

BEN AVON AREA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXIV - Number 4, May, 2009



Monday, May 25, 2009
Memorial Day
Log House Open House
12:00 Noon to 1:30 p.m.

The Evolution of Old Glory Jean Henderson

Buying the flag that we fly at the Dickson Log House inspired a review of the history of Old Glory. The first question was, which version of the star and stripes would be most appropriate for the time when the log house was built?



You should count 15 stripes and may be able to make out 15 stars.

History in the Park
Sunday May 17th, 1:00 -4:00 pm
Blueberry Hill Park Activity Center
Free Admission and Parking
Sponsored by Franklin Park Borough

PARTICIPANTS include historical societies or associations representing Sewickley Valley, Lawrenceville, Ben Avon Area, Cranberry, Allegheny City, Ross Township and Franklin Park Borough.

Other groups are North Hills Genealogists, Greater Pittsburgh Civil War Roundtable, North Allegheny Museum, Carnegie Library's PA Room, Western Pennsylvania Genealogy Society and Northland Public Library.

Business representatives are Al Mechling from **Mechling Bookbinding** [publishers of community and family histories, book repairs and rebinding, specializing in old family bibles] and Mark Battaglia from **Underground Archives** photo and records preservation and **Debbie Corll** (former director of Pittsburgh 250) from **Corll Consulting** [marketing and promoting non-profits].

Blueberry Hill Park is on the right off Nicholson Road traveling into Franklin Park from Ohio Township.

The flag which flies at the Dickson Log House today - and would have flown at the time of its construction in 1797 - is also known as "The Star Spangled

Banner." This version of our flag flew above Ft. McHenry at Baltimore when the British attacked on September 13, 1814.

The original Fort McHenry flag is displayed in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. This design, born with the Second Flag Act of January 13, 1794, is our only official flag ever to have more than thirteen stripes. It has 15 stars and 15 stripes, and was the official USA flag from 1794-1818. The fifteen stars represented our first 13 colonies which became states and the addition of Kentucky and Vermont

Francis Scott Key, a lawyer from Washington DC, had gone aboard a British ship trying to obtain the release of a friend of his held prisoner. He was detained on board through the night. The sight of the American flag still flying over the fortress the next morning inspired Key to write what, in 1931, became our National Anthem.

By current law, a star is added to the USA Flag on the Fourth of July following the admission of the State or States bringing about these changes. No star is identified with a specific State, and there is no law designating the permanent arrangement of the stars.

However, since 1912, whenever a new State has been added, the new design has been announced by Presidential order. No flag ever becomes obsolete; each is still a legal flag and is entitled to the same respect shown the current flag.

Memorial Day

Dick Herchenroether

Many of our supporters and local residents find the Log House open for visitors after the annual Memorial Day service held at the Avonworth sports field on Ohio River Boulevard. It is just sort of

a tradition and enough people seem to "know" about it that several guests look around and chat a bit each year.

We will continue the tradition and make it a little more formal as we try to have an open house on some regular basis. Skipping the very likely to be cold (not just chilly) months, that means eight or nine times a year.

Anyway, as announced on the front page, you will find someone at the open door at least from noon to 1:30 p.m. Plenty of time for a quick visit if you are in the area for the parade or to attend the ceremony at the old football field.

If you have not gone to the ceremony in a while think of doing so. We are fortunate that various people have voluntarily organized the parade and ceremony each year for decades. While very straight forward and simple I find the day's activities uplifting and moving.

The parade consists of fire equipment, police, EMT, local political officials, Little League teams and CANDY. But also veterans, and sometimes active or reserve service members who lay wreaths in Emsworth and Ben Avon. The rifle salute is optional year to year.

At the field, the program is consistent from year to year. We recently obtained copies of programs from 1946, 1948 and 1949 which verify today's program is much the same as those 50 years ago.

Local clergy (by rotation year to year) provide an invocation and a benediction. The order of business includes flag raising and national anthem, pledge of allegiance, choral and/or band music, and a main address.

