

MRS. PHEBE (HAIGHT) BUTLER.
(Widow of Colonel Zebulon Butler.)

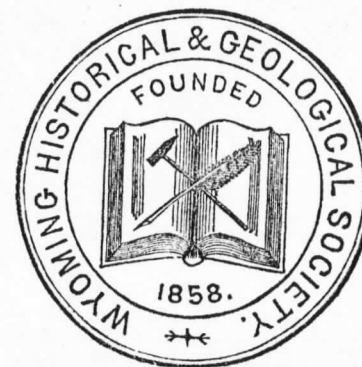
WREN

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PROCEEDINGS
AND
COLLECTIONS
OF THE
WYOMING HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY,
FOR THE YEARS 1911-1912.

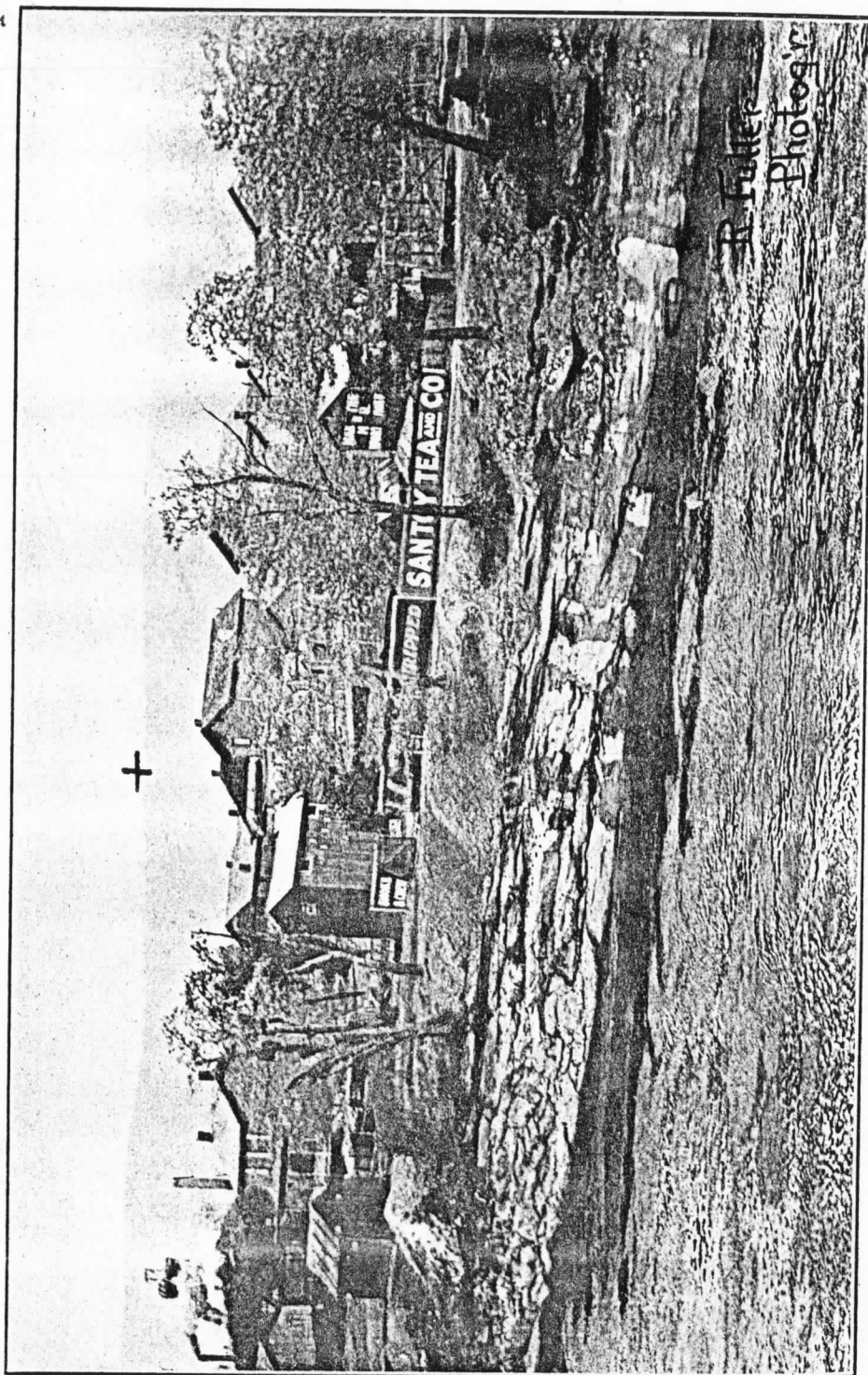
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View of Bead Hill and "Plymouth Rock," looking northwest. The + is directly over the building in the cellar of which the bodies were found. (When the photograph was taken the river was five feet above low water mark.)

