

Fall 2006

# The Jacobsburg Record

JACOBSBURG  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Volume 33, Issue 3

*Jacobsburg — Where History Lives!*

## Be Our Guest at Boulton

Who visits the Jacobsburg Historical Society? The real answer is everyone and from all over. They range from school students and Junior Historians to adults from the Lehigh Valley to the four corners of Pennsylvania and beyond. A very pleasant surprise is that we are drawing visitors from far outside our region as the notoriety of our excellent collections and displays becomes known. Our best publicity is spread by word of mouth by past satisfied visitors; by members of various firearms collecting groups, such as the Kentucky Rifle Association, Forks of the Delaware Gun Collectors, National Rifle Association, and National Muzzle Loading Rifle Association; and by members of other historical societies, to name a few.

So far this year, by the beginning of August, we had 594 visitors who signed our guest book. Visitors from east of the Mississippi River came from the following states: New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, Wisconsin, and the District of Columbia. Visitors from the west came from Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, California, Washington, and Hawaii. And continuing farther west across the Pacific from Hawaii were visitors from the nation of Japan.

This August, Atsuko Saikami, from northern Japan, visited Boulton with her two young daughters and her mother, Katsuko. They came as the guests of Andras Molnar, son of



Japanese visitors, Reina and Luna Saikami, beckon to their mother, grandmother, and American host, Andras Molnar, to come and see the John Joseph Henry House.

Jane and John Molnar, a JHS board director. Andras is a sophomore student at Connecticut College. As part of his studies in Japanese language and culture, he had stayed in the home of the Saikamis in the summer of 2004. This summer, Ms. Saikamia flew with her family to Seattle on personal business. Afterwards, she arranged to visit New York City, as well as with her friend Andras in Pennsylvania.

While visiting Andras, Ms. Saikamis expressed an interest in knowing more about the history of the area, so Andras brought the family to Boulton. With Bill Atherton as their guide, the Saikami discovered the John Joseph Henry House and the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. Ms. Saikami was fascinated with the stories of the Henry family and their industry, as well as with the architecture of the Henry homes, which is so strikingly different from Japanese construction.

At the end of the visit, Ms. Saikami's mother told Andras and Bill that her visit was so special that she, to use a Japanese expression, "wanted to take her memories of Boulton with her to heaven."

Tuesday 08 August 2006 William S. Atherton, Director		
才神 敦子	Atsuko Saikami	静岡県八幡市虎内町 6-1
玲奈	Reina	Hachinohe, Aomori, Japan
増奈	Luna	
川口 豚子	Katsuko Kawaguchi	埼玉県所沢市下松 537-17
Andras Molnar	John Molnar	Nezareth, PA 18064

Page from the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum guest register bearing the signatures of our Japanese visitors.

**Jacobsburg Historical Society****Board of Directors**

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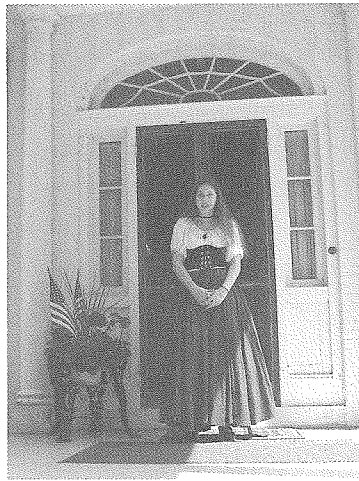
Earl Van Norman

Howie White

The *Jacobsburg Historical Society* is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting the art and industry of making early American firearms, and the character of the individuals and community that created and sustained that enterprise.

The *Jacobsburg Record* is published by the Jacobsburg Historical Society, 441 Henry Road, Nazareth, Pennsylvania 18064, 610-746-2809, and is mailed to Society members and supporters.

Jan S. Ballard, newsletter editor

*Message from President Rich Steiner***Volunteer Sarah White**

White, daughter of Cathy and Howie White, is an up-and-coming JHS volunteer. Sarah, a senior at Easton High School, is a recent recipient of the prestigious Girl Scout Gold Award. Through her parents involvement, Sarah has grown up with JHS, and, like Virginia, she continues to give generously of her time, serving as a docent, a member of the grounds cleaning crew, and a coordinator of our Christmas Open House. Though years apart, Sarah and Virginia share the common ground of understanding the historical significance and beauty of Boulton and the importance of preserving its legacy for future generations.

