



History, Manners, and Customs of The Indian Nations: who once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States.

John Heckewelder

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Example in this ebook

JOHN GOTTLIEB ERNESTUS HECKEWELDER, the author of “An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations who once inhabited Pennsylvania and the neighboring States,” was born March 12th, 1743, at Bedford, England. His father, who was a native of Moravia, a few years after his arrival at Herrnhut, Saxony, was summoned to England to assist in the religious movement which his church had inaugurated in that country in 1734. In his eleventh year, the subject of this sketch accompanied his parents to the New World, and became a resident of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Here he was placed at school, and next apprenticed to a cedar-cooper. While thus employed, he was permitted to gratify a desire he had frequently expressed of becoming an evangelist to the Indians, when in the spring of 1762 he was called to accompany the well-known Christian Frederic Post, who had planned a mission among the tribes of the then far west, to the Tuscarawas branch of the Muskingum. Here Post, in the summer of 1761, had built himself a cabin (it stood near the site of the present town of Bolivar), and here on the 11th day of April, 1762, the intrepid missionary and his youthful assistant began their labors in the Gospel. But the times were unpropitious, and the hostile attitude of the Indians indicating a speedy resumption of hostilities with the whites, the adventurous enterprise was abandoned before the expiration of the year. Young Heckewelder returned to Bethlehem, and the war of Pontiac’s conspiracy opened in the spring of 1763.

In the interval between 1765 and 1771, Mr. Heckewelder was, on several occasions, summoned from his cooper’s shop to do service for the mission. Thus, in the summer of the first mentioned year, he spent several months at Friedenshütten, on the Susquehanna (Wyalusing, Bradford county, Pennsylvania), where the Moravian Indians had been recently settled in a body, after a series of most trying experiences, to which their residence on the frontiers and in the settlements of the Province subjected them, at a time when the inroads of the savages embittered the public mind indiscriminately against the entire race. This post he visited subsequently on several occasions, and also the town of Schechschiqanink (Sheshequin), some thirty miles north of Wyalusing, the seat of a second mission on the Susquehanna.

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