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# NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## Nanticoke Indians, in search of.....

In 1744, a segment of the Nanticoke Indian population of Maryland took to their dug-out canoes and paddled up the Delaware River then on to the Susquehanna in search of a peaceful place to settle. One can imagine their feeling of hope for a better life as they stepped on to the shore of what is now the city of Nanticoke they must have thought their decision a good one to see the abundance of pristine fertile land to farm, mountains to hunt and rivers to fish. By 1748, a large number of the Nanticoke had moved into the Wyoming Valley. However their peaceful existence would be short lived.

Much of what we know about the Indians that populated Eastern United State was garnered from accounts, stories, and maps documented by Captain John Smith in the 1600's and John White, who made a voyage to the new world two decades earlier. Smith and White recorded the Indian

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## Keeping up With the Times

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### ***Nanticoke History on the Web***

Opinions on the immense effect technology and the world-wide web have on our lives today swings from favorable to unfavorable depending on who you're talking to. However, it is a valuable tool that allows organizations like the Nanticoke Historical Society to get the word out as to all the benefits it offers.

Gene Bojarski, The society's web site creator and Facebook page administrator, has given over many hours developing these sites. Serving as content manager for the web site and Historical Society Facebook page Bojarski keeps everyone up-to-date on society events as well as initiating placement of photos for possible identification. Log on to [www.Nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.Nanticokehistoryonline.org). to find out more about the society, read stories about the city, find out how to request information, see photos and much more.

These two vehicles alone allow world-wide access to the society and in today's transient environment will help keep the Nanticoke Historical Society on the cutting edge.

### **DID YOU KNOW**

settlements and documented their governing systems, ways of life and rules of behavior. Listing the tribes and their names was a challenge, so the English spelled them phonetically, resulting in several different names for the same tribe. Smith documented Nantiquack (some spellings list as Nantiquak), what is now Dorchester County on the Delmarva Peninsula of Maryland, as the area in which the Nanticoke lived. According to William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, Volume 14 Nantaquack translates to “a point of land on a tidal stream”. The Nanticoke’s were also known as the Nentego, Unechtgo or Unalachtgo all meaning Tidewater People.

Most of what is written about the Nanticoke, a southern offshoot of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) tribe, describes them as farmers and traders. Nanticoke women harvested corn, squash and beans, which they called the "three sisters." Nanticoke men hunted deer, elk, turkey, and small game, and fished in the rivers. As English colonists arrived and settled along the Eastern Shore in the 17th and 18th centuries, Indian tribes were squeezed out of their settlements.

The Nanticoke were a peace loving people, who were caught in a struggle between tradition and change. During much of the 1600'S the Indian nations had to decide at what level they were willing to compromise to retain the land allotted them. At various times, the Nanticoke resorted to violence against the English in order to retain their land. One final stand, in 1742, resulted in fierce reprimand of the tribe by the English after they were betrayed by a member of the Choptank tribe who informed the colonists of the Nanticoke's planned attack.

Into the late 1600's and early 1700's the battle weary Nanticoke tribe tried negotiating treaties with their adversaries, but the colonists found it hard to understand Indian traditions, resulting in missteps that again led to a series of conflicts. Over many years the Nanticoke realized the colonists would never let them live in the way of their traditions so they splintered, some migrating north to Pennsylvania and westward to Ohio, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Ontario, Canada.

Still others traveled to Delaware or remained behind in their traditional territories. In 1744, some of the Nanticoke tribe members accepted an invitation from the powerful Six-Nation Iroquois to join them and settle in Pennsylvania, New York and Canada, which they did, but by 1748, they would once again be influenced by a stronger force. The Iroquois wanted help in asserting their claim to land, in order to keep encroaching European settlers from taking additional territory. In return, the Iroquois offered protection to the smaller tribes such as the Nanticoke. It is written, that in 1755 due to the outbreak of hostilities between the French and English, the Nanticoke, left their land and migrated north to New York and Canada.

Though the Nanticoke did not find the peace they were looking for along the Susquehanna, they left a legacy along with their name, hope, for a better life in a beautiful place that the Nanticoke may have never left had circumstances been different. As we delve into our past we find that this area represented a chance for peace to many generations of people who immigrated to the United States in the 18 and 1900's. Perhaps those who settled here did not find a perfect life, but there was the opportunity to obtain it.