A lot has transpired during the summer months. With the help of you, our volunteers and supporters, we've held several successful events, reached out to thousands with our educational programs, opened our Longrifle Museum, hosted touring groups, completed phase one of our archives and records project; and we continue to make advances on our high-priority building and ground restoration projects. To that end we will soon commence a new round of work on the JJ House, which will include the exterior painting of wood trim and shutters and the much needed repair of the parlor ceiling. With a second major Greenway grant we'll continue additional JJ House stabilization projects and eventually migrate to the barn and summer kitchen. The stream bank (Stone House) revitalization project is on temporary hold as we continue to explore all options and understand any implications which might result from the eventual Henry Woods bridge replacement. Lastly, Jan Ballard continues to explore grants and funding sources which will allow us to eventually restore the Nicholas Hawke gun shop. During this busy summer season, our JHS team has volunteered thousands of hours in achieving our successful track record. Along the way we've had some fun, built some new friendships, strengthened the old ones and have all grown through the "spirit of giving back." Both Sarah and Virginia know this spirit. If you haven't done so already, please join us with your participation. I'm confident that you'll have fun and realize a tremendous sense of gratification.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our organization. On a recent business trip I found myself sitting on a plane, which was delayed by the passing of a severe thunderstorm. Waiting patiently, I began to reflect on JHS and the many wonderful people who have contributed to our organization's health and welfare over the years. Two in particular came to mind. Although years apart, they are contemporaries and they embody a tremendous energy, passion and achievement for JHS. Virginia Lopresti is the "Grand Dame" of JHS. She is a Founding Mother, who continues to generously give her time in a myriad of venues. Whether through Board of Director service, museum docent duty, or educating children and adults with her artifacts and stories, Virginia continues to graciously dedicate her service to JHS. Sarah

**Volunteer Virginia Lopresti**

## JHS Annual Membership Dinner Features Jacobsburg Road Show

The Jacobsburg Historical Society cordially invites you to attend the membership's annual fall dinner. The event will take place at the Holy Family Club, 515 West Mauch Chunk Street, Nazareth on Thursday evening, October 19th. The cash bar, cocktail social will begin at 6:00 p.m., with a family style dinner following at 6:45 p.m. Cost is \$22 per person. Following dinner, JHS prints, books, clothing, and foofaraw on display around the room will be presented for silent auction. Anyone wishing to donate items to this first-time event will be contributing to the operations of the Society and adding a new, fun twist to our annual meeting. For more information, contact Dave Ehrig at [DEhrig@aol.com](mailto:DEhrig@aol.com). Our main speaker this year will present a fascinating "Jacobsburg Road Show." All of the items presented on the silver screen by Richard Dotta will be archives and

assets found in and on the Society's grounds, buildings, and museum collections. Richard performed the appraisal on the Mary Henry Stites Estate when we inherited the property and goods. Our plans for the program are to create an "Antiques Roadshow" type of atmosphere, only using JHS goods. Using a combination of photo slides, PC PowerPoint and actual items from the JJ House, Richard can tell some of the story of some of our treasures. This will be a great refresher for those who grew up around Boulton or a wonderful new look at the Henrys for those who have recently joined the Society. To make your dinner reservations, please respond by Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, P.O. Box 345, Nazareth, PA 18064. For more information on the dinner, contact Bobbie or Joe Digerlando at [ismdigerlando@enter.net](mailto:ismdigerlando@enter.net) or 610-759-7239.

—Joe Digerlando

## Nominees to the JHS Board of Directors

The membership will elect a slate of directors at the October 19th Annual Dinner Meeting. These directors have accepted the nomination to continue serving on the board: **Rich Steiner, Phil Schroeder, Bill Atherton, Joe Flemish, and Earl Van Norman.** Bob Newell will step down from the board next year. JHS appreciates his long, dedicated service and wishes him well.

**Tom Turtzo and Sybil Marsh** are new nominees. Following are their statements regarding their interest in and commitment to JHS.

—Dave Ehrig, Chair, Nominations

### Tom Turtzo

My relationship with Jacobsburg and the Historical Society goes back to my childhood. My first recollection of Mary Henry is when she and her friend Mrs. Beers were sitting in our living room with my mother discussing the organizing of an historical society. While my mom was not a key figure in the final formation of the society, she did expose me to Henry's Woods at an early age. I spent many wonderful and magical hours there fishing and at various Boy Scout encampments. In the 1970s, I was mesmerized by the archaeological finds of the Lopresti's. It was astonishing to me. Until that time, I was not really aware of the historical significance of the whole area. In the last two decades, I have given a number of traditional forge demon-

