



## We Hit the Jackpot

*By J.T. Fleegle*

EVER DREAM of hitting Powerball? I do. Oh, the things I would do. For certain, this would be the last installment of the Life and Times series. I'm sure my two dedicated fans would be disappointed; but, hey, those are the breaks. Granted, I don't live in poverty and I'm pretty sure of my next meal, but not having to worry about everyday things anymore is very appealing.

So what if I did live the "hard" life? What if I wasn't sure of how I would keep my family fed and warm through the winter? What if the grocery store was the great outdoors and the shelves were barely stocked? This might be my situation if I had lived in Europe during the era of colonization. Depleted resources at home and unknown riches abroad spurred the exploration and "discovery" of new worlds. And if I was lucky, I would survive the 5-month journey across the Atlantic and in doing so "hit the jackpot."

As you well know, life was not all roses and daisies for colonists of the New World. But the treasures that it held were beyond anything they dreamed of in their homeland. In 1682, when William Penn arrived in his newly acquired province, he was flabbergasted at the natural wealth he found. He wrote that elk, deer, raccoons, beaver, rabbits, turkeys and pigeons were so plentiful that "they run in droves into the house in cold weather." Well, I'm not quite sure I believe that but, the fact is, Pennsylvania was teeming with wildlife, and the effort required to obtain it was far less than anything experienced in the Old World.

The population in Pennsylvania hit 300,000 by 1776, a 500 percent increase in just 60 years. And the colonists did what anyone would do if they hit the lottery. They spent their money. Deer were abundant and a primary food source. The venison that was not sold or traded was salted and used by the colonists themselves. In time, Penn's Woods were transformed for agriculture, providing even more food for the growing numbers of residents of the commonwealth.

The natural resource account was busting at the seams and the bank was always open. No one was turned away. Colonists had everything they needed and apparently all they really had to do was leave the door open on a cold night to wake up to a house full of game. What could go wrong?