

AIS HISTORY

INDIAN PINES

One of the organization's early goals, the purchasing of 46 acres of unimproved timberland in Virginia, was achieved in 1976. The land, named "Indian Pines," serves as a refuge from the hectic life of Washington and provides a place of our own for primitive camping and harvesting of berries, sassafras roots, nuts, persimmons and holly. Over the years, the Society has improved "Indian Pines" to use for pow wows and other social gatherings.



CARLISLE INDIAN CEMETERY

In the early 1970s, AIS took part in several military festivals at the Carlisle Barracks. One of our members was Grace Thorpe, daughter of Jim Thorpe, and outstanding Carlisle student/graduate. During the visits, we were shown the Indian Graveyard where students who died were buried. Mitchell Bush asked why the students weren't returned to their homes when they died. He was informed that in the late 1800s, society did not have the capability of keeping one's remains cold until buried. It took too long to return a body to an isolated tribal community. So the children were buried at school, far from their families. The AIS decided to visit the children's graves at least once a year on Memorial Day weekend.

The military was curious at first about the caravan of cars which drove in, left flowers on graves and departed without any contact with military authorities. Throughout the years, there has been little change in our visit. We do leave plastic flowers instead of live flowers. One of our members expressed her displeasure with the change but was advised that the important aspect was our visit, not what we left behind.



VETERANS' WALL

As part of his work creating the Turtle Arena at Indian Pines, AIS member Jay Hill designed and built the Veterans' Wall which contains the names of AIS members who have passed on to the Spirit World. At present, the wall contains name plates for those veterans for whom we had full background information. As we receive complete information on dates of birth, death, and military service, plaques are added for both Indian and non-Indian AIS veteran members.

The veterans' wall was dedicated at our annual Mother's Day pow wow, May 9, 2010. At the dedication ceremony, the names of AIS members who were members but have passed

on were read aloud by members Pete Homer and Sam Wakefield. Sam's memorial dedication read:

"We have contributed to the American dream with the hope that one day we will live in peace as brothers and sisters under one flag. For over 12,000 years, our forefathers have hunted these lands. Before the white man came we were free nomadic people. Now some of us have moved beyond our teaching and have become infected with greed and envy. These are the ways of the white man, not ours.

This area and land is ours where we can carry on with our sacred tradition and honor those who came before us. This is not a time of mourning, but a time of celebration when we can come, joined as one people. As I look out I see red, I see brown, I see black and white, but we are held together by our shared bloodlines. Some are from the north, the south and the west, but we are a strong and proud people. We have survived the elements of time, the weather, floods, famine and the attempts of the white man to exterminate us. Our children will live on if we keep our traditions and hold onto our land. Let us all remember who we are today and why we meet today and why we remember who we are and why we celebrate our heritage. Why we keep our tradition and our land is to pass it on to our children. We must hold onto our land and our traditions or we will be left to wander aimlessly in the land of our Fathers."