

# The Jacobsburg Record

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THIS IS WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT. . .

. . . Restoration of the Henry Homestead. And right now it's a kaleidoscope of deafening knocking down, taking off plaster, putting in a steel beam, walking on muddied dirt floors, uncovering over the log and fieldstone and clay construction of the original pre-Revolutionary log cabin, noticing the yellow pine plank paneling used in the 1810 addition, discovering an unsuspected window, realizing that it's all going to be put back together to make our Henry Homestead in Boulton a gem to be a source of instruction, a museum for items from the digs, and an office and meeting place for the Jacobsburg Historical Society. In addition, we are providing tenant quarters so that a custodian is on hand at all times.

Beginning on page 7 of this issue is a verbatim account of architect Engle's study of the Homestead before work was begun.

We hope everyone saw Lorna Weil's account of the restoration in the Sunday Call-Chronicle of August 5, page B6.

The building, of course, had to be vacated. Helping in that move were Virginia Lopresti, Mary DeRaymond, Ellis Neuner, and Matthew Morris.

Work has been progressing since the contract was let in June to Lanark Construction Co. of Coopersburg, James Hartnett owner. John N. Dickey and Reed Engle are the architects.

BUT, we are still in need of \$8000 to finish off our \$65,000 campaign! If any one of us has cards not yet canvassed, please let's see what we can do. The Board would appreciate suggestions for contacting sources of revenue--such as likely foundations interested in historical and educational projects.

Of the 601 persons who pledged the \$57,000 plus, 15 are delinquent as of this writing, but we already have more than \$41,000 on hand. A good deal of that amount is out in short-term interest-bearing notes.

## MUSIC IN THE WOODS, SEPTEMBER 30, RAIN DATE, OCTOBER 7

Because it will be impossible to use the Homestead area for the traditional fall get-together, the committee of Molly Santee, Joe DiGerlando, and Dale Prinkey, Jacobsburg State Park Superintendent, have planned a fall tour with amateur musicians in position about the Benade House area and along Nature Trails. They could include small groups, such as those so much enjoyed at the Craft Summer Festival, or individual pipers or flutists or violinists. If anyone knows of amateur musicians, still in school or out, please call Molly Santee (Mrs. Gordon F.), 253-3687. This will be a pleasant, novel, and cultural way to enjoy the Nature Trails in the woods.

Time: 12:30 to 4:30. There are tables and benches--so bring family and lunch and make it a picnic day. Young and old alike will enjoy. Light refreshments will be served under the chairmanship of Judy Sandercock--donations accepted.

Starting point: The new parking lot opposite the Bishop Benade House and grounds where early 19th century buildings are being worked on by the Jacobsburg Park crew headed by Dale Prinkey. See the  $9\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. root cellar located here and dug out by the Loprestis. It was in this area Virginia found the sections of an almost complete example of a slip-ware pie plate.

Directions: From Rt. 115, turn alongside the Belfast Hotel. Continue straight ahead for one mile. The parking lot will be on the left, and sitting well back on the right will be the Benade House with its Georgia Clay trim ("earthy orange", says Dale, and we agree to its being aesthetically pleasing). At the Benade House, too, admire the lovely natural stone and arched bridge over the stream put up by YCC boys under the direction of Dale Prinkey.

### THE RAINS CAME. . .

. . . And fell on our Craft Summer Festival on that Saturday, July 14. But all of us are indebted to the supreme planning and management of the affair by Mary Lou Audenried and Mary and Tom Bortell. Friday night the families of Bortell and Audenried pitched in; Mickey Toth and the Loprestis, Cay Beers, Margaret Taylor, Joe DiGerlando--even George Henry Burns and his wife, Dottie, were on hand, having come up from Quakertown to heed the call for help in the Reporter.

First and foremost we express our thanks and appreciation to all the exhibitors--without whom we would be nothing! All 43 accepted the storm with grace; unfortunately their exhibit time was really cut in half. All praised the arrangements, and some have indicated they'll be back next year.

