

---

---

# NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

---

---

Volume 2, Issue 5

FALL 2014

---

---

## The Nanticokes People of the Ocean

In 1747, a small segment of the Nanticoke Indian population of the Eastern Shore 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. Leaving the only home they'd ever known and weary of a century of conflict with the English colonists, one can imagine their fear but sense of hope for a better life as they stepped on to the shore of what is now the city of Nanticoke. Seeing the abundance of pristine fertile land to farm, mountains to hunt and rivers to fish, tribal leaders must have thought their decision to migrate north a good one. Under the invitation and protection of the Six-Nation Iroquois, tribesmen built their wigwams and at night watched the flickering campfires of their Indian brothers, the Shawnee, across the river. Their new home seemed safe and far away from the colonists and their intolerance of all things Indian.

*Indians*

*continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 THE NANTICOKES – PEOPLE OF THE OCEAN
- 1 ASSASSINATION PROMPTS QUICK ACTION
- 3 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
- 3 A TREATY CENTURIES IN THE MAKING
- 4 SO WHERE'S OUR CANNON?
- 5 MEMBERS SEARCHING FOR INFORMATION

## Quick action led to first memorial.

---

It stopped raining shortly before noon that November day in Dallas, Texas in 1963. If not for that simple fact, our country's history may have been very different. At 12:30 p.m., President John F. Kennedy was assassinated as he rode in a motorcade through Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas, Texas. The sun appeared and a last minute decision was made not to attach the limousine's bubble top, which would have quite possibly protected he, the first lady, and Texas governor and Mrs. John B. Connelly from an assassin's bullets. In Nanticoke, it was 1:30 p.m. a 62 degree day and workers had just finished lunch and were back on the job constructing the city's new \$400,000 grade school on Kosciuszko Street. Word of the president's death must have passed quickly among the workers and city residents. Suddenly time stopped. Our city, a country and the world were in mourning. Four and a half hours later school board president Leonard (Mack) Mackiewicz, board members and visitors met and stood for a moment of silent prayer for the murdered president, after which a motion was made by Gelso Biscontini and William Matikiewicz to name the new educational facility set to open in 1964, the John F. Kennedy Memorial School. Mackiewicz and school board directors Biscontini, Matikiewicz, Andrew Dorak, J. Novak, Mauro Nardozzo and John Shipp voted to pass the resolution. The quick action possibly made the school the first in the nation to carry the president's name. A resolution mourning the assassination was also adopted at the meeting and sent to the president's family.

Consider a Gift Membership for family or friends.

Despite their determination to make this their new home, the Nanticoke would find their peaceful existence short lived.

### **Who were the Nanticokes**

Much of what we know about the Indians that populated Eastern United States was garnered from accounts, stories, and maps documented by Captain John Smith in the 1600's. Smith recorded the Indian settlements, 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); in 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 Lenni-Lenape translate it as "people of the ocean." The Nanticokes were also known as the Nantego, Unechtgo or Unalachtigo...

The Nanticokes, a southern offshoot of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) tribe, were farmers and traders. Nanticoke women harvested corn, squash and beans, which they called the "three sisters." The men hunted deer, elk, turkey, and small game, and fished in the ocean and inlets. As English colonists arrived and settled along the Eastern Shore in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, Indian tribes were squeezed out of their settlements. The Nanticokes primarily, a peace loving people, were caught in a struggle between maintaining their traditions and adhering to the English laws.

### **A splintering of a tribe**

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, while still in Maryland, the Nanticokes resorted to violence against the English. 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 planned

uprising. Into the late 1600's and early 1700's the Nanticokes 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.

The Nanticokes realized the colonists were determined to push them from their lands so the tribe splintered. Some migrated north, others westward to Ohio, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Ontario, Canada. Wanting to stay close to their homeland, a significant number of Nanticokes moved eastward into Delaware and settled in Indian River Hundred. A segment that traveled to Pennsylvania settled on the Susquehanna. There they stayed until conflicts between the Six Nation Iroquois and the English settlers threatened their peaceful existence.

### **Avoiding conflict**

It is written, that by 1753, well before the French and Indian War of 1758 and the Revolutionary War of 1775 the Nanticokes left the Wyoming Valley migrating north to New York and Canada, in hopes of finding the life they once had before the arrival of the colonists.

Only since an 1879 U.S. Federal Court decision, has the American Indian been considered "persons within the meaning of the law." It was not until 1924 that Congress recognized Native American people as citizens of the United State. It was not until 1978 that Congress signed into law the "American Indian Religious Freedom Act," giving the Native Americans the right to practice their religious beliefs.

