

NATURE'S

Grapevine

WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK, NJ

Winter 2017

The Ice Age in Central New Jersey (Part 2)

By Jim Wade

This is the second installment of an article by Mr. Wade that appeared a year ago in the Winter 2016 edition of Nature's Grapevine. The story below is set in what is now New Jersey, in the vicinity of Washington Crossing State Park, during the last ice age.



graphic by Art Dorety

Down wind, about a half a mile away, are a small group of prehistoric hunters, covered in thick, animal hide clothing, with wooden spears, affixed with ivory or antler fore-shafts attached with particular specialized stone spear-points, known as clovis points. These are prehistoric Native Americans, known as Clovis people, because of the stylized spear-points they use for hunting. They have been watching, a couple of young, juvenile mammoths closely for hours, that have strayed some distance from the main herd. The animals have been tempted by the buttercup, alpine poppy and reindeer moss, that have grown around an exposed outcropping of rocks along a marshy meadow,

with scattered dwarf birch saplings and arctic willow, sparsely growing in the background. The hunters are waiting for the right opportunity to try and sneak-up, unaware, upon the juvenile mammoths, in hopes of separating one of them from the herd, to take down. This venture will take a lot of cunning and skill, quick timing, much courage and luck, if they are to succeed with this extremely dangerous venture. The small band of paleo-hunters will have to split-up. One group will take on the dangerous task of grabbing the attention of the main herd, likely with the use of fire-brands and yelling, especially in hopes of separating the mother from the juveniles. The other group of hunters, also using fire-brands and noise as well as their spears, will drive one of the young mammoths off far enough away, to safely attack it, and bring it down. The hunters will aim for the softer sides, or ideally the belly of the young mammoth, if they are to get their spears through the tough hide, of the juvenile. Being that it is young, the juvenile mammoth's hide has not had enough time to become quite as thick and tough, as the older adult mammoths.

Once the juvenile mammoths are a good distance away from the main herd, nibbling and grazing in momentary abandonment, amongst the favored wildflowers and herbs, the two groups of paleo-hunters make their move. The first group, slowly makes its way unnoticed, around the edges of the mammoth herd. Being that the hunters are down wind of the herd, any scent of their presence will not be detected by the animals. A small, hot coal-ember is brought forward from a secured, small wooden container or pouch, and the pre-made fire brands are lit. The hunters spread out with their torches, and begin to wave the fire brands, yelling and moving towards the mammoth herd in order to steer them away from the young juveniles. The herd being taken by surprise, raise-up a horrible noise, some rearing up their tusks in defiance. The hunters continue to yell and taunt the huge hairy creatures with their fire brands, ever so slowly, forcing them back, and away from the young juveniles. Fear, anger, and frustration, envelope the herd, putting many into a flight of panic. The second group of hunters, now having crept up and surrounded the chosen juvenile, having successfully frightened off the adult mammoths, wave their fire brands and jab with their spears, at the young juvenile, steering and forcing it ever so slowly, towards the marshy meadow, where the ground is soft and wet. The young mammoth in great fear and confusion, backs it's way, into the watery marsh, its back hind legs start to sink down into the wet, spongy bog-marsh. Its cry's for help and rescue cannot be met; the mother of the young one, along with the other adult mammoths, being confused and detained by the first band of hunters. She bellows back in vain, as the second band of hunters,



close in with their spears, on their fated prey.

