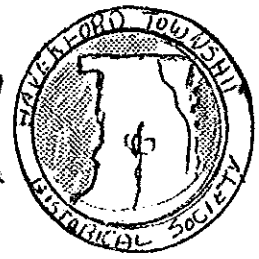


HIS NEWSLETTER



Volume VIII Number 2

Spring 1979

Welcome to You, to Spring, and to our Annual Heritage Day - with a Difference!

First, let us rejoice in the hope of reasonably good weather for the next seven, eight, or nine months, PARTICULARLY MAY 19! After a really miserable winter (which your editor spent in recuperating from several hospital visits), she is beginning to come to life with the spring flowers. Anne Blair deserves our heartfelt thanks for doing all of the ground-work in getting our program together.

You, as members of the Historical Society, are certainly deserving to know just what is going on.

The first step after last year's Heritage Day was the decision to call it off for 1979. (Seemed like burying a friend.) We have been steadily going down in attendance and receipts for the last six years. This may have been due in part of the fact that so many other groups were doing "our thing," especially in the Bicentennial year. Also, there are many other activities at that time of year. We should make our Heritage Day, which has been restored to life, the first thing on our calendar for the whole month of May. We have shortened the hours from 10 to 3, and we urge you to come early and spend the day, or at least part of it. We also hope you adults will come and bring your many adult friends as well as the children.

We still need money for continued restoration and improvement of Nitre Hall. One of the big expenses is to build a bridge from the bank back of the house to the second story. This will follow the required government regulation of having two entrances and exits from a public building. Also we will try to make it easier for the handicapped to visit. All of this seems to go so slowly but it is really getting done.

Now, hopefully you are very curious to find out just what has been planned, so here it is!

We have contacted the United American Indians of Delaware Valley largely through the good efforts of Anne Blair. We fortunately phoned the UAIDV at 225 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, as it was the nearest group. Then, after several phone calls, we met the very charming and capable executive director, Louise Lightfoot Smith. She is most enthusiastic about having her community meet with ours at Powder Mill Valley Park. More than that, she has contacted tribal groups from Massachusetts, down to New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, as well as Pennsylvania, of course. As a matter of interest, Reggie Leach of the Flyers is an Ojibwa, and was honored by a special day given by the Community in his honor. Chief Traynor Halftown, a Seneca, and Carl Pierce, a shamon or medicine man, will both be with us. Mr. Pierce will give a prayer, blessing the day, after the Flag Salute, so be prompt. He is giving the Community a course on the religion of the People. We also hope to have a peace pipe ceremony with Chief Halftown and three other chiefs. Mrs. Ruth Janessey will bring samples of her crafts, such as shirts, afghans, Indian dolls, and beading.

Louise has guaranteed us a very interesting day, but does not really know how many Indians will arrive. We certainly hope that we will be able to match their numbers.

We must also remember that this is not to be a performance by trained actors - rather a sharing with us of the tribal dances and crafts which sometimes have had to be re-learned. Now, I would like to tell you where and how this planning and relearning takes place.

The UNITED AMERICAN INDIANS OF DELAWARE VALLEY or UAIDV

This very interesting group is a full service agency at 225 Chestnut Street and is comparatively new. It started in 1971 and has progressed to an organization that counsels, finds homes and jobs, educates for a High School Diploma or other needed courses, gives legal advice and assistance, and has classes in Indian dancing, (men and women do not dance together), Indian crafts, and even in martial arts. Above all, this is a place for members to gather together for social life.

Any member of the Community must have at least one-quarter Indian blood; many are full-blooded members of their own tribes. Most of them have left reservations with the hope of making a life on their own. There are approximately 7500 Indians in this general area; the

UAIDV has about 400 members.

The building at 225 Chestnut Street can provide temporary homes for newcomers and has sufficient space for this all-encompassing program. Their newsletter, RISING SUN, lists some possibilities for jobs as: apprentices for women, night classes for further study, outreach volunteers, a program for ex-offenders and a Youth Program, under the direction of Julie Lombard. Incidentally, this gracious lady is a talented artist and will bring some of her paintings for us to enjoy on May 19.

*Some of What You May Never Have Wanted To Know About
Pennsylvania Indians*

The very first people in Pennsylvania were the Allegewi Indians, (later Allegheny). For protection of their villages, they built big walls of earth, some of which may still be seen in the Western part of the state.