Today, according to the tribe's web site, there are about 550 Nanticoke Indians in Sussex County Delaware and about 500 in other parts of the state. There are members living in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma and Canada. Though the Nanticoke did not find the peace they were looking for on the banks of the Susquehanna, they left a legacy along with their name, a hope for a better life. As we delve into the history of our city, we find that this area represented a chance for a better life not only to the Native Americans, but to many generations of people who emigrated to the United States in the 18 and 1900's.

## Calendar of Events

### VIRTUAL TOUR OF NANTICOKE

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**7 P.M. NOV. 20**

*SAMANTHA MILL HOUSE, 495 EAST MAIN STREET,  
NANTICOKE*

*(NEXT TO MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY)*

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO OUR OFFICE TO TAKE A VIRTUAL TOUR AND VIEW THE NANTICOKE OF LONG AGO. THE STAFF WILL USE OUR EXTENSIVE DATABASE AND SLIDES TO PROVIDE VIEWS OF THE AREA AS IT ONCE WAS.

REFRESHMENTS SERVED

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 570-258-1367

### Member Christmas Party

**2 TO 6 P.M. DEC. 7**

ALL MEMBERS ARE INVITED. EVERYONE IS ASKED TO BRING A COVERED DISH. IT CAN BE AN ENTRÉE, DESSERT, BOTTLE OF WINE, ETC.

### Meeting Schedule

**No Meetings will be held in January and February due to weather**

### Part two of Miracle of the Bells

A POWER POINT PRESENTATION -  
BEHIND -THE-SCENES-OLGA  
TRESKOFF, THE ACTORS IN THE FILM.  
THE HOLLYWOOD LOT, AND THE  
SCENES FILMED IN GLEN LYON.  
DATE & PLACE TO BE ANNOUNCED.

## A Treaty centuries in the making...

John Haydock served as Mayor of Nanticoke from 1986-87. He was a life-long resident, who with his wife Isabel, raised four daughters Rosemary, Sally, Patricia and Bonnie. Haydock owned the Nanticoke Taxi Co. and was a child support officer for the State of Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and Department of Revenue. He served as a U.S. Army sergeant in World War II and received the Bronze Star. Haydock had one passion that was not as well-known to the public, his love of archeology and history.

in the 1970's he joined the Frances Dorrance Chapter of the Society for Pennsylvania Archeology. While there, he met Leslie Delaney, professor of history at King's College. Delaney invited Haydock to accompany him to a paleo Indian village and burial site located on the Volpicelli Farm, in the area of Dundee. The Schacht Site, named after brothers Robert and Edward who discovered it, was noted by three of the nation's top Indian history experts as "exceptional and critical in the history of Indian existence." The bones buried there were found to be more than 400 years old.

It was the pairing of Haydock's love for all things past and for his town that motivated him, in 1987 as mayor, to contact the Indian tribe for which Nanticoke was named and to sign a formal peace treaty between the city and its Native American founders. That important event brought to the area Nanticoke tribal family members with surnames such as Coursey, Wright, Harnon, and Norwood. Relatives of men and women linked to the early history of the tribe and their dealings with the first English settlers.

Thousands of area residents and dignitaries attended the two day Powwow and were treated to native dances, customs and trinkets.

In the following year Haydock and Odette Wright, the curator of the Nanticoke Indian Museum at Millsboro DE unveiled a monument that stands at the lower Broadway section of the city. On it states: "This monument commemorates the signing of the peace treaty between the citizens of Nanticoke and the Nanticoke Indians this day August 8, 1987." It stands as a constant reminder that our city has a long and storied past, one that we can be proud of.

## **VISIT THE MILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY TO LEARN MORE:**

ABOUT THE EARLY TIMES AND SUBSEQUENT STRUGGLES OF THE NANTICOKE INDIANS

**THE NANTICOKE – BY FRANK W. PORTER III –EXCELLENT PHOTOS.**

**THE NANTICOKE INDIANS – PAST AND PRESENT – BY C.A. WESLAGER – COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE NANTICOKE INDIANS.**

The Nanticoke Historical Society will participate in :

### **Luzerne County Community College Festival of Trees.**

Historical Society members, Bill and Kathy Sweeney will be in charge of decorating our tree at the LCCC Educational Conference Center. Trees can be seen Daily Monday through Friday beginning 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Dec. 5, through Friday, Dec. 19. Weekend hours 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday Dec 13 and Sunday Dec 14. We can't wait to see this year's theme.

Log on to [www.nanticokehistoryonline](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline) – click on Blogger to see an upcoming story –former Nanticoke mayor John Haydock on his journey to the City of David Archeological site in Israel.

