

PANNEBAKKER FAMILY NEWS



NEWSLETTER OF THE PANNEBAKKER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

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William Penn visits the Indians

Ever wonder what Pennsylvania was like when the first Pannebakkers arrived?

Excerpts quoted from Samuel Janney's *Life of William Penn*, 6th edition, 1882.

In the spring of 1683, William Penn made a journey to the interior of his province, during which he made himself fully acquainted with its surface, soil, and natural productions and visited the Indians in their wigwams, with whom he learned to converse in their own language. The result of his observations is communicated in the following interesting letter to the Free Society of Traders.

Penn's observations on the 'natives or aborigines':

The natives I shall consider in their person, language, manners, religion, and government, with my sense of their original. For their persons, they are generally tall, straight, well built, and of singular proportion; they tread strong and clever, and mostly walk with a lofty chin. Of complexion black, but by design, as the gipsies in England. They grease themselves with bear's fat clarified; and using no defence against sun and wather, their skins must needs be swarthy. Their ey is little and black, not unlike a straight-looked Jew. The thick lip and flat nose, so frequent with the East Indians and black, are not common to them; for I have seen as comely European-like faces among them, of both sexes, as on your side the sea; and truly an Italian complexion hath not much more of the white; and the noses of several of them have as much of the Roman.

Their language is lofty, yet narrow; but, like the Hebrew in signification, full. Like short-hand in writing, one word serveth in the place of three, and the rest are supplied by the understanding of the hearer, imperfect in their tenses, wanting in their moods, participles, adverbs, conjunctions, interjections. I have made it my business to understand it, that I might not want an interpreter on any occasion; and I must say that I know not a language spoken in Europe, that hath words of more sweetness or greatness, in accent and emphasis, than theirs: for instance, Octocockon, Rancocas, Oricton, Shak, Marian, Poquesian, all which are names of places, and have grandeur in them. Of words of sweetness, anna is mother, issimus, a brother; neteap, friend; usqueoret, very good; pane, bread; metsa, eat; matta, no; hatta, to have; payo, to come; Sepasen, Passijon, the names of places; Tamane, Secane, Menanse, Secatareus, are the names of persons. If one ask them for any thing they have not, they will answer, matta ne hatta, which, to translate, is 'Not I have' instead of, 'I have not.'

Of their customs and manners there is much to be said. I will begin with the children. So soon as they are born they wash them in water, and while very young, and in cold weather to choose, they plunge them in the rivers to harden and embolden them. Having wrapt them in a clout, they laid them on a straight board a little more than the length and breadth of the child, and swaddle it fast upon the board to make it straight; wherefore all Indians have flat heads; and thus they carry them at their backs. The children will go very young, at nine

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months commonly. They wear only a small clout round their waist till they are big. If boys, they go a-fishing till ripe for the woods, which is about fifteen. Then they hunt; and, having given some proofs of their manhood by a good return of skins, they may marry; else it is a shame to think of a wife. The girls stay with their mothers, and help to hoe the ground, plant corn, and carry burthens; and they do well to use them to that, while young, which they must do when they are old; for the wives are the true servants of the husbands: otherwise the men are very affectionate to them.

When the young women are fit for marriage, they wear something upon their heads for an advertisement, but so as their faces are hardly to be seen but when they please. The age they marry at, if women, is about thirteen or fourteen; if men, seventeen or eighteen. They are rarely older.

Their houses are mats or barks of trees, set on poles in the fashion of an English barn, but out of the power of the winds, for they are hardly higher than a man. They lie on reeds or grass. In travel they lodge in the woods about a great fire, with the mantle of duffils they war by day wrapt about them, and a few boughs stuck round them.

Their diet is maize or Indian corn divers ways prepared, sometimes roasted in the ashes, sometimes beaten and boiled with water, which they call homine. They also make cakes not unpleasant to eat. They have likewise several sorts of beans and peas that are good nourishment and the woods and rivers are their larder.

