

**CASTLE GREGORY: A  
STORY OF THE WESTERN  
RESERVE WOODS IN THE  
OLDEN TIMES**

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Castle Gregory: A Story of the Western Reserve Woods in the Olden Times by Albert Gallatin Riddle

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**ALBERT GALLATIN RIDDLE**

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17-1-1884

# CASTLE GREGORY;

A STORY

OF THE

WESTERN RESERVE WOODS

IN THE OLDEN TIME.

*as told by Susan Riddle*

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BY THE AUTHOR OF BART RIDGELEY, THE HOUSE OF ROSS,  
HART AND HIS BEAR, ETC.

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CLEVELAND, OHIO:  
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Gift  
to  
Alice, Nellie, and Emma  
G. G. R.

TO ALICE, AND NELLIE, AND EMMA,

THE THREE MAIDENS WHOSE PRESENCE GAVE INTEREST TO THE STORY TELLING OF

"HART AND HIS BEAR," THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED.

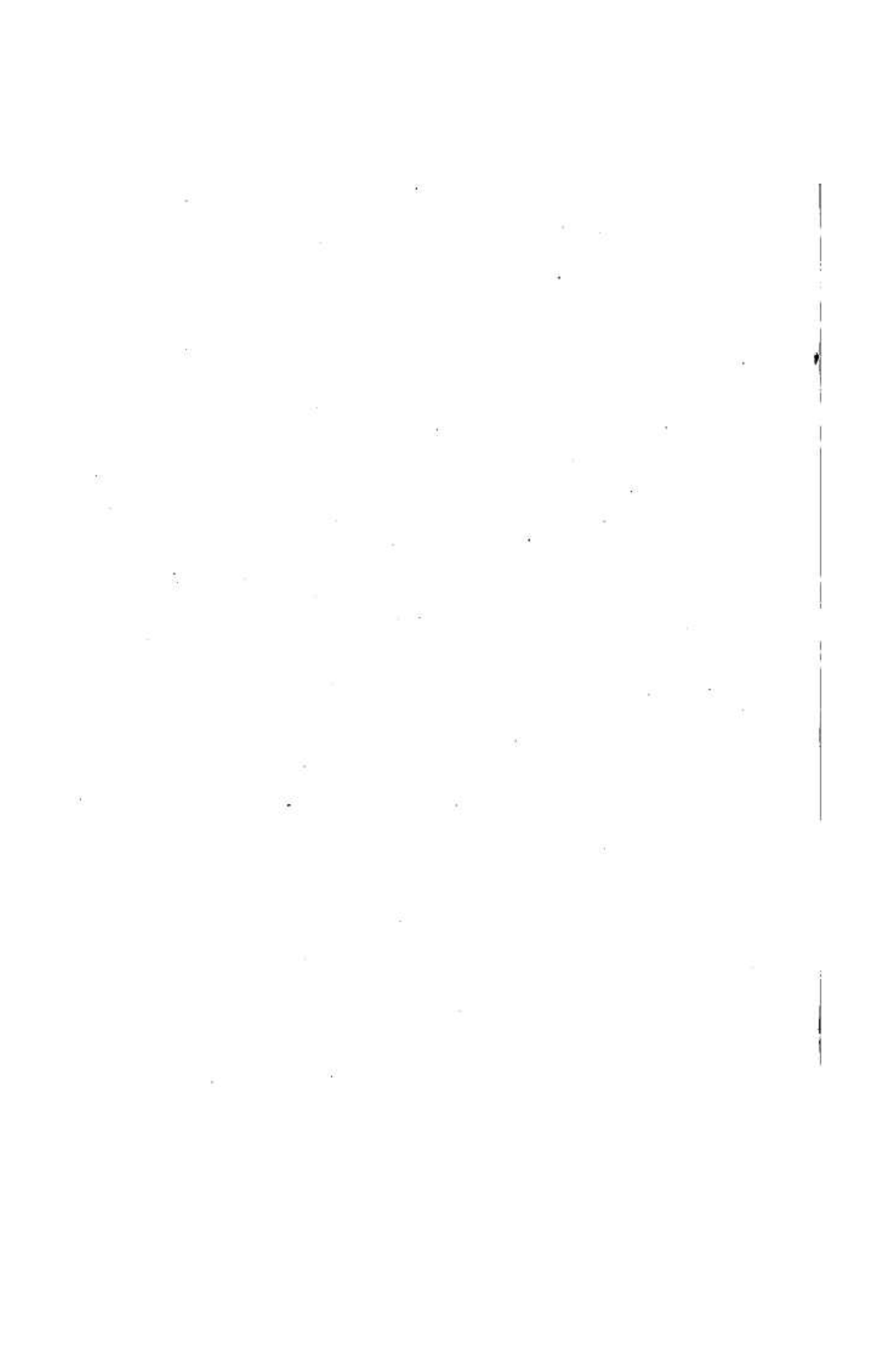
A boy grows to manhood, quite alone, in the woods, becoming what Hart might have been. One day, in the heart of the forest, he meets a maiden as lovely as one of themselves. The burden of the tale is to note the unfolding of the young man's character, under the influence of her presence.