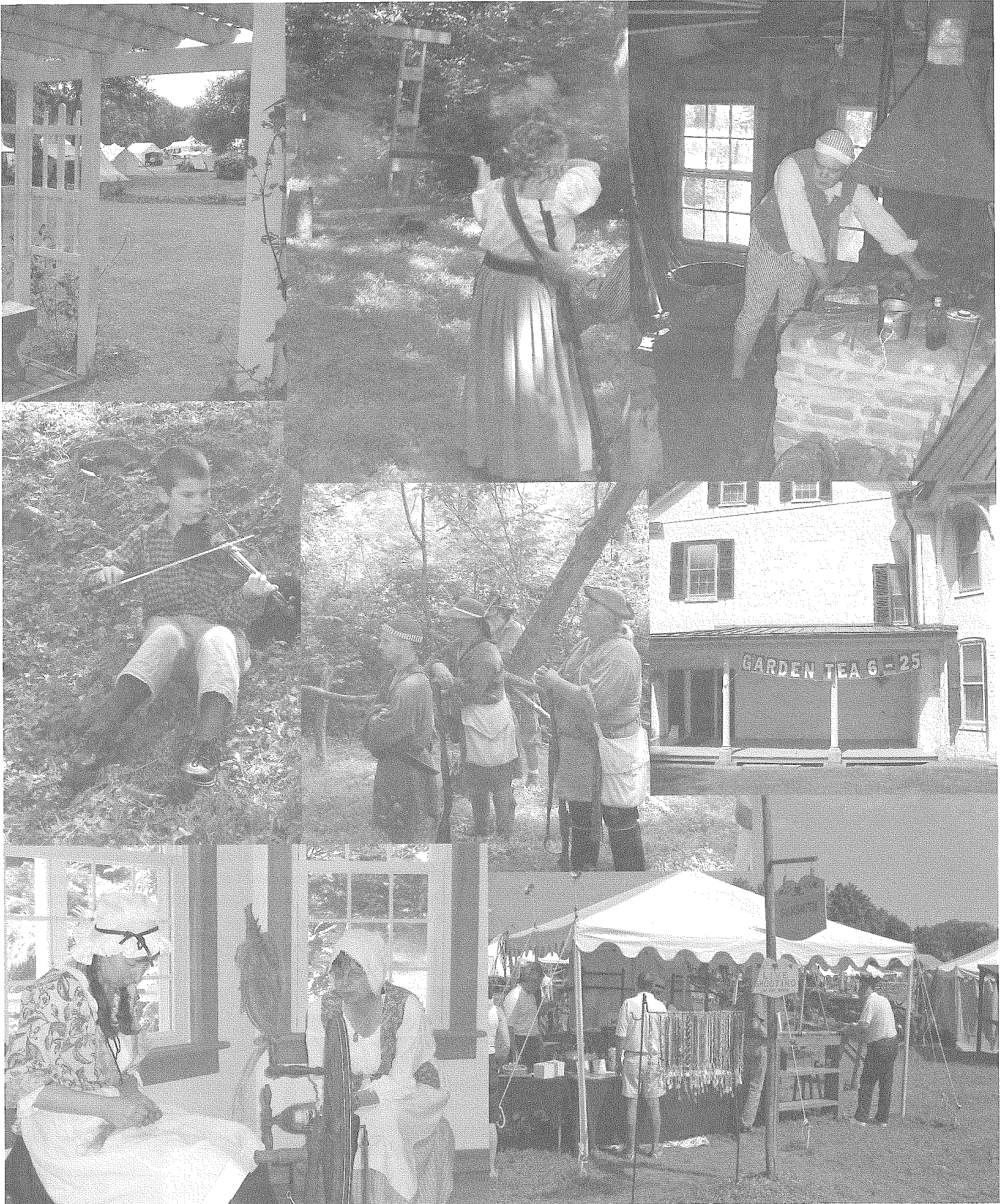
strations at various events, such as the Bushkill Stream Festival, which, sadly, did not continue more than a few years. I took the gunsmithing course at Jacobsburg a few years ago, and I would like to see it expanded to be more comprehensive, along with an advanced blacksmithing program, as well.

### Sybil Marsh

I am a retired school nurse who grew up in Nazareth and spent the majority of my adult life in Wassergass, a suburb of Hellertown. I have now moved back to an historic old family home on Belfast Road in Bushkill Township. I have always loved history, old homes, antiques and the rural life. While living in Wassergass, we acquired a flock of sheep, which led me to the hobby of spinning wool. I took this hobby to school (Saucon Valley Elem. buildings) and into the classroom for classes and demos with the children when they studied Colonial America. (I have continued to do this in retirement.) I have been a docent for Historic Bethlehem in the Industrial Quarter and at Burnside Plantation. I am also a volunteer for The Moravian Historical Society in Nazareth, working in their museum craft shop. For the past three years I have been a docent for Jacobsburg in the JJ House, and I have also volunteered on the clean-up committee for Jacobsburg events. Most recently, I was appointed as volunteer coordinator for JHS. My husband and I have opened our own home to two house tours to benefit community organizations. It was chosen mostly for its local, historical interest.