If any European comes to see them, or calls for lodgings at their home or wigwam, they give him the best place and first cut. If they come to visit us, they salute us with an Itah, which is as much as to say, 'Good be to you!' and set them down, which is mostly on the ground, close to their heels, their legs upright: it may be they speak not a word, but observe all passages. If you give them any thing to eat or drink, wellfor they will not ask; and, be it little or much, if it be with kindness they will be pleased: else they will go away sullen, but say nothing.

They are great concealers of their own resentments, brought to it, I believe, by the revenge that hath been practiced among them. In either of these they are not exceeded by the Italians. A tragical instance fell out since I came into the country. A king's daughter, thinking herself slighted by her husband in suffering another woman to lie down between them, rose up, went out, plucked a root out of the ground, and ate it, upon which she immediately died; and for which, last week, he made an offering to her kindred for atonement and liberty of marriage, as two others did to the kindred of their wives who died a natural death: for till widowers have done so, they must not marry again. Some of the young women are said to take undue liberty before marriage for a portion; but when married, chaste.

But in liberality they excel. Nothing is too good for their friend. Give them a fine gun, coat, or other thing, it may pass twenty hands before it sticks: light of heart, strong affections, but soon spent: the most merry creatures that live: they feast and dance perpetually: they never have much, nor want much. Wealth circulateth like the blood. All parts partake; and though none shall want what another hath, yet exact observers of property. Some kings have sold, others presented me with several parcels of land. The pay or presents I made them were not hoarded by the particular owners; but the neighboring kings and their clans being present when the goods were brought out, the parties chiefly concerned consulted what, and to whom they should give them. To every king, then, by the hands of a person for that work appointed, is a proportion sent, so sorted and folded, and with that gravity which is admirable. Then that king subdivided it in like manner among his

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dependants, they hardly leaving themselves an equal share with one of their subjects; and be it on such occasions as festivals, or at their common meals, the kings distribute, and to themselves last. They care for little, because they want but little: and the reason is, a little contents them. In this they are sufficiently revenged on us. If they are ignorant of our pleasures, they are free of our pains. They are not disquieted with bills of lading and exchange, nor perplexed with chancery suits and exchequer reckonings. We sweat and toil to live. Their pleasure feeds them; I mean their hunting, fishing, and fowling, and this table is spread everywhere. They eat twice a day, morning and evening. Their seats and table are the ground. Since the Europeans came into these parts, they are grown great lovers of strong liquors, rum especially; and for it exchange the richest of their skins and furs. If they are heated with liquor, they are restless till they have enough to sleep. That is their cry, 'Some more, and I will go to sleep;' but, when drunk, one of the most wretched spectacles in the world.

In sickness, impatient to be cured, and for it give any thing, especially for their children, to whom they are extremely natural. They drink at those times a teran, or decoction of some roots in spring water; and if they eat any flesh, it must be of the female of any creature. If they die, they bury them with their apparel, be they man or woman, and the nearest of kin fling in something precious with them, as a token of their love; their mourning is blacking of their faces, which they continue for a year. They are choice of the graves of their dead: lest they should be lost by time, and fall to common use, they pick off the grass that grows upon them, and heap up the fallen earth with great care and exactness.

These poor people are under a dark night in things relating to religion, to be sure the tradition of it: yet they say there is a great King, that made them, who dwells in a glorious country to the southward of them; and that the souls of the good shall go thither, where they shall live again. Their worship consists of two parts, sacrifice and cantico. Their sacrifice is their first fruits. The first and fattest buck they kill goeth to the fire, where he is all burnt, with a mounful ditty of him who performeth the ceremony, but with such marvellous fervency and labour of body, that he will even sweat to a foam. The other part is their cantico, performed by round dances, sometimes words, sometimes songs, then shouts; two being in the middle who begin, and by singing and drumming on a board, direct the chorus. Their postures in the dance are very antic and differing, but all keep measure. This is done with equal earnestness and labour, but great appearance of joy. In the fall, when the corn cometh in, they begin to feast one another. There have been two great festivals already, to which come all that will. I was at one myself. Their entertainment was a great seat by a spring under some shady trees, and twenty bucks, with hot cakes of new corn, both wheat and beans, which they make up in a square form, in the leaves of the stem, and bake them i the ashes, ad after that they fall to dance. But they who go must carry a small present in their money; it may be sixpence, which is made of the bone of a fish; the black is with them as gold; the white silver; they call it wampum.