## Historical Society presents Huber Program

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The Nanticoke Historical Society hosted a program presented by Bill Best, president of the Huber Breaker Preservation Society. Best offered a comprehensive history of the anthracite mine fields and the workings of coal breakers; described as "enormous preying monsters," on one of many web sites dedicated to the subject He also spoke of the Preservation Society's attempts to save the last remnants of the Huber Breaker in Ashley. One fact

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## Calendar of Events

### "AN INTRODUCTION TO GENEALOGY"

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**7 P.M. APRIL 24**

*SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, 495 EAST MAIN STREET,  
NANTICOKE  
(NEXT TO MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY)*

### "Nanticoke Area Mining Movies"

***Narrated by Charles Petrillo***

**7 P.M MAY 15**

*AT THE CULTURAL CENTRE OF ST. FAUSTINA.  
38 W. CHURCH STREET, NANTICOKE*

### "Next Monthly Meeting"

**7 P.M. MAY 29**

*SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, 495 EAST MAIN STREET,  
NANTICOKE  
(NEXT TO MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY)*

Meetings suspended for June July and August

### "Family Picnic Day"

*FOR ALL MEMBERS*

**10 A.M. TO 3 P. M. – JULY 19**

*SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE (NEXT TO MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY). EVERYONE IS ASKED TO BRING A COVERED DISH TO SHARE. THE SOCIETY WILL PROVIDE HAMBURGERS, HOT DOGS, SODA AND WATER. MEMBERS ARE ASKED TO CALL OR EMAIL THE PRESIDENT IF YOU WILL ATTEND AND WHAT YOU ARE BRINGING.*

### "MIRACLE OF THE BELLS"

*A FALL DATE IS BEING DISCUSSED FOR THE SHOWING OF THE MIRACLE OF THE BELLS MOVIE  
DATE AND TIME AND LOCATION WILL BE ANNOUNCED.*

*Huber*

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makes Best's focus more immediate, breakers are unique to the Northeast section of Pennsylvania and the Huber is the last one standing.

Breakers such as Loomis in Hanover Twp., Bliss, Truesdale and Auchincloss in the Hanover section of Nanticoke and the Susquehanna #5 and 7 dotted the landscape in Luzerne and surrounding Lackawanna, Schuylkill, Northumberland, Carbon, Columbia, Dauphin, Susquehanna and Sullivan Counties, The Huber Breaker in Ashley, named in honor of Charles F. Huber, Glen Alden Coal Corporation Chairman was one of the last constructed. The colliery closed in 1976.

#### ***Northeast PA coal region unique***

Coal deposits are worldwide, but the coal from a 500 square mile region of northeastern Pennsylvania is special. 300 million years ago, decaying plant matter known as peat shifted and compressed under enormous pressure to become coal. But in Northeastern Pennsylvania the upheaval of the Appalachian Mountains moved the peat deeper beneath the earth's surface, creating anthracite a harder more pure high-carbon coal. It proved difficult to ignite but burned longer and more efficiently than bituminous. In 1808, Judge Jesse Fell of Wilkes-Barre, burned anthracite on a grate proving it could be used to heat homes and David Thomas of the Crane Iron Works in Catasauqua brought the first large-scale anthracite furnace to Northeast PA. As the demand for anthracite increased, the need for finding a way to efficiently break the coal into burnable sizes grew.

#### ***Battin's Invention***

In 1844, Joseph Battin, a supervisor at a manufacturing plant in Philadelphia invented the first coal breaker. Battin's first chance to show the usefulness of his invention came when Gideon Bast, asked him to set up a breaker at his colliery on Wolf Creek, north of Minersville. As time went on more and more mines added breakers to their operations. But, by the 1970s, many coal breakers around the world were being shut down in favor of

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## LINKS TO SUCCESS

It was June of 1996, and the Nanticoke Historical Society was still in the early stages of formation when members received a letter from Mr. L.W. Lamb of Gauteng, Republic of South Africa. The letter, which came by way of then Nanticoke Mayor **Wasil Kobela** and Nanticoke Cemetery Director, **Harold Cain**, detailed Lamb's interest in finding the burial site of his great grandparents **Henry and Matilda Bodilly** who emigrated from Cornwall England to Nanticoke in 1830.

Members of The Society eagerly began their search and found they had the family's burial records in their database. Henry Bodilly was buried on October 6, 1884. The couple's infant son was interred on October 26, 1884 and Matilda, wife of Henry, was buried on November 2, of the same year. One of the two surviving sons, Lamb's father, returned to England. Lamb was aware the family had died of "some form of plague and as he stated in his letter, "I always forgot to ask (my mother) about our ancestors and now I have become interested and would like to find out more."

Copies of the records as well as photographs of the sites were sent along to Lamb. Although Lamb wasn't sure anyone would have the information he requested, he was fortunate to have reached out in the very year of the Society's inception. For the founding members, it solidified their determination to continue their efforts to link people, even from as far away as South Africa, with relatives that settled in Nanticoke.