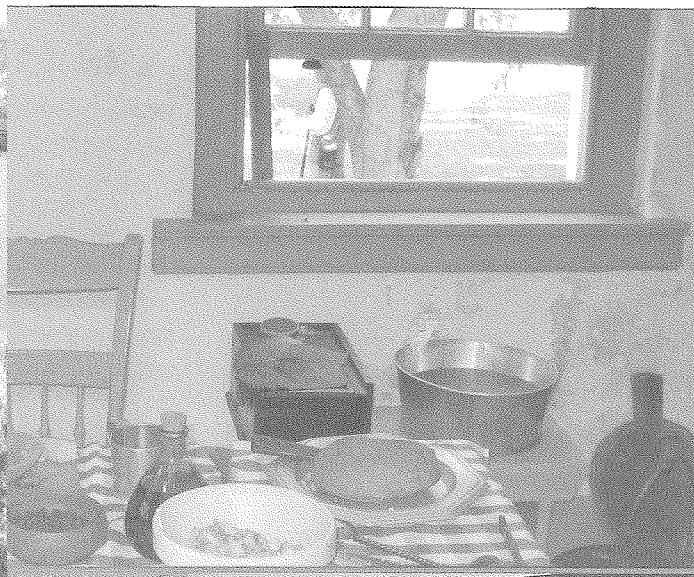


# SUMMER 2006

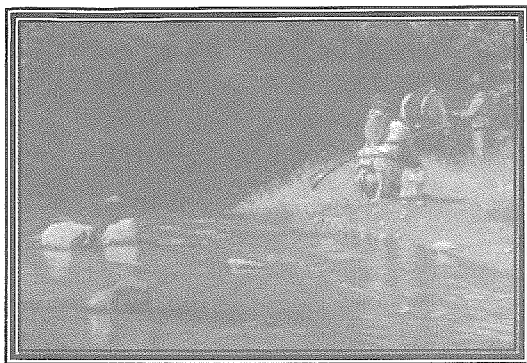




Photos by Phil Schroeder, Tim Lubenesky, and Dave Ehrig



## From the Museum Store

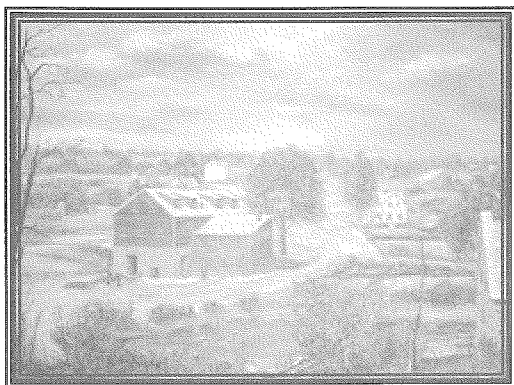


*On New Headwaters* by Kevin J. McDonald

Kevin J. McDonald is an artist who is fascinated by history. And that fascination is readily apparent in his and Jacobsburg Historical Society's first limited-edition, signed and numbered print. *On New Headwaters* vividly depicts the timeless beauty of natural wilderness as two Rocky Mountain fur trappers explore potentially beaver-laden waters in the early fall—a scene characteristic of the American mountain man's heyday, circa 1820–1830.

"The longrifle depicted in this painting is based on an associate's original J.J. Henry longrifle. I have donated the original painting to the Jacobsburg Historical Society and am glad to know that *On New Headwaters* will hang in the Museum of the Pennsylvania Longrifle." —KJM

Limited edition prints. Unframed: \$125 Framed: \$275



*Henry Gun Factory* by Donald Wendling

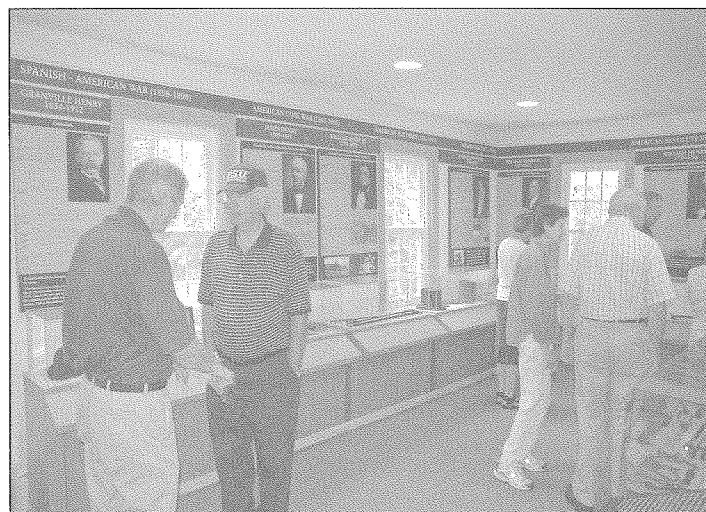
Donald Wendling's interest in local history motivated him to undertake this historically accurate rendition of the internationally famous Henry family gun factory, which was located in Boulton, Pennsylvania, just north of the early Moravian settlement of Christian Springs.

The Henry family's gun making activities began in the area in 1780 when William Henry II set up his business on South Main Street in Nazareth Pennsylvania. The business grew to the point where he located his gun-making operation on a tract of land along the nearby Bushkill Creek at Jacobsburg in 1792.

