

HISTORY

OF

RESICA FALLS SCOUT RESERVATION



PREPARED
BY
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THE ORDER OF THE ARROW
Through Cooperation of
BEN FRANKLIN CHAPTER

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RESICA FALLS SCOUT RESERVATION

INTRODUCTION

The Resica Falls Scout Reservation is located in Monroe County, Pennsylvania, east of Stroudsburg on the Big Bushkill Creek. The Post Office address is Marshalls Creek, Pennsylvania.

The Reservation office has an imposing view of the Resica Falls, from which the Reservation gets its name. Visitors may view the historic falls from a walkway along the creek.

This short history is prepared so that Scouts, Scouters and visitors may know something about the history and background of the Reservation.

EARLY HISTORY

Before the white man settled in the territory, the area covered by Resica Falls Scout Reservation was the home and hunting ground of the Minisink Indians. The Minisink Indians were a clan of the Delaware Nation. The chief tribal meeting place for the pow-wows was Recessa Falls. It was here the laws governing the tribes were made and administered, punishment meted out and disputes settled.

Around the year 1840, Recessa (its former name) was one of the principal tanning centers. Here were brought the raw hides from Easton and from here the same hides were shipped back to Easton as beautifully tanned leathers. Also near the Reservation was located a saw mill, one of the busiest in town and in the area. It was so located because it had a ready supply of water power - Recessa Falls.

How did the Reservation get its name? The Village of Recessa was formed around the year 1856. The first settlers were Jeremy Macky and Depue Miller, who owned 900 acres of land and were the first of many tanners. The time was during the Mexican War, and in celebration of an important American Victory at Resaca de la Palma, the settlers called their new village Recessa.

In its brightest day, Recessa Village contained between 20 and 30 homes. Families were large in those days, and it is recorded that one family had 17

members. Some were farmers, but most worked in the tanneries. The center of the Village was the company store, a custom in those days. Stores were few and far between, and it was only the company who could afford to keep them well stocked.

In the early days, Recessa was a promised land for lumberman and tanners. Pine and oak awaited the axe and saw. Animals abounded in the forests, a ready supply of pelts and hides for the tanneries, and there was always a ready supply of water power - Recessa Falls.

In 1848-1850 the tanneries closed down. As a result, the people moved to other villages and towns where the tanneries had moved and where new ones were starting up.

After the tanneries closed, a few families remained. For these, the little school, located near Route 402, provided education for the young. It served its community for a long time.

Closing of the tanneries brought changes to the area. The Village became one of the deserted villages of Pennsylvania. The homes and buildings were left to crumble in the dust. Lands were converted into farms. The Big Springs Camp was once a lush and fertile farm.

The land was eventually purchased by an Irishman who had migrated from Ireland and had become financially independent. It was at this time the name was changed to Resica Falls. After his death, his wife, homesick for her native Ireland, put the land up for sale.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESICA FALLS SCOUT RESERVATION

In 1954 a group of Philadelphia businessmen were interested in starting a Sportsman Club. Hearing the land was available, they took an option on the property. In 1955 and 1956 a drive was in progress for Philadelphia and Valley Forge Councils to find a new camping area to relieve the overcrowding at Treasure Island and Delmont Scout Reservation. Upon hearing about the drive, these men gave their option to scouting. An agreement of sale was entered, permitting the two Councils to purchase the land.

The Resica Falls Scout Reservation was formed. The Reservation represented the two councils in a joint effort. The Federation operated the Reservation from 1957 to 1965.

In the formative years the Federation was directed by Mr. Harold West, better known as "Doc" West, who developed it into the camp we know today.

Following Mr. West, Mr. Clarence Deiffenderfer became Director of the Federation's Reservation and was followed by Mr. David Le Feber in 1965.

The Resica Falls Scout Reservation at the present time is divided into two camps:

BIG SPRINGS

Big Springs is a one week camp. It gets its name from the big spring within the camp area. It can accommodate some 250 boys and leaders for one week of camping.

GREAT BEND

Great Bend is a two week camp and derives its name from the bend in the Big Bushkill Creek. It can accommodate 250 boys and leaders per week.

For the Explorers, Resica Falls Scout Reservation provides the Firestone Explorer Base, located about 2-1/2 to 3 miles from the Reservation headquarters. Here the Explorers find adventure in canoeing, wilderness camping and sports of all kinds.

Firestone Explorer Base was given to Resica Falls Scout Reservation by the Firestone Foundation, through Mr. Roger S. Firestone, then President of Valley Forge Council.

On January 1, 1965, Valley Forge Council became the operator of Resica Falls Scout Reservation, by special agreement with Philadelphia Council, who became a silent partner.