The co-chairmen express their appreciation for all the help to all of the above, to all Board members and committees plus their families; to Girl Scouts Holly Kunkle and Roseann Serfass; Althea and Ellis Neuner; Carolyn Vickrey; musicians Jack Vickrey, Christy Roysdon, and Angela Spinoza; Miriam Larsen; Martha and Bud Stover who came in from Allentown to help; Mary Richardson; Betsy Zeller; Anna Gamboni; Judy Audenried; Peggy Shuttleworth; Lois Doyle; and Dale Prinkey for help in setting up the tent.

As of July 30, the Festival had netted \$1175 with some bills and money still to come in. Included in that total was the amount of \$795 realized from Margaret Taylor's patron letter.

### FESTIVAL FALLOUT

The next morning Mary Lou had a call from Walter Shunk, well-known potter who exhibits at the Kutztown Fair every year--he had lost his ear piece from his hearing aid. Did Mary Lou think it could be found? Well the Audenrieds met the Shunks at the shed on the hill, and sure enough, after a bit of hard searching and stirring around, there it was under a flat stone.

Then one of the Scottish dancers phoned in from Allentown. He had thrown his scarf across the side of the tent--would it still be there? And again, yes it was! The dancers manfully entertained under the tent

with the noise of the thunder and rain furnishing unaccustomed accompaniment.

When the storm zeroed in, many visitors as well as exhibitors were enjoying the program and events under the tent. A gallant young man did yoeman service by dashing back and forth to the tent from the 4H Center. He shared his umbrella with individual ladies to get across the flooded field and up the steps to the main building. Miss Stites and her two cousins couldn't hurry, so after the thunder and lightning moved on, but before the rain and winds had let up very much, they just started out. They were inevitably drenched to the skin. They got back to Mary's and were hospitably invited to change into dry clothes. It developed they were light travelers. What change of clothes? So, hospitality was extended still further!

Of course, people do put off buying plants until they are ready to go home. This year we had particularly interesting and numerous plant representations. Carolyn Vickrey, librarian at the Nazareth Public Library, creatively suggested she would take them into the library to benefit the latter to the extent of half the proceeds. Wonderful! And thank you so much, Carol Vickrey.

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Hats off to Ellis Neuner and Matthew Morris for taking care of the Homestead grounds all summer-cutting grass and trimming and cutting out undergrowth.

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Virginia and Joe Lopresti have been out digging this entire summer through all the weeks of record-breaking humidity, and without much help. One youngster from Manpower started July 2. Then another girl showed up the first week in August. One of the Lopresti grandsons has been helping, along with an 11-year-old neighbor. They have been digging about a mile or two beyond the Benade House in what they believe are the remains of a Jacob Huebler mill 56 x 27 ft. The walls are 2 ft. thick. It is of stone construction on three sides built against a slate hillside. Virginia will tell us all about it when the summer is over. This building could later have been turned into a forge by William Henry, the Loprestis believe.

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Mr. John Schlamp is a new member on the Board. He is president of the Nazareth National Bank, with his roots firmly in the area, having been born at New Village. He went to Nazareth schools and Moravian Prep and was graduated from Moravian College. He and his wife, Kathryn, have four children, a girl, twin boys, and another son--all now over 21. Welcome to this working Board.

Mickey Toth is currently off the Board while he is employed on the Homestead restoration.

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Ring around the date of October 25--Annual Dinner Meeting  
Jacobsburg Historical Society  
Stockertown Fire House

## HISTORICAL RESEARCH

## JACOBSBURG'S BLACK CITIZENS

By Charles M. Sandwick, Sr.

The account of the Wolle family reunion which was held at Jacobsburg and Boulton 20 July 1866 contains this comment: "At Jacobsburg, Nathaniel Ahry, an old neighbor, and often a help in the family, in days of yore, now 82 years of age, was also present." This venerable colored gentleman, known familiarly as Tan Ahry, was a lifelong resident of the Jacobsburg vicinity and was regarded as an authority concerning its folklore.

Captain Franklin Ellis in his History of Northampton County, Pa., 1752-1877, published by Peter Fritts, in a section devoted to Bushkill Township, said of him: "Tan Ahrey, an old man of the Arandack race, who died in 1875, at the age of ninety-one years, was long looked upon by the inhabitants of Bushkill as an authority in matters pertaining to the early history and traditions of the township. He often spoke of the beaver dams, that he affirmed existed at one time in the Bushkill, near Jacobsburg." Ellis erred on three points, the misspelling of Ahry, the reference to a nonexistent Arandack race, and the dating of Nathaniel's death as 1875 when in fact he died in 1872 at the age of 88.

The original spelling of Nathaniel's surname was "Ary," although at times it was recorded as "Ari" or "Arie." Sometime before 1850 he adopted the phonetic spelling "Ahry." Both of his parents were mulattoes and were designated as such in numerous church records at Bethlehem, Lititz and Nazareth. The dictionary defines a mulatto as a person who has one Negro parent and one white parent. Perhaps because this definition does not apply to a person both of whose parents are mulattoes, the 1850 census taker classified Nathaniel Ahry as black, while designating his son Alexander, a farmer, as mulatto, which seems to imply that Nathaniel's late wife had been white.

The registers of Schoeneck Moravian Church disclose that Nathanael, son of friend and neighbor Jacob Ary and his wife Margaretha, was born 7 Nov. 1784 and was baptized in their house one mile from Schoeneck 14 Dec. 1784 by Rev. Johan Wolfgang Michler. The sponsors were Mr. and Mrs. Nathanael Miksch of Friedensthal.

We haven't identified the wife of Nathaniel Ahry. The late Martin A. Smith, former editor of The Jacobsburg Record, stated that Nathaniel "had reputedly taken an Indian wife," but we have found no evidence to support this supposition. Further confusion is introduced by the Bushkill Township census of 1830 where the entire household of "Daniel Ohry" (the census taker's error for "Nathaniel Ahry") is listed under the heading of Free Colored Persons. Since this record includes a woman in the same age bracket as Nathaniel, we presume that she was his

wife. Again in 1840 the entire family of "Nathl. Ahre" was listed under Free Colored Persons. No wife was shown for Nathaniel in 1850.

Nathaniel was the youngest of six children born to Jacob and Margaretha (Christler) Ary, whose first five children were born at Christian's Spring. The children of Jacob and Margaretha were: (1) Susanna Maria, b 9 Sep 1772, d 17 Dec 1785; (2) Anne Elisabeth, b 21 June 1775, living in 1817; (3) Johann Jacob, b 10 Apr 1777, d 3 Nov 1789; (4) Johannes (John), b 7 Aug 1779, m Katharine ----, and had James, b 2 Aug 1816, Sara, b 2 Dec 1817, Maria Anna, b 20 Mar 1823 and possibly other children; (5) Anna Johanna (Hannah), b 9 Nov 1781, d 31 Oct 1858; (6) Nathanael (later spelled Nathaniel), b near Schoeneck in what is now Bushkill Tp 7 Nov 1784, d Bushkill Tp 23 Dec. 1872, married and had at least three sons and one daughter.

Jacob Ary was born in Berbice, Guyana, 13 Sep 1745. A party of Moravian missionaries who had been serving in Guyana came to Bethlehem in the spring of 1749, bringing with them Ary, a mulatto boy not yet four years old, and Elizabeth, an Arawak Indian girl, aged sixteen. Ary was sent to the Moravian school in Frederic Township, Philadelphia County. He was baptized at Bethlehem 31 Mar 1755: "Jacob, alias Ary, a mulatto boy from Berbice, 9 yr. old, baptized by Bro. (Jacob) Till."

The Lititz Diary disclosed the following events: On July 27, 1771, "Jacob, the Mulatto, originally from Berbice, S.A., assistant cook in the Brethren's House, was betrothed to the Mulatto sister Margaret Christler. They were married on the 30th by Bro. (Rev. John Adam) Grube, after an address by Bro. (Rt. Rev. Matthew) Hehl. They went to Christiansbrunn (Christian's Spring) to live."

Margaretha (Christler) Ary was born near Yorktown, Pa., 12 May 1743. She died 1 Aug 1814, and Jacob died 17 June 1817. Both were buried in the Moravian Cemetery at Schoeneck. Their sons Jacob and Nathaniel were also buried there. Their daughters Susanna Maria and Anna Johanna were buried in the Moravian Cemetery at Nazareth.

