

Press Release: 7/22/09

**Subject: Native Americans to Clean Up Historic Cemetery, Saturday 7/25/09,
8 a.m. - 6 p.m.**

MEDIA COVERAGE INVITED

Contact: Paul Nevin, Lancaster-York Native Heritage Advisory Council,
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Attached: Dritt Cemetery Photos
Excerpt from "Tritt Family History, Volume 1"

Local Native Americans will be cleaning up a historic cemetery at the new Native Lands County Park (York County) beginning at 8 a.m. this Saturday, July 25. Although most people know the park because it contains the site of last Susquehannock village and its associated cemeteries, it also contains the Dritt family cemetery. The Lancaster-York Native Heritage Advisory Council has organized the clean up of the Dritt cemetery because it feels that all of the burials at the park deserve to be respected and presented in a dignified atmosphere. Members of the Dritt/Tritt family have tried to maintain the cemetery over the years but have had difficulty. Presently the cemetery is a tangle of weeds and mile-a-minute vines.

The Dritt family was also "native" to the land that has recently become York's eleventh county park. The Jacob Dritt Mansion lies a short distance down the hill from the cemetery. The large stone house that is now the John & Kathryn Zimmerman Center for Heritage and home to the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area is believed to have been built in the 1730s or 1740s. It became known as the "Dritt Mansion" when Captain Jacob Dritt, who fought with militia from York in the American Revolution, resided there from 1773 until his death in 1817. Jacob was not buried in the cemetery. He drowned in the Susquehanna in December, 1817. His body was found the next Spring on a plantation in Maryland and is believed to have been buried there. Jacob's wife, Elizabeth, as well as seven of their children are buried in the cemetery, along with six other known burials of Dritt family members spanning four generations - the last being that of Emanuel Dritt who died in 1879.

The clean-up is being done as part of preparations for an event the group is planning to hold at Native Lands County Park on Saturday, October 17 to celebrate the preservation of the park's 1670's Susquehannock village site. A few members of the advisory council will be at the cemetery on Friday (July 24) to prepare for the cleanup, and Wayne and Leonard Tritt, descendents of a half-brother of Jacob Dritt, will also be visiting the site on Friday. A hiking trail that runs through the park is now open to the public and accessible from the adjacent Klines Run Park.

The cemetery is accessible to media via a short path from the rear of the Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area (formerly Lancaster-York Heritage Region) office located at 1706 Long Level Rd., Wrightsville, PA

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The Lancaster-York Native Heritage Advisory Council includes respected members of York and Lancaster counties' Native American community as well as non-Native participants with a deep interest in the Native American culture. The Council has been formed to ensure that the history and culture of the Native People of our area is preserved for future generations.