**NOTE:** As in years prior to 1884, and up to the outbreak of Spanish influenza in 1918 diseases such as typhoid fever, cholera, diphtheria, influenza and small pox would reach epidemic proportions devastating whole communities.

➤ **IN THE NEXT ISSUE....** Who was Edward G. Phillips and does anyone know what's buried in Patriot Park?

*Huber*

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coal preparation plants.

After a post -World War II decline in coal production and several catastrophic mine accidents, King Coal ruled the region no more.

Sadly, the society was unable to save the breaker itself, as restoration would have been an immense undertaking, but through the tireless efforts of Best and members the Preservation Society has obtained 3 ½ acre site in front of the breaker for a memorial park in which they hope to include a theatre, multimedia building, miner's home and gift shop. The society is in the process of obtaining two train cars to be restored and placed at the site.

The Nanticoke Historical Society was pleased to be able to present the program and stands with the Preservation Society in their efforts to commemorate these last remnants of Pennsylvania's rich coal history.

### Congratulations

*to the winners of our Easter Drawing - Thank you to everyone who participated.*

*The winners are:*

*1st prize Tom Mera, Delaware*

*2nd prize Ray Blockus, Shickshinny*

*3rd prize Al Yarasavage, Mt. Top*

## Society Hosts Open House

Recently the Nanticoke Historical Society hosted an open house at their offices at the Samantha Mill House. Visitors were invited to submit an historical or genealogical query to members of the staff at no cost. Information officers Chet Zaremba and John Sherrick accessed the Society's database for requested information while those who attended enjoyed refreshments and discussed the memorabilia and photographs on display. Check out the Nanticoke Historical Society Facebook page to see photos.

**MEMBERS SEARCHING FOR  
INFORMATION ON THE  
FOLLOWING SURNAMES:**

**Ray Blockus**

Surnames: **Blockus, Blokus, Blocus, Chesko, Chezka, Czieka, Chzan**  
[Texasgal445@yahoo.com](mailto:Texasgal445@yahoo.com)

**Bob & Elaine Deluca**

Surnames: **Deluca, Tarnowski**  
[emd469@pa.metrocast.net](mailto:emd469@pa.metrocast.net)

**Michael Geiger**

Surnames: A New one added **Lenahan**  
[ironmike47@comcast.net](mailto:ironmike47@comcast.net)

**Stanley & Sally Gorgas**

Surnames: **Hyduk/Hydak, Haydock, Adamski, Bialobek, Tomko, Ulatowski, Bjalobek, Butchko, Paulus, Negosh, Galick, Harczarik**  
[sgo2240718@aol.com](mailto:sgo2240718@aol.com)

**Richard & Theresa Hess**

Surnames: **Sienzant/Sierzant, Wiemcak/Wiecek, Mikolaicik**  
[HessTerry@hotmail.com](mailto:HessTerry@hotmail.com)

**Nancy Heyrich**

Surnames: m-grandparents **Joseph Kaminski, Kuryloski**  
[naheyrich@aol.com](mailto:naheyrich@aol.com)

**John Hickey**

Surnames: New names added **Carter, Toward, Dougherty, Higgins**  
[jfhicke@q.com](mailto:jfhicke@q.com)

**Sandy Lee**

Surnames: **Lee, Burnaford**  
[henslee33@gmail.com](mailto:henslee33@gmail.com)

**Martha (Becky) Price**

Surnames: **Connor, Hopko, Cintalla**  
email [Rebekah53@verizon.net](mailto:Rebekah53@verizon.net)

**Barry Littleford**

Surnames: **Littleford, Ruddick, Davis thru marriage Myers, Stewart, Paige (Tushinski)**  
email [LIL4D@verizon.net](mailto:LIL4D@verizon.net)

**Richard Robins**

Fathers Family Surnames: **Robins, Mott, Wolf, Dodson, Pringle, Carter, Sharps, Large, Ives, Bonham, Porch, Morse, Harrison, Gregory, Wolfe**  
Mothers Family Surnames: **Wells, Wheeler, Hungerford, Miller, Baltzell, Dugas (Du Vallon), Morris, Kembal, Grosch, Butz, Smith, Guibert.**  
[w5brr@aol.com](mailto:w5brr@aol.com)

**Helen Wasiakowski**

Surnames: **Wasiakowski, Krukowski, Welnowski (Welnoski), Wolski, Piontkowski, Madajewski, Hiller (Chyla), Mackiewicz, Aszuk**  
[HelenScarlett@yahoo.com](mailto:HelenScarlett@yahoo.com)

**John Stolarick**

Surnames: **Grandfather Stephen Stolarick**  
**Grandmother Mary Chabala**  
Phone 570-696-1036

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