

# The Jacobsburg Record

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SOCIETY OFFICE - 610-759-9029

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## OXFORD FURNACE WEEKEND

During the weekend of May 15 & 16, 1999, our Society participated in the Warren County Heritage Festival, an event held annually in Oxford, N.J. A display featuring a variety of long guns, pistols, and photographs was set up in the basement level of Shippen Manor, the old Oxford Furnace Ironmaster's residence. This building was the home of William Henry III when he ran the Oxford facility during the 1830's.

A crew of volunteers set up our exhibit on the evening of May 13th. During the event, Tim and Terri Lubenesky, Mike Jones and fiance, Krista Gera, Earl Van Norman and Bob Newell took turns manning the display area. Bill Atherton served as an interpreter in the parlor area upstairs, concentrating on the story of William Henry III and his children. Our group was kept very busy throughout the event by a steady stream of interested visitors.

Early on the morning of Sunday, May 16th, we had a pleasant surprise. A young woman in full Revolutionary War uniform led a blind man, also dressed in regimentals, into the exhibit area, and quietly asked if some of our things could be handled. We replied in the affirmative, and the gentleman really enjoyed himself. He especially liked our casting exhibit, which shows the steps involved in producing a brass trigger guard from casting to final engraving. The man was a drummer in one of the reenactment groups camped on the terrace fronting the Manor, and his enthusiasm for military reenacting and history in general was nothing less than refreshing.

Our group shared the museum rooms with Mr. Ed Schultheis of Oxford. He told visitors the story of iron mining at Oxford, including his own experiences as a 16-year veteran of the mines. He presented our Society with a fine specimen of high grade magnetite ore from the Oxford area.

The combination of a great site, lots of enthusiastic visitors, and good weather all combined to make the Oxford Furnace event both memorable and successful.

*Bob Newell*

**1999 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS**

Opening of Homestead Museum delayed until further notice.

- June 18-20 Rifle Frolic
- July 28-30\* Junior Historians - A Youth Environmental Learning Series
- August 20\* Slide Program - Henry Heritage: The Moravian Connection
- August 21 Tea Party in the Garden
- September 18 Penn State Master Gardeners Perennial Exchange
- September 24-26 Fur Trade Event
- October Volunteer Fall Cleanup - Date to be announced.
- November 6\* Discover Boulton - Walking Tour. Rain date November 13.
- December 4 Volunteer Christmas Party
- December 5 Christmas Open House

\*For more information, call 610-746-2809

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Since we are now in the month of June and looking forward to many and varied Summer activities, we thought it might be interesting for all to read about some of the Henry Family picnics. The following article previously appeared in the May/June 1979 issue of the Jacobsburg Record and was written by Annie M. (Babp) Roth.

*PICNIC!*

*During the summer months this word will be used frequently, for who is there among us who does not like a picnic? Today it's quite simple to plan one since we have available disposable plates, cups and spoons; also Thermos bottles and jugs, together with prepackaged food which we put into styrofoam chests, sometimes with ice. All this we toss into the family car and away we go to some crowded park or campground, preferable near a river or lake.*

*Today I would like to take you down Memory Lane and introduce you to a fantastic, quiet, and secluded picnic place of long ago located on the west side of the*

*PICNIC (Cont'd.)*

*Bushkill Creek that flowed into Henry Dam about a quarter of a mile below. This spot, a small clearing nestled against the high ridge of hemlock trees that stretched almost to Jacobsburg, was the Henry family's private picnic place.*

*On the west side of the dam, a short distance above the spillway, stood a boat house, complete with latticed door and lock, lodging a wooden boat with "Lehicton," the Indian name for Bushkill, painted on the side. This boat was very proudly purchased by the mother of Miss Mary Henry Stites with "gift money," and Miss Stites tells me she still has the boat and that the key to the boat house still hangs at the same place it has for these many years.*

*In the spring of the year the boat was painted and launched and the first order of business was to row the wooden table and benches up to the picnic place. At picnic time many trips had to be made to transport members of the family, guests, and food. There was a narrow path to walk along the creek through the woods, a rather treacherous one at a few places, used only by some of the men and the young people of the family.*

*There was a small fireplace laid up with native stone covered with a grate on which coffee was brewed in a large tin coffee pot. The coffee itself was tied in a sugar bag, dropped into the pot of water, and removed when the beverage was "just right" for serving.*

*About a hundred feet, more or less, upstream was a rock formation, part of the aforementioned ridge, out of which flowed a spring. Someone very ingeniously chipped out a small basin that was always full and overflowing forming little rivulets that meandered their way over moss-covered rock to the creek below. This spring was accessible only by boat, the water was dipped out of the basin with a cup into a bucket, and that was the drinking water, cold, clear and refreshing.*

*The Henry Dam went with the 1926 flood and took with it many pleasurable activities that are now only a memory.*

\* \* \* \* \*

We have, among our manuscripts, a diary kept by Mary Adeline Henry (Mrs. Thomas H.A. Stites) dated 1891. She was 18 years old at the time. Don Repsher has made a typed copy which furnishes us with much picnic lore. Not only are we told about the date and location of these outings, but a list of every relative and friend attending is also given.

