

Skye Fournier

Dr. Clarke

AP US HISTORY

MollyOckett Day: a Commemoration of One of Bethel's Heroes

The spirit of MollyOckett must live on through the habitants of the Androscoggin area of Maine because MollyOckett is Maine's symbol of hope, healing, and strength as a native american women who dedicated her life to serving others.

MollyOckett experienced the hardships and terror inflicted upon the Abenaki's during the French and Indian War, and it's important to know the truth about what happened to everybody involved.. Celebrating MollyOckett guarantees the accurate truth about the past is carried on for generations. MollyOckett is an example of how many native americans chose to live a life of peace, avoiding the violence surrounding them. This fact has been misconstrued for many years, as Indians have been portrayed often as violent warriors. During the French and Indian War, Susanna Johnson and her family were captured by the Indians. Terrified by what was going to happen to her, she recalled the event in later years with a calm disposition. Johnson said," We expected a severe beating... but we were agreeably disappointed when we found that each Indian only gave us a tap on the shoulder" (Brumwell 43). Susanna's experience with the native americans challenges the belief that was still alive in Bethel until a few years ago. When a Wabanaki Indian watched the Bethel parade in 2012 with Arla Patch, she was horrified to see a float harboring children in face paint, whooping and hollering, holding tomahawks. This was how Bethel saw the Wabanaki's at that point, and Patch knew that she had to educate the town of Bethel about the truth. Since then, her dedication to revealing MollyOckett is important to the town because the community needs to understand what life was truly like for the native americans who once lived where we do now, so we can honor and appreciate them.

MollyOckett was important to Bethel and the neighboring towns because she served as a bridge between the white settlers and the Abenaki's during a momentous time. She was a role model of peace and good will for everybody in the New England area.. She was respected by everybody, and it's important to celebrate her grace and

power as a native american woman. Former headmaster of Gould Academy, Nathaniel T. True said "That she possessed more than ordinary ability among those of her sex and people is evident. She gained the respect and even the love of whites at a time of life when the mere mention of an Indian was wont to kindle up in the breasts of white men anything but pleasing emotions" [Sic] (Dr. Nathaniel T. True). During the French and Indian war, the tension between the white settlers and Indians was prominent. MollyOckett helped the white settlers when it was needed, but she never strayed from her roots as an Abenaki native american. Gale Courey Toensing, a reporter from *Indian Country Today*, said that MollyOckett "was called a bridge between the worlds of the Abenaki and the white settlers and was once referred to as "Androscoggin Valley's Florence Nightingale" (Toensing). MollyOckett was as a Christian Indian "Doctress" who was committed to healing any individual who was in need. One person was Hannibal Hamlin, who later grew up to be Abraham Lincoln's first vice president. MollyOckett not only helped to heal many people around the area, but she did so even after the fall of Quebec and the burning of Odanek by Major Robert Rogers and his Rangers in 1759 that scared her for her life. Her return home after the Treaty of Paris was signed, marked her dedication to healing others.

MollyOckett was a healer during confusing times for native americans, yet she continued to "walk a straight line", not faltering from her beliefs. Tumkin Hagen, the leader of the last Indian Raid of August 2-3, 1781, was to kill Colonel Clark. MollyOckett didn't believe in this, so she went against what was expected of her as a native american and saved the man's life. Her courage to put herself in danger by warning the man was seen as an act of humanity. Actions such as this make MollyOckett a role model for every citizen of the Androscoggin area. The Bethel community believes that by celebrating MollyOckett, we commemorate all she has done for this land and the people who lived here. During the presentation from members of "Truth and Reconciliation", we learned that some of the stories and the way MollyOckett was represented during the MollyOckett Day's festival was inaccurate. It is important to celebrate MollyOckett to educate the Androscoggin area about who MollyOckett really was, and how she dedicated her life to healing the people of her community.

Celebrating the life of MollyOckett is important to honoring the valuable things that she did for the people surrounding her. As a native american woman during the French and Indian War, she contributed to the success of the white settlers in addition to her people. Frequently MollyOckett would travel to Newry and Riley Plantation, where white settlers lived. She taught Martha Russell ways of native americans, showing she didn't want to see the white settlers leave this area. By helping the white settlers adapt and learn to live in a new world, she became a role

model for how to treat people. Today, her capacity for goodwill serves as one of the reasons we still celebrate her, and strive to educate everybody in the community about how powerful of a woman MollyOckett was.

MollyOckett Day is an event that is important to the community of Bethel, not just on the day of the festival but for the entire year. Cultural Assimilation of the native americans was a tragic time for the Indians, and it is hard for the Bethel community to hear about it now, many years later. By celebrating MollyOckett, it is ensured that the people affected by the horrors of the past can move on, and as a community, Bethel will be able to heal from the past and look forward to our future. Like the Androscoggin Valley's Florence Nightingale served as a bridge between two divergent cultures, MollyOckett Day is the bridge between accepting the truth about the past, and using the knowledge to grow and learn as a community. "The truth is our resilience, strength, humor and intelligence have saved us from extinction, will enable us to heal from generational trauma and will restore our culture so we may thrive as the distinct, unique, beautiful people the Creator meant for us to be." (Esther Attean, American's Who Tell The Truth).