

# Girl, Interrupted



It becomes clear, as we read the stories of our family ancestors, that they lived lives that were very different from ours. But none that I've come across quite matches the life of Catherine Lorisich, my wife's 5th great-grandmother who was born in Pennsylvania during the French and Indian wars.

When Catharine was about ten, she and her family were working out in their fields when an Indian crept up and snatched her baby sister who had been placed on the ground as the family worked. Seeing this, her mother rushed the Indian, struck him with her rake but was immediately killed with one blow from his tomahawk. Catharine, her father and her baby sister were taken captive and marched to Ohio. At one point, the Indians threatened to throw the baby into a stream to drown it due to her incessant crying. Catharine pleaded so passionately an old squaw took pity and allowed her to soothe and quiet the infant.

After a year, her father and sister were released. But the tribe had taken a liking to Catharine and so kept her with

them, treating her as an adopted member of their extended family. She was eventually assigned to be a caregiver for an old warrior chief who could no longer hunt or travel with the other men. She prepared his foods and kept him comfortable.

For seven years she lived among her captors and with each year was given more and more freedom to travel beyond the camp as they came to view her as one of their own. One day, as she was in the woods gathering roots, herbs and firewood, she came upon some white men who were building a boat. They offered to take her with them. She agreed, apparently with the blessing of the old Indian chief that was still in her care. He tearfully presented her with gifts of thanks and remembrance to take with her, trinkets that she treasured until the end of her days.

She lived for a time in the home of one of her rescuers who came to love her as a daughter; even providing her with a formal education. He desired for her to stay with him and his family but she instead chose to be reunited with her biological father whom she had managed to locate at their old family homestead. She eventually married, had children, and moved to Germantown Ohio where she lived until the age of seventy-three. It is said that, at the time of her death, her descendants numbered in the thousands and that there were at least 500 residents of Germantown who were directly related to her.

*Michael Ondrasik and Home Video Studio specialize in the preservation of family memories through the digitalization of film, videotape, audio recordings, photos, negatives and slides. For more information, call 352-735-8550 or visit our [website](#).*