Washington, May 1st.

Affectionately,  
A. G. R.

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# CASTLE GREGORY.

BY A. G. RIDDLE.

## CHAPTER I.

### TELLS WHEN THE CASTLE WAS BUILT, AND OF ITS CHIEF AND HERO.

It is historic that ancient Connecticut, under a grant of the Second Charles, claimed a territory of over sixty miles in breadth, running west to the mythical "South Sea" of that time. The title was none of the best, but when she relinquished it to the infant republic, she was permitted to reserve so much of the land as lay between the south shore of Lake Erie, and the 41st degree north, running one hundred and twenty miles west, from the Pennsylvania line. This now constitutes the eleven counties of the northeast corner of Ohio. The placing of these three million acres of land on the market produced a great movement of the New England people into the Ohio woods, during the first quarter of the century, not without influence on the State and the Republic. So much Puritan Massachusetts and Connecticut transplanted in the briefest time, in the then farthest known West.

The Cuyahoga is the most considerable of the many rivers of this favored region. Gathering its first waters almost from the lake itself, near the eastern end of the Reserve, it makes directly south from it, gathering confluents as it goes, as if intending to break or find a way through the rocky divide between the basins of the lakes and the Valley of the Ohio, and carry her waters to the Mississippi, instead of the St. Lawrence, as does

her sister, Mahoning. It makes its way across the sandstone ridge of the first rapids, but is turned southwesterly, and finally, with a sharp angle, is forced to head directly back toward the lake to which her waters are delivered thirty or forty miles west and up from its infant springs and rills.

Curiously enough, within this irregular semicircle, described by the Cuyahoga, rises her smaller and more beautiful sister Chagrin, taking her first supplies almost from the same fountains, and running a shorter career, turns back upon her first course, and empties her once limpid tide but a few miles from her rise.

Covered with one of the heaviest and most beautiful forests of the middle of the continent, with an abundant rain fall and small evaporation, both bore twice the volume of water to the parent lake that now finds its passage in their shrunken channels.

An old Indian trail crossed the Cuyahoga at a point near its bend remotest from the coast, extending from points on the lake to the native villages in the interior. Just above the crossing, on the northern bank, was the scene of my history, which, though it recounts incidents of the earliest of pioneer days, is idyllic somewhat, and touches few of the more striking incidents of border life and adventure.

The first rude collection of buildings—the forest home of the proprietor, his laborers and hangers-on, were constructed, not without reference to defense against Indian war-

fare, and came to be known as Castle Gregory. The central and principal structure of very considerable extent was solidly built of squared logs, carried up two high stories with openings or loop holes, for rifle practice, on occasion. It was never the scene of siege and sally, though Indian skirmishing had flashed in the forest neighborhood before the bloody defeat of the hostiles, by Wayne, on the Maumee, a few years prior to its erection.

In the first years of the century, embittered by political disappointments, and meeting with pecuniary losses, John Gregory, of Massachusetts, then in middle life, made a considerable purchase of the Reserve lands, visited the region soon after the allotment to him, selected the site for a residence, had the lines run and marked, and secured a party of borderers from Western Pennsylvania, who, with their axes and rifles, made a very determined impression on the forest. He went into the woods to stay. A man of vigorous and commanding frame, of strong will, shrewd and keen in intellect, a college graduate, bred to the law, though little practiced in the courts, he had many qualities fitting him for the leadership of men; with the hardihood and sagacity requisite for life beyond the border, as his first years in the Ohio woods were. Five years of determined warfare on the savagery of nature reduced it to a condition fit for the residence of his wife and young son.