SOME INDIAN GRAVES AT PLYMOUTH, PA.

BY CHRISTOPHER WREN.

Curator of Ethnology.

READ BEFORE THE WYOMING HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

APRIL 26, 1912.

LINES TO A SKELETON.

(*London Chronicle* about 1850.)

Behold this ruin! 'Twas a skull
Once of ethereal spirit full;
This narrow cell was life's retreat,
This space was thought's mysterious seat;
What beauteous visions filled this spot,
What dreams of pleasure long forgot;
Nor hope, nor joy, nor love, nor fear,
Has left one trace of record here.

Beneath this mouldering canopy
Once shone the bright and busy eye;
But start not at the dismal void!
If social love that eye employed,
If with no lawless fire it gleamed,
But through the dew of kindness beamed,
That eye shall be forever bright
When stars and sun are sunk in night.

Within this hollow cavern hung
The ready, swift and tuneful tongue,
If falsehood's honey is disdained,
And where it could not praise was chained;
If bold in virtue's cause it spoke,
Yet gentle concord never broke;
This silent tongue shall plead for thee
When time unveils eternity.

Say, did these fingers delve the mine,
Or with envied rubies shine?
To hew the rock or wear the gem,
Can little now avail to them;
But if the page of truth they sought,
Or comfort to the mourners brought,
These hands a richer meed shall claim
Than all that wait on wealth or fame.

Avails it whether bare or shod
These feet the paths of duty trod
If from the halls of ease they fled
To seek affliction's humble shed;
If grandeur's guilty bribe they spurned,
And home to virtue's cot returned—
These feet with angel's wings shall vie,
And tread the palace of the sky.—*Anon.*

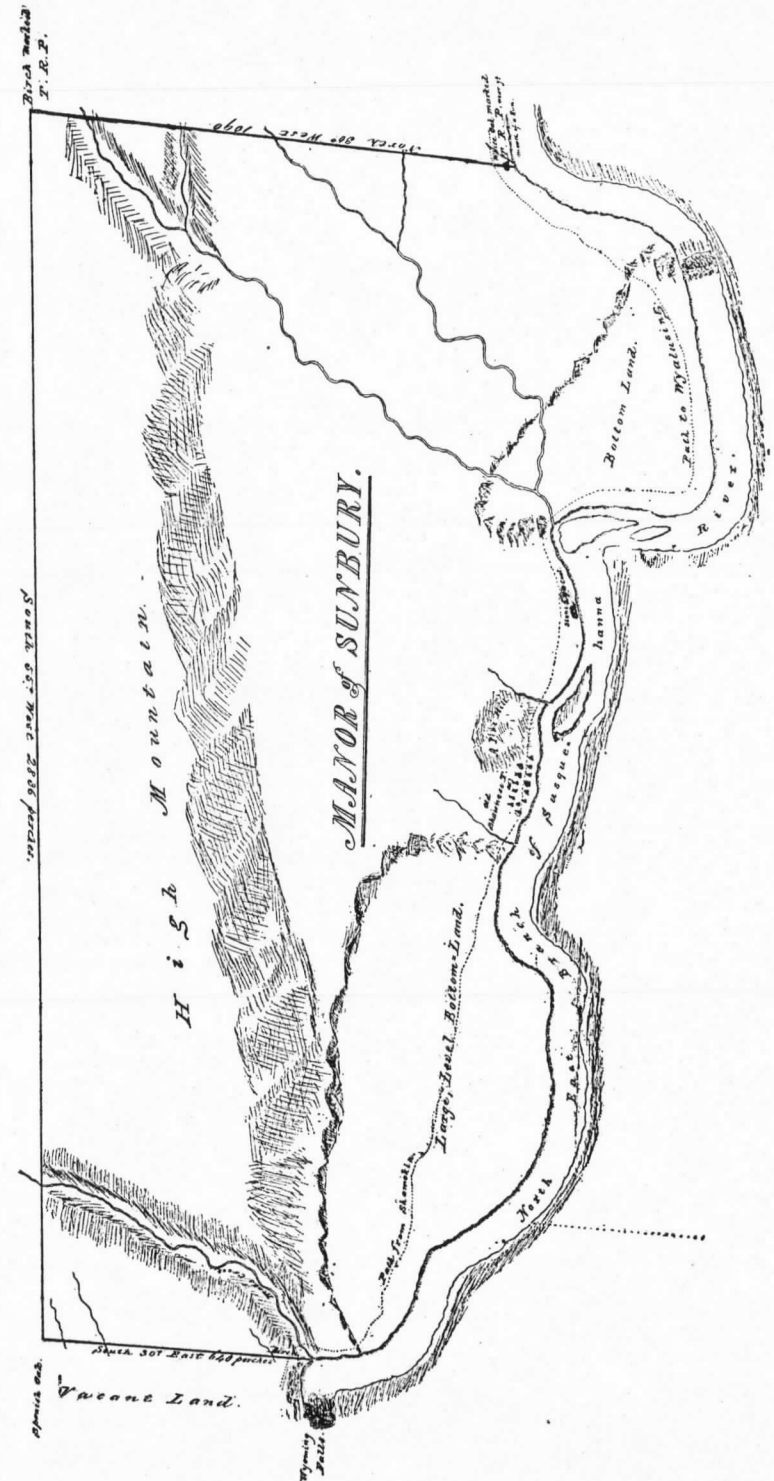
In the first week of June, 1905, while excavating for a cellar on the south side of Bead street, in Plymouth, Pa., three Indian skeletons were exposed by the workmen. The bodies were lying in ground on Bead Hill, directly adjoining, on the west, a brick dwelling No. 418 Bead street, formerly owned by Mr. Theodore Renshaw.