Limited edition prints. Unframed: \$125 Framed: \$275

## First Friday Event Held at Boulton

The Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society, which holds monthly "First Friday" educational programs at its headquarters in Easton, instead traveled by caravan to Boulton on August 4. Despite the hot weather almost 20 people participated in the nine mile caravan in order to tour the John Joseph Henry House and the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and to enjoy presentations by Virginia Lopresti, Earl Van Norman, and Bill Atherton, as well as tours and hospitality provided by JHS members Ron Gabel, Dave and Tina Ehrig, Jackie Van Norman and her grandson Neil, and Barb and Phil Schroeder. The word from the NCHGS is that they enjoyed their visit so much that future caravans to other Northampton County historic sites are likely. Perhaps there may even be a return visit to Boulton in the future to walk along the Bushkill Creek to see and learn about the remains of the Henry industrial sites, such as the factory, mill race, dam, and ice houses.



Northampton County Historical and Genealogical Society guests enjoy a First Friday event hosted by JHS.

## Volunteers Corner

A big thank you to everyone who helped to make our Summer 2006 events a great success. The combined efforts of MANY to spruce up the exterior and interior of our buildings, grounds, and gardens have provided more beautiful surroundings for Mollie's Tea and the Rifle Frolic than we have seen in recent years. A big thank you, also, to those who helped with the planning and details of those events, especially the publicity and ticket sales "committees"!

You have paved the way for the addition of a number of NEW VOLUNTEERS who responded positively to our written request for help. Susan Cervin, Arthur Eime, Peg and Dominic Ferraro, Dolores Matusek, John Meixell, the Tomsic Family, and James Wright have all indicated their willingness to volunteer in various capacities. We are pleased to welcome them and will be calling upon them as we plan our Fall and Winter events, schedule clean-up days, and assist in preparing mailings and helping Jan Ballard complete tasks that will enable us to organize and permanently preserve the many wonderful Henry Family artifacts and information that now belong to our Society.

Several of our new volunteers are interested in becoming docents for our tours, and I am in the process of revising the information we use in the tours and creating a small handbook and orientation program to prepare them for this very important job. Others who may be interested are welcome.

We will also be needing help in the planning and execution of our Christmas 2006 Event scheduled for Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. Soooo . . . those of you who have been considering taking a more active role at Jacobsburg, there's no better time than NOW!! I look forward to all your calls ( 610-759-0361) or emails ([wassergass@msn.com](mailto:wassergass@msn.com)).

--Sybil Marsh, Volunteer Coordinator

## Pennsylvania Longrifle Course: A Unique Glimpse at Living History

Along the west bank of the Bushkill Creek stands the historic village of Boulton. Once a thriving center of gun manufacturing for the Henry family and the skilled craftsmen of Jacobsburg, it stands today as both the site of the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and home to the Gunsmith Apprentice Program.

"The purpose of the program is to give students instruction in basic gunsmithing techniques to build a muzzleloading rifle from parts," stated Tim Lubenesky, board member and facilitator for Jacobsburg Historical Society. "This course is one of our museum's outreach programs. It is designed to perpetuate the skills of the colonial gunsmith. Many of our Master Gunsmiths are getting older and they wish to pass their skills along to the next generation."

JHS conducts a two-session training program to instruct apprentices in the fine art and craftsmanship of building contemporary Pennsylvania/Kentucky longrifles. Each fall session teaches the basics while the more advanced spring session includes inletting skills, brass patchbox construction, metal engraving, and wood and metal finishing techniques. The fall session is a prerequisite for enrolling in the spring course.

Students are given hands-on instruction as the presenters discuss lock, stock and barrel techniques. Current and past master gunsmiths have included such notables as George Dech, Rich Hujsa, Jim Correll and Rocky Shreck. These men are known for their skill in accurately recreating the art and architecture of Pennsylvania Longrifles, as well as their efforts in judging longrifles at Dixon's Gunmakers Fair. This fall represents the sixth year of the program's success.

The first two hours of the evening involve instruction in rifle building techniques. The last hour is devoted to understanding the characteristics of Pennsylvania Longrifle gunsmithing schools (distinct styles of rifle architecture). Each week, students can study and photograph original longrifles and discuss the strategies, equipment, materials and skills that went into the construction of each.

At the conclusion of the two courses students will experience all the theory and skills necessary for building their own longrifles. The program has the uniqueness of being built at the original Henry homestead with instructors who endeavor to continue the gunmaking heritage into the twenty-first century. "There is no

other ongoing program similar to this in the country!" Lubenesky proudly reflected.

During the course of the classes, Master Gunsmiths Hujsa and Correll build reproductions of Henry arms as demonstration pieces. To date, the master gunsmiths have produced 11 accurate Henry reproductions, all which are offered for sale at the end of each class. Monies generated from the sale of these unique reproductions are donated to the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum.

The most recent rifle was an 1826 J.J. Henry Gun built by R. Hujsa. This smooth-bore full-stocked gun was the type sold to the American Fur Trade Company for trade with Native Americans during the fur trade era. The current rifle being finished by J. Correll is a copy of Henry's famous New English Pattern Rifle. The Henrys were the only makers of this pattern rifle and manufactured it exclusively for the American Fur Trade Company up to the Civil War. Those interested in acquiring one of the course's unique Henry recreations can contact Ron Gable, JHS treasurer, at [rggabel@fast.net](mailto:rggabel@fast.net). Interested gunsmith apprentices should contact JHS for an application.