While all of that changes slightly in detail or order from year to year, the

Honor Roll call, rifle salute and playing of taps always closes the proceedings. Each name is read slowly, the sound dying out before the next one is called. The honor given is local, simple, meaningful and memorable.

**An Excerpt from the March 15th Talk
given by Len Barcousky**
Post-Gazette editor and reporter

I'm Len Barcousky and my wife Barbara and I live on Flaccus Road in the Frank House.

That's right between the Cavaleri-Marshall House, where the Wagner family now lives, and the Bradley house, where the Francis family lives – right across the street from the Kelsch home – which faces Forest Avenue and is where the McNeils live.

When Barb and I came here more than 20 years ago, we learned that homes were identified by the people who used to live there – I feel sorry for whoever ends up in our house – which I hope won't be for many years. Barcousky is not an easy name to spell or remember.

But I think that tradition of naming properties by their previous owners is one sign of this community's commitment to local history.

Long after I left school that I came to realize that history was not just something I read about in books or that happened in places like Independence Hall. For example: As a boy, I played on the banks of Trout Creek, a tributary of the Delaware River, which divides Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Along its banks were the remains of an 18th century sawmill. Nearby was state historical marker noting that Kern's Mill, also known as Trucker's Mill, served as one of many French and Indian War-era forts established at the direction of Benjamin Franklin.

My gosh, that should have seen like a triple threat for a boy interested in historical material – Indians and a fort and Benjamin Franklin.

Unfortunately, I had seen enough cowboy movies to know what a fort looked like and Trucker's Mill was no fort, I concluded.

It wasn't until many years later when I visited northwestern Virginia that I saw similar small "forts" that George Washington had overseen

during the French and Indian War that I realized that my little town -- along with much of the Pennsylvania frontier -- had been as much the Wild West as was the Arizona territory in the 1870s and 1880s.

I've also found an unexpected connection linking my childhood home – 300 miles from here - - to the place where I have raised my children.

I grew up in the shadow of the Blue Mountain that runs through Lehigh and Northampton counties. While researching material on this area I came across a book published in 1895 about the Delaware Chief known as Journeycake.

Journeycake's relatives included a young brave known as Kelelemend. He was born among the Blue Hills of Pennsylvania, "near the Lehigh Gap, where the picturesque Lehigh River cuts through the mountains." –Those mountains – and the Appalachian Trail that runs atop them -- were one of my playgrounds when I was a boy.

One of the saddest episodes in Pennsylvania history involves the Walking Purchase – a dirty deal through which the descendants of William Penn acquired huge portions of Lehigh and Carbon counties and forced the Delaware, or Lenape people, to move west into the Susquehanna and later Ohio Valleys.

Kelelemend was among the Delaware who left the Lehigh Gap for the Forks of the Ohio. – He became famous here, first as an ally of French, seeking to hold onto this area as Indian territory; later as an ally of the Americans in their fight against the British.

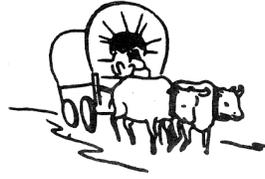
We know Kelelemend by another name – Chief Kilbuck – for whom it is likely that our neighboring township was named.

So I grew up where Kilbuck was born and spent his early years – and like him, I came west to the banks of the Ohio in search of new opportunities.

Renewing Members – THANK YOU!

Darlene Phillips	Ohio Twp
Lanis Liggett	Moon Twp
Jim & Bonnie Bass	Ross Twp
Frank & Rose Meacci	BA
Jean Dittman	Kilbuck
Petey Hager	BAH
Kathleen Schurer	BA
Elizabeth Garmon	BA

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Renewing Members – THANK YOU!

Marjorie Todd Simonds	Kilbuck
Len & Barb Barcousky	BA
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Jane & John Angelini	BA
Bill & Sharon Trimble	Auburn AL
John & Frances Haeberle	BA
Martha & Steve Huddy	Williamsport PA

A special thank you to those who provided this issues' content. Without something to print we have nothing to send.

Ben Avon Area Historical Association c/o 136 Dickson Avenue, Ben Avon, PA 15202	
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