

THE LOST CITIES

Good day everyone...it's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.

In a number of future daily diaries on Pennsylvania, I'll repeat some of the stories of the lost cities of Pennsylvania. A few like Ephrata and Harmony you are probably well aware of, but there were others, interesting and odd places--all with a definite purpose. Asylum for a Queen--Asylum no longer exists, but French Royalists came to Pennsylvania to provide shelter for Queen Marie Antoinette, but they never got her out of France. A future King of France actually visited there--but the panthers in the wilds beyond Wilkes-Barre were said to be too much for the snuff-box Versaille crowd. Prince Gallitzin, at home in Russia with the Romanoffs, had a little better luck. He founded--along the crest of the Alleghenies--an altruistic colony where the lowliest would fare as well as the richest. The town of Gallitzin bears his name, but there is no colony existing--Once upon a time Horace Greeley, famed editor of the New York Tribune was the foster father of a queer Pennsylvania colony...communistic in nature...in Wayne County. Greeley had a nose for public relations so he deigned that a woman should rule that colony--like the queen bee in a hive, but when an early frost destroyed a slim crop--many headed back to New York where reptiles were safely in zoos and not in their colony... Celestia, on top of a bleak mountain in Sullivan County, is another lost city. Everything was to be shared equally--but

how can you share equally misery and starvation. The devout leader, a man named Armstrong and his wife stuck it out, but when they died they deeded their Celestia to God. Their major problem incidentally, was the collection of taxes...Once there flourished near Pottstown, a place called Battle Axe, another of Pennsylvania's lost cities; actually a nudist colony, long before its time. The Battle Axes themselves had a thin veneer of religion according to the historians and a red-hot PR man with the zeal of Billy Sunday...But none of the lost cities of Pennsylvania ever attracted such wide sentimental interest as did Ole Bull's Norweigan settlement in Potter county. We have a state park named for the most famous musician of the last century--Norway's violinist Ole Bull. He built a castle on the highest buff of 11,000 acres in Potter County and several hundred colonists came to Pennsylvania at his beck and call. Even Henry Clay of Kentucky contributed cash to this undertaking. But land harpies, capitalizing the enthusiastic and sentimental attitude of the public, quickly made real estate hash of the famous violinist's domain, and it failed completely and swiftly as the other lost cities have. Ole Bull's castle is a relic today; forgotten; Marie Antoinette's Asylum and Horace Greeley's Wayne county retreat too...dreams of grandeur and visions of ideal existence gone up into the smoke-dreams of Pennsylvania history.

This is Pete Wambach. It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania.