

TOM QUICK'S REVENGE

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The Indian Slayer/Avenger of the Delaware

"Hero of many a wondrous tale,
Full of his dev'lish cunning!
Tom never flunked or turned pale,
Following on the Indian's trail,
Shooting as he was running."

Tom Quick Jr., known as the Indian Slayer or the Avenger of the Delaware, was born a year after his family moved to Milford from New York in 1733. Tom's family got along very well with the Indians along the Delaware. Young Tom became best friends with an Indian boy named Mushwink whose father was a Delaware chieftain. Young Tom and Mushwink played, ate, and sleep together as if they were brothers. The Quick's Indian neighbors always brought them presents and taught them how to speak their language along with how to farm and hunt. Young Tom became a very good hunter. As the young friends grew older, peacefulness between the two races stopped.

William Penn, who was leader of the first few hundred shiploads of political and religious refugees to arrive in 1682, wrote back to London telling the others there how much better everything was here. This caused more and more immigrants to come. William Penn's sons wanted to add to their real estate by pushing for a promise that was made to their father by the Delaware Indians. He was promised that he could add to his land as far as a man could walk in a day and a half. This was okay with the Indians at first, but by the time 1737 rolled around there were lawyers involved stating that any man could make the walk. At this time, the Penn brothers hired fast couriers to make the walk for them, helping them to gain miles and miles of land. The Indians started to worry about losing all their homes, land, and burial grounds of their ancestors. The Indians, by now, are planning to wipe out the white race. By 1754 the French and Indian War began with the French recruiting a large amount of Indians to fight on their side.

One day in February of 1756, young Tom, his father and his brother-in-law worked all night in their gristmill, leaving at dawn to cross the frozen Delaware and head for home. When they got halfway across the river they were ambushed by a group of Indians. One of those

Indians was Mushwink, young Tom's boyhood best friend. Mushwink shot Tom's father. The older Tom pleaded with his son and son-in-law to leave him to die and to get out of there while they could. They did what he said and when the coast was clear, they turned back to see what fate had come to their father. The condition they found his dead body in was enough to drive young Tom mad to the point he vowed revenge on the whole Indian race. He didn't care if they were men, women or children. He set a pact to himself to kill as many as he could before he died himself.

Tom had a special rifle that he called "Long Tom" that he carried with him pretty much everywhere. Sometimes he would leave home without it running into an Indian who didn't know who he was. He would patronize the Indian until he got him close to a cliff at which time he would push him off to his death. After the war was over, Tom went into a tavern where he came across Mushwink who was boasting about killing the older Tom. Young Tom took him out of the tavern and shot him dead. Tom was arrested for this because of the war being over, but managed to escape with the help of friends. He killed many Indians over the years, until his death of smallpox at age sixty-two in the year 1796. On his deathbed he asked that a Delaware Indian be brought close enough so he could kill his 100th Indian before dying. His 99th and last kill was Mushwink.

Most of the white settlers looked at him as a hero because he protected them. They would take him in and feed him believing that he was justified in his actions. In 1889 an eleven-foot monument was erected in young Tom's memory. It is located in the spot where the Indians scalped his father.

I can see where Tom Jr. was angry and wanted to avenge his father's death, especially because his father was such a good friend to the Indians and because of the fact that Mushwink

was supposed to be his friend, but betrayed him. I can also see why the Indians wanted to protect their own homes and land. I don't, however, believe that the young Tom should have killed innocent Indians, especially women and children saying, "Nits make lice". My belief is that if he wanted revenge for his father's death, he should have started with Mushwink instead of ending with him. I don't believe that all persons are responsible for the decisions made by one or a select few. Then again, the Indians had a plan to wipe out the white race, so maybe what Tom did to so many of them kept the white race from being destroyed. The ninety-nine Indians that he killed were that many less to kill the whites. After seventy-five years of peace between the whites and the Indians, I would have thought there would have been a way to share with each other and keep the peace between them. I guess that selfishness took over.