In the death and burial register of the Schoeneck Moravian Church it is recorded that Elisabeth Ary died 17 July 1848 and was buried on the 19th. No other information is given nor have we been able to find her tombstone; so we are unable to say whether this was Nathaniel's wife, his daughter, or his older sister. Nathaniel's sister Elisabeth, who was born in 1775, became an associate member of the Schoeneck congregation 6 April 1788 and a communicant 22 April 1792, and we know that she was living when her father died in 1817, but beyond that we have no information about her.

Alexander Ahry, a son of Nathaniel, was born 25 July 1829 and died 2 April 1898. He was buried in the Moravian Cemetery at Schoeneck. On his tombstone, the surname is spelled "Ary." On Nathaniel's stone, the spelling is "Ahri."

In a deed from his parents dated 29 Feb 1812 the occupation of Nathaniel Ahry was given as forgerman. No doubt he was employed at Henry's forge in Jacobsburg. In 1820 he described himself to the

census taker as a weaver. In the census of 1850 he was listed as a laborer.

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### BOULTON REMINISCENCES

Mary Henry Stites

Summertime--woods, a stream, a boat house with rowboats and a canoe, and finally a picnic--this was the most joyful thought of all to the children and the older ones too.

It was never hard at Boulton to get a picnic started if one did a little judicious instigating. A child's remark, "Let's have a picnic," was all that was necessary. However, if there was some hesitation at home, the next step was to pay Aunt Tal a visit and repeat the remark to her. Her response could be counted on, always prompt and always affirmative and all in one breath, "Does mama want a picnic? Tell her I'll bring the sugar cake and the pickles." Every child should have an Aunt Tal!

The third step was to return home and, staying strictly within the truth, report that Aunt Tal thought it a nice day for a picnic and that she would bring sugar cake and pickles, in addition, of course, to many other delicacies. The usual response to all this would be to the effect that it is a nice day, summer is passing, and we must enjoy it while it's here--and the picnic was on its way (almost by itself)! The self-persuasion thoughts were Grandmother's, who belonged to the count-your-blessings school of thought.

There were five households to be consulted, three with telephones, two without. Those with telephones were called immediately, and a child was dispatched with messages to the two without. At that time the family was large. Sixteen at a picnic was considered rather a small number, twenty to twenty-four was more usual, particularly if any of the various households had company--frequently the case.

There was a time--before mine--when arranging a picnic involved some considerable planning of the I'll-take-this and you-take-that sort. However, in latter years it was decided that each household should bring what it wished. This worked out admirably and there was always a feast.

Baskets packed, the family assembled on the lawn of the Homestead, then known to the whole family as "The Aunties'", and the party set out for the woods. It was a walk of about a quarter of a mile to the landing. Boats were bailed and cleaned, oars fitted in the locks, and the boats swung around close to the landing and held steady while the older ones embarked. Aunt Tal, a lady of comfortable build, always sat in stern--or was it the bow?--I don't remember which; in any case she balanced the boat.

Next, children took their places, the rower, usually one of the uncles, took oars in hand, and each boatload moved off upstream. There was a definite channel to be followed or you would land on a mud bank, for in later years the dam had considerable silt. Even this involved



excitement, for once firmly in the mud, the boat had to be rocked from side to side and an oar used as a pole to push, and even on one or two memorable occasions someone would go overboard.

Once arrived at the "Old Picnic Place" came the unloading of people and baskets. This completed, boats were securely tied to tree roots, and, oh the excitement when the current worked loose a carelessly tied boat and began to take it downstream!

Food--and what is more important to a picnic than food?--was simple. There were always several kinds of cold meat, deviled eggs, tomatoes, potato salad, pickles, preserves, and cheese. For dessert, fruit and cake, and always sugar cake, besides that backbone of an outdoor meal--freshly made coffee.

The group always left the woods well before dark. There were no flashlights and nobody wanted to bother carrying coal oil lanterns. Once again, everybody assembled at the old house, sorted out various possessions, baskets, wet bathing suits, etc. Depending on the weather--if a thunderstorm threatened, home came next; however, if the evening was pleasant, the elders gathered on the porch to talk, and the children in the front yard to play games until darkness came, and with it bedtime.