Article (abridged) by Dave Ehrig published in *The Pottsville Republican*, 7/23/06.



## Molly's Garden Tea Honors Contributions of Henry Family Women

Late in March while I was reading the *Morning Call* and sipping my breakfast coffee, a picture of women having a springtime tea seem to leap off the page. The article went on to say that this picture was taken in 1929 and was a typical venue for women working on community projects. Nearly tripping on the dogs curled by my feet, I retrieved scissors and a highlighter and carefully cut out and read this article honoring women. The article stated that through various women's clubs and organizations, women were at the forefront of community service. As I began to absorb the tremendous dedication of pro-suffrage forces, I was equally awed by the depth and scope of women's contributions to America during World Wars I and II. The image of these women having tea while planning community service projects was forever burned in my brain. The vision for "Molly's Garden Tea" was born.

Her name was Mary Adeline Henry Stites. Since her one daughter was bequeathed the name "Mary," as well as Molly's mother before her, the confusion of names could result in inaccuracies. However, to give a better idea of this particular woman, we used Mary Adeline's nickname, "Molly," which she was often affectionately called by family and friends.

Molly was born at Boulton, was married at Boulton, and died at Boulton. Her father was Granville Henry, the last proprietor of the Henry's Boulton Gun Works. Her mother was Mary Krause Henry, with Molly being an only child. The day that we celebrated Molly's Garden Tea was two days removed from the anniversary of Molly's wedding day on June 27, 1905. On this date in 1905 Molly was unaware that she would have two daughters, one who would preserve Henry history for all time and one who would tragically die of tuberculosis at the age of 17 years. Ironically, Molly's husband, Dr. Thomas Henry Atherton Stites was a physician who worked tirelessly as a pioneer to eradicate TB.

Molly's Garden Tea was covered by *The Express Times*

reporter, Kelly Huth. The following is the article that was printed in the paper on June 27, 2006 — Molly's and Tom's wedding anniversary!



Reading fortunes in tea leaves.

### Tea and a Life History at Bushkill Township House

On Sunday, the Jacobsburg Historical Society honored one of the last Henry women who lived at the Henry House with a public tea party. From 1 to 4 p.m., about 100 guests learned about "Molly" Henry Stites during "Molly's Garden Tea."

Held at the Henry House and gardens where the family lived, guests were invited to sip tea from their favorite teacups while looking at pictures and artifacts of Molly and her family. Molly Henry was born

in 1873 and died in 1974 at the age of 101.

"We did this to recognize and honor the contributions of the Henry women to society and to the communities of Nazareth and Boulton," said Roberta Steiner, coordinator of the event.

Molly Henry was the first Henry woman to begin preserving the family's history. In 1969, she and her daughter, Mary Henry, donated volumes of family business records to the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware.

During the tea, tours were given of the Henry House and the Pennsylvania Longriffl Museum. Refreshments were available as guests listened to musical performances by Bruce Stimmel and Sally Shutler. Marja Schantz offered readings of tea leaves and members of the Henry family gave tours and recounted stories of their Aunt Molly.

"When we'd come up for the summer, Aunt Molly would always wear her silk gown and carry her navy needlepoint bag in which she kept her jewels. She could barely hold it, but she always wanted to keep her jewels with her," said Emily Henry Jostrand, one of the Henry descendents.

The tea was also a celebration of Molly Henry's marriage, according to Steiner. The date is two days away from the 101st wedding anniversary of Molly Henry to Dr. Thomas Henry Atherton Stites. They were married on June 27, 1905.



### Molly's Garden Tea (continued)

"We decided on a tea because it's something Molly would've done. She loved to entertain," Connie Unangst said, who spent the day dressed as Molly Henry.

"And it's neat to understand that there actually was a Molly who lived here, and it's fun to get to know her."



Molly (Connie Unangst) greets guests at her tea.

*Postscript* – Mary Adeline Henry Stites and daughter, Mary Henry Stites, were forerunners in recognizing the value of preserving the vast and rich Henry history for all eternity. Molly's daughter, Mary Henry Stites, in 1989 endowed the Jacobsburg Historical Society with the 1834 John Joseph Henry House and the surrounding 24 acres. The buildings and property currently serve as the headquarters for all administrative, archival and event business.

Most importantly, it's a place of fun, education, and honor. Thank you Molly and Mary for your amazing foresight.

Please stay tuned for next year's tea.

Just thoughts ... October 2007 ... Lydia (Molly's daughter) ... the budding violinist ... this tea will be dedicated to YOU. As they say ... the rest is history.

