



[[Hide Images](#) | [T-](#) | [T+](#) | [Print Page](#)]

Story Location: http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/mass/tom_quick/8.html

TOM QUICK "Nits Make Lice"

It is interesting to note that even the fabulists seem to have blanched at some of Quick's more heinous deeds. The 1851 book "The Original Adventures of Tom Quick," recounts one of the most horrific incidents in Quick's bloody career, an incident which, while it may have been widely exaggerated, is thought to be rooted in fact.

According to the story Quick had been on a hunting trip that had taken him to a secluded spot in what is now northwestern New Jersey called Butler's Rift.

"His success in hunting had not been very great; but he was probably troubled very little on account of his ill luck; for he had a greater desire to meet with Indians and slay them than to encounter what he considered less brutal beings. He was not many days in waiting for an opportunity to gratify his revenge, if revenge like his could be gratified."



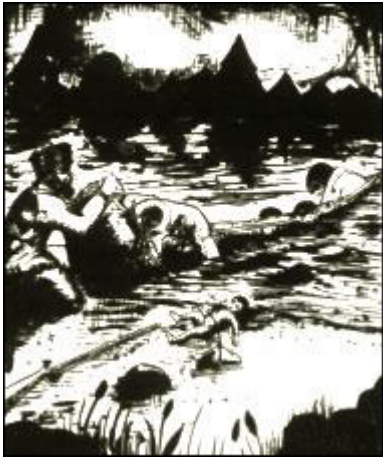
Loner Quick tracks indians

"One day he stationed himself at the foot of the Rift...He watched several hours without seeing anything of importance; but finally was rewarded with the sight of five savages coming up the river in a canoe. The party consisted of a man, a squaw and three children. The Indian seemed to be unarmed, and he and the others were evidently not apprehensive of danger. They were on the same side of the river as Tom, and were proceeding leisurely along — the children enjoying the journey and seeming very happy.

"As soon as Tom saw them, he concealed himself in the long reed grass which grew on the shore...As they came near he recognized the Indian as one of those who had visited his father's house before the war, and who had been engaged in several outrages on the frontier.

"When the Indian family — for the squaw was evidently the wife of the man, and the children his own — had got near enough to be within gunshot, Tom raised up from his recumbent posture, and ordered them in the Indian tongue to come ashore, and threatened to fire if they did not. As soon as the man saw Tom he turned very pale...He dared not disobey, however, and reluctantly

came to the shore. Tom then inquired where they held been, and where they were go ing...He then told them that they had got to their journey's end; that the tribe to which they belonged had murdered his father and several of his relatives during the war, and that he had lifted up his hand in vengeance against their whole race. The Indian answered that it was 'peace time,' that 'the hatchet was buried,' &c. But Tom replied that there could be no peace between the red skins and him, and that he would wage eternal war with them. He then shot the man, who jumped out of the canoe into the river, where, after a few convulsive throes, he died. Tom, after killing the Indian, tomahawked the squaw and her children. As the hatchet sunk into the brain of the squaw, she sprang instinctively towards her youngest child, and fell on the bottom of the canoe, and was soon beyond the pale of mortal life. The two oldest children, as Tom afterwards declared, 'squawked like young crows' as he killed them. He had proceeded thus far without any compunctions of conscience, or feeling that he was committing a most horrible massacre, which ranked him with incarnate demons. But when he came to the youngest, his murderous propensities were for a moment checked. As he raised the tomahawk to give the fatal blow, the babe—for it was nothing more—looked up wonderingly into his face and smiled. The innocence and unconsciousness of danger beaming from its sunny, childish eyes caused him to relent. His arm fell to his side. He could not strike it. At the moment, the idea of taking the life of such an innocent, harmless being, seemed horrible to him. It held out its tiny hands to him, and in childish glee, seemed as if it would spring to his arms. Tom's heart was completely softened. He thought he would convey it to some white family, and have it taken care of properly, and fancied that it would be very pleasant to have such a pretty, in nocent creature to fondle after he had been hunting, and when he returned to the settlements. But the fact suddenly thrust itself into his mind, that the child would in a few years become an In dian, and this so enraged him that he instantly dashed out its brains."

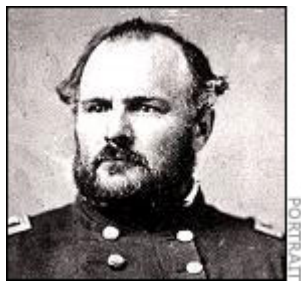


Quick kills Indian family

Quick would later justify his act of infanticide with these three words.

"Nits make lice."

Perhaps that too is apocryphal. But it is intriguing to note that in 1864, seventy years after Tom Quick's death and 13 years after the quote ascribed to him first appeared in print, the notorious Col. John Chivington urged his men to spare no children during the infamous Sand Creek Massacre in Colorado with those same three words.



Colonel Chivington

Legends, it seems, have a way of finding their own way to truth.

©2006 Courtroom Television Network LLC. All Rights Reserved.
[Terms & Privacy Guidelines](#)