The location has long been known as an Indian burial place, and the hill and street both got their names because, in years past, when the ground was under cultivation, the farmers' plows frequently turned up numerous glass beads.

Bead Hill lies about one hundred (100) yards directly west of the Carey avenue bridge, which crosses the Susquehanna river at this point, and is the top of what is locally known as "Plymouth Rock". The hill is about two hundred (200) yards long, running east and west along the river, and rises at the highest point, where these bodies were found, to about fifty (50) feet above the river level. Directly west of the hill the land falls away to a lower level, where it is known that an Indian village was located, from arrow points and other stone implements having been found there.

In the survey of the Manor of Sunbury, made by Wm. Scull, for the Proprietaries in the year 1768, and published as Map No. 67, in Volume IV, of the Third series of Pennsylvania Archives, Bead Hill, is marked as a "Pine Hill" and the village on the lower ground is located and described as "Old Shawanese Town". A copy of this map forms a part of this paper.

In going over this ground several years ago with Oscar J. Harvey, Esq., for the purpose of locating Indian village sites for his new History of Wilkes-Barre and Wyoming Valley, he using an old map and the diary of John Martin Mack, who was the companion of Count Zinzendorf during his visit to Wyoming Valley, and the writer pointing out camp or village sites which he had located from marks still on the ground, we became pretty well satisfied that it was to Bead Hill that Zinzendorf had retired when the incident



MAP OF MANOR OF SUNBURY.
After a survey, for the Proprietaries, by William Scull, in 1768. (From "History of Wilkes-Barre and Wyoming Valley," by courtesy of Oscar J. Harvey, Esq.)

of the unfriendly Indians and the snake, described in our histories, is said to have occurred. We arrived at this conclusion by means of the diary by tracing Zinzendorf and Mack day by day through the different villages which they mention as having stopped at, from their entry into the west end of the valley, in their journey up the river. The location seems to fit all the conditions described, as a place of retirement from the village on the lower ground several hundred yards distant.

The bodies which give rise to this paper were all found within a space of thirty (30) feet square, that being the size of the cellar which was being excavated. They were buried about two (2) feet below the surface, in a sandy soil, formed largely from the disintegration of the soft rock composing the hill; the material coming out of the cellar being afterwards used in mixing the concrete for the foundation of the building.

The bodies were all stretched at full length on their backs, with their feet towards the east.

Body No. 1 was probaby that of a woman, being considerably smaller than the other two. It may have been the wife of No. 2, near which it lay. Before this body was placed in the grave, a floor of flat stones had been laid down, on which it rested, and a row of stones set on edge surrounded it, differing in the former particular from the other two burials. No objects, so far as noticed, were with this body.

