

“DRUMS ON THE CONOCOHEAGUE: THEN AND NOW”

A NATIVE AMERICAN POWWOW AT CONOCOHEAGUE SETTLEMENT

MERCERSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

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Native American heritage will again be celebrated with two exciting days of drumming, dancing and singing at the Conococheague Settlement, 12995 Bain Road, Mercersburg, PA, on September 8 and 9, 2018. The event will be held Saturday, September 8th, from 9 am–8 pm and Sunday, September 9th, from 11 am – 4 pm. The Grand Entry will take place at noon each day.

The event features the Medicine Horse Singers, Aztec Dancers and the Potomac Dancers performing traditional Native American drumming, dancing and singing with fire dancing featured Saturday evening. In addition, eventgoers will experience a variety of Native American craft and lifeway demonstrators. The bridge between ancient and modern powwows and the spiritual significance of the drumming, dances and song will be explained.

The public is invited to join in some dances and have fun while learning about Eastern Native heritage, and kids will enjoy a candy dance.

An emcee will discuss the dances and their origins along with a narrated reenactment depicting a French & Indian War era frontier skirmish complete with the burning of a cabin and taking of captives. The dance circle is open to all.

Other customs that the people may see are smudging with sage, keeping the sacred fire going, praying to Creator, showing respect for elders, Native dress, male dancing, female dancing and social dances. These customs would be done by Nations from this area such as Delaware, Shawnee



All ages perform in the dances with very colorful, tradition dress.



and Iroquois; all nations are welcome to join in the event.

Food and beverages will be sold on premises and will include Native American specialties. There will be no alcohol on premises. Visitors are advised to bring chairs or blankets.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th century powwows were a gathering of Natives to worship Creator; to thank Him for food, shelter and one another in the daily struggle to survive.

Modern Powwows started after WWII when the Native soldiers were coming home from war. The powwow fulfilled their wish to show how they were protectors of their families and the

Nation. It came from the old Objibway religion called Drum, which comes from a story where a Chief's wife went into a very cold body of water to escape enemies who had attacked the village. She passed over, but the Sky people sent her back because it was not her time. They told her

how to make a drum and she had two men make it. Another village was attacking them; the men played this drum and some of the attackers were killed by the mighty sound. The attack was called off and the two groups talked. It was decided that the drum was to be used for music instead of going to war.

Men drummed and women sang. The dancers in the circle were all men until 1949 when a group of women entered the circle, which brought the Powwow to an abrupt halt. The women talked with the Chiefs, who decided the women added grace and beauty. Later, young boys wanted fancy dance and the young girls wanted jingle dance. They would wear 365 cones on their dress and one additional cone for each male relative in the armed service.

Today, Powwow is still a religious experience for Natives and a way to thank the Creator. Professional drummers, dancers and singers will use the powwow to praise Creator and it will also be an opportunity to educate people about Natives from the past and present.

The Conococheague Settlement is the main attraction of the Conococheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage, a non-profit organization that serves as a regional center for the purpose of developing and fostering awareness, understanding and stewardship of the cultural and natural history of the Appalachian frontier through preservation, education and research.

Headquartered within Rock Hill Farm, a well-preserved historic farmstead that was established in the early 18th century in southern Franklin County, Pennsylvania, the 30-acre site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It includes two historic house museums with outbuildings, a research library, two relocated historic log structures, walking trails with access to a pioneer cemetery, and several historic gardens.

www.cimlg.org

**Open M-F 9 am – 4:30 pm (dawn to dusk)
Tours available by appointment**

Conococheague, rhymes with Monica Jig, is a Native American word often translated as "long indeed, very long indeed" owing to the winding nature of the creek.



One of the two relocated historic log structures at the Conococheague Settlement.

Women add grace and beauty, as well as colorful dress, to the traditional Powwow dances.



William Penn's Policy Toward Native Peoples in 1682 Pennsylvania



At the beginning of Pennsylvania's colonial period, the story of the Lenape people was bound to the story of William Penn and his "holy experiment." Of the English colonies, Pennsylvania initially adopted the most enlightened policy toward the Native peoples.

In 1682, William Penn, son of a wealthy admiral, was granted the territory north of Maryland in lieu of a debt owed by the English Crown to his father. An early convert to Quakerism, Penn conceived of his land as a "free colony for all mankind." As part of this freedom, Penn entertained what was then the "curious notion" that his grant did not override native rights. He promised the Lenape people tolerance for their way of life and respect for their property. In return, the colony saw little in the way of conflict during the first 36 years.

When in London, Penn wrote to the Lenape, "I am very sensible of unkindness and injustice that hath been too much exercised toward you by the people of these parts of the world...but I am not such a man." After Penn's death in 1718, his "holy experiment" was replaced by self interest and greed on the part of his heirs, other English colonists and the Iroquois Confederation.

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