Many, many years after this, two tribes from the far West came to seek new homes. They were the Lenni-Lenape (Len-NAH-pe) and the Mengwe. A black wampum belt came from the Allegewi as a challenge to keep these new Indians from their land. Unwillingly, the Lenape decided to fight with the Mengwe as allies. The Allegewis lost and fled down the Mississippi River. The Mengwes became the Iroquios in New York State and northern Pennsylvania. The Lenape took the land east of the Susquehanna, Lehigh, and Delaware Rivers. They call themselves the "real people" or "first people." Other tribes call them "grandfather" as a sign of great esteem. The name "Delaware" comes from Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, who was appointed governor of the Virginia Colony in 1610. He had discovered some of the northern estuaries of this familiar river.

Shackamoxon was the main village of the Delaware Indians, and the chief group of these were members of the Turtle Clan, a name as common as "Smith". Be sure to look for Toni Johnson, who is a Lenape from the Turtle tribe and serves as "girl Friday" for the Community on Chestnut Street.

Related to the Delaware are Shawnee (meaning Southerners of Pennsylvania), Nanticoke or "tide Water People" from Maryland. They were very dark skinned and were believed to know witchcraft. (Skin

color was never red, but varies from light cream to brown. The French called them "red skins" from the red war paint they used.)

Conoys lived at Conoy Town, now Sunbury. Their name means "Corn shelling" or "bark leggings." A small group of Tutelos came from North Carolina with a language like that of the far west Sioux.

The Susquehannock (you know where they lived) Seneca, and Tuscarora were from the Iroquios or Mengwes. Erie Indians lived just south of the lake. Because of the number of panthers and wild cats they were the "cat people."

Wampum beads were a valuable property and you may see some in Nitre Hall. Beads of the inland Indians were made of wood, or bird or porcupine quills. Those nearer the coast could use shell and carefully choose their color. Sometimes it took a day to make one bead, as shells cracked and chipped so much. Wampum was not used as money but was exchanged to seal a bargain or as thanks for a special favor. Also patterns were woven into wampum to tell the stories of great events to be remembered. Beads were sometimes sewn on the clothes of the chieftains.

In looking at a map from "Indians of Pennsylvania," by Lucille Wallower, which is used widely in our schools, it fascinated me to see a "buffalo swamp" between the Susquehanna and Allegheny Rivers. But then, how did Buffalo, New York, get its name?

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Please write sometime - praise or criticism joyfully received

NEWS FROM PEG

A group from Barclay Homestead of Cherry Hill have visited the Cabin and Nitre Hall twice. They brought some children to participate in Colonial Living, as they want to start a similar program in Cherry Hill. They were treated to slides of the Fifth Grade activity, plus demonstrations of the simple drop spindle, cards for wool, and a box loom.

Peg has just acquired a tape loom and has corresponded with "The Closet Weaver." Pictures have been sent and some of our work is requested.

The program on "Rubbings" was well attended. It would be fun to have an exhibition in the fall of rubbings that you made this summer.

The workshop on patchwork and quilting was quite successful and will be repeated this summer if there is sufficient interest.

Also, Neville Ehmann has just replaced sixteen spindles and the "overhang" that goes on the outside of the stairs. Many thanks to Mr. Ehmann for his good work. Now we really need volunteers to paint this needed addition. Please tell Peg or Harry Irwin if you can help.

SOME MORE OLD SAYINGS - courtesy of Frank Whitten.

The Big Cheese - British travelers to the East in the 19th century brought back a Persian word, chiz. It meant thing and was pronounced cheese. Such a familiar word was adopted as a good way to point out a top-ranking person or thing. (On the other hand, cheesy meant lacking style).

A Bread and Butter Note - 17th century ding lacked variety and consisted largely of these items. In time, working became "earning

your bread and butter." Therefore, a guest should thank his host for a repast or even a visit, and it is still considered etiquette for today.

IT'S A HOT POTATO - early American settlers discovered that roasting over hot coals was a delicious way to enjoy this edible root. Hungry children would grab it before it was done and would not dare drop such valuable food to be wasted on the floor. So the juggling that followed to keep from getting too badly burned became something "too hot to handle."

SPEND A WEEK ON THE MISSISSIPPI!

The Youngs, after several trips, and the Irwins, after one trip, convinced Sue Loder that she and two friends should try it. We flew to New Orleans, hopped the bus to the river, and did not see the city at all. (That will have to be a separate trip.) At the dock, an elegant man in a white suit and two lovely Southern Belles greeted us. As we boarded, a photographer snapped us. He was most expeditious as he took pictures of any interesting event, and would have them finished and on display on several screens in a hall off the grand saloon. You ordered by number and by your cabin number and the pictures appeared under your door that night.