Body No. 2, lying about three (3) feet north of No. 1, was that of a good-sized man, who seems to have been a person of some distinction. One of the men who did the digging said that he measured this skeleton with a four-foot stick which he had, and that it was about six (6) feet six (6) inches long. The exactness of this measurement is, however, open to some doubt.

In this case the body was also bordered around with a row of stones set up on edge. With the body were found

about two hundred (200) faceted dark blue glass beads of the usual pattern found in graves of this region. The entire breast was covered with closely embroidered bead work, made of small glass beads, principally of white and blue color, which were so small that but few of them were secured, as they became mixed with the loose earth. Extending down the body from the left shoulder was a string of one hundred (100) or more brass finger rings, a number with crude seals in them of cameo design, made of clear or semi-transparent glass. A personal examination of some of these rings showed the seals were made in a mold.

There were also with this body two long-necked glass bottles or decanters, one of which was broken by the pick of the workman; also an object, which from the description seems to have been a tubular baked clay pipe.

Body No. 3 was buried in all particulars like No. 2, except that no objects were noticed as being associated with it.

This body lay some distance from the other two, and only the upper half of it extended into the cellar excavation.

All the relics became scattered among the bystanders who had gathered when it was known that skeletons had been found, and they could not be collected again the next day, although the writer tried to secure them.

As the digging was done by Polish coal miners after they had finished their regular day's work at the mines, and darkness came on while they were engaged in the work, it is quite probable that other objects may have been in the graves which were entirely overlooked, the chief interest of the miners being to get their cellar dug out.

So much attention has been given to the details of these burials because it is a curious fact that very few Indian graves have been found in Wyoming Valley, and there seems to be no single case in which an effort has been made to describe the conditions surrounding such a burial with any degree of exactness.

It is somewhat remarkable also that but very few Indian

BEAD ST. PLYMOUTH, PA.

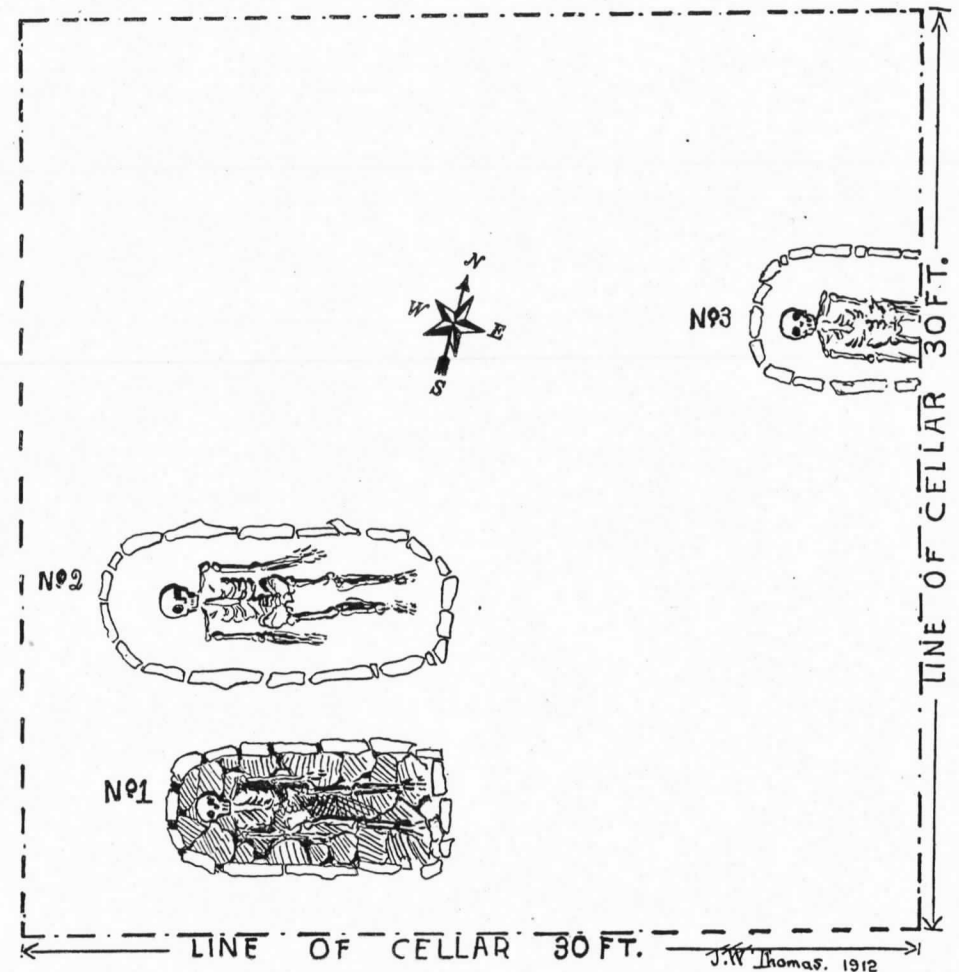


Diagram of Indian Graves on Bead Hill, Plymouth, Pa.