—Roberta Steiner

### HORSES AT BOULTON

This story is from William Bensen Henry's oral history (1991). He was the great-grandson of gunsmith, James Henry. His daughters, Jane Henry Ives and Emily Henry Jostrand, traveled from New England to attend Molly's Garden Tea. We hope that they will continue to be involved in JHS events.

—Roberta Steiner

#### Series Part 2: General "Jenny"

No discussion of Boulton would be complete without discussion of the pony called General, or "Jenny" as we called her. I think she originated when Uncle Tom (Dr. Thomas Stites) was (a physician) at the sanitarium at Hamburg (PA) and he loved to go to Cresson (PA). Later Jenny was shipped to Boulton. She was very old and never got the exercise she should have had, and so she had a mind of her own. I loved to take her out every chance I got, but when she didn't want



General "Jenny"

to go, she was like a mule and simply wouldn't move. One time she stopped short, and when I tried to make her go, she threw me over her head! Fortunately, I wasn't hurt.

Of course, she had a nice saddle and harness and a two-wheel cart with a rear seat that folded down and faced to the rear. One time Aunt Mary (Mary A.H. Stites) asked me to take Jenny up to Belfast to meet a person, someone called Aunt or Cousin Adelaide, or "Addy," and she came up by trolley from Bethlehem, and I was to meet her at Belfast. I thought it was proper to put her in that rear seat, never realizing that with a two-wheel cart, when Jenny would go into her trot, the rear seat bobbed up and down. Cousin Addy was a prim, proper old maid, and she really got shaken up by the time we got to Boulton. Jenny had trotted the entire way, and poor Addy was never the same after that!

## Seventh Annual Junior Historians Day Camp

The Jacobsburg Historical Society & Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center Heritage Program Partnership wrapped up its seventh annual Junior Historians Day Camp the last week of July. Thirteen kids from 8-12 years-of-age participated in the three-day program during the morning hours of July 26-28. The Jr. Historians Day Camp introduces children to the historic places and green spaces that make up today's Jacobsburg EE Center, more commonly known as Jacobsburg State Park, as well as the adjacent property and cultural resources of the Jacobsburg Historical Society.

As in years past, Day One of the Jr. Historians program was focused on the Boulton Historic Area, which encompasses the historical landscape of the Henry family's firearms community in the southeast corner of the park, and all of the society's adjacent 24 acres. The society's staff, including master gunsmith Jim Correll and archaeology chairwoman Virginia Lopresti, presented the day's program. Mr. Correll met this year's class of Jr. Historians at the society's shooting range, where he introduced the kids to the Pennsylvania Longrifle and its history, demonstrated loading and firing a longrifle and wowed the kids with his shooting prowess.

Afterwards we visited the Museum of the Pennsylvania Longrifle at the Henry Homestead. Here Mrs. Lopresti presented a program on her 15 years of archaeological research at Jacobsburg, sharing scores of artifacts and stories with the children. We then toured the museum, where our Jr. Historians learned about the various kinds of firearms the Henrys manufactured here at Jacobsburg and for what markets they were made, the families other civic and cultural contributions and the communities they founded here in the Jacobsburg reach of the Bushkill Creek and beyond.

Day Two was focused on the Henry's Forge Historic Area in the middle of the park. The day began with a stream study, where kids discovered the many creatures – insects, fish, crayfish & amphibians – that live in the waters of the Bushkill at Jacobsburg. Our Jr. Historians learned that the presence of many of these organisms confirms the special protection waters status of the Bushkill as a high quality, cold-water trout stream.

Afterwards we paid brief visits to the Ironmaster's House and Forge Office, where our Jr. Historians were introduced

to the Henry family's historical iron and slate industries through photographs and artifacts. The day wrapped up with kids actually splitting slate roofing tile, which was donated by the Capazolla Brothers Slate Company in Bangor, with hand tools that were donated by the Dally Slate Company in Pen Argyl. After splitting their slate tiles, our Jr. Historians used colored chalk to creatively illustrate the day's activities on their newly created slate palettes.



Day Three saw us all back at Boulton, where our program began two days earlier. Here – taking advantage of the bat colony that calls the Henry Homestead Barn home – we first focused on these wonderful and mysterious creatures by observing some of them as they spent the

day resting upside-down in perfect bat fashion in a "bat box" attached to the outside of the barn. Through poster illustrations and games, we then learned about the biology and ecology of bats – not just here at Jacobsburg, but throughout Pennsylvania and around the world.

From bat conservation, we segued into Native American history, revisiting the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum at the Henry Homestead. Here our Jr. Historians were introduced to the Lenape Indians, the native people of the Bushkill Creek Watershed and the entire Delaware River Basin. Afterwards the children learned of the Henry family's role in the American Indian Fur Trade as well as the family's personal history with several generations of the Lenape or Delaware Indian family of Gelelemend Kilbuck. We wrapped up the day and the program with an arts & crafts activity in which our Jr. Historians made their own Indian dream-catchers from local plant materials, artificial sinew, stone and wood beads and feathers. Ian Kindel, Environmental Education Specialist from Delaware Canal State Park, led this activity.

