

Manheim Township and Its Part in the Indian History of the County

This society has often been favored by papers on the way in which various sections of what is now Lancaster county figured in the history of the dusky-skinned inhabitants who knew this section to be their home and happy hunting ground prior to the time when the early settler's axe blazed the way on to these fertile acres. Such papers have primarily treated on the history enacted at and about the Susquehannock Indian town and capital in the Manor of Conestoga and the extinction of the tribe. If I am able to present to you some facts based upon which you might grant that the section now known as Manheim township is second in Indian lore to none other section of what now is Lancaster county, than the Manor of Conestoga, I feel that I have paid none but just dues to her. As the township to-day ranks among the very first of her sister townships of the county in its citizenry, fertility of its soil, standard of its schools, extent of road improvement and exceeded by only one in its value of real estate, it is but fitting to deduct that its earlier inhabitants, owing mostly to its natural position, were no less a component part of the life of the day than are its present day inhabitants.

After the county of Lancaster was erected a meeting of magistrates and inhabitants of the county was held June 9, 1729, to agree upon the names and boundaries of the townships,

which agreements were confirmed by the Court of Quarter Sessions the first Tuesday of following August. The boundary of Manheim township, as agreed upon and not since materially changed, was: Beginning by Peter's Road at a corner of Donegal and Warwick townships, near the head of little Conestoga creek, thence down the said road by Warwick township to Conestoga Creek, thence down the said creek to the Old Doctor's Ford, thence westerly by Lancaster township on a direct line to Little Conestoga at the upper side of Peter Bamgarner's land, thence up the said creek, to place of beginning. You will notice the eastern and western boundaries of the township are natural ones and the northern one a recognized route of travel at this early date which, according to Ellis & Evans, has never been changed. I shall treat upon two of these boundaries presently under their respective heads. Is it any wonder then that I say, "owing mostly to natural position," that this section, dotted with myriad springs, gave rise to numerous streams in which originally abounded fish, beaver, etc., and to which banks came, and in virgin forests roamed, deer, bear and buffalo, making it a rich hunting ground, figured much less in the life of the day?

Peter's Road—Northern Boundary.

Historians agree that most early roads were former Indian trails. This road, the northern line of the township, was named after Peter Bazailon (spelling varied), who was a French Canadian and licensed as an Indian trader by the Governor. One authority says in 1710. Mombert, quoting Col. Records, says 1703. He settled

near the Schuylkill, where he established a trading post, but did not remain there long. He then moved to East Caln township, Chester county, where he built a house, his wife, Martha, doing most of this work. While living here his trading post was not at his residence, but among the Paxtang Indians (Ellis & Evans). Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. 19, Sec. Series, gives account of his moving to Donegal, since in 1708 he was granted "free liberty to build to himself a house." Despite the fact that Bazaillon was under suspicion at different times with irregularities in the Indian trade, considered a dangerous man against the English, and upon several occasions held under bond guaranteeing his good behavior toward the Government and the Queen's subjects, his road nevertheless formed the northern boundary of Manheim township and division of several others of the county. Moses Combs, a brother of Martha Bazaillon, who had a trading post near Conoy, and died near St. John's Church, East Caln township, Chester county, and is buried by his sister's side, and Jacques LeTort, another French Canadian Indian trader, first located on the Brandywine and later established a trading post at Conoy Indian town, were without much doubt travelers on Peter's road, since Combs seemed to be closely related in business with Peter Bazaillon and LeTort and made frequent trips to the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, with him being gone sometimes for a space of two years. According to Ellis & Evans, this road was laid out in 1718 and likely was used for at least ten years prior to this time, since Bazaillon started his trade with the Donegal country prior to 1708. It had in 1725 four hotels along

it, none, however having been in Mannheim township, and were later closed. To-day there is no road coinciding with this line, but a road at points crossing and nearly paralleling with the line is in use for quite a portion of the northern line of the township.

About three weeks ago a friend of mine told me that when he was a boy his father owned a farm along the Cocalico creek, a short distance north of its confluence with the Conestoga, and was pointed out, by his father, the place when Bazailon forded the creek. The ford must have been at the confluence named, since confluences of streams were radiating points of trails and the line as given for the township is about one perch below the confluence.

Conestoga Creek, Since Christened River, The Eastern Boundary.

