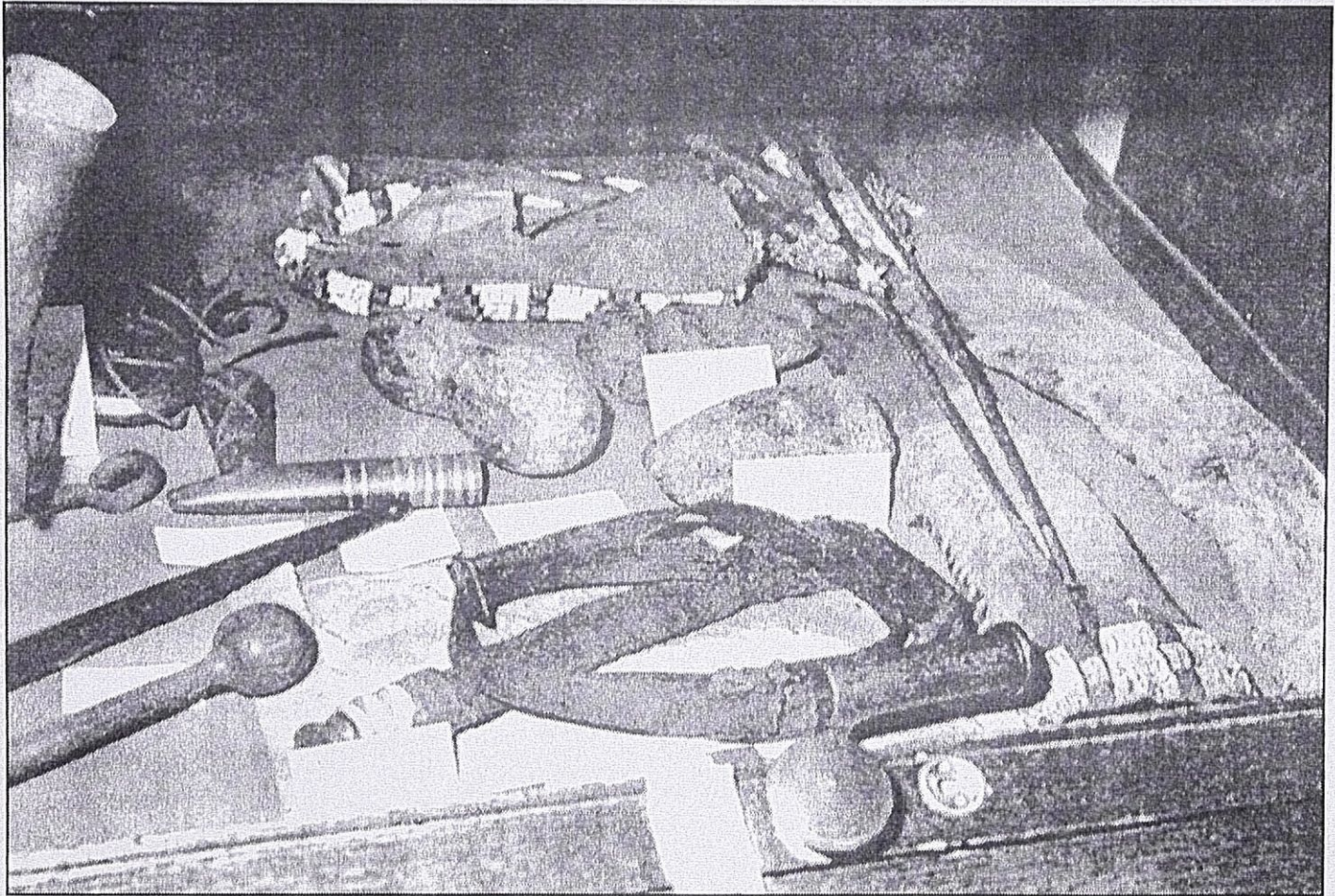


Settlers & Indians a Bloody Combination

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SOME OF THE INDIAN RELICS FOUND IN THE AREA.

