

DELAWARE CHIEFS – CAPTAIN JACOB AND SHINGAS

In speaking of the horrible Indian massacres which followed the defeat of Braddock, Drake, in his Indian history, says:

“Shingas and Captain Jacobs were supposed to have been the principal instigators of them, and a reward of seven hundred dollars was offered for their heads. It was at this period that the dead bodies of some of the murdered and mangled were sent from the frontiers to Philadelphia, and hailed about the streets, to inflame the people against the Indians, and also against the Quakers, to whose mild forbearance was attributed a laxity in sending out troops. The mob surrounded the House of Assembly, having placed the dead bodies at its entrance, and demanded immediate succor. At this time, the above reward was offered.”

King Shingas, as he was called by the whites (who is noticed in the preceeding paragraph), but whose proper name was Shingask, which is interpreted Bog-Meadow, was the greatest Delaware warrior at that time. Heckwelder, who knew him personally, says: “Were his war exploits all on record, they would form an interesting document, though a shocking one.” Conococheague, Big Cove, Sherman’s Valley, and the settlements along the frontier, felt his strong arm sufficiently to attest that he was a “bloody warrior,” cruel his treatment, relentless his fury. His person was small, but in point of courage, activity and savage prowess, he was said to have never been exceeded by any one. In 1753, when Washington was on his expedition to fight the French on the Ohio (Allegheny), Shingas had his house at Kitanning.

King Shingas was at Fort Duquesne when Colonel Armstrong destroyed Kitanning; and there is no doubt whatever that Captain Jacobs fell in the engagement, notwithstanding Hans Hamilton, in a letter to the Council, dated at Fort Lyttleton, April 4th, 1756, said, “Indian Isaac hath claimed, and, we believe, received the reward offered for killing and scalping Captain Jacobs, and yet Captain Jacobs lived to do a great deal of mischief before his scalp fell into the hands of the English colonists.

Not only was Captain Jacobs a great warrior, but it would appear that all his family connections were Indians of note. In a letter from Colonel Stephen to Colonel Armstrong, it is stated on the authority of a returned captive from Muskingum that “A son of Captain Jacobs is killed, and a cousin of his, about seven foot high, called Young Jacob, at the destroying of Kitanning, and it is thought a noted warrior by the name of The Sunfish, as many of them were killed that we know nothing of.”

There is no doubt that Armstrong’s return did not embrace half the actual loss of the enemy, including women and children; but it was a mistake in Colonel Stephen, or his information, to include the warrior Sunfish among the slain, for he was a hale old chief in 1781.*

* History of Juniata Valley. – N. J. Jones, Editor.