

INDIAN MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FOUNDED FEBRUARY, 1973

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF SHAMONG TOWNSHIP HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 3 Issue 2

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SPRING 2009



ANOTHER SUPERB ILLUSTRATION BY IMHS MEMBER RON KURTZ. THE SCENE DEPICTS ACTIVITIES AT AN OLD COUNTRY FLEA MARKET.

JOIN US AT OUR MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings are open to the public and are held at the Shamong Twp. Municipal building located at 105 Willow Grove Road at 7:30 P.M. unless otherwise indicated.

Meetings are not scheduled in January, February, July and August.

Monday, April 20, 2009 7:30 P.M.

The guest speaker will be Kenneth Clark. He will provide a program entitled Historical Development of Prescribed Burning in the Pine Barrens, and also talk about the Warren Grove fire.

Monday, May 18, 2009 7:30 P.M.

Speaker to be announced. There will also be names submitted by the Nominating Committee for officers to be elected for the coming year.

Monday, June 15, 2009 7:30 P. M.

Speaker to be announced. Election of officers for the coming year.

Officers

- President:..... Carol Fucci
- Vice Pres.....Janice Woytowich
- Rec. Secretary:..... Ruth Boice
- Treasurer:..... Don Catts
- Corr. Secretary..... Gail Currier
- Historian:..... George Flemming
- Railroad Historian:...Daniel Tavani

Trustees

- George D. Flemming
- Marie Giberson
- Leon King
- Joseph Reinhart
- Daniel Tavani

It was a sincere pleasure to welcome the Chief of the Delaware Nation from Anadarko, Oklahoma. The group he heads has approximately 1400 Natives on the reservation. It is the only federally recognized group of remaining Lenape in the United States.

The chief was dressed in a buckskin jacket and levis. He looked the part, and was well versed in the history of his people. We took him through the meeting room at the municipal building on March 21st. Present at the time were Peter and Carol Fucci, Dan Tavani, and the author, George Flemming. Kerry was very impressed with the collections of the Indian Mills Historical Society.

Some pictures were taken of him at the site of the Indian Reservation marker at the Methodist Church and then we broke up with the group. Kerry had wanted to speak with me privately about some matters that concerned him regarding the 1790 treaty.

I took Kerry back to my home in Leisuretowne to show him my collection of Native American relics. As soon as he walked into my den he said he felt like he was at home on the reservation. We then discussed alot about the 1790 treaty and his feeling that the treaty was violated when the Brotherton Reservation was sold as not all the Natives had signed the request to sell the Brotherton lands. The State Legislature had authorized the sale of the land however. His group is not seeking any land reparations or otherwise, just some kind of acknowledgement of past wrongs done.

VISIT BY CHIEF KERRY HOLTON

ATCO TO ATSION, ATSION'S FIRST RAILROAD

By

DANIEL V. TAVANI

The opening into Atsion's Recreational Park off Route 206 was originally part of the Atco to Atsion Railroad spur to Atco. Originally financed by the Camden and Atlantic Railroad; now the Atlantic City Line in 1861. The 9 ½ mile line was built by the Delaware and Raritan Bay Railroad. Turntables for turning engines around were built at both Atco and Atsion. Our book on the Route of the Blue Comet printed by the N.R.H.S. shows the locations.

This Atco to Atsion line was also known as the Batsto Branch however never ran to Batsto. The route also became an alternate route between Philadelphia and New York City. The Raritan and Delaware Bay Railroad ran from Camden via the Camden and Atlantic to Atco to Atsion through to Sandy Hook, Monmouth County, where passengers were transferred to a ferry to New York City. Started in September of 1862, this line was primarily involved to transport Civil War troops.

In 1867 service discontinued because of financial problems. Service then resumed in 1869 when the Raritan and Delaware Bay became the New Jersey Southern. Trains started running again between Camden and Long Branch via Atco and Atsion. The Pennsylvania Railroad had taken over the Camden and South Amboy Railroad in 1883, ending the interchange. The Camden and Amboy had taken control of the passenger business north of Camden to an interchange at Eatontown, north to Sandy Hook on the New Jersey Southern, because of political control in Trenton. As a result, in 1894, service was terminated.

By World War One, almost all trackage was removed. A short section remained from Atsion, later to become Atsion Junction, about 1400 feet to the Ice House on Atsion Lake. Raritan Ave. in Waterford Twp. is the original right of way of this line. Some glass works along the way were also serviced by this spur. Today, at the end of the paved portion of Raritan Ave., there is a fence around pasture land where some of the old railroad ties are being used as fenceposts. The only other evidence of this spur are a few railroad ties located on Pleasant Mills Road where the spur branched off the New Jersey Southern; joining the Vineland Railroad later to be built from Winslow Junction.

GLIMPSES OF THE PAST

BY

GEORGE D. FLEMMING

THE HARVEST HOME:

An old fashioned holiday, known as the Harvest Home, was once celebrated throughout the United States, Canada, and many European countries. It is merely a celebration of the harvest and was usually held around the time of the autumnal equinox; or when the amount of daylight and the amount of darkness were equal. It was a warm gathering of family and friends sharing in the bounty of the harvest.

The custom dates back to the medieval times of the ancient Celts who once populated the British Isles and a large part of Europe. In those times from 1200 years before the present to, the year 1400 AD, celebrations of this sort were held. Many churches in England still celebrate the harvest by having a thanksgiving service where the bounty of the harvest is displayed and then dispersed to the needy. It was also a custom of the ancient Druids at the ruins of Stonehenge.

Whether this same circumstance prevailed in Indian Mills is quite possible. The known site of the Harvest Home in Shamong occurred at Gardners' Grove on the north side of Stokes Road just west of Three Bridge Road. The pavilion is still standing for all to see and a sign dedicated to the memory of John J. Gardner III, a great grandson of Congressman John J. Gardner. Another was held in a grove just south of the Shamong Diner, although this grove is now gone and four houses have taken its place.