Thanksgiving is traditionally a time to give thanks for the bounty the land has given us and to remember the pioneers who struggled to settle the nation. Most depictions displayed during the Thanksgiving holiday are of Indians and Pilgrims, originally called Separatists, living harmoniously in the new world.

While northern portions of the United States were settled in the seventeenth century, Schuylkill County was created by a legislative act in 1811, 60 years after its first permanent settlers crossed the Blue Mountain on its southern border to make their homes in a frontier where Indian massacres were among the dangers of pioneer life.

Schuylkill County was part of Berks and Northampton counties which was purchased from the Delaware Indians in 1749. The region was considered unfit for the crude agriculture of the Indian and was used only as a hunting ground.

The chief at the time of the arrival of the white

man was said to be named Bohundy. Pine Creek, located near Deer Lake, is occasionally called Bohundy, and Fort Lebanon is sometimes referred to as Fort Bohundy. There is also a road, Bohundy Drive, in Deer Lake.

County a wilderness

During the French and Indian War, 1754-1763, Schuylkill County was a wilderness of marsh, swamp land, and dense pine forests which were home to wild beasts and the Delaware Indians. It was sometimes called "St. Anthony's Wilderness," after Anthony Seifert, a Moravian missionary. The Indians of Schuylkill County were Unamis, a kindly, trustful, and generous tribe in peace, but brave, crafty, resourceful and cruel warriors in times of war.

The Delawares and other Indian tribes of New York and Pennsylvania were the allies of the French in France's ill-fated attempt to secure control of North America from the British. They crossed the Susque-



DELAWARE INDIANS of the Delaware tribe had a settlement on Scallop's (Scalp's or Sculp's Hill), a high bluff overlooking the Schuylkill River near Landingville.

hanna in large numbers in the French campaign that followed the ambush and de-feat of General Braddock's Army in Western Pennsylvania on July 9, 1755. For eight years, the area that was later to be Schuylkill County was a place where Indians murdered white men, looted settlements, and burned homesteads.

Governor Robert Hunter Morris provided for the fortification of the frontiers after a number of settlers had been killed and their homes burned in raids north of the Blue Mountain. The frontier at that time extended from the

Delaware River to the Maryland border. Forts were located at intervals all along the natural defense line provided by the Blue Mountains.

Militia manned forts

Constructed of logs, the forts were manned by a militia hastily recruited from among the settlers in the Schuylkill region and what is now Berks County. Some of the forts had swivel guns. The garrisons sent out scouting parties to patrol the areas between the forts. Although there were some raids south of the Blue Mountain by small bands of Indians, the forts served their purpose in preventing any large scale attacks on the settlers in what is now Berks County.

Fort Deitrich-Schneider, located along Route 183, Fort Lebanon, located near Auburn, and Fort Franklin, named for Benjamin Franklin and located at the base of the Blue Mountain off Route 443 about 3/4 mile south of Snyders, were all built to protect the routes over the Blue Mountain from the Schuylkill to the Berks and Northampton sides of the mountain.

Southern Schuylkill County was sparsely settled during the Indian War. What the settlers suffered at the hands of the Delawares gave the region the name of "The Bloody Ground of Pennsylvania." On their raids the Indians descended the Tulpehocken or Sunbury trail from what is now Sunbury to Hegins, over the Broad Mountain to the Blue Mountains at Pine Grove and down the Schuylkill Trail from Tuscarora to Port Clinton.

Frequently joined by Shawanese and Nanticoke Indians, the Delawares continued marauding expedi-

tions. Conrad Weiser, a Berks County frontiersman and the Provincial Governor's interpreter in prior dealings with the Indians, warned the settlers of the impending danger.

First massacre near Pine Grove

One of the first massacres occurred near Pine Grove when Peter Grafe's wife and two children were killed on October 28, 1755. Two days later, Henry Hartman, who lives west of Pine Grove, was scalped.

