception, being of opinion with Teedyuscung, that it will be of great service, at this time, to engage the friendship of the nation to whom they belong. Isaac Norris, Speaker of the House finds that the assembly made some provision for the four prisoners in the response to the Lieutenant Governor's message, on December 8, 1759.** **Voles of Assembly, Vol. 5, December 8, 1759: We have recommended the other parts of your Honor's message to the commissioners who will make a suitable provision for the prisoners now delivered, and also to take care that the messengers from the Ohio shall depart well satisfied with their reception. Amongst us signed by the Order of the House December 8, 1759 Isaac Norris Speaker.** **Just when and where Ann Wasson was united with her children is not known. On April 22, 1762, letters of administration were issued at Carlisle on the estate of John Wasson, with Ann Wasson and William Sloan, her eldest son, as administrators in the settlement of this estate it was brought out that John Wasson "had received all and singular the personal estate of William Sloan", Ann Wasson' s first husband. As this sum was now due the Sloan children. William Allison, John Holiday, William Maxwell and James Potter asked to act as arbitrators. On May 26, 1762, they made settlement with the consent of all parties. This settlement was confirmed at an Orphan's Court held at Shippensburg on the 8th day of March 1763.**

**John Wasson**

* **In Nov. 1951, while digging a ditch along the South Penn railroad, a farmer uncovered the skeleton of a man believed to be that of John Wasson. The examining pathologist reported that the man was brutally attacked with both a tomahawk and war clubs. Marks on the skull and other indications pointed to a violent death; ribs were fractured by blows to the body, and one of the skeleton's arms was broken by twisting.**