

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

NEWSLETTER

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THOUGHTS

Why study history? This is a question that has been asked time and time again and has been given many answers - some of them very strange and far-fetched. Look at it from a different angle - what if nobody studied history? To answer this we must first define history, and there are many, many meanings for that one word - study of the past, collection of important events, etc. I prefer to call history a relationship of past events with the present and use of this knowledge to guide us in the future. History is not only what happened a thousand or even a hundred years ago. Yesterday's events can be history. If we did not study history we would not be aware of the past revolts and strife and technological developments that were important in the formation of our nation. We would not know that this world-leading industrial nation had its beginnings as an agricultural colony almost 500 years ago. We would not know why the Indians recently took over Wounded-Knee. We could not solve our problems on pollution because we would not know how we got them. We would panic at events like Watergate or presidential resignations because we would not be aware that our country has survived many problems and crisis in the past. We would not be able to plan for tomorrow because we would not remember yesterday.

This is what history is all about - not memorizing dates or names or places; but understanding the how and why of the past. What can we learn from Jacobsburg, for instance? It was just like many other little towns of its time - a small farming community that became important for its location on a good stream for water power, and on a main road for transportation. It became an important industrial center, but was actually destroyed by its success. Neither the money nor the facilities were available to expand to keep up with the demand, and the small producers that tried to compete with the mass-producers went under. Unfortunately, this situation happens every day because in most instances we study history but we don't put it to use. The old cliché is true - "history repeats itself." Did you ever ask why? It happens because man, supposedly an intelligent being, does not learn from his past mistakes. Last year's "fuel crisis" is an example. Those long waits in the gas lines have not had any effect on our driving habits. Think about it. Think about how much time, effort and resources we could save if we would just listen to those voices of the past screaming at us.

GHOST STORIES?

The time is upon us for tales of witches and goblins. Halloween is rapidly approaching and much time will be spent in fun and merriment imitating these scary creatures. Of course we all know that they are not real ... are they? Jacobsburg has its own ghost stories.

We have tales of farm wagons being found in the creek, of horses that were standing in their stalls in the morning tired and sweated as if they had been worked all night, and of strange visions of ladies in white. Some of these can be explained as pranks and jokes, but the lady in white ...?

The story goes that some young people were having a church picnic in Jacobsburg on a nice sunny day. One young girl saw an older woman dressed in white, walking nearby and pointed her out to her friends asking who she might be. Nobody else saw the lady in white.

What do you think?

NOTE: If you know of any strange or interesting incidents from our area, please submit them in writing with all available details. We are compiling a collection of such information. All sources will be kept in strict confidence. Ed.

FIELD NOTES

The supposed tanning vats were left undisturbed for the summer of 1973 because of the small turnout of diggers. But enough artifacts had been recovered to whet the appetite to continue the investigations. Among the "goodies" found was a small tin snuff box with the company name and "London" stamped (impressed) on the lid. One half of an unfinished cast iron frying pan was dug up. Several cast iron pieces were identified as parts from a "Catherine Furnace" like the one in the Whitfield House in Nazareth, Pa. In the northwest corner of the building a pile of cattle horns were excavated. Slightly more than halfway across the northside of the building pieces of unused iron ore were piled and it was estimated the weight was one ton.

Along the west wall a doorway was found with a beautifully worked stone sill twenty inches by forty-eight inches. In the doorway enough large pieces of a glazed pottery were picked up to reconstruct a gray six-quart pot commonly used to store milk. (The pots were placed on the floor of the cool cellar - really a cave - and the cream rose to the top. It was easily skimmed off, set aside, and when ripe was churned into butter. Did you ever have your corn flakes with clotted cream or drink cold buttermilk.)

The material found on the inside of the walls consisted of rotted leaves, rusty hunks of junk, gray and yellow clay. We used pointed shovels, trowels, and garden forks to dig for our treasures. Among these were beautiful blue slag left over from the furnace which occupied this same spot before the tannery was placed there. We gatered bags of ceramic bits, china, glass, nails and unidentifiable trivia (?). Outstanding among this was three pieces from a china dolls head.

When it became too hot to dig clay, we moved to a small foundation to the west of the tannery - twenty-six by sixteen feet. We knew that it was the Ferretti home before they moved to the farm in the southeast section of Jacobsburg. During prohibition it was a distillery. Like all the other buildings it had been bulldozed when the City of Easton had bought up all the surrounding area for the water rights. Four walls and two floor levels were exposed. Among the goodies found here were a rifle barrel and one musket barrel.

The Jacobsburg Historical Society is proud to offer for sale a portfolio of four prints of the Boulton area. These are 8 1/2" X 11" reproductions of original pen and ink sketches recently completed for the Society by Barry Jones, a Palmer Township commercial artist. The scenes include the Boulton Gun Works, the Henry Homestead, the Workmen's House and a view of Henry's Woods. The prints are enclosed in a handsome folder with an explanation of each print, a brief history about the Society and information about the artist. The set is ideal for framing and display in your home or office as a grouping of scenes or individual presentations. The portfolio is available for \$5.00, tax included, (\$4.25 + \$.75 for postage and handling.)

Plan now for your Holiday gifts. Only 500 sets have been produced in this first printing and orders will be filled on a first come, first serve basis. Clip off the coupon and send to: Series One Prints, Jacobsburg Historical Society, Post Office Box 345, Nazareth, Pennsylvania 18064.

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