

## MINORCANS SURVIVED HARSH TIMES

PEGGY ARNOW MUNROE

I am descended from Maria Bonelli/Bonelly. At the time this happened, she was married to Tomas Pacetti, who helped broker some of the releases of her mother and siblings. After Tomas died, she married Joseph St. Sebastian Arnau/Arnow. (Joseph is the one who changed the name from Arnau to Arnow.) I am descended from that union. This was shared with me by Joseph Arnow Flood. All spelling is as I received the document.

I have a farm near Lake Miccosukee, not far from Tallahassee, and am sure the Indians must have roamed it. Have read that they went as far south as Key West to hunt food. My siblings and I have not been able to locate the site of the Indian village, but believe it was quite spread out. Have read that the Indians also took in run-away slaves. When the village was raided by Andrew Jackson, there was a pole with many scalps in the center of the village. Have to wonder if one belonged to Tomas Bonelli who was scalped at the time of the kidnapping. (Do not know if true but have read a brave had to bring back a scalp before he could take a squaw.)

When Antonia was finally returned home, she was pregnant by the Indian medicine man. That child, a daughter, lived to the age of 6. She did marry and have a large family and I have shared this with some of her descendants.

Following is Antonia Bonelly's testimony before the Twenty-Fourth Congress of the United States (December 7, 1835, to March 3, 1837).

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Personally appeared before me, Joseph Sanchez, a justice of the peace for the county of St. John's. Antonia Bonelly Leonardy, who, being duly sworn in explanation and continuation, says: That at the time the Indians made the descent upon the settlements of Josiah Dupont, Mr.

Pellicer, and deponent's father, in the year 1802, she, this deponent, was about thirteen years of age.

The persons of her father's family taken by the Indians were her mother, Mrs. Mary Bonelly, and five children, viz: this deponent, Joseph, Theresa, Catherine, and John; the nine Indians set out immediately with all the plunder that they and the prisoners could carry, and travelled by circuitous routes and by-paths for the interior of the country. Deponent's family were made prisoners about three o'clock in the afternoon, and were forced to march that day and the following night until daylight of the second day, when they halted and encamped until the morning of the third day, when they started again, and travelled until sundown, and they encamped for the night, and so again on the fourth day, and for twenty-four days from the time of her capture.

The party could not travel fast, as the plunder was heavy, and deponent and her sister Mary, who was eleven years old, were obliged to carry alternately their brother John, who was about twenty months old. On the second day after they started from the Matanzas they crossed a small river, and afterwards they crossed the St. John's where it was very wide, (probably a little lake) she recollects also crossing a river called Suwanee, in a skin. The skin was stretched out by two cross sticks, and rim made of wood; she laid down in the bottom very still whilst crossing, and remembers she was afraid to look up. The banks of this river were very steep.

On the twenty-fourth day they arrived at a town called Mickasuky, the chief of which she recollects was called Ken-ha-jah. When we were within a short distance of the town the party halted and proceeded to make a division of their plunder and prisoners, after which we were turned over to some Indian women who came out to meet us; after which the Indian men went another way to dance over the scalp of deponent's brother.

Whilst living with these Indians, which deponent learned were called by the name of Mickasuky tribe, deponent experienced many hardships and cruelties, and her trials were very severe; and the circumstances and history of her captivity and that of her family were so peculiar and barbarous that everything appears to be fresh to her mind, and she does not think that anything but death can efface them from her memory.

The Mickasuky town where deponent was, she understood from the Indians, was about a day's journey from St. Mark's, on the Gulf of Mexico, and a considerable distance from Apalachicola, and within the Spanish boundary of the two provinces of the East and West Florida; deponent's mother and Catharine, Theresa, and John, were detained seven months; and at the end of this time deponent's father sent one Jack Forrester with three hundred dollars to redeem the family, but the Indians, not considering this a sufficient sum detained deponent and her brother Joseph.

Deponent was detained fifteen months longer, but her brother Joseph escaped previously to that time, and got down to St. Mark's, from whence he was sent by the commander to Pensacola, and from thence to Mobile, New Orleans, Cuba, and finally he reached St. Augustine in a vessel commanded by Captain Stephen Benet. About twenty-two months after deponent's captivity, her father sent two hundred dollars, being the additional sum demanded by the Indians, and she was then released and delivered up to her brother-in-law, Thomas Pacety, who brought her to St. Augustine, accompanied by Payne, the chief of the Seminoles, and a Negro slave belonging to said chief.

Deponent further says that her father and mother, they said Jack Forrester, the said Captain Stephen Benet, and her brother-in-law, Thomas Pacety, are long since dead; her sister Mary resides at St. Mary's, Georgia, and that the rest of her family that are living reside in the

Island of Cuba. She has always understood that the Mickasuky Indians were considered by the Spanish government to be under the military jurisdiction of the governor of West Florida, and not of East Florida.