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The BULLETIN

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OXFORD, NEW JERSEY

By

A. G. YOUNT Minister



Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.—Deuteronomy, 32:7.

## Old Oxford Legends

## The Burial Place of Delaware Indians

By George S. Humphrey

(continued)

"I wondered if this were really true, and if my ancestors were looking down on me from behind those soft, sifting, white and pink curtains. As the night grew

cooler I thought I would mix a drink of grog; and went down to the spring for a cup of water. As I stooped over to get it I glanced toward the trail which leads through the Gap, and was almost transfixed, when in the bright moonlight I saw stalking along the path a tall figure who was like the Indians that sometimes wander into the cast house here.

"Another, and then another followed until in all, seventeen had passed.

The last two carried a sort of litter on which was laid something covered with skin or blankets. The others carried bows and arrows and tomahawks, but no rifles. They surely must have known that we were burning charcoal, as the smell of the smoke, if nothing else, would have betrayed us; but they passed silently along the trail. I was seized with a wild desire to see what they were to do; and so followed them, keeping at such a distance that they would not discover me. The march was not long, for they soon stopped near a great rock in the Gap; and after a short search removed some undergrowth near its base, then pulled away some of the stones.

"To my great surprise they uncovered an opening which led into a great cavern under the rock. And while they stood near the entrance the two with the litter went inside and returned without their burden.

"Then I realized they must have brought the body of one of their great men in order to place it in the burial place of the tribe.

"One of them carried into the grave a bow with several arrows, a tomahawk and an earthen pot which I supposed contained food, and the shell of a tortoise. After this was done they all stood in front of the cave with bowed heads, then replacing the stones and covering them with earth and growing ferns, they resumed their march at a much quicker step, (page 4)

And so we went toward Rome. And when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

---Acts 28:15

"O Lord, renew our spirits and draw our hearts unto thyself that our work may not be a burden, but a delight; and give us such mighty love to thee as may sweeten all our obedience. May we not serve thee in the spirit of bondage as slaves, but with the cheerfulness and gladness of children, delighting ourselves in thee and rejoicing in thy work. Amen."

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The annual Fair and Oyster Supper December 9th.

There will be an all day sewing at the Manse next Wednesday. Much important business will come up then, especially reports on collections and various preparations for the Fair. A large attendance will give encouragement to the ladies. Remember the date Wednesday December 1st.

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some of the younger men or boys about the furnace endeavored to find to find the burial place in Sykes Gap, but without success.

Years ago a kindred spirit and myself searched carefully for the sacred cave; but while there are several caverns among the rocks in the Gap, we could never find this one.

And while we have slept many a night on the site of the old charcoal camp, among the ruins of the burners hut, and have seen many wierd sights and heard many strange sounds no spirit of the old Leni Lenape ever appeared to us, nor has the voice of the Delaware sounded in our ears.

--- The End ---

Mr. George Weber sends the following interesting letter:-

"The enclosed check from my 14 year old grand-son— it being his first dollar earned for Artwork, and is a prize from the Cleveland Plain Dealer Pub. Co. To explain why it went to Oxford, I quote from his letter to me, 'I have earned my first dollar by my Artwork and want to do something for you with it. I saw in the Oxford Church Bulletin, which Mrs Stout loaned us, that you sent some money for the organ. I wish you would add this to the fund in your name.'

"I am carrying out his suggestion with the exception of the last clause for I am not in the habit of accepting unearned credit.

"I presume the organ repairs have been paid for, so you may apply as you wish.

"This dollar being his first earned of course it meant more than 100 cents to him; and I appreciate the gift accordingly."

Mr Weber's grand-son's name is Clarence Hanna, son of Sue Weber Hanna, and lives with his parents in Cleveland (Lakewood) Ohio.

The mother was born and raised in Oxford, and, together with her parents and brothers and sisters, was a member of our Church. This old Mother Church of the family sends warmest greetings to this fine young grandson, and deeply appreciates his rare gift and the beautiful spirit it represents.

We hold the check until it has been decided how to apply it. It would be well to use it for some permanent purpose in the Church, and the Editor would be pleased to receive suggestions from our readers.

At the Reunion last May it was a common remark that the children and grand-children of former residents of Oxford, were attending the Reunions in greater numbers each year, and that they found them very interesting. It would be fine if this interest in the town and church should increase with coming generations. So mote it be.