On a map showing the location of the earliest highways from the Susquehanna to the Delaware, published by H. Frank Eshleman, Esq., the old Susquehanna and Schuylkill Indian path crosses the eastern side of the township bordering the Conestoga Creek, across country for several miles to the French creek and on to the Schuylkill. That this route was used by the Indians is clearly established by William Penn's writing in 1690 when he says: "Three years ago (1687) a road was definitely cut and laid out between Philadelphia and the Susquehanna country, which, is the course the Indians on the Susquehanna took when trading in Philadelphia," stating they had a way by water going up a branch of the Susquehanna, thence down a branch which flows into the Schuylkill thirty miles from Philadelphia. (Hazard's

Reg., P. 400.) Penn also says this was the common course of the Indians with their skins and furs into our parts and to the Province and East and West Jersey from the western parts of the continent, where they bring them.

It has not been definitely established whether this road as Mr. Eshleman maps it was through the township or on the eastern side of the creek. Several reasons tend to show the former. Nevertheless, if one could have witnessed the travel on it he would have seen pass before him at different times the following:

Indians in trading from, at least the time of the earliest outlet of such trade to about 1714, when the first road opened to the Susquehanna. Van Swearing says, in 1654, speaking of the Swedes on the Schuylkill, "Thousands of beavers can be had around the Schulykill brought down by the Minquas."

The Indians who came to Penn's treaty, as Rupp on page 24 says, "news of Penn's confirmed promise to the Indians spread even to the Minquas."

William Penn upon his visit to the Susquehanna Indians in 1683 or '84 (Pa. Archives, Vol. 19., Sev. Series, Page 13) also (Vol. 1, Haz. Reg., Page 400), also again when he returned home from his visit to the Susquehannocks, in 1701 (Penn & Logan Cor.), when, as tradition says, he was lost in the woods.

Susquehannocks, Conestogas and other neighboring Indians who made the trip to Philadelphia in 1701 to give Penn goodbye on his departure to England. (Col. Rec.)

Governor James Logan upon his visit to Conestogas in October, 1705.

Conestogas, Shawanese and Gan-

awese who made a trip to the Philadelphia council of June 6, 1706, to confer on public business.

Governor Evans paid a visit to the Conestogas in the fall of 1706 and again in 1707.

Chas Gookin, Lieutenant Governor, visited the Conestogas June 18, 1711 to treat with them on matters reported by Peter Bazaillon.

These are a few of the most prominent personages who traveled this route across the township about the year 1700 and shortly thereafter.

The earliest road across the township of which I find any record in the Lancaster and Reading road, which to-day deviates but little from the original road from Hickorytown (Lancaster) to the Tunker settlement on the Cocalico (called by the German "Schlangenhoehle," in English "snake dens"), now known as the Ephrata Cloister, which settlement was begun in 1725 or '26, and, on to Reading. This road likely followed in part the path to the Nanticoke Indian town of "Lehoy," situated a short distance north of Oregon on lands lately owned by Levi S. Reist in which section scattered families of the tribe were as late as 1758. Oregon, the oldest settlement along this road, was settled in 1717 by Jacob Baer. It was near this road that the last lone Indian of the township lived and died, of whom I shall later speak, and by which road the Governor and Commissioners and some other gentlemen made a trip to the "Tunker Settlement about twelve miles hence," after the great Indian treaty at Lancaster in 1744. During the excitement rampant on the frontiers owing to Indian incursions the inhabitants of Berks county sought shelter and some of them fled to Lan-

caster by this way in 1755. (Pa. Gazette, 10-30, 1755.)

Hon. James Veech, in speaking of the old stage coach and pike, said: "It is a monument of a past age, but, like all other monuments, it is interesting as well as venerable. It carried thousands of population and millions of wealth into the west, and, more than any other material structure in the land, served to harmonize and strengthen, if not to save, the union." How much the less is this true of the Indian trails and early roads?

As to the Indians who lived and roamed over this section, I know of no better reference than a paper found in the first volume of the proceedings of this society read by F. R. Diefenderffer, in which he says that the Nanticokes, Conoys, Conestogas and Shawnese roamed over the county. The two first named, both having towns close to the borders of the township, were the ones who mostly roamed this township, and the villages of the northern section of the township were likely of these tribes, the southern likely being Conestogas.

Settlers Among the Indians.

The earliest settlers of note in the township during the Indian occupation were:

John Henry Neff, of whom I shall speak later.

Hans Adam Shreiner, who came into this section in 1729.

Martin Weybrecht, before 1739.

Benj. Webb, before 1739.

Frederick Eiselberger, about 1739.

Christian Lang (Long), prior to 1739.

John Huber was in the township in 1740.

Andrew Billmyer, of whom I shall speak later.

