

What comes to mind when you think about Girl Scouts? Cookies, of course! How about history? There is a special interest group of middle and high school age girls in the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania Council called the Heritage Patrol. This group is dedicated to learning about our local history and then sharing this knowledge with others, especially children, and to providing service to local organizations working to preserve our heritage. What a perfect fit when you live in or near Historic Bethlehem!

The Heritage Patrol did its first Burnside Plantation event on September 19, 1988. It was called Archeology Dig for Kids. They followed that up with assisting at a Living History Day in November of the same year. They have been seen volunteering at numerous events through the years since, sometimes assisting with preplanned activities, sometimes designing their own programs. Presently, the Heritage Patrol Girl Scouts volunteer at the Blueberry Festival in July and the Lehigh County Open Gate Tour in October.

At the Blueberry Festival, the Heritage Patrol can be found interacting with the young guests by assisting them to make historic crafts and teaching how to play colonial games. There are also girls who have purchased appropriate fabric and made their own colonial garments. These girls demonstrate and do hands-on activities outside of the summer kitchen to assist the Foodways group.

Historic Bethlehem Partnership and the Heritage Patrol have a long history of working together. Recently, they have been seen volunteering at the Turkey Trot in November. When Historic Bethlehem wanted to teach historic crafts and games to children visiting Musikfest, the Heritage Patrol stepped up and designed and ran a program in 1986. This program is still in existence today. It is called Historic Krafts for Kids and runs the Monday through Friday of Musikfest in the afternoon at the Luckenbach Mill. This program is offered to individual girls and boys, ages 6-12, and to Brownie and Junior troops. The children can do an hour, an afternoon, or all week. For more information, contact Sandra Villard at 610-253-0620.

The Heritage Patrol also does yearly events for only Brownie and Junior Girl Scout troops at Historic Bethlehem sites. These events include Burnside Plantation Day at the Burnside Plantation in November, Victorian Pastimes at the Kemmerer Museum in February, and Moravian Memories at the Colonial Industrial Quarters in April.