The first thrust of spears are made on the juvenile mammoth, penetrating into the chest and abdomen of the young calf. Another spear is jabbed into the chest, as the juvenile try's to rise-up on it's front feet, to ward off it's attackers; another spear, fitted with a flint clovis point, is thrust deep inside the belly of the calf. Too shocked and weakened by the thrust-blows of the paleo-hunter's spears, the calf falls forward, imbedding the second spear point, deeper inside it's abdomen. The men keep taunting the creature, as one brave, adventurous young hunter, with loaded spear in hand, leap's upon the juvenile's back, plunging the spear-shaft deep inside the thick, fur-covered hide and piercing the calf's lungs, causing the creature to let out one last anguished scream, as a final fitted spear, by another hunter, is thrust deep into the chest cavity, piercing the animal's heart. The calf spent, slumps forward. A cry of conquest and victory rings out from the gathered men. The other hunters run to join their fellow paleo-comrade's in their day of triumph and glory.



graphic by Art Dorety

The liver, lungs, tongue, and other soft internal organs are likely removed, and savored and relished first, as is done by modern-day African elephant hunters. The hide and skin, being too tough and inelastic for making any kind of clothing, would likely be used by these paleo-Indians, to cover their wooden framed shelters or wind breaks, that are sparsely scattered along the Raritan valley. Evidence of such practices has been archaeologically located and documented by excavations in Mezhirich, and other sites in the Ukraine, of Old World Upper Paleolithic mammoth hunters.

No local archaeological evidence at all, remains today of the noble, dangerous and brutal mammoth hunt described

above. Such experiences of the very distant past have been lost to the mists of time, except in the stories that had been handed down from one generation to the next. The later Indians of New Jersey, the Lenape people, would have told these stories each winter around their lodge and council fires. The mammoth hunt was preserved only in memory over countless centuries, of a strange and noble creature the Lenape's fore-bearers once knew, and hunted.

References

Dickey, N.H. (Ed.). (1992). *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*, (Vols. 16-17). Funk & Wagnalls L.P.

Kraft, H.C. (2001). *The Lenape-Delaware Indian Heritage: 10,000 B.C. - A.D. 2000*. Lenape Books.

Lister, A. & Bahn, P. (1994). *Mammoths*. New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Jim Wade worked as a field archaeologist and archaeological field assistant at several Indian sites throughout Central New Jersey . Mr. Wade also worked as an archivist with the N.J. State Museum documenting Native American land holdings in New Jersey from the 17th & 18th centuries. He is a frequent volunteer at WCSP where he assists with our Native American and primitive technology events. Mr. Wade is available for talks and demonstrations to groups. His e-mail address is: red9hawk@aol.com.

Volunteer Notes

A hearty thank you goes out to all our volunteers who participated in a rainy Primitive Technologies Weekend in October. Special kudos go to **John Waltz**, Belle Mead, for organizing the event.

Jim Wade, Princeton, delivered an outstanding program in October on the Native Americans of the Area of the Park. Note that Mr. Wade also authored the enclosed feature article. He will return to WCSP on February 19, to discuss the paleo-peoples. See the enclosed schedule for details.

Paul Moran, Allentown, NJ, has undertaken much-needed trail work over the autumn season.

We would like to thank the following volunteers who assisted with our Holiday Wreath Making event. They are: **Ellen Coleman**, Ewing, **Al Fittipaldi**, Titusville, **Kevin Kavanaugh**, Ewing, **Ben and Jean Strauss**, Titusville, **Paul Moran**, Allentown.

Marge Delaney, Ewing, **Ellen Coleman** and **Cheryl Burgos**, Morrisville, both came in to staff the Nature Center during fall events.



Around the Park

WCSP Maintenance Foreman, Clint Wojick, has transferred to Round Valley Recreation Area. Best wishes on your new assignment Clint. We will miss you.

A home school group from Washington Crossing, PA, a scout troop from Wayne, NJ, and school groups from Princeton, Ewing, Lawrenceville and Hopewell Twp. all visited the WCSP Nature Center over the autumn season. Activities delivered were Pond Study, Natural Dyes, Growth of a Tree, Rocks in the Making, The Lore of the Lenape, Wildlife of NJ, Shelter Building and Trail Hike.