According to Ellis & Evans, the name of John Henry Neff appeared on the first assessment list of Conestogoe township, made in 1718. It appears from this that Neff was on the Conestoga in what was later Manheim township at this time. Rupp, page 122, says: "Among others who had transported themselves and estates into the Province of Pennsylvania, between the years 1700 and 1718, and have always behaved themselves religiously and peaceably, and have paid due regard and obedience to the laws and government of the province and were accordingly naturalized, was John Henry Neff. He was known as the 'Old Doctor' and undoubtedly the first regularly bred physician in Lancaster county. Who has not heard of Dr. Hans Heinrich Neff? So well was Dr. Neff known that when the boundaries of the township were fixed, on June 9, 1729, one of the lines of Manheim township is thus defined, thence down the said creek to the Old Doctor's Ford." It affords me pleasure to be able to quote that this settler was of those regarding whom Governor Gordon, January 13, 1729, said, "They have hitherto behaved themselves well and have generally so good a character for honesty and industry as deserves the esteem of this government and a mark of regard for them."

Andrew Billmyer was granted a patent of land along the Lancaster and Reading road, at what now is Landis Valley. The date I have been unable to determine, but it must have been directly after 1730, since he took land adjoining Hans Adam Shreiner, who took up land in 1729. This land was deeded to Leonard Billmyer, who deeded it to a Mr. Landis, and in

which name it is now held. There are four springs on this land in succession. The lower spring is known as Indian spring. It was here that the last Indian of the township had his wigwam, lived and died. He went around among the settlers of the community for food and occasionally performed small favors in return therefor. The year of his death and burial place I have been unable to determine definitely. He is supposed to be buried in the Billmyer family graveyard.

Another resident of the township for the greater part of his life was Peter Maurer, born June 13, 1757. He was a witness to the Indian outrage in the old jail. As a boy he ran down to the old jail and saw the horrid sight. He was married in 1780 at the First Reformed Church, Lancaster, his wife being Eliz. Graffort. Ten years later he bought a tract of land in Manheim township, where the Lititz and Oregon pikes fork. In 1799 he was granted a license to sell liquor by the small. He called his place Green Tree. Rupp says, "I visited him at his house near Lancaster. He is in his eighty-seventh year and enjoys remarkable health and informed me that he saw the bodies of the Indians buried in one hole at the place where the bodies in 1833 were dug up, at the corner of Chestnut and Duke streets." What an analogy with the account which the "Stroller" had in The New Era a few days ago concerning the digging up of bones in the old jail yard. Mr. Maurer died in 1843. I had the pleasure of seeing the following heirlooms; sword, knapsack, powder horn and spurs, all used by him in the Revolutionary War; lamp, chairs, hotel sign and also saw a table

used in his hotel under which Indians, in the employ of a neighboring farmer, at a later date, sat while at the hotel for rum.

As to the residents who figured in the Indian history, I will make but one more reference. There are to-day quite a number of the prominent residents of the township, one of whose ancestral family, namely, Jacob Reist, fought in the French and Indian War and was killed on Braddock's field, July 9, 1755. Although Mr. Jacob Reist was not a resident of the township he lived close to the borders thereof, and a brother of his was the progenitor of the resident above mentioned, having himself settled in the township at an early date.

To the excitement caused by the Indian atrocities and incursions from 1754 to 1765, the reapers in the fields taking their guns and ammunition with them in the harvest of 1763, this section was, in common with the rest of the country, subject.

Indian Relics.

The abundance of relics found gives mute evidence that this section was thickly settled with Indians, as several residents possess excellent collections. Villages were located at different places, principally at the Landis farm, Landis Valley; Hess, Nestle' roth and Zobler farms, near Fruitville, and the Buckwalter farm, at the northern end of the township, as there are strong springs on each of the farms named, and relics by the hundreds have been found around the springs on them. They consist of axes, celts, pestals, hammer stones, spears, ceremonials (both finished and unfinished), arrow points and some few pipes. About the only relics of

which there seems to be a scarcity are beads and pottery. A jasper spear six inches in length was found some few years ago. A soapstone pipe, with a face carved on the bowl and hole in which to stick the stem, found about one-half mile east of Neffsville some few years ago, was among the Zahm collection, which, if I am properly informed, is now at the Franklin and Marshall Museum. There is scarcely a section of the township in which relics in larger or smaller quantities have not been found, showing they roamed and hunted over the entire section. The writer has frequently had the pleasure of finding a half-dozen relics in the short space of an hour.

Their day has passed, but each find recalls to my mind the marvelous development of their art of workmanship in stone and is the only lasting evidence of their primitive needs.

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