



Bows, Bullets, and Bears (Frontier Pennsylvania) (Volume 1)

John L. Moore

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Jack Armstrong died violently along the Juniata River in early 1744.

Armstrong was a rough-and-tumble frontier trader whose sharp business practices antagonized one Indian too many. He and two men who worked for him traveled into the woods in early 1744 and never came out again. Word soon crossed the frontier that all three had been murdered. Obscure, but richly detailed documents tell how and why Iroquois Indians living along the Susquehanna River at present-day Sunbury developed evidence that exposed the Native Americans involved in Armstrong's murder.

John L. Moore's nonfiction book contains true stories of Armstrong and other real people caught up in the struggles that took place all along the Pennsylvania frontier throughout the late 1600s and 1700s. The stories are set mainly in the valleys of the Delaware, Juniata, Lehigh, Ohio and Susquehanna rivers.

Other chapters tell how:

The Philadelphia jury in Margaret Mattson's 1683 witchcraft trial delivered a split verdict. She was acquitted of bewitching her neighbors' cows, but found guilty of being known as a witch. Presiding over the trial was William Penn, who let Margaret go home after her husband and son posted a bond for her "good behavior."

Moravian missionaries who traveled along the Susquehanna River's West and North Branches during a famine in 1748 found many Indians sick with smallpox and suffering from starvation. The people in one native town were boiling tree bark for food. In another village they were cooking grass.

Early in the French & Indian War, an influential Iroquois chief known as "The Belt of Wampum" urged Pennsylvania officials to build a fort on the Susquehanna River at the native town called Shamokin, present-day Sunbury. "Such Indians as continue true to you want a place to come to and to live in security," The Belt said in early 1756.

Frances Slocum, a small girl kidnapped by Indians from her home along the Susquehanna River during the America Revolution, spent most of her adult life as a Miami Indian. In 1839, her brother Joseph and his daughters traveled from Pennsylvania to Indiana to visit her. They traveled by stage coach, canal boat and horse-drawn railroad during their 19-day journey west.

Anecdotes throughout the book describe how Native Americans and Europeans hunted bears, ate bear meat, and used bearskins for blankets and mattresses.

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