

JACOBSTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.
P.O. Box 345 Nazareth, Pa. 18064

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2 No. 5

August 1974

President: Mrs Lewis Beers
Vice President: Joseph DiGerlando

Secretary: Hilton Rat
Treasurer: Miss Margaret Taylc

THOUGHTS

The summer is rapidly drawing to a close. It has been a very successful summer, doubly climaxed by our fantastic findings at Jacobstown and the overwhelming success of our first craft fair. We hope to continue this pattern with our third annual walk through Henry's Woods in October. We've traveled a long way since that first walk a few years ago. The support of our members has been very heartening to our board of directors and has shown us that we are traveling in the right direction.

Questions, comments or new ideas from our members are always welcomed and are given our most serious consideration. These may be addressed to any of our board members or committee heads directly or c/o the Society. The changes incorporated in our newsletter are a result of one of our members questions about our activities. Beginning in this issue Mickey Toth will talk about events of local history that he has discovered through his years of research. Virginia Lopresti is starting a series on archaeology - what it is and why it is important to us. More news of this type is planned for future issues, including notes from our researchers and some information on the way of life of the colonials. Keep those cards and letters coming!

Joe DiGerlando

NOTE OF SADNESS

It is with deepest sympathy and regret that we note the death of our oldest member, Mrs. Mary Henry Stites. Mrs. Stites was 101 last January and throughout her life had been very much concerned with activities in the local community and was very interested in the work of the Society and its role in preservation of local history. She was a member of the Schoenck Moravian Church and was interred at the Greenwood Cemetery in Nazareth.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Beautiful blue sky, with white puffy clouds, ideal summer temperature, a scenic setting, 750 people attending, 32 excellent exhibitors, the luscious smell of molasses cookies baked on the premises, and other baked goods and refreshments: all of these things contributed to making our first Jacobsburg Craft Fair just about perfect.

I, your president, have been asked to express for the society our deep appreciation of all the work done by so many good members. It is impossible to name all of those who participated but our thanks go to all. However, we should name some of the workers and organizers. The chairman of the day was Mrs. Ben Johnson (Peg) whose hard work and creativity were evident in all that was done. The refreshments and baked items were under the capable supervision of Mrs. Joseph Lopresti (Virginia) and the molasses cookies were baked under the watchful eye of Mrs. Gordon Santee (Molly). The recipe for those delicious cookies was through the courtesy of Mrs. Hilton Rahn, Sr. The splendid coverage in the newspapers, the Society newsletters alerting our members to the Fair, the attractive posters were all produced by our vice-president and publicity chairman, Joe DiGerlando. These chairman have I know expressed gratitude to the members who helped them on projects.

Did you know that Hilton Rahn, our secretary, returned from his vacation a day early for our fair and that he was the tender of the keg of birch beer? Did you know that the colonial dress and cap worn by chairman Peg Johnson and also the caps worn by the food handlers were made by Virginia Lopresti? Did you recognize members Brian Stocker and Bill Frabel when they helped you park your car? Did you know that Joe Lopresti conducted two tours of the tannery and that those who went marveled at the progress made this summer by our archaeology committee.

Did you see in the "Sunday Call" the picture of our membership chairman, Kitty Fluck, in her sunbonnet and dress?

Are you interested in Jacobsburg History? The Sandwicks answered many inquiries.

Are you fascinated by early tools and artifacts and their history? Then you talked to Albert Toth and heard his answering comments. How many of you guessed the use of his big wooden ski?

Did your children get an Indian head band, or dip their own candles or receive a handmade bullet from our muzzle loader?

Did you purchase some of the beautiful articles made by our craftsmen?

If you knew and did all of these things and more then you really enjoyed our Fair. We feel that it was successful enough to repeat next year. If you liked the Fair and have suggestions of ways to improve or enhance our production next year please let us know.

Thank you again one and all for working, participating and attending the first Jacobsburg Craft Fair.

Sincerely,
Catherine S. Beers

* NOTE (because of the fantastic success of the Craft Fair, the Board has voted to make this an annual event. Our next fair will be on Saturday, July 19, 1975. Please mark your calendars. ed.)

RAMBLINGS

(Albert "Mickey" Toth, board member and local historian, is well known in the area for his very colorful and informative talks. He has been doing years of research and is in the final stages of preparation of a book about local history. His series will be giving us a new perspective on life in Colonial Boulton and Jacobsburg.)

"I have good news and bad news.

"First the good news, we have just received a sizeable order for military muskets. Now the bad news, that means war."

This could have been what transpired that eventful day when Mr. Wm. Henry advised his workers of the large contract issued him from the Commonwealth of Penna. Dec. 13, 1797.

Of course the war was with England and it meant that contracts were let all over the east as this was the area where prominent gunsmiths were plying their trade.