In a massacre at the inn of Valentine Baumgarten, located where the Rest Haven Nursing facility is now located, a woman and boy were killed and another boy wounded.

Adam Johann Buss was surprised at his home in West Brunswick Township, near Deer Lake, and he and his wife were killed and their children were taken captive. Indians attacked the mill of Peter Conrad near Landingville, burned it to the ground, and murdered several members of his family. The torch was put to the home of Johann Peter Schmelger at Molino and his three children were taken captive.

In December of 1756 Michael Ney was killed near Summit Station. He and his brother were ambushed by two Indians while gathering firewood. One Indian was being badly beaten by Michael when another Indian came to his comrade's rescue and killed Ney. Michael's brother, who pretended he was dead, later crept away to warn his family.

The original old Red or Zion Church, the first church built in the county in 1754-55 and located along Route 61 in West Brunswick Township, was burned by Indians during a raid in 1756.

In September of 1757, a raid on the John Hartman home in Orwigsburg led to the deaths of the father and a son, George. Mrs. Hartman and a son, Christian, survived the attack, but two daughters, Regina and Barbara, were captured. Months later the body of Barbara was found several miles from the house. It was surmised that she became exhausted and unable to keep up with her captors, and had been cruelly murdered.

Regina, the stronger of the two, was taken to New York, where she lived as one of the tribe, becoming "Sawquehanna", the White Lily. Throughout her captivity, she and another girl captive were continually under the guard of an old squaw. At the end of the French and Indian War in 1765, Regina, then age 22, was taken to Carlisle where she was eventually reunited with her mother.

Many of the settlers fled into Berks County following the Indian raids but they moved back when Fort Henry was built. The militia had trouble finding the Indians after a raid. One of their favorite hiding places was the "Red Hole", a deep gap between Klingerstown and Fort Henry, four miles east of Pine Grove.

After the fort was built, the raids halted for a time. Abandonment of the forts after 1758 was followed by more raids in 1763. On September 8 of that year, the Indians murdered four children of Nicholas Miller in the Long Run Valley. Eight armed Indians returned the same day to John Fincher's mill in what is now known

as the west ward of Schuylkill Haven. The Indians had previously burned Fincher's Mill in 1756, but the family was able to escape at that time. There was no escape in 1763 as the Indians killed Fincher, who was a Quaker, his wife and two sons, and captured his daughter. One of Fincher's sons was able to flee by leaping over the mill race. He ran to the soldiers stationed in the area pleading for help. Rachel Fincher was returned to her family at Carlisle in 1765 when the Indians released prisoners they had taken in the war.

Also in 1763, five Indians entered the home of Phillip Martzloff, murdered and scalped his wife, two sons and two daughters, burned the house and barn, and destroyed the stacks of hay and grain. Martzloff was absent from the home at the time and one of his daughters escaped the attack by hiding in a thicket. Godfrey Boyer was also murdered by Indians at what is now the east ward of Schuylkill Haven. This was the last attack made in the area by Indians during the French and Indian War.

Following the Battle of Lexington in the Revolutionary War, the townships of Pennsylvania were called on to raise a company of militia. From the portion of Berks County, which is now Schuylkill County, Captain Jacob Whetstone's and the Bretz Companies came from Pine Grove while Captain Minick's and Captain Cristoff Baldi Companies were from Brunswick Township.

Indian trouble again

During the Revolution, Schuylkill settlers again had trouble with the Indians, for a large extent of what is now the county was controlled by savages. The Neiman family was murdered in their Mount Carbon home at a time when masts for ships of the Continental and French navies were being cut between Pottsville and Mt. Carbon during the Revolutionary War about 1780. Neiman and his three children were killed by five Indians who descended on their home, now the site of the Pottsville Hospital. Terrified, the other settlers in the area began to flee and there was no further settlement of the area until 1800.

As a result of the Neiman massacre, reinforcements were sent to the captain of the Marines of the Continental Navy who was in charge of the work of securing ship masts.

