

Heritage Days Of Watontown

BY BARBARA MILLER
Lycoming Co. Correspondent
WATONTOWN — "If we had to cook like this, we'd go to McDonald's every night," Donna Meyer joked while cooking over an open hearth at the fifth annual Heritage Days celebration. Heritage Days were held at the Hower-Slote House on the Warrior Run High School Farm, near Watson-

town on October 3 and 4 and attended by 1,000 people. Although warmly dressed in a long cape, Mrs. Meyer, like many others participating in the 64 demonstrations, crafts, and activities of the event, was fighting a biting wind that shed the first snow of the season on nearby counties. This was coupled with billowing smoke that followed her round the

hearth and made her eyes blood-shot. Nevertheless, she and her friends, Pam Bower, and Debbie Menges held their post demonstrating how to bake pumpkin bread in a dutch oven by an open hearth. Mrs. Meyer explained that the dutch oven was a cast iron pot about 10-inches deep with a pie-plate-shaped lid that held hot coals. The pot was not taken to the

hearth; instead, hot coals were deposited on the lid which then heated the contents of the oven. In addition to several food demonstrations, there were exhibitions covering every aspect of colonial life from butchering and powder horn engraving, to bullet-making and beekeeping. The 12th Pennsylvania Regiment & Riflemen, Northumberland County

Militia and Butlers Rangers (Tories) with their tents and campfires and authentic soldiering garb lent color to the event as well as imparting information about soldiering in colonial times. Teenagers Ruth Voris and Elisa Frey took off their mittens long enough to illustrate for visitors a typical 18th century wash day complete with a scrubbing board, tub, plunger, lye soap, and an old Sunbeam wringer of 1800 vintage.

An old kitchen stove or two with their stovepipes pointing strangely skyward dotted the landscape where one could sample fresh baked molasses or sugar cookies or fresh popped corn.

Carol Harmon, Watontown, practiced dipping bayberry candles for the first time. "I had a really nice pair that some one bought," she said. "It takes a lot of practice to do it so they look store-bought." The early settlers, she explained, gathered bayberries and boiled them and collected the bayberry wax to make fragrant bayberry candles.

Inside the Hower-Slote House amid colonial furnishings were a variety of crafts and demonstrations. Marion Muffly, Watontown, with her covered stool in front of her, practiced the almost forgotten art of making delicate

(Turn to Page B26)

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