Wm. Henry had just moved his gunmaking from Christian Springs to Nazareth. His gun shop was located and listed as Main Street in that town. This contract would of course mean the hiring of more personnel, laborers, mechanics, blacksmiths and the expanding of the present building. The brethren of Nazareth had different ideas! An explanation - next issue.

One of our greatest events of the summer occurred at the Jacobsburg Tannery site. Joe and Virginia Lopresti have spent many days excavating at Jacobsburg with the few members of their committee that have been there to help. This remains to be one of our areas of great concern because current plans of the State include a lake that will cover the Jacobsburg area. Because of this, Joe and Virginia spent five days a week for six weeks working with a small crew of boys completely excavating the Tannery. As a result of this back-breaking labor, we now have open for study, what is probably the largest tannery in Northampton County. At least 41 and possibly 44 tanning vats have been found. Jacobsburg was truly a booming industrial town. Most other tanneries of that period had less than 1/4 of that number.

This is the problem: We need more volunteers to help expand our excavations and cover the rest of the village. The only requirement is a willingness to do a lot of heavy work. We are an equal opportunity "employer" and provide free training just in case you don't know how to use a shovel or a wheelbarrow. As part of our training program, Virginia Lopresti is writing a series on the basics of Archaeology and how they pertain to Jacobsburg.

FIELD NOTES

The working committees of the Jacobsburg Historical Society have decided that many of the members who sign up to assist them don't really know what it is all about. So through the newsletter we will give a few lessons in our adventures.

Archaeology - Definition - The study of past human life and activities, as shown by the relics left by ancient peoples. It is a science and by it we recover, study and try to reconstruct the past. It is pursued by amateurs as well as professionals. It is divided into prehistorical and historical. In prehistory we study caves, rockshelters, trails, cemeteries, mine quarries, mounds and village sites. The objects consist of stone tools, skeletal remains, animal bones, seeds, fish scales, shells and even the debris left in the ground. Historical archaeology is the study of the past since there has been recordings made of the activities, wars, disasters, etc. Especially the records that we can decipher. These two periods overlap in time. It is so important that everyone, amateur or professional should do his utmost to contribute to the refinement of techniques of recovery and study. Lost forever are the behavior, the language, the religion. So we value objects as clues to human action.

To begin an archaeological adventure you must have a site selection, research and permission to search. In Jacobsburg is an Historical site of some significance but we have hardly begun the research. So - HELP, HELP, HELP!!! Before we elected our officers, we sought permission of the Pennsylvania State Park Commission to conduct an archaeological dig into the past. Permission was granted and a five year plan was presented to Harrisburg. It included the excavation of about a dozen buildings and ended with a prehistorical investigation of the grounds. Two years have gone by and we are still on the first building. Tons of dirt and rocks have been moved and we have reached the level of the tannery but this was the second use of this building, not the original use. This fall we will be excavating the vats on Saturdays and Sundays. Any help would be greatly appreciated. And remember the words of Herbert Kraft - Seton Hall University - "Archaeology is 10% Inspiration and 90% PERSPIRATION."

Virginia Lopresti

WALK IN THE WOODS

Mark your calendars for Sunday October 13, rain date October 20, for our annual walk through Henry's Woods. In case you've forgotten, we had nearly 400 walkers the first year and 500 last year for the tour through the historic Boulton Area - site of the Henry gun factory and the gorgeous Henry's Woods as well as the industrial area of Jacobsburg. We will be making a number of changes this year, to better handle the large crowds. Part of the walk will include a bus tour from the parking area at Jacobsburg to Boulton - the beginning of the walk. Guides will be strategically placed along the route and participants will be able to keep their own pace. The bus will also

meet walkers at a point on the route and take them to Jacobsburg, where guides will meet them. First tour will leave at 1:00 p.m. - last bus at 3:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served and exhibitors will set up at various points.

ELECTION MEETING

Our annual meeting and election of officers will be held on Thursday, October 24, 8:00 p.m. at the College Hill Presbyterian Church in Easton. More information will be given in future issues.

SPECIAL NOTE OF THANKS

Thanks a million to everyone who baked for our craft fair. Everything was sold. Everything was delicious. Thanks for helping to make our first fair a success.

Virginia Lopresti

WORK DAY

Saturday, August 24 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. will be a clean-up day at the Henry Homestead to prepare the property for our new tenants. Please come and help.

President: Mrs. Lewis Beers, Easton 253-4547
Vice-President: Joseph DiGerlando, Nazareth 759-7239
Archaeology: Mrs. Virginia Lopresti, Stockertown 759-1580
Research: Charles Sandwick, Easton 252-1290
Construction: Joseph Lopresti, Joseph DiGerlando, Albert Toth,
Belfast 759-2153
Membership & Field Trips: Mrs. Henry Fluck, Easton 253-1146
Public Information: Joseph DiGerlando

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 24 - 10:00 a.m. Work Day at Henry Homestead
September 4 - Board of Directors Meeting
October 13 - 1:00-3:00 p.m. Annual Walk in the Woods
October 24 - Society Meeting