The government is by kings, which they call sachama, and those by succession; but always on the mother's side. For instance, the children of him who is now king will not succeed, but his brother by the mother, or the children of his sister, whose sons (and after them the children of her daughters) will reign, for no woman inherits. The reason they render for this way of descent is, that their issue may not be spurious.

Every king has his council; and that consists of all the old and wise men of his nation, which perhaps is two hundred people. Nothing of moment is undertaken, be it war, peace, selling of land, or traffic, without advising with them, and, which is more, with the young men too. It is admirable to consider how powerful the kings are, and yet how they move by the breath of their people. I have had occasion to be in council with them upon treaties for land, and to adjust the terms of trade. Their council, the old and wise, on each hand. Behind them, or at a little distance, sit the younger fry in the same figure. Having consulted and resolved their business, the

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king ordered one of them to speak to me. He stood up, came to me, and in the name of the king saluted me, then took me by the hand, and told me that he was ordered by his king to speak to me, and that now it was not he but the king who spoke, because what he should say was the king's mind. He first prayed me excuse them, that they had not complied with me the last time. He feared there might be some fault in the interpreter, being neither Indian nor English. Besides it was the Indian custom to deliberate and take up much time in council before they resolved; and that, if the young people and owners of the land had been as ready as he, I had not met with so much delay. Having thus introduced his matter, he fell to the bounds of the land they had agreed to dispose of, and the price; which now is little and dear, that which would have bought twenty miles not buying now two. During the time that this person spoke, not a man of them was observed to whisper or smile — the old grave, the young reverent in their deportment. They speak little, but fervently, and with elegance. I have never seen more natureal sagacity, considering them without the help (I was going to say the spoil) of tradition: and he will deserve the name of wise who outwits them in any treaty about a thing they understand. When the purchase was agreed, great promises passed between us of kindness and good neighbourhood, and that which done, another made a speech to the Indians, in the name of all the sachankers or kings; first, to tell them what was done; next, to charge and command them to love the Christians, and particularly to live in peace with me and the people under my government; that many governors had been in the river; but that no governor had come himself to live and stay here before: and having now such an one, who had treated them well. they should never do him or his any wrong; at every sentence of which they shouted, and said Amen in their way.

The justice they have is pecuniary. In case of any wrong or evil fact, be it murder itself, they atone by feasts and presents of their wampum, which is proportioned to the quality of the offence or person injured, or of the sex they are of. For, in case they kill a woman, they pay double; and the reason they render is, 'that she breedeth children, which men cannot do.' It is rare that they fall out if sober; and if drunk they forgive, saying, 'It was the drink, and not the man, that abused them.'

We have agreed, that in all differences between us, six of each side shall end the matter. Do not abuse them, but let them have justice, and you win them. The worst is, that they are the worse for the Christians, who have propagated their vices, and yielded them tradition for ill and not for good things. But as low an ebb as these people are at, and as inglorious as their own condition looks, the Christians have not outlived their sight with all their pretensions to an higher manifestation. What good then might not a good people graft, where there is so distinct a knowledge left between good and evil? I beseech God to incline the hearts of all that come into these parts to outlive the knowledge of the natives by a fixt obedience to their greater knowledge of the will of God; for it were miserable indeed for us to fall under the just censure of the poor Indian conscience, while we make profession of things so far transcending.