The Indian Head or Indian Run Valley, located along old Route 122 (now Route 61) was a place where Indians sought shelter when they returned to the area to perpetrate more than 30 massacres in the county. As late as 1830 bands of Indians visited that area to re-enact tribal rituals.

Indian settlement

There was also an ancient Indian settlement on a high bluff overlooking the Schuylkill River, two miles below Schuylkill Haven and less than a mile from Landingville. Known as Scallop's (Scalp's or Sculp's Hill) in West Brunswick Township, there are no remnants of the village remaining today. Drinking water for the village came from a spring on the Thomas and Peale farms on the Schuylkill Haven-Adamsdale Road. Many Indian artifacts were found on the site of the Peale farm by Dr. Burd E. Peale. Dr. Peale had a fine collection of arrow and spear points, tools for pounding and cleaning pelts, pieces of broken pottery, and other Indian artifacts which were found on his homestead. The Indian arrow makers from Scallop's Hill traveled to the second mountain near Orwigsburg to gather the quartz rock to make their spears.

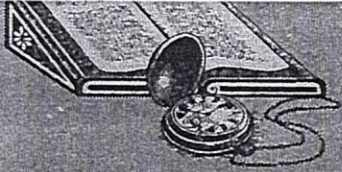
Militiamen established a frontier line to protect the Southern Schuylkill Valley from attacks of the English and the Indians who threatened to cut down the Susquehanna Valley if successful in their campaign in New York state.

The Indians were finally driven beyond the Blue Mountains in the later stages of the war and never returned to Schuylkill County, closing a very bloody page on the history of the area.



AN ANCIENT INDIAN BURIAL GROUND is supposedly located in this area near Briar Road in North Manheim Township. The Unami Indians had a settlement in the area of the Peale farm, located along the Schuylkill Haven-Adamsdale Road.

Information taken from the History of Schuylkill County, published by the Pottsville School District, and the Schuylkill Haven 225th Anniversary book.



Turning the Pages of Time . . .

The true first settlers of Sch. Haven killed by Indians

4-21-05

By COLLEEN HOPTAK

Although Martin Dreibelbiss is considered the first settler of Schuylkill Haven, earlier settlers braved the dangers of the wilderness to establish their homes in Southern Schuylkill County.

In a "History of Schuylkill Haven," written by the late J. Harry Filbert, Esq., published in the 175th Anniversary book of the borough, it notes Schuylkill Haven was one of the earliest settlements made within the confines of Schuylkill County. Filbert explains the lands north of the Blue Mountains were not purchased from the Indians until the fall of 1749, but prior to that, adventurous settlers located in the valley.

It is claimed Michael Deibert settled as early as 1744 on the old Filbert and Peale farms, about a mile and a half east of the town toward what is now Adamsdale, and that George and Gloria Orwig settled along Sculp (Sculp or Scollop) Hill in 1747.

Since most of the new settlers of the area were immigrants without knowledge of the laws, they mostly "squatted" on the land without taking out patents for it and were either chased away by the Indians during the French and Indian Wars or

not established until 1752.

Fincher built his house and barn at a point a little west of the center of the former Reading Railroad yard, opposite Broadway. The property was located along an old road that crossed the river about "eight perches" below the mouth of the Alms House Run. This ford was known as Fincher's Ford. Fincher and his family lived on the property until his buildings were burned by a party of marauding Indians on November 3, 1756.

Although Fincher and his family escaped harm, Captain Jacob Morgan, who commanded Fort Lebanon, midway between Auburn and Pinedale, sent a detachment of troops after the Indians. The soldiers followed the Indians to the home of Phillip Culmore, located about a mile from the fort, where they found Culmore's wife, daughter and son-in-law, Martin Fell, killed and scalped. Fell's wife and his one year old and seven year old children, were missing.