WCSP has a new source for information on park programs. Our friends group, the **Washington Crossing Park Association of New Jersey** is sponsoring a site on Meetup.com. Meetup.com is a social media information forum. Park activities and Association activities, referred to as "Meetups" are listed on this page. Folks who would be interested, can join the Meetup group "Washington Crossing Park Association of NJ". In addition to providing basic information on events, the page will enable people to see who and how many are attending events, view photos, ask questions and make and receive comments. The site can be accessed at <https://www.meetup.com/washingtoncrossingstatepark/>.

Gene Ramsey

Washington Crossing State Park lost a good friend and very active volunteer last September. Visitors might remember the friendly and enthusiastic gentleman who was present at the WCSP Nature Center most every Memorial Day and Labor Day weekend with his telescope trained on the sun. Gene Ramsey was an active member of the Amateur Astronomers Association of Princeton (AAAP) and would regularly offer solar observing events at the Nature Center on behalf of AAAP. Gene passed away only a few days after his last solar observing event here, this past Labor Day Weekend. Gene also assisted over the past several years with our Friday evening astronomy seminars offered jointly with AAAP.

Gene resided in the Pennington area for 47 years. He was a US Air Force veteran and was a systems analyst retired from McGraw Hill in Hightstown. Gene joined AAAP shortly after retiring to pursue his passion with astronomy. In addition to offering programs in the state park, Gene shared his love of astronomy with outreaches to schools, scout groups, and other organizations. He spoke and delivered demonstrations in astronomy at a variety conferences and seminars.

Gene is survived by his wife Dolores, his sons Mike and Joseph, his daughter Cindy and three grandsons. Gene will be greatly missed here at the Crossing and will be fondly remembered whenever one of us has occasion to look up toward the heavens.



photo credit: Wayne Henderek

Gene Ramsey (left) working with park visitors at a solar observing session at the WCSP Nature Center.

This newsletter is available free of charge electronically. It can be downloaded at the web address below. Requests to be included on the emailing list may be made by contacting the Nature Center.



Nature
CENTER

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Closed Mon and Tues

Website.....www.state.nj.us/dep/parksandforests/parks/washcros.html

Park Naturalist

& Newsletter Editor.....Wayne Henderek



Winter Programs at the Nature Center

The following is a list of activities being offered through the Nature Center at Washington Crossing State Park in Titusville, New Jersey. Some programs will require advanced registration as indicated below. Attendance is always limited and is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Programs will commence at the Nature Center unless otherwise indicated. An adult must accompany all children. In the event of inclement weather some programs might be canceled. It is always advisable to call ahead before coming out. These events are intended for families and individuals only. Programs for scouts, schools and other groups are scheduled separately by special arrangement. **Phone : (609) 737-0609**

THE NATURE IN ME (3 yrs. – 7 yrs.) Saturday January 7, 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. Do you ever wake up feeling like a bear or perhaps a butterfly? Do you eat like a bird or maybe you sleep like a log. We, all at times, relate to objects in nature. With the help of a parent or other adult, children will trace and cut out a life-sized paper outline of themselves. They will then fill in the empty space with appropriate pictures and illustrations cut from old nature magazines in this fun indoor nature craft activity.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday January 14, 12:45 p.m. *Living with New Jersey Black Bears* This intriguing video provides an inside look at one of the state's most interesting wildlife species and gives some clues on how to safely share the landscape with these animals.

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WORKSHOP (pre-teen – adult) Sunday January 15, 1:30 p.m. In this workshop, the participants will learn about the different types of cross-country ski equipment that are available and what to look for in selecting your first pair of skis. Other topics will include: how to dress and where to go skiing in New Jersey. The indoor lesson will last 1 -1 1/2 hour. If the ground is snow covered, an additional 1+ hour outdoor ski lesson will be offered. Participants will have to provide their own ski equipment for the outdoor lesson. Call the Nature Center to obtain equipment rental information. Advanced registration required. The workshop will be co-instructed by **Kevin Kavanaugh**, Ewing and **Daniel Nurmi McAuliffe**, Langhorne.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday January 21, 12:45 p.m. *Forests*. From the evergreen forests of the frozen North to the deciduous dry forests of the tropics, these woodlands illustrate the intense seasonality of the Earth. As the tallest, largest and oldest organisms on the planet, trees are home to a fascinating range of wildlife.