While researching another matter, I came across an item in the New Jersey Mirror & Burlington County Advertiser, that prompted me to write this article.

" Indian Mills. Wednesday, August 28, 1929.

There was a large attendance at the Harvest Home here. It takes a big quantity of food to supply dinner for the large number of guests. George Foster, Medford, furnished 1500 rolls and 100 loaves of bread for the dinner and also roasted 163 chickens that were needed. The chickens were delivered to the bakery early Wednesday morning and at two o'clock in the afternoon were roasted and ready for the big feast. The chickens were a fine lot, all young, averaging from five to eight pounds. The bakery oven roasted the fowl in an excellent manner and the quality of chickens properly prepared has aided greatly in making this Harvest Home one of the most popular in these parts."

The custom prevailed into fairly modern times and in some areas may still take place today. Various nationalities honor the tradition of Harvest Home which was once widespread. The New York Times published a brief article on Sept. 29, 1874 entitled.....

HARVEST HOME CELEBRATION

"Philadelphia, Sept. 28, Schuetzen Park was thronged today by Germans participating in the celebration of Harvest Home. The principal feature was a procession of 350 men and women attired in ancient German costume. Including the distinguished persons represented were King William Mismarck Von Moltke, and twelve other German generals. Dancing and the usual festivities were continued until evening when the grounds were illuminated."

While the Harvest Home celebrations probably never reached this magnitude in the Shamong area, it would be interesting to know what actually did occur in days of olde. Remember in 1929 there was no Route 206, the area was populated mostly by farmers and a few trades people. There were no paved roads in Shamong, and no housing developments. By 1929 surely there were some cars, but a horse and wagon were still in use locally in those days. Certainly more occurred at the Harvest Home than just eating chickens and loaves of bread.

If anyone can add any local information about the Harvest Home in Shamong either first hand knowledge or as told by your parents and grandparents, please let me know. My telephone # is 609-859-1198, or e-mail gdchum1@aol.com.

FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Don Catts has decided not to continue as editor of the newsletter. The Winter 2009 issue was his last. Don's work and expertise with the newsletter was beyond compare. I will do my best to continue his excellence, but my skills in navigating the computer are limited.

As before, articles on local history or items of local interest are always welcome. Please e-mail any questions or comments you may have.

Sincerely,

George D. Flemming

Newsletter Editor

609-859-1198

gdchum1@aol.com

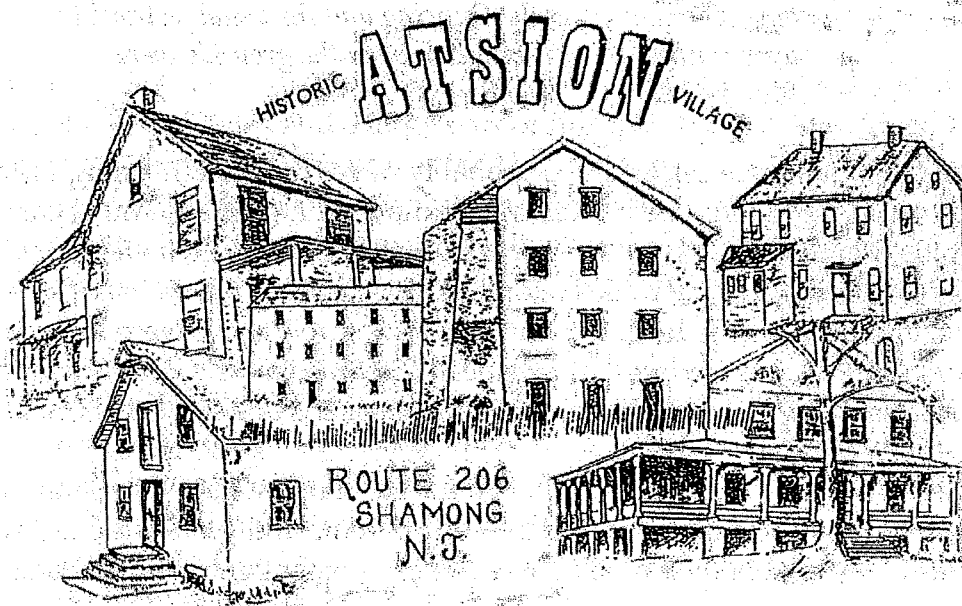
ATSION DAY - Outdoor - Flea Market

Sponsored By: The Indian Mills Historical Society

A tradition since 1973

Sunday May 3, 2009

9:00AM - 3:00PM



Arts & Crafts ~ Antiques ~ Fleas

Atsion Lake Recreation Center

Rte 206, Wharton State Forest, Shamong, NJ

Free Admission & Parking

Dealer Fee: \$25.00

Info: 609-268-1693

Gates Open at 6:00AM for dealer set-up

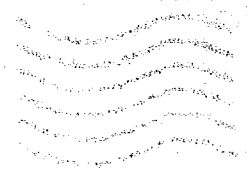
Refreshments provided by the Boy Scouts

No Food Vendors - No Alcohol - No Weapons - No Dogs

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Make checks payable to: Indian Mills Historical Society
Mail to: Don Catts, 39 Manitoba Trail, Shamong, N.J. 08088

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

_____ Individual \$ 7.00 _____ Family \$12.00 _____ Senior (62 & over) \$5.00

_____ Individual Life \$50.00 _____ Honorary Member (no dues) Student under 18

Optional Tax Deductible Donation _____

I would like to dedicate this donation in memory/honor of :

Name of person(s), event, and date of memory/honor.

Example: John and Jane Doe, 20th wedding anniversary February 14, 2007