Fincher and family killed

Fincher rebuilt his buildings at or near their original location. On the afternoon of September 10, 1763, eight well-armed Indians approached the property. Fincher, his wife, two sons and daughter, Rachael, asked the Indians to

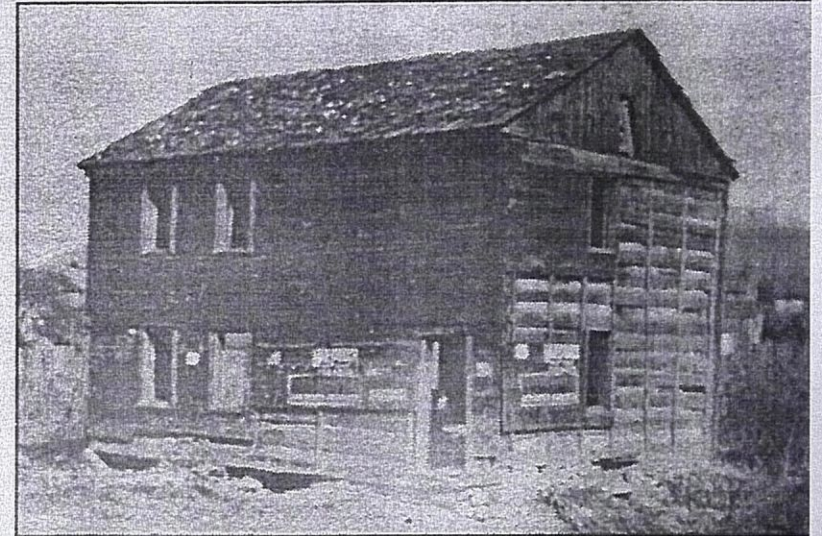
administration on his father's estate, October 1, 1763. These were the first letters granted in Berks County north of the Blue Mountains. Later, his father's property was awarded to him in Orphans' Court. Fincher conveyed the property to Peter Conrad by a deed dated November 16, 1770. Conrad's saw mill, located just west of Landingville, was burned by the Indians in March 1756. Conrad deeded the property to George Merkel in October 1778, and he later conveyed the property to his son-in-law, Martin Dreibelbiss in October 1778.

Fincher had never patented his land and it is supposed the original warrant and survey were burned with his house in 1756. Dreibelbiss had the property resurveyed, December 7, 1781, and a patent was issued to him December 3, 1784, on the original Fincher warrant of March 5, 1750.

Tradition indicates the murdered Finchers were buried near their home which was located near where the roundhouse of the Reading Railroad was eventually built.

Other Settlers

Other early settlers of Schuylkill Haven who were murdered by the Indians include Valentine Baumgartner, a settler in the eastern part of the town prior to



FIRST HOUSE IN SCHUYLKILL HAVEN — Although Martin Dreibelbiss is usually considered the first settler in Schuylkill Haven, the late J. Harry Filbert noted in his "History of Schuylkill Haven," included in the borough's 175th anniversary book, that Michael Deibert settled in Schuylkill Haven in 1744.

was told the body of the property owner was quartered and left lying on a tree stump.

A young girl by the name of Elizabeth Dechert was supposedly murdered by Indians in a springhouse along Long Run in the extreme western part of the borough. In 1781, one of the owners of the southern adjoiners of the Fincher tract was Daniel Dechert, probably the father or brother of the doomed girl.

Petersburg

The major portion of the

that time was considered a colossal fortune and was doubtless the richest man north of the Blue Mountains at the time of his death. Although Dreibelbiss was undoubtedly the wealthiest property owner in Schuylkill Haven in the eighteenth century, Filbert says he was not the town's first settler.

Information from the 175th Schuylkill Haven Anniversary Book

Note: After reading last week's report on gasoline wars, Guy Fidler of Summit

French and Indian War or were later dispossessed of their lands by those who had taken lawful title to it.