The Jr. Historians Day Camp is one of Jacobsburg EE Center's most popular summer children's programs and one of Jacobsburg Historical Society's most rewarding programs. Many thanks to all the individuals and companies mentioned above, who helped facilitate this year's program. Next year's three-day Jr. Historians program is tentatively scheduled for July 25-27.

—Jim Wilson, JEEC Education Specialist

## America's Madonna

A most imposing artifact in the John Joseph Henry House is a copy of Raphael's *Madonna of the Chair*. Although perhaps not immediately recognizable to museum visitors today, this Renaissance masterpiece by the "Prince of Painters" was nineteenth-century America's *Mona Lisa*, a cultural icon known by everyone from the art connoisseur to the man on the street. The Madonna's popularity was partly due to its mystical quality of making the divine seem approachable and part of the everyday experience. By owning a reproduction, one affirmed a commitment to the moral and artistic virtues the painting embodied. A fine copy of the Madonna by a qualified artist (and often complete with the same type of massive gilt frame which enshrines the original) formed part of the parlor furnishings of many refined American homes. It is especially fitting that a copy of *Madonna of the Chair* should have a prominent place in the Henry estate home, given the family's long history of appreciating and promoting the fine arts.

This history begins with William Henry of Lancaster's association with Benjamin West, who was once referred to as an "American Raphael." Henry first exposed West to the classics, as well as to new European developments in art, which influenced West's painting *Death of Socrates*. During his years of study in Italy between 1760 and 1763, West copied *Madonna of the Chair* as part of his education as an artist. Later, as a master himself, West encouraged his own students, such as Gilbert Stuart and Rembrandt Peale, to study the Madonna for interpretation of individual characters and for groupings of figures within the composition. He regarded *Madonna of the Chair* as the perfect expression of love between a mother and child and used key elements of the Madonna in painting four versions of a portrait of his wife, Elizabeth, and their first-born son, who was appropriately named "Raphael" (*Mrs. Benjamin West and her Son Raphael*, circa 1770).

Hanging in West's studio in London was a copy of *Madonna of the Chair* that was painted by one of his English students, John Downman, who visited Florence in the 1770s. Another student, John Trumbull, saw Downman's picture and unknowingly selected it to copy, an action which a delighted

West saw as a promising omen for Trumbull's future as an artist. Undoubtedly, an elderly Trumbull related this story to the scholarly gunsmith, James Henry, in 1838 when, following Trumbull's visit to Boulton to see West's *Death of Socrates*, the two met in New York to discuss the place of Benjamin West in the world of art.

In 1857 James Henry took an extended tour of Europe after traveling there as part of a Moravian synod delegation. While in Florence, he had the thrill of experiencing *Madonna of the Chair* first-hand in the magnificent Pitti Gallery. In his travelogue, Henry writes, "We paid most attention to the gallery of paintings containing the works of old masters, a collection probably unexcelled. The *Madonna of the Chair*, the great gem of the collection, was studied with great attention and confirmed all that has been said of this remarkable production." (Henry also notes that "modern copyists of these paintings may be constantly seen sitting before these [masterpieces] and attempting their reproduction." By the mid-1800s, the Madonna was so popular that an artist could expect to wait up to 15 years for the opportunity to copy the original.)



*Madonna of the Chair* in the JJ House.

Neither the painter nor the provenance of the Henry family's copy of *Madonna of the Chair* has yet been discovered. James Henry may have brought it from Italy in 1857. Another possibility is that the E. Kluge family gave the painting to Mary Adeline Henry and Thomas Henry Atherton Stites as a wedding present in 1905, as suggested by an entry of "Madonna" on a gift list. We will continue to look for clues in the archives, as well on the painting itself.

—Jan Ballard

Sources: *Raphael in America* by David Alan Brown (Wash., DC: National Gallery of Art, 1983); *In Pursuit of Refinement: Charlestonians Abroad 1740-1860* by Maurie D. McInnis et al. (Columbia, SC: Univ. South Carolina Press, 1999); "Benjamin West in Italy" by Allen Staley in *The Italian Presence in American Art*, ed. by Irma B. Jaffee (New York: Fordham Univ. Press, 1989); *The Life of William Henry* by Francis Jordan, Jr. (Lancaster, PA: New Era Printing Co., 1910); *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting* by Ann Uhry Abrams (Wash., DC: Smithsonian Inst. Press, 1985). Manuscripts in JHS Archives: "Sketch of a tour of Europe in 1857: including views of England, France, Switzerland, Italy, and Germany" by James Henry (Ser. II, Box 1, Folder 49); Stites, Mary Adeline Henry: Wedding 1905 (Ser. III, Box 3, Folder 2).



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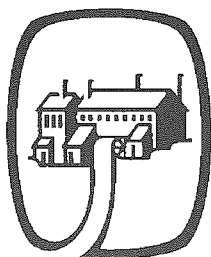
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