

friendly terms with the whites were suddenly missed, and the few Indians that remained told them that they had gone to join the hostile tribes near Cohecton and farther west. The settlers knew enough of Indian character to foresee the ordeal to which they were to be subjected and began to prepare for the worst. The women and children were first sent to places of safety, Old Paltz, Rochester, and Wawarsing, in Ulster County, and to Goshen, in Orange County, at all of which places the majority of them had relatives by marriage or otherwise, for they knew the fury of the Indians would be vented alike on the strong and the helpless."¹

There were settlers likewise living in exposed localities south of Minisink whom the frontier Indians there regarded as inimical to their welfare. Anthony Swartwout, a son of Barnardus, and a nephew of Major Jacobus Swartwout, four-and-thirty years old, was cultivating a farm lying not many miles distant from the church at Walpeck, and now in Stillwater township, in Sussex County, New Jersey, and bordering upon the pond now known by the name of Swartwood Lake. His wife, Magdalena Decker, had borne him two sons and three daughters, two of whom, as will be related, were the frightened witnesses of the killing of their parents by a party of Indians in 1755.

Five savages, belonging to one of the neighboring tribes which had become disaffected toward the English and had withdrawn from its hunting and trapping grounds in that part of East Jersey and had gone into Pennsylvania, secretly returned, in 1755, to wreak their resentment upon Anthony Swartwout, Richard Hunt, and a settler, surnamed Harker, who had incurred their ill-will.

Finding Richard Hunt absent from home and only his brother Thomas and a negro at his house, who had barred the windows and doors against them, the savages so terrified the two inmates by undertaking to burn the building that they speedily surrendered themselves to the wily barbarians.

Unsuspecting the presence of any hostile Indians in the neighborhood, Mrs. Swartwout, intent upon accomplishing her daily dairy-tasks, passed from the backdoor of the homestead to go to the milk-house near a runlet of water. Being seen by the Indians ambushed at the barn, she was shot and killed. Her husband, hearing the report of a gun, looked from a window of the house and saw the prostrate body of his wife and the Indians running toward it. Greatly shocked, he quickly barred the doors and windows, and with his rifle in hand stood ready to defend himself and his crying children.

While holding the savages at bay between the house and barn, he exacted from them a promise that they would neither harm him nor his children should he yield himself a prisoner to them. Permitted by them to bear the lifeless

¹ History of the Minisink region. By Charles E. Stickney, pp. 60, 61.