

Destination RIVER TOWNS

Civil War 150 Fundraiser

The bridge that crossed the Susquehanna River in 1863 was a wooden structure, a covered bridge more than one mile long. The structure connected the river towns of Wrightsville and Columbia, a thriving commerce center. Goods that would be useful to an invading army could be found warehoused in this town. Food from this agricultural county would also be useful to the Confederate forces. Yet there were only a few untrained and inexperienced members of the militia to defend the town. On the evening of June 28, 1863, four citizens entered the bridge from the Columbia side. Their plan was to destroy only a center section of the bridge. This plan would make the bridge impassable, but would also allow it to be repaired at a later date. The four men placed black powder charges on the fourth pier from the western side, and then ignited the powder. The blast sent smoke and dust into the air, but did not damage the bridge. At 6:00 pm the four men doused the bridge with a flammable accelerant, and then ignited the bridge again. This time a fire, aided by a strong wind, quickly fed on the wooden structure and demolished it entirely. In six hours, only the stone piers remained. The eastern advance of the Confederacy was stopped. These troops would re-trace their steps westward and head

toward Gettysburg. The stage was set for the largest and most defining battle of the Civil War. As part of the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of key events throughout the Civil War, a committee of citizens from Columbia, Wrightsville, and Marietta is laying the groundwork for a series of events slated for June, 2013. The anchor event to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the burning of the bridge will include lighting of the bridge piers which still remain from that covered bridge, period music, and fireworks. Other tentative plans include a Civil War Ball, encampments, reenactment of a Civil War field hospital, walking tours, lectures, and more. To help with advance funding for these activities, the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area and Rivertownes PA USA are jointly sponsoring a presentation by Stephen Runkle on the topic of "The Gettysburg Campaign to the Susquehanna River." This ticketed event will take place on June 28, 2012 – the 149th anniversary of the bridge burning. The lecture will begin at 7:00 PM at the National Watch & Clock Museum, Fifth and Poplar Streets, Columbia. Tickets which include the lecture and refreshments may be purchased at www.SusquehannaHeritage.org or by calling 717-252-0229 (ext. 4) or 717-684-2489.

RiverFest Planned

Rivertownes PA USA has scheduled RiverFest 2012 for Sunday, June 24, from 4:30 to 9:30 PM. The event will take place on the grounds adjacent to the John Wright Store & Restaurant located on North Front St. in Wrightsville, PA. This annual event benefits programs of Rivertownes PA USA. Current initiatives for this organization include replacing the current lighting on the Veterans Memorial Bridge with lights more in line with the original lamps, and planning events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the burning of the bridge during the Civil War.

RiverFest features great music, good food, & relaxation. Entertainment begins at 5:30. The blue grass band Vinegar Creek Constituency will provide entertainment from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM. Historic memorabilia will be available for purchase. Visitors are invited to bring lawn chairs to enjoy the picturesque setting. The event concludes with the ceremonial lighting of three of the bridge piers that once carried the mile-long covered bridge burned during the Civil War. The lighting is slated for dusk, around 9:30. Donation is \$2 per adult. Children accompanied by an adult are free.

MARIETTA CELEBRATES BICENTENNIAL

- Memorial Day Parade, Monday, May 28 at 11 a.m.
- Annual Lancaster County Fireman's Convention and Parade, Saturday, June 2. Parade starts at noon.
- Fundraising auction hosted by MRA at 6 p.m. on June 9.
- Annual Marietta Fireman's Carnival, Friday, June 29 and Saturday, June 30
- Fireworks spectacular at 10:30 p.m. Saturday, June 30
- Community picnic beginning at 8:30 a.m. Sunday, July 28 in Memorial Park featuring a children's parade, pet parade, bike rodeo, family games and food.
- 47th annual Candlelight Tour of Homes Sunday, Dec. 2.

• History Reposed — a Walking tour of Marietta Cemetery. This rain or shine event Sunday, June 10 features guided tours of the cemetery at 2, 4:30 and 7 p.m. Tours led by local historian Dennis Landis, who has created a history of the cemetery and will give three different tours. Tours begin at the cemetery entrance on West Fairview Avenue. Light refreshments will be served. Participants should wear walking shoes.

• From Blessings to Brews — Marietta Churches and Taverns. This tour of churches and taverns will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 12. Meeting place is Marietta UCC, 3 S. Waterford Ave. The tour ends at Shank's Tavern, 36 S. Waterford Ave.; light refreshments will be served. Karen Sullivan will present information about churches, while Ray McKeeby will focus on taverns.

• Architecture and Marietta Artists will be presented at 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14 in the First National Bank Building, 100 W. Market St. Built in 1875 the building serves as MRA headquarters. This program features both an exhibit of local art and a discussion of work by local artists and a presentation by Bob Heiserman on architecture found in the community. Light refreshments will be served.

• Tall Tales and Nicknames, a program focusing on local folk history, will be offered at 2 p.m. Sunday Dec. 16 at the Marietta Community House, 264 W. Market St. Lynn Baker Alarie, author of "The Scoop on Marietta: A Small River Town," will discuss tall tales, while Harold "Brosie" Kulman, will present information on nicknames. Light refreshments will be served.

The Marietta Community Chorus celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, and the group will perform during several bicentennial events including the Community Picnic. In honor of the bicentennial, The Susquehanna Stage Company's summer production will be "1776," based on the book by Peter Stone, music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards. Performances are June 29 to July 1 and July 4 to 8; Wednesday through Saturday performances are at 8 p.m.; Sunday matinee performances and a special performance on Saturday, July 3 are at 2 p.m. Performances are held at 264 W. Market St.

For further information about Marietta Bicentennial activities and events, visit www.marietapa200.com. For information about Town Talks and MRA, visit www.marietta restoration.org. Additional information about Susquehanna Stage Company is available at www.susquehannastageco.com.

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