

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, September 29, 2014

The Atlantic Indians, (1918–): Ruth and I returned Sunday night from a day at the annual Pow-Wow (trapshooting tournament) of the Atlantic Indians, a membership trapshooting organization founded in 1918. My father, T. Clarence Marshall, was a charter member and served as High Chief (President) in 1945–46. Ruth had never attended a trapshoot before, and it was my first since 1972. We were entertained royally at their annual banquet at the Inn at Pocono Manor and witnessed some of the competition at the nearby shooting grounds.

For most of their history, the “Indians” have had a membership numbering between 100 and 150, with an average attendance at their tournaments of about 100 shooters, 15 or 20 of whom are women. In the early years, the tournaments were held at various gun clubs in the northeast, but in 1930, the organization settled on Buckwood Inn at Shawnee-on-the-Delaware in Pennsylvania, where temporary traps were erected on the river bank and the lead shot fell into the Delaware River. It was a convenient location, equidistant from New York and Philadelphia with the four traps located on the front lawn of the hotel. Except for one year (1936), the annual three- or four-day shoot, usually in September, was held at Shawnee until the early 1980s. Fred Waring bought the property at the end of World War II and changed the name to Shawnee Inn.

Mainly because of environmental concerns, the Indians moved their fall tournament to Pocono Manor, about 25 miles northwest of Shawnee, in the early 1980s. Although over ½ mile from the inn, permanent shooting grounds were established that serve them well. In fact, a slightly smaller annual spring tournament is held in May at this location. These spring shoots are not new to the organization, either. In the 1930s and 1940s, usually one or two days in length, these shoots were held at the Wilmington Trapshooting Association, at the Quaker City Gun Club in Philadelphia, and on the boardwalk at Asbury Park, New Jersey, where shooters, standing on the boardwalk, shot at clay targets thrown over the ocean from temporary traps on the beach.

In 1923, the Rhode Island Reds, an early trapshooting organization, donated a heavy bronze trophy to the Atlantic Indians for an annual competition. It has an Indian brave with a spear sitting on his horse, and it weighs close to 100 pounds. The idea was that the shooter with the highest score in the handicap event each year would win “the horse” and have possession of the trophy for one year, after which he would bring it back for the next year’s competition. Each year’s winner’s name was engraved on the trophy. In addition, a small bronze replica about eight inches long was presented to the winner for his permanent possession. Many years ago, it became impractical to transport the full-sized trophy, so it stays at Pocono Manor. This year’s winner was 23-year-old Nathan Storb, who broke 92 out of 100 from 25 yards.

This was the 92nd year the “horse” has been in competition. Five shooters have won it twice. I won in 1942 and am the only living Indian who won it before 1968. That is the reason Ruth and I were invited to Pocono Manor this past weekend, so an ancient “has-been” could present the trophy to the 2014 winner. Our FAHP member Tom Bullock was responsible for our invitation. We enjoyed the experience and were treated like royalty.