➤ Log on to [www.nanticokehistoryonline](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline) -click on Blogger to see an upcoming story with great photos of the Nanticoke powwow and signing of the peace treaty.

## **So Where's Our Cannon?**

### **Question:**

In 1904, Commander George W. Simpson of the Nanticoke Spanish American War Vets, made arrangements for securing a cannon for the city's Central Park now Patriot Square. The gun was shipped from Ft. Wadsworth, NY, with 20 8-inch shells that were stacked in a pyramid at the base of the weapon. The cannon was placed on a concrete base and unveiled on July 4, 1904. In the summer issue of the society newsletter we asked the question, "What happened to the cannon and shells?"

### **Answer:**

During World War II the country had to produce enormous amounts of military equipment. A single tank required 18 tons of metal and the largest ships, 900 tons. In an effort to acquire the metal needed quickly, the government asked citizens to collect all types of metal for recycling. City governments offered their monuments as one way to help the war effort. The Spanish American War cannon and shells that stood in Central Park were shipped off and perhaps became a tank, ship, plane or weapon.

Along with metal, U.S. citizens collected newspapers, rubber products, aluminum, tin and even kitchen grease. No one is really sure what these items did to help the war effort, but one source states tin foil was used as radar confusing particles. As planes entered enemy airspace, shredded aluminum was dropped confusing radar operators as to the number of incoming planes.

Many small towns across the United States held scrap drives for paper so it could be used for packing material for equipment and weapons. The government needed copper so they minted pennies from zinc-coated steel in 1943.

Although it is written that the benefit and savings from these drives is hard to measure, it did much to initiate a strong sense of patriotism among communities across the country.

Members searching for information on the following surnames:

Gene Danowski, Nanticoke

Email [ejd2@psu.edu](mailto:ejd2@psu.edu)

Surnames: Danowski

Keriann Drury, Nanticoke

Email: [keriann.temple@gmail.com](mailto:keriann.temple@gmail.com)

Surnames: Drury, Sowa, Kaczmarczyk

William Fox, Landsdale, Pa.

Email: [andyflower2william@aol.com](mailto:andyflower2william@aol.com)

Surnames: Henson, Andrews

Judy L. Hritsko, Vermilion, Ohio

Email: [hritsko@centurytel.net](mailto:hritsko@centurytel.net)

Surnames: Tarasavage/Tarasiewicz

Amy Vivian Kitchener, Fresno, Ca.

Email: [amy-kitchener@hotmail.com](mailto:amy-kitchener@hotmail.com)

Surnames: Vivian, Eynon, Beveridge, Culp/Kulp, Craig

John & Peggy Makos, Hanover Twp., Pa.

Email: [pegmakos@aol.com](mailto:pegmakos@aol.com)

Surnames: Maday, (Maddy, Madey), Rowlands, Carroll, Mazur, Makos, Klimczak

Gene Danowski

Nanticoke, Pa (born, raised and living in)

[ejd2@psu.edu](mailto:ejd2@psu.edu)

Mother, paternal- Yachimowicz, maternal- Przybylowski

Father, paternal-

Danowski, maternal- Kozlowski

## DID YOU KNOW:

\*The Nanticoke Language (Unalachtigo) became extinct in 1840 when its last known speaker Lydia Clarke passed away in Delaware

\* Those Nanticoke-Lenape who remained in the areas of Maryland and Delaware were counted as members of the Turkey Clan. However those who moved Northward such as the Nanticoke who settled in Luzerne County counted as members of the Turtle(Tulpe) Clan.

\*The Nanticoke Lenape Nation of Moors recognizes the City of Nanticoke in Luzerne County. As their ancestral and cultural land of affiliation and identification.

\*The last Nantego Indian in Nanticoke was Kate Frazier, who is said to have made her home in the mountain above the Hanover section of Nanticoke

\*According to Fordham University the model of the U.S Constitution was formed along the lines of the Iroquois League of Nations, which had been functioning as a democratic government for hundreds of years. To read more log on to <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/iroquois.asp>

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Anton Piotrowski – “An Accident of History”
- What was happening in 1950?

### NANTICOKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Samantha Mill House

(Next to the Mill Memorial Library)

495 East Main Street

Nanticoke, PA 18634

570-258-1367

Web Site - [www.nanticokehistoryonline.org](http://www.nanticokehistoryonline.org)

Email - [nanticokehistorical@yahoo.com](mailto:nanticokehistorical@yahoo.com)

[history@nanticokehistoryonline.org](mailto:history@nanticokehistoryonline.org)

#### OFFICERS

President: Julianna Zarzycki

Vice President/Corresponding Secretary/Treasurer:  
Chester Zaremba

#### NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Judith L. Minsavage