Here follows but an outline of Mary Adeline's report on these events, the reading of the names of countless Aunts, Uncles and Cousins making slow reading to us over one hundred years later. Even in its brevity it will show how popular the summer picnic was, and the large number of family and friends who attended them.

### Picnics(Cont'd.)

July 4 - Nine relatives and friends including Grandpopie (James Henry) celebrated the Fourth by a picnic at the dam.

July 6 - Ten relatives had a picnic. This was presumably at Boulton as Mr. and Mrs. Geiser came from Easton to see Uncle Ed on business and joined the party.

July 8 - Papa, Momma, Aunt Fanny, Katie and I had a picnic this afternoon - the smallest picnic I ever went to.

July 11 - Thirteen had a supper at the picnic place. Two gentlemen came from Nazareth (it is assumed) by bicycle.

July 13 -Thirteen had a picnic that Monday afternoon, the location not given.

July 16 - Six family members had supper at the picnic place. Some dozen persons visited one house or another during the day, including Rev. E. Grider from the West Indies. Perhaps a quiet supper outdoors was a pleasant relief.

July 17 -Supper was had in the yard this Friday evening.

July 21 - Six of the family had a picnic on the hill near the bridge.

August 1 - Nine family members had supper at Black Rock. This was the location of a spring at the western end of present-day Nazareth Park.

August 7 - (Friday) Mary Adeline had what she termed "a very select picnic." Present were Grandpopie, Aunt Sophie, Aunt Tal, Popa and Momma. What made it "select" she doesn't divulge (perhaps it was well she didn't).

August 12 -"A very nice picnic" was held with twenty attending at a site not mentioned.

August 14 - A small picnic of three in the Hall woods. (Nazareth Hall school had extensive grounds.)

Altogether Mary Adeline records twenty-seven picnics during the months of July and August in 1891. One was the Schoeneck Sunday School picnic (the family church). Those at the dam often included a row on the pond. We have the boat as another "picnic artifact."

With these facts and statistics, there is little doubt that the rumor is true -- the Henry Family loved picnics!

### Household Hints

It is often said that the contents of a house tell much about the lives of those living in it. This is most certainly true of the J. Joseph Henry House.

We have heard that the Henry Family enjoyed picnics, and the evidence at hand substantiates this. A very complete picnic basket has been found, containing both cutlery and table ware such as cups and plates. True, such an item was not unusual in a house at the turn of the century. But we also find a large assortment of white enamel-ware plates and cups (with typical blue rims) indicating that Henry picnics were on a larger scale than an ordinary picnic basket could handle. Then, too, there are several victorian folding

Household Hints (Cont'd.)

chairs with carpet-type seats which tradition tells us provided the seating at these outings. These were also found in the attic of the house.

As if this were not enough evidence, there is the white carriage gate at the bend of Henry Road leading down the hill. Although smothered by the growth of larger trees, a faint double line of Cedar trees lines a carriage-width path to a flat spot overlooking the Bushkill. Here, we are told, visitors gained access to a picnic ground behind the upper pasture.

This amount of equipment, plus a landscaped approach to a scenic overlook, indicates that the Henrys held a picnic more than once a year!

*Robert P.L. Frick, Curator*

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**JACOBSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
KENTUCKY RIFLE FROLIC  
JUNE 19TH & 20TH, 1999  
Sat. 10am-5pm.....Sun. 10am-4pm**

**On display an Outstanding Collection of  
Original Pennsylvania Longrifles (Kentucky Rifles)**

**19th Century Living History Encampment**  
A Pre-1840 Style Living History Encampment.  
See what living on the Frontier was really like!

**Kentucky Rifleman's Accouterments**  
& tools of the Gunsmith Trade with Original Rifling Machines & Artifacts from the Factory. Learn how the Longrifles were hand crafted from some of the Masters of the Trade.

**Working Craftsmen**  
Come and talk with our Craftsmen & Apprentices, see their beautiful workmanship. Take home a hand crafted piece of history. Start your own heirloom collection.