Earliest settler

Filbert reports the earliest settler in the Schuylkill Haven area was John Fincher, a Chester County Quaker, who had emigrated to Exeter Township, Philadelphia (now Berks) County, about 1740. On March 5, 1750, a warrant was granted to him, and later a survey was made of 225 acres of land, facing upon the Schuylkill River. The land Fincher settled encompassed what is now the entire West Ward and part of the South Ward of Schuylkill Haven Borough. At the time, Fincher's land was in Lancaster County and the east bank of the Schuylkill River was in Philadelphia County, as the Schuylkill River was then the dividing line between those counties. Berks County was

Rachael, asked the Indians to come inside the home to eat, hoping the good-will gesture would spare their lives. However, the Indians were not in a hospitable mood and they viciously killed Fincher, his wife, and two sons. Rachael was dragged from the property by the Indians and was eventually taken into the "Ohio Country." Following the defeat of the Indians at Kittanning, Rachael was returned to Colonel Bouquet. A young lad who lived with the Fincher family escaped to notify Ensign Schaeffer, who was quartered with six soldiers approximately three quarters of a mile away. Schaeffer followed the Indians to the Nicholas Miller property, where four children were found murdered.

Since John Fincher Jr. was on a visit to Chester County on the day of the massacre, he escaped death. He took out Letters of Admin-

1753. His house may have been located as far west as the middle of the North Ward or as far east as the Alms House farm. Baumgartner, who was born in Tulpehocken Township, Lancaster, met his fate on March 22, 1756, when his plantation was attacked by the Indians and his wife and one son were killed. Another of Baumgartner's sons was wounded but there is no further indication of what happened to the family's property following the attack.

Part of the North Ward of the borough was laid out on lands originally owned by Baltzer Neyfong, who appears on the assessment of 1753. On March 6, 1756, his plantation, located just above Willow Lake, was attacked by Indians and his wife and one son were killed. He remarried, returned to the property and remained there until his death in 1778.

The same day the Neyfong massacre occurred, Jacob Clauser and his wife were reportedly murdered in their home north of the Blue Mountains.

There is a tradition that the original settler of the Godfrey Boyer tract, now part of the East Ward of the borough, was also murdered by the Indians. Filbert reports he

land lying east of the Schuylkill River was patented by Reverend Richard Peters. He conveyed a tract of 187 acres, known as "Petersburg," to Peter Conrad on February 4, 1771. Peters also conveyed a part of a large tract of 665 acres to Conrad in 1775. This property, which Peters had acquired from George Boone, an uncle of Daniel Boone, was known as "Circumbendobus." George Merkel acquired the interest of Peter Conrad in this tract together with a "water corn or grist mill and saw mill" and sent his son-in-law, Martin Dreibelbiss, to take charge of the property.

Dreibelbiss built a stone mill a little west of the southwest corner of Main and Canal Streets, occupying it until he built his first home. The large log building built by Dreibelbiss stood a little west of the mill on the opposite side of Main Street. The mill was used several times during the Revolutionary War as a refuge from Indian attack. Dreibelbiss later acquired the tract known as East Schuylkill Haven, or Spring Garden, and other numerous properties nearby. Dreibelbiss died at the age of 48 and is buried in the "Old White Church" cemetery. In his short life, Dreibelbiss accumulated what at

not believe there actually was an oil shortage in 1973.

An avid fisherman, Fidler often fished in the Delaware Bay in the early 1970's. He says when the oil embargo was announced in 1973, there were many tankers lined up in the Delaware Bay. "That wasn't an oil shortage, it was oil greed," Fidler says. In addition, Fidler says he would wait in line like many motorists to purchase his \$5 limit of gasoline. Then he discovered a fuel oil and gasoline distributor in Pine Grove had an excess supply of the precious commodity. "Ness would sell me as much as I wanted," Fidler says.

Since Fidler had tanks located on his Summit Station property at the time, he says the distributor would fill the tanks for him and he would offer the gasoline to anyone who needed it. "We all helped each other out," Fidler concludes.



INDIAN RELICS OF BYGONE DAYS — Many early residents of Southern Schuylkill County lost their lives to Indian attacks. Pictured are some Indian artifacts found in the Schuylkill Haven area.