burial places have been located in the valley, while there is much evidence of the occupancy of the region by the aborigines, in the many stone implements which are found on camp and village sites. Future discoveries of such burial places will doubtless be made which will throw additional light on the mortuary customs of the Indian tribes that lived in Wyoming Valley and along the Susquehanna river.

For the reasons mentioned the writer has secured the best data obtainable in the cases under consideration, appreciating that the information is incomplete in many important particulars, but he hopes that this paper may add something to our knowledge about local Indian burials.

Because the glass beads and bottles are of the white man's manufacture, it is evident that the burials described were made after the Indians had come in contact with our own people.

(Memorandum.)

PLYMOUTH ROCK.

Plymouth Rock is an abrupt bluff of soft sandstone which juts out about one hundred and fifty (150) feet into the Susquehanna river on the easterly end of the town of Plymouth, Pa. It has a sheer rise of about thirty (30) feet at the most easterly end and about four hundred (400) feet westward rises by a steep pitch to about fifty (50) feet above the water line, somewhat back from the water's edge.

The northern end of the Carey avenue bridge rests on the rock, and Richard's Island, the only island in the river between Plymouth and Nanticoke, is opposite Plymouth at this point. (See Map of Sunbury Manor.)

Plymouth Rock forms a barrier which protects the town from the direct currents of the river and is the only high spot directly on the river bank from Plymouth to Nanticoke dam, a distance of about five (5) miles down the river. Within the past fifty years there have been at least two occasions on which the water rose between twenty-five and thirty feet above low water mark, accompanied by great

quantities of thick ice, when, without the protection which the rock affords, the town would have been swept by swift running water and ice, to the serious damage of property on the low lying lands.

About a mile and a quarter down the river, from the rock, the river takes an abrupt bend, nearly at a right angle, to the southeast for a distance of about fifteen hundred feet, which makes room for the Shawnee Flats on the northerly side of the river, forming a level plateau about one-half a mile wide and about three miles long. These "flats" were much occupied in Indian days, as is indicated by a number of camp or village sites located on them. (See map.)

It was to the easterly end of Plymouth Rock that the Indians took Zinzendorf and Mack, from "Old Shawanese Town", and, pointing to a burial ground (now Shupp's graveyard) on an elevation about a quarter of a mile up the river, said that Indians were buried there, but they did not know who they were, as the graves were there when they came into the country, as described in the diary of John Martin Mack.

Plymouth Rock takes its name from the town and the town got its name because some of the earliest settlers were descendants of the Pilgrims who landed on Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts, who removed to Connecticut and came to Plymouth about the year 1763, with the first New England settlers of Wyoming Valley.

THE RECORDS OF THE TOWN OF WESTMORELAND,

IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE WYOMING
HISTORICAL AND GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

For many years this Society has been the possessor of a certain portion of the old "Records of the Town of Westmoreland" as the Wyoming section of Pennsylvania was called one hundred and fifty years ago. The editor promised in the preface to Volume X to publish a part of these in Volume XI and subsequent issues, but it was not found convenient to fulfill this promise until the present volume was under way.

The "Records" contain many land transactions between the Susquehanna company and the early settlers, as well as many "Minutes of the Meetings of the Inhabitants."

In the admirable and exhaustive "History of Wilkes-Barre", by Oscar J. Harvey, Esq., Volume I, pages 25-28, an excellent and a full account of these Records is given, as he was permitted to copy a number of these early "minutes", which will be found in Volume II of his work. The "Records" cover the period from 1772 to 1777; the land transactions being of great historic value, their publication in the volumes of the Society will interest the members, and as the "minutes" are scattered throughout the manuscript which will be continued through several of our annual volumes, they will be included for the benefit of many who will not see Mr. Harvey's History.

The portion of these valuable manuscripts held by this Society include only 431 out of 2,000 pages. Thus they are incomplete for reasons which are explained in Mr. Harvey's book. They will be published as they run chronologically, "*verbatim et literatim*".