BALDPATE MOUNTAIN HIKE (pre-teen – adult) Sunday January 22, 1:30 – 4:00 p.m. We will take a county park trail from its trail head near Church Rd. to the top of the hill. Meet at the parking lot by Niederer's Pond (Church Rd). Advanced registration required. Bring a water bottle and wear hiking shoes.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday February 4, 12:45 p.m. *Caves*. Peer into the unusual underground world of caves with its interesting geology and astonishing wildlife. Caves from the American Midwest to Indonesia will be explored.

GEOCACHE WASHINGTON CROSSING STATE PARK (preteens – adult) Sunday February 5, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m. Geocaching is a high-tech update on the good old-fashioned scavenger hunt game utilizing GPS (global positioning systems) technology to locate objects hidden in and around the state park. Participants will learn how to obtain information and hints from the Geocaching.com website, on the location of dozens of geocache sites located in and around the state park. They will then use handheld GPS devices to go out and find as many caches as possible. Once a cache is found, participants typically will sign in on the log contained within and then take an object from the cache box after leaving a trinket for subsequent geocachers. Participants should bring a pocket full of trinkets to exchange when they locate caches. Trinkets can include small toys and balls, plastic jewelry, pens, pencils, scratch pads, patches, action figures, coins, etc. Advanced registration required. A limited number of GPS navigation devices will be made available to participants. Bring your own handheld GPS device or smart phone with Geocaching app installed if you have one.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday February 11, 12:45 p.m. *Deserts*. The Earth's deserts appear to be wastelands yet, they are surprisingly among the planet's most varied ecosystems. This video will expose the secrets of life's persistence in these harsh environments.
(more events next page)

(Nature Center events continued)

CROSS-COUNTRY SKI WORKSHOP (pre-teen – adult) Sunday February 12, 1:30 p.m. In this workshop, the participants will learn about the different types of cross-country ski equipment that are available and what to look for in selecting your first pair of skis. Other topics will include: how to dress and where to go skiing in New Jersey. The indoor lesson will last 1 -1 1/2 hour. If the ground is snow covered, an additional 1+ hour outdoor ski lesson will be offered. Participants will have to provide their own ski equipment for the outdoor lesson. Call the Nature Center to obtain equipment rental information. Advanced registration required. The workshop will be co-instructed by **Kevin Kavanaugh**, Ewing and **Daniel Nurmi McAuliffe**, Langhorne.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday February 18, 12:45 p.m. *The Grasslands*. Huge wildlands of plains, prairies, savannahs and tundras harbor large herds of wild animals as well as their predators. This video unravels these interesting ecosystems.

THE PALEO AND ARCHAIC INDIANS OF NEW JERSEY Sunday February 19, 1:30 p.m. **Jim Wade**, former archivist and researcher with the N.J. State Museum will take participants on a journey back to the time of the last ice age, when the earliest Native American peoples entered what is now New Jersey. Discover how these Paleo-Indians lived and survived in an arctic landscape filled with strange, prehistoric fur-covered animals, like the woolly mammoth, great elk, and musk oxen - Learn how these earliest people adapted to their harsh environment and hunted with specialized Clovis spear points - See how these prehistoric hunters opened the way for new bands of Archaic peoples who followed, with new innovative stone tools and lifestyles. The program will include a slide presentation and Native American artifacts will be on display.

NATURE VIDEO Saturday February 25, 12:45 p.m. *The Oceans*. The oceans are perhaps the most mysterious and unexplored of the planet's biomes. The dark icy depths will be illuminated to expose beautiful shellfish, pelagic predators and large marine mammals.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Saturday March 4, 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Sunday March 5, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Saturday March 11, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

MAPLE SUGARING (All Ages) Sunday March 12, 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. This event is a participatory demonstration in the procedures of home maple sugar production. Advanced registration required.