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so that with difficulty I could keep up with them. As we came to the clearing near the swamp at the end of the Gap, I saw the great Dipper swing above the Pole Star with the two pointers straight over it, as they were tonight when I looked at them. The dawn soon began to appear, and by the time we had reached the Clear Pond there was a bright gleam in the East. We came to the Big Rock, and I hid behind some bushes to see what they would do. They laid their bows and arrows on the ground and threw off the skins which had covered their shoulders, making themselves bare to the waist. In the growing light I saw that each of them had the figure of a tortoise tattooed on his breast. Then they all stood on the Big Rock overlooking the Pond toward the mountains on the other side, and I knew they were waiting for the sunrise. The birds were singing in the tree tops, the water lay below without a ripple; the Indians stood motionless, and I looked in wonder at it all.

"Suddenly a brilliant spot appeared over the mountain and a ray of light shot like an arrow over the surface of the water and shown upon those silent figures. Slowly they bowed themselves, rose again and then dropped to their knees, remaining in that position until the entire disc of the sun was visible. Then they stood up, bowed their heads once more and picking up their weapons returned to the trail. Then one of them without hesitating came to the place where I was hiding and lead me to the group before the tallest man whom I supposed to be their chief. I was paralyzed with fear, and fully expected that one of the young braves would be ordered to crush my head with a tomahawk. But the chief looked at me with a kindly expression; and I began to hope my life would be spared. At a wave of his hand the others formed a ring and sat down on the ground, leaving us two standing in the midst. Then he said to me in good English, 'Brother: you thought that none saw you at the spring in the Gap and that we knew not that you were following us in the trail, (Over)

but the eyes of a Delaware are like those of the eagle and the owl; we can see clearly either in the daylight or in the darkest night. Some of the young men have seen you at the furnace, and while your hair is light and your eyes are blue, yet your skin is red like ours. You love the wild forests and the stars in the heavens; so you are again like us and we said, "Why should not our brother be with us when we carry out our ancient customs?" So we let you follow us. And now we will tell you about it, and also receive you into our tribe and the Clan of the Tortoise. Alas! our members are fewer every year, and we fear that the time is not far distant when there will be none left to do honor to the memory of our great chiefs who have gone before us to the Hunting Grounds which the Great Spirit has provided for us. Last night we placed in the grave of his fathers the body of Moquenocka, the Little Bear, who is the last of our tribe born among these hills, and who hunted the deer through the valleys and fished in these waters before the white men discovered them.

"We have carried his body over from our villages on the Susquehanna in order that it might rest in this beautiful land which he has always loved. Never again will the body of a Delaware be laid that cavern, and we pray that the sacred spot may never be violated. You saw us bow down and worship as the rising sun cast its beams over the Pond and the forest. For hundreds of years our fathers have come to this place when the sun had finished his journey to the North and was about to retrace his course to the South. Here they worshipped, not the Sun, but the Great Spirit; for as the sun gives us heat and causes the trees to bud and the birds to sing; so the Great Spirit gives life to his children and showers blessings upon them.

"Now we are about to return to our Villages, but we place one injunction upon you,—Until the ice has formed and melted ten times in this Pond, and until ten Summers have past, you must not tell any man of what you have seen and heard this night; nor must you disturb the ancient burial

place of our fathers. In order that you may be one of us, one of the young men will draw blood from your arm and from mine. The blood will be mingled, even as you are to be mingled with us. Then upon your breast will be placed the tortoise which is the mark, not only of the Leni Lenape, but of the clan of the Turtle. We make thee a brother to us; make us thy brothers and be thou faithful!

"Having finished his talk, the chief called one of the young men, who with the sharp point of a fish bone, drew blood from my arm and from that of the chief and mingled them in a small well-burned clay dish. Then he led me to a shady spot in the woods, and bidding me lie on the mossy bank, began to tattoo the tortoise on my breast. The work was long and painful, making me faint and ill.

"When it was completed the young man brought me a deer skin bag filled with parched corn; each one of the party shook my hand and silently moved off on the trail. I fell asleep from weariness, and when I awoke the sun had set and the moon was coming up over the hills across the Pond. Going down to the big spring I took a long draught of the pure cold water, ate some of the corn and felt refreshed. I stayed at the Pond until late the next day when I returned to the charcoal camp in Sykes Gap. As you all know, never a word about my adventure has escaped my lips; but ten times has the ice formed and melted in the Clear Pond and ten times have the forest trees put forth new leaves. Today the Sun has finished his course to the North and begins his Southern journey. When I began my story the pointers were straight above the Pole Star as they were just as the Indians completed the burial of the old Chief, whose resting place I have never disturbed. So I have kept the faith with my red brothers, and am proud to belong to their clan."

The furnace men had listened attentively, and the story was absorbed into the body of legends which were repeated from time to time for three generations. Soon after the Red Swede related his adventures,

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**CHURCH OFFICERS**

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EDWARD T. GREEN

ELISHA B. FOSS  
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*Choir*

*Leader* .....

MRS. E. T. GREEN

