



SUSQUEHANNA SUMMER SOLSTICE FEST

# SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS

Susquehanna  
SolsticeFest.com

WED JUNE 14 - SUN JUNE 18, 2023

French Azilum, PA

SAT  
JUNE  
17  
4:00 -  
4:30 PM



The Cabin

## KAREN EDELSTEIN

### EARLY JOURNEYS FROM PA TO SIX NATIONS/ HAUDENOSAUNEE TERRITORY

Karen Edelstein returns to SSSSF to present a lecture on the 18th-century explorations by Moravian missionaries travelling from Pennsylvania into the wilderness of Central New York, home to the Gayogohono (Cayuga) people. The accounts of these missionaries provide a fascinating window into the pre-colonial landscape of PA and NY, and the indigenous people residing there.

Although far fewer in number today than they were in the 1700s, the Gayogohono are still present the Finger Lakes, and are a living and growing culture. Too often, Karen believes, in recent newspaper articles and other reporting, the emphasis has been on the devastation inflicted upon Native Americans, rather than their rich culture, and the thriving continuance of their legacy.

The word “palimpsest” aptly describes Karen’s fascination with the deep layers of geography and how our places of habitation influence our world views. Palimpsest, in the art world, is a term that describes how a sheet of vellum used in antiquity as writing surface could be scraped off to create a blank sheet for a new text. Previous traces on the vellum emerge through current images as a residue of the original. Similarly, places of habitation have layers of culture and nature that still inform and influence the present. Those layers include history, culture, language, and geography; the influences of these components help to create a unique “sense of place.”

For Karen’s talk at SSSF she will reference the original diaries of some of the earliest Europeans in our region—Moravian missionaries who set out from near Bethlehem, PA towards Syracuse, NY with the hopes of establishing mission outposts along the way. Karen’s fascination extends into how place names, such as Towanda, Mehoopany, Tunkhannock or Wyalusing are rooted in indigenous languages and perceptions of the natural world. Related to this, she is also active in the Ithaca-based Gayogohono Learning Project, which seeks to revitalize Gayogohono, the language of original inhabitants of the greater Cayuga Lake region.

Karen was trained as an environmental cartographer and has a masters degree in environmental management from Cornell. For many years, she worked in the field of land conservation. Until just recently she was a staffer for Fracktracker Alliance, an organization that maps and monitors the environmental and public health impacts of the oil and gas industry. Her concern with the environment, communities, and ecology all dovetailed nicely in this role.