For their original, I am ready to believe them of the Jewish race, I mean of the stock of the ten tribes, and that for the following reasons: first, they were to go to a land not planted nor known, which to be sure Asia and Africa were, if not Europe; and He who intended that extraordinary judgement upon them might make the passage not uneasy to them, as it is not impossible in itself, from the easternmost parts of Asia to the westernmost of America. In the next place, I find them of the like countenance, and their children of so lively resemblance, that a man would think himself in Duke's Place or Berry Street in London, when he seeth them. But this is not all: they agree in rites; they reckon by moons; they offer their first fruits; they have a kind of feast of tabernacles; they are said to lay their altar upon twelve stones; their mourning a year; customs of women; with many other things tat do not now occur. So much for the natives.

Next, the old planters will be considered in this relation, before I come to our colony and the concerns of it.

Reunion Update

The date for the reunion has been set for July 5-7, 2019. The steering committee has decided to not have one host hotel, as we did in 1999, but to allow participants to find lodging in any of several hotels, motels, campgrounds in the area, of which there are many. A list of hotels, etc., including distances and driving times from the various venues being used during the three-day reunion, will be available in the near future.

Friday, July 5:

Golf outing at Raven's Claw Golf Club in Pottstown, PA. This will be a scramble/shotgun start format, limited to the first 72 golfers to apply. Best ball, each member of the foursome must use at least one of their drives. There will be goodie bags for all golfers and prizes for:

- closest to the pin on a designated hole
- longest fairway drive on a designated hole
- first place, lowest score
- second place
- third place

The fee will be \$100 per golfer and includes greens fee, cart, lunch and beverages, prizes and tips to course personnel. Planned start time is 8:00 am. More on how to enter in the next update.

Registration will be held at Sunnybrook Ballroom in Pottstown, PA from 2:00 to 6:00 pm.

This is where you will pick up your tickets and program data for the reunion. Also, any pre-ordered merchandise will be available. This includes t-shirts, mugs, commemorative booklets, etc.

Reception to be held at Sunnybrook Ballroom from 7:00 to 9:00.

Saturday, July 6:

There will be a morning tour of a venue of interest. Venue and tour details are still in the planning stages.

The tour will most likely begin and end at Pennypacker Mills in Schwenksville, PA.

Picnic at Pennypacker Mills from 1:00 to 6:00. The picnic will include a very comprehensive menu, with special Pennsylvania Dutch elements, speeches, music, prizes, children's activities, etc. Local participants are encouraged to bring chairs.

Sunday, July 7:

Brunch at Sunnybrook Ballroom. Time for this activity has not been set, but most likely from 12:00 to 2:00.

After brunch, we will proceed to breakout sessions in various rooms at Sunnybrook. The topics for these sessions are still in the works.

All ticketing for the reunion will be through an Internet ticketing site, and will begin next Spring.

For those of you interested in making the reunion a part of a larger vacation trip, we will have information available about local attractions, and suggestions to help you plan your trip.

Anyone planning to attend the reunion who is not a member of our family association is encouraged to join us by requesting an application from any of the officers listed on the last page of this newsletter.

We are in need of people to volunteer to help with reunion activities. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Bruce Pennypacker at pannebakkerfa@gmail.com.

Our reunion in 1999 was largely funded by generous donations from friends and family. All donations will be recognized in the reunion program and are greatly appreciated. Please send checks payable to **Pannebakker Family Association** to either Ron Pennypacker or Bruce Pennypacker, whose addresses are listed on the last page of this newsletter.

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Pannebakker Family Association



The Pannebakker Family Association is an outgrowth of the family reunion held at Pennypacker Mills, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania on July 2-4, 1999. The reunion celebrated the 300th year wedding anniversary of Hendrick Pannebecker and Eve Umstat, in Germantown, Pennsylvania in the year 1699. In the words of the Steering Committee of the reunion, "We hope that the 1999 Pfannebecker-Umstat Reunion will lead to the growth of a family association, which will provide a forum for conversation, collection and preservation of information, and a sense of lasting community among the heirs of this rich cultural heritage."