(Incidentally, very little money, if any, ever exchanged hands, except at Bingo or Boat races. All chits were signed; the last morning, we lined up by decks, and bills were paid with amazing speed.)

Now, to return. The dining saloon was huge, but two settings were still needed as there were some four hundred passengers. We were assigned our own table, with charming water and bus boy. Did you ever have a yummy catfish fileted at your place? If, perchance, the schedule was changed due to fog, we would line up cafeteria style and

an agreeable waiter would whisk our plate and us to a pleasant table.

The first night, after dinner, we took ourselves on a short tour. On the top deck; while drinking in the beauty of the stars, we were nearly blown off our feet by a blast of steam from the calliope on the deck below. Later, anyone who wished could try their skill, and it played like a short piano, if the steam was on.

Two facts quickly came to light. First, the boat was powered only by the paddle wheel, with no hidden engine under the boat. If we got stuck on a bank due to heavy fog, we waited for a clear sky and the turn of the tide.

Number two fact was that this was not "The Love Boat." It was surprising at the number of people who mentioned this. The officers were handsome, and the Captain was part Indian but they seldom appeared as they attended to duty. Also, the purser was a woman, which was a shock. True, we had many pleasant talks with the bartender of the lounge between the dining and the grand saloon. He is planning on building a fashionable night spot with dinner and dancing in lower Cincinnati, when he gets enough "bread."

There was a pool on the top deck about fifteen feet across, and there were shuffleboard and kite-flying if you chose. Sometime I'm going to go and bask on the deck chairs, as I certainly didn't have time on this trip.

There was a very plush small theatre on the bottom deck, with red velvet seats. They showed a collection of early River pictures, including a young Bing Crosby. They also had new movies, as "Oh God!" Every minute of the day offered something, as the daily news sheet told us when left on our beds each evening, so you could take your choice.

We had the last of the "red hot mamas" who could really belt out a song, with a fine band to play just about any kind of music. Perhaps the greatest attraction was the last of the great river-boat gamblers. Even with the audience practically breathing down his throat, no one could figure out just how he did what he did.

We also paraded down the stage, which the uninformed would call the gang-plank to visit St. Francisville, Natchez (which we had to sort of back into as it is really on the Yazoo River), Vicksburg, and Baton Rouge. We went to the waiting bus and were taken to the proper stopping place. We saw beautiful old homes and spacious gardens with gracious hostesses, the Vicksburg battlefield with sharply drawn lines between the North and the South and a monument to all soldiers. We saw an old courthouse, where everyone ran for the souvenir counter, and a fascinating group of houses of the poor whites at Baton Rouge. Personally, I want to return to Natchez and take their garden tour and also visit again the charming lady who came from Media.

We also passed the Delta Queen and they passed us several times with much waving of hands and tooting of calliopes. Our boat was truly elegant and beautiful, but the pictures of the Delta Queen show her to be lush and gorgeous, rich with Victorian charm. There are great plans afoot to have a race between them, on a regular cruise, this fall. Many aficionados will be aboard. The Mississippi Queen has the speed but the smaller Delta Queen can manoeuver better. Watch for the news - in fact, go with them if you can.

Well, for myself, I'll start saving my pennies again and will plan to take another cruise, perhaps from a new starting point, as Cincinnati or St. Louis. It's a great life.

Back To May 19th!

Kathy Foden, who has been helping Peg with Colonial Living, offered to cook lunch on her grill. That, with cold drinks, should be quite ample, supplemented with some sweets.

In regard to the Powder Keg, or goodies table - cookies, candy, cupcakes, or brownies, (big cakes are hard to slice unless sold in toto), we hope everyone will contribute. One kind lady offered to bring something before I even mentioned it. At our April meeting, we hope to sign up all possible contributors. We also need persons to sell tickets at Mañoa Road and near Beechwood, at the bend of the road. (Remember traffic is one way coming from Manoa Road for the day.) But - we do have a problem. Try as hard as we can, Harry Young has the only up-to-date membership list, so if you are not at the meeting and do not get a phone call, come and please bring a tasty donation anyway. Some day, our list will get made - again. Also, tell your friends, young and old, to come and enjoy themselves.

Another idea is to bring any of your Indian artifacts and have them examined and identified. The Community is planning to bring all of their exhibits and they are always on the look-out for gifts to add to their collection. I only wish I had had a place to store a grinding stone that once came into the hands of my father.

Mrs. Smith is going to show and explain the Indian artifacts from their museum in Nitre Hall. Mr. Smith, although, alas, not an Indian will really do credit to the slides they have collected. This is a good chance for us to get in place a large glass case that has been given us. So watch for Peg riding a fork-lift!

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