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#### THE LOG HOUSE AND HOMESTEAD SITE BEFORE WILLIAM HENRY III

from "Historic Structures Report. The Henry Homestead, Boulton, Pennsylvania, for The Jacobsburg Historical Society," Prepared by Reed Laurence Engle, October 20, 1978, the Office of John M. Dickey, AIA, Media, Pa.

The origin of the log house that forms the core of the Henry Homestead will be difficult to discover because of the number of wood and/or log structures listed on the available Jacobsburg/Boulton deeds, and because of the large amount of acreage encompassed by those documents.

It is known, however, that Henry, Christ, and Everly purchased 396 acres of land from the estate of Jacob Hubler in 1792, and that the land extended approximately 9,300 feet along the Bushkill Creek, an area running from Boulton to Jacobsburg.<sup>3</sup> William Henry and Company owned 440 acres; William Henry and Jacob Everly owned 529 acres in partnership; and Everly owned 393 acres in his own right by the year 1798.<sup>4</sup> The Direct Tax List indicates that wood structures, and a two-story stone house stood on this land, and indicates that there were three tenants, but does not list details as to their residences.

Research indicates that the Moravians are said to have had a log church, later supplanted by a "Swiss type house" on the Bushkill, that served as the original meeting house for the Schoeneck Moravian congregation on the Henry/Everly/Christ acreage, and it is stated that Hubler's original log cabin next to "a Spring" is in fact the Henry log house.<sup>5</sup> The present project is unable to substantiate or counter either claim.

Architectural evidence gathered with the aid of paint, nail, and structural analysis and identification shows that the log house was originally constructed at its present dimensions (21' by 28') of adzed, roughly squared logs of hemlock, oak, and walnut. The logs were V-notched at the corners,<sup>6</sup> and chinked with local stone, river cobbles, and clay mortar that was subsequently white-washed (Photograph #1, not reproduced here). The original wood shingled ridgelines of the house ran north/south, opposite to the present orientation of the homestead, and the original rafter plates show an unusual double notch which probably indicates that a substantial roof overhang initially was present. The general jointing in the log house shows a better mastery of the craft than is found in many extant log structures.

The house had a central fireplace dividing the first floor into two rooms with an east/west random plank partition (Photograph #3, not reproduced here). The southern room, the smaller of the two and appearing not to have had a fireplace, probably served as a sleeping area, while the larger northern room was the kitchen/living space. Window infills indicate the smaller room had at least two windows, and the northern room at least one window and a door (Photograph #2, not reproduced here).

The second floor of the house was essentially a loft space and probably was reached by a ladder or small stair. Neither first nor second floor walls or ceilings were plastered, but rather show evidence of having been occasionally white-washed (Photograph #4 not reproduced here).

The basement was also divided in two, with a stone wall and chimney foundation. The spacing of the first floor joists indicate that either a small stair or ladder provided access to the basement to the west side of the fireplace. The basement originally served as storage area for fruits and vegetables as indicated by the many wrought nails of the joists that served as hooks.

The log house, though of better than average construction, was considered uninhabitable by the young gunsmith on his arrival at Boulton in 1810, and within a short time (Ed. Note: by his marriage in 1817) Henry had expanded and remodeled the structure.

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Editor's Note: Footnotes 1 and 2 are references to the introductory material in Engle's Report. Therefore this section starts with footnote 3.

<sup>3</sup>Copy of records from the Bureau of Land Records, Harrisburg, in the possession of Joseph and Virginia Lopresti as reported in the Jacobsburg Record, Vol. VIII, #9, Dec.-Jan., 1976, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>1798 United States Direct Tax (Glass Tax), Plainfield Township.

<sup>5</sup>Lopresti map of the area.

<sup>6</sup>V-notching is an unusual method for joining log cabins and is not credited to the Germans who favored the dovetail, or the English who used the half-dovetail. The Scotch-Irish often used the saddle notch joint. The Swiss or Swedish are known to have used the V-notch, and it may be seen in the Upper and Lower Swedish Cabins, Upper Darby Creek, Pa.

<sup>7</sup>Letter from William Henry II in the possession of Mary Henry Stites states that William had made the house "habitable."

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There will be no September Board meeting.