

Isaac Newton Kountz

At one time or another, we have all thought about how difficult life was on the prairie during frontier times. Now, try to think about how difficult, and heart-breaking, it would be to have a beloved child murdered on Christmas Eve by a bunch of marauding Indians. You probably can't imagine unless you have had the experience of losing a child yourself. But that is exactly what happened to the Kountz family on Christmas Eve of 1876.

The family, living near Junction, Kimble County, Texas, consisted of forty-seven year old Doctor Ezekiel and his wife, forty-five year old Harriet Kountz, Elizabeth and Dixie, the younger daughters, twelve year old Christian, and sixteen year old Isaac. Isaac was born on August 20, 1860, in Hancock County, Tennessee. There were two older brothers, John and Christopher, but they were in Kansas on a cattle drive. The family, who seemed to move ever westward, had moved to Kimble County from Kansas the year before. Apparently, they were going to move to Mexico, but Harriet refused to go any farther.

Christmas Eve morning of 1876 was bitterly cold and there was snow covering the ground. Isaac and Christian were tending a small herd of sheep on a hillside near their home. Their father had left on an errand earlier that morning, and only their mother and sisters were home.

Just a few days before Christmas, Nicholas Patterson moved into the same area and would later marry Elizabeth Kountz. He reported that "...about 10 o'clock a.m. the two boys saw some people coming down the road. They took them to be cowboys. On second look they saw 15 or 16 Comanche Indians. The boys started toward the ranch house in haste... The Indians shot the older boy through the knee and he fell. The Indians advanced, dismounted and shot him through the head and took his boots and part of his clothing.

"By this time Sebastian had crossed the road and was going over a rail fence around the field. An Indian made a grab for him as he went over, but only succeeded in snatching off his cap. In the meantime the mother and the two girls had heard the shots, and they stepped out to investigate. When they saw the younger boy running across the field toward home, Elizabeth ...ran half way across the field to meet him. He informed her that the Indians had killed Isaac. She was ...near enough

to count them. The Indians did not advance on the ranch house... This all happened while there was not a man in a mile of the ranch. The Indians moved across the valley... where they ran across another youth out looking for horses. They killed him, but did not attempt to scalp either of the two boys.

"A posse of citizens was formed to follow them. The father of Isaac and my father, N.Q. Patterson, who were both captains in the Civil War, led the posse till night overtook them. At daybreak they were on the trail again. A squad of State Rangers had joined the chase. After a chase of 150 or 200 miles the Indians abandoned their bunch of stolen horses and split up, making a half dozen trails or more in various directions, so that it was impossible to follow the real trail any longer."

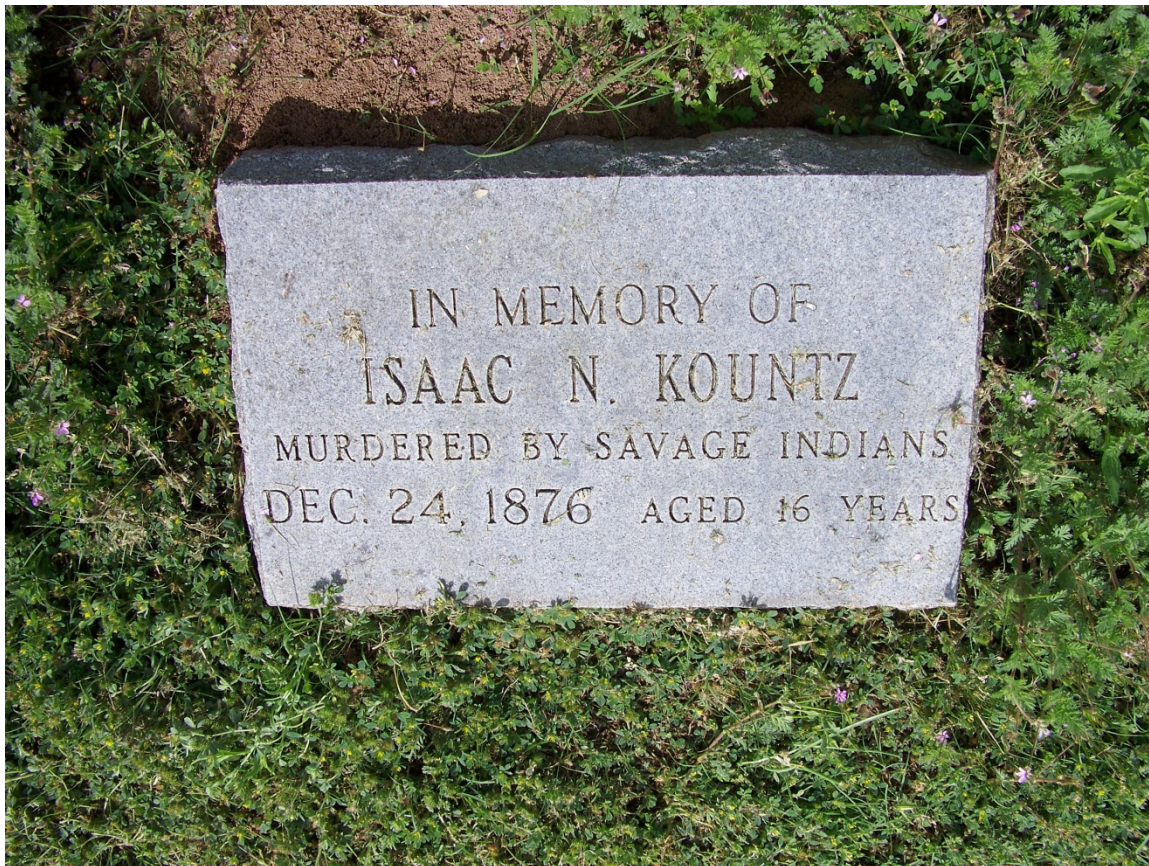
Kountz was originally buried on the spot he was killed. A Texas State Historical Marker was placed at the sight. It reads: ISAAC KOUNTZ: KILLED ON THIS SPOT BY INDIANS ON CHRISTMAS EVE, 1876. HE WAS 16 YEARS OLD, AND HERDING SHEEP FOR HIS FATHER, DR E. K. KOUNTZ. A BROTHER SEBASTIAN, AGED 11, ESCAPED. A POSSE AND TEXAS RANGERS CHASED THE INDIANS TO THE GUADALUPE RIVER. YOUNG KOUNTZ WAS REBURIED IN JUNCTION CEMETERY.

He was moved to Junction Cemetery and placed in between his parents in 1892 when his Mother died. The grave was left unmarked for a long time. Marker is the original.

GPS Coordinates for Grave Site: N30.48294, W99.77966

GPS Coordinates for Historical: Marker: N30.48062, W99.78573

GPS Coordinates for cemetery: N30.48283, W 99.78300



Source: Excerpts from an original bio provided to Find a Grave by Virginia Brown in May 2009 and placed by C. Fahey. Virginia used Frontier Times Magazine articles from mid to late 1920s plus other sources.