WINTER BIRDS OF THE PARK (All Ages) Sunday March 19, 1:30 - 3:00 p.m. Come join veteran birder **Franta Broulik** of **Washington Crossing Audubon** as we walk the trails in search of a variety of winter bird species and perhaps some early spring migrants. Advanced registration required.

EARLY SPRING TWILIGHT HIKE (Adult) Thursday March 30, 7:15 p.m. We will search the park's remote northern sections for early spring twilight and nocturnal phenomena such as woodcocks in courtship, spring peepers and other breeding amphibians, owls, etc. Meet at the parking lot by Niederer's Pond (Church Rd). Wear boots and bring a flashlight.

(more events next page)

Winter Programs at the Visitor Center Museum (609) 737-0623

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday January 7, 2:00 p.m. *Liberty! The American Revolution: The Reluctant Revolutionaries. Part I.* This 120-minute video covers the time period leading up to the American Revolution and its causes and concludes with the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday January 14, 2:00 p.m. *Liberty! The American Revolution: The Times That Try Men's Souls. Part II.* This 120-minute video covers the dark days of 1776, including the Christmas night crossing of the Delaware River and the victory at Saratoga that would finally bring France into the war.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday January 21, 2:00 p.m. *Liberty! The American Revolution: Are we to be a Nation? Part III.* This 120-minute video discusses the shift of the war into the south and the important victory at Yorktown as well as the creation of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday January 28, 2:00 p.m. *Spies of the Revolutionary War.* Nathan Hale, John Honeyman, John Andre and Benedict Arnold are just a few of the spies who played a large role for both the American and British during the American Revolution.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 4, 2:00 p.m. *POW's of the American Revolution.* This 70-minute video tells the story of the American Prisoners held on New York prison ships in Wallabout Bay.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 11, 2:00 p.m. *Benedict Arnold: Triumph and Treason.* This 50-minute video describes the life of this enigmatic man.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 18, 2:00 p.m. *John and Abigail: Love and Liberty.* 45-minute video discusses the lives of John and Abigail Adams; one of America's greatest couples.

HISTORY VIDEO Saturday February 25, 2:00 p.m. *Founding Mothers with Cokie Roberts.* This 50-minute video tells the incredible stories of the women who actually saw combat to the moral and legal victories of Elizabeth Freeman, a slave who sued for freedom.

Winter Programs at the Johnson Ferry House (609) 737-2515

FIRST DAY HIKE-FROM FERRY TO FERRY, 100 HORSES, 18 CANON, AND THE WAGONS (10 yrs. – adults) Sunday, January 1, 10:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Walk the route that the "stuff" of the continental army took as it crossed the river on the ferry boats on Christmas night December 26, 1776. This historic tour/hike begins at the Mc Konkey Ferry Tavern in PA and includes the river bridge, the ferry boat replica, the Nelson House, the Stone Barn, and the Johnson Ferry House in WCSP, NJ. Dress warmly with good walking shoes. Advance registration required. No fee. Donations accepted.

WINTER FOODWAYS CLASS (16 yrs-adult) Saturday, January 14, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. An all-day, hands on hearth cooking class and full meal. Well known food historian, **Susan McLellan Plaisted** will instruct this class limited to 14 people. Advanced registration required. Fee \$70. Please register early to reserve a place.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION (all ages) Sunday, February 19, 2017 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Music in the parlor, FAQ's about our first president, the history of gingerbread, colonial education, toys and games, woodworking in the stone barn and punch and gingerbread served. A Good family event. \$5 donation suggested to defray costs.

SPECIAL FOODWAYS: PUDDINGS WORKSHOP (16 yrs.-adult) February 25, 2017 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. **Susan Plaisted** will instruct this class. Fee \$70. Please register early to reserve a space.