During these years there was less communication between Ohio and New England than now between either and Alaska. He returned to find his wife in the last stages of consumption. Deploring his long absence, he tenderly cherished the residue of her life, and buried her. From the shock of her loss he never recovered the wonted tone of his former spirit, shaded as that had been by crosses and losses. The free life in the woods

had unfitted him for life in New England. There was now nothing to detain him in the East. He purchased stock and draft horses and cattle, loaded three or four wagons, mounted his son on a strong, bony young horse, himself on a powerful charger, and made his final exit from the older civilization.

The boy was then thirteen, tall of his age, high-shouldered, and hollow-chested, with the large, dreamy eyes of his mother, and something of her languor and passiveness. She was fanciful, and named her child after a hero of romance who had enlisted her admiration, and she called him Fitzroy. To his father he was Roy. During the years of that parent's absence he was the sole companion of his mother, who was his entire world. His education was cared for, and, with his active brain and passive manner, he was an apt scholar, and became a great reader. A youth by temperament, education, and association, more unfitted for border life was never carried into the woods. To him the journey into the forest was a rude but needed awakening from the torpor of grief into which the death of his mother plunged him. Undemonstrative, shy, and uncomplaining, tender and clinging in his nature and affections, he soon became attached to his strong, homely horse, destined to become famous in the new West. With his mother's fancy in names he called him Red Cross. The 600 miles of constant journeying, occupying seven or eight weeks, for the slow passage of the caravan, was a severe strain on the boy's endurance, and its effect marked. Instead of slaking under it and being transferred to a wagon, where appliances for his ease were carried, he daily grew in strength and hardihood. His father regarded him as short lived, fearing that he inherited a fatal malady from his mother, and so languid, shy, and reticent had he

found him, that he had very unfavorable impressions of his capacity, and cherished but moderate expectations of him, should he reach a manhood of ordinary vigor. The new scenes, the labor and exertions of the journey appealed to the latent resources of his unapprehended nature, and quickened the development of qualities which in a few years were to make him largely useful in frontier life, and carry him successfully across the intervening time to robust and beautiful young manhood.

Curious even beyond boyhood, his faculty for observation was aroused to notice, remember, and finally study the new and interesting objects of nature around him. His mind was stored with useful reading, while his imagination was filled with legends of romance, the exploits of knights in the service of high-born ladies, and the rescue of leaguered damsels. Living wholly with his mother, his retiring disposition wore a shyness of manner and sometimes that of timidity. In the rough world of the woods and the rougher ways of the borderers whom he met at his new home, he was at first a little stunned and for a time confused. To the three or four pioneer women, whose ancestors had ever lived on the changing border, and their half-barbarian children whom he found there, he was an object of more curiosity and interest than were Omies Indians with their squaws and papposes to him, a band of whom inhabited a village of wigwams at the bend of the river, a mile below the homestead.

On his return with new laborers and improved implements, the proprietor resumed the scarcely suspended war of extermination upon the forests and the cultivation of the cleared lands, while Roy was left wholly to his own guidance and resources. His father had a cultivated fondness for books, and carried with him a considerable library on his

return to his domain in the woods. Between this and the interminable forest Roy divided his time; an apt student in wood craft, he in time became an adept.

An able and willing professor was awaiting his arrival. Among the retainers of Castle Gregory the most conspicuous and useful was Jim Brady, a cousin of the famous Samuel Brady, whom he resembled. A comrade also he had been of the Poes, all great Indian hunters and fighters of an earlier day. Legends of their exploits still linger in all that region, and their names have secure places in the pages of pioneer history. Brady was the hunter of the Castle, had a taste in forest finery, and went tricked out in gay deerskin hunting shirt, beaded leggins and moccasins, and wampum belt. Roy took to him at once. Here was a famous borderer, one of the men of whom he had read, with the romance of battle exploit about him; a rescuer of captured maidens from the Indians, with the flavor of wild wood adventure around his head. Roy went with him on his shorter excursions, heard his stories, learned how to find his way through the woods, and to care for himself in their depths. He came to know much of the nature and the ways of the wild things that lived and prowled there, of their haunts and habits. He had an innate dread of mere bloodshed, which he was slow to overcome, and it was a long time before he brought himself to master the practical part of a hunter's craft, that which involves the art of the butcher. At first he carried what Brady called a bear spear, an effective lance-headed weapon, with a tough hickory shaft eight or nine feet long, which once belonged to Adam Poe, and had in his hands seen service in Indian battles. It pleased Roy's fancy as a knightly weapon, and for a long time was his constant companion. It served a good purpose during his second year in