

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Summer 2025

THE WERNER FAMILY

by

Alfred Werner

While creating Nockamixon State Park, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania upended the dreams and legacies of many families, among them, my parents James and Elfriede Werner. Although not landowners, my father had become the caretaker of a large dairy farm along Mink Road in Bedminster Township in Bucks County. A county resident since birth, James Werner grew up in Hilltown Township on a small dairy farm on the Pleasant Spring Creek on the east side of Diamond Street at its intersection with School House Road. James' father was tragically killed when James was ten years old. My grandmother, daughter of Dr. Daniel Landis of Blooming Glen, decided to try and keep the farm. My grandmother, with the work of my father and his two younger brothers, plus help from the community and friends kept the farm. My grandmother remarried a farmer in 1940, and the farm stayed in the family until 1969.



My father in front of his childhood home.

It was during this time that my father decided he wanted to be a successful dairy farmer. The dream grew stronger as time progressed. He graduated a year early from Sell Perk High School in 1944. After helping his stepfather for a year, he enlisted in the army in November of 1945. My father was blessed. The war had ended and although trained to be a sniper, he became a driver for the American legal team prosecuting war crimes. Stationed near Fulda, Germany, he transported lawyers, aides, witnesses and even some defendants during the war trials. In between driving chores, he met a young German girl, Elfie, who had also lost her father. A baker by trade, her father had his bakery confiscated and was eventually drafted into the German army as a cook. He was never heard from again after the Germans invaded Russia.

Elfie had a little brother. My father used to bribe him with chocolate candy, a rare luxury in Germany then, to have some time alone with her. They would hike in the hills surrounding Fulda. They both loved nature and after some time, each other. My father told her stories of the wide-open farmlands from which he came, the hunting, fishing and serenity offered by a life in America. Eventually they decided to marry.

Some of my mother's relatives had immigrated to America before the war and Uncle Otto now worked with the German consulate in Washington, DC. After months of negotiating, she was finally allowed to travel to the United States with a proviso she be married within 30 days of her arrival. My father was discharged in April 1947. He would have to wait until August for his Elfie to arrive. My father borrowed my grandparents' car and drove to Philadelphia to pick her up.

My mother landed in Philadelphia, in a strange land, knowing no one and being of German descent, was shown no courtesies given other arrivals of the day. She would have to adjust to this treatment from strangers for about a decade until she lost her accent and other customs. My father took her to my grandparents' farm to live. Here she became close to my father's sister, Dorothy, and his cousin, Wilhelmina

Peters, who lived on a farm on School House Road close to my grandparents. By the time my parents were married in September the three girls had developed a strong bond.

While all this was going on, a local “gentleman” farmer, Mr. Richard Walsh, was expanding his farm. He and his wife had purchased Green Hills Farm in the late 1930’s. As their grain farm prospered, they expanded with the purchase of an adjoining farm on what is now known as Welcome House Road. My brother James Jr., (Jimmy) joined the family in 1948 and my parents decided it was time to leave my grandmother’s house. With the help of a family friend, Lloyd “Poppy” Yoder, my father was hired to work on the new farm. My father and his family would reside on the second farm. It wasn’t the dairy farm he dreamt of, but it was a good start for the young family to begin their lives together.

The young family soon was invited to attend gatherings at Green Hills Farm. My mother became part of the staff that prepared for these gatherings. Mrs. Walsh recognized the difficulties of being a German war bride and quickly took to assisting my mother in her Americanization. Mrs. Walsh was at the same time trying to establish an orphanage for “Amerasian” youth often abandoned by American servicemen. She would go on to create the Welcome House Adoption Agency. Poppy Yoder would adopt over a dozen of the children. Mrs. Walsh also adopted several of these children herself. My mother helped plan and host gatherings, fund raisers and even fashion shows to promote Mrs. Walsh’s agency.

It was during these busy times I was born in 1950. I don’t remember it at all, but it was during my infancy, at one of these events, I had my brush with celebrity. My mother had a photograph of some of Mrs. Walsh’s friends, Oscar Hammerstein and James Michener, passing me around like a football with Mrs. Walsh cheering them on.

During that busy summer of 1950, my father was



My father (with glasses) is knee deep in the 1950 dam construction.

recruited to help build a small dam on the Tohickon Creek. My father first met Mr. Phillips, owner of Tohickon Creek farm, and his adjoining neighbor. Their properties had a common line running in the creek. It was in this vicinity they wanted to build a dam. Why my father was chosen to assist was never related to me, but I suspect the Walshes had something to do with it. He helped choose the site for the dam that would create a small pool of water within a couple of hundred feet of two cabins, one on either property owner’s land. This pool would become one of the favorite swimming holes of the neighborhood children.

My sister Rosemary joined the family in 1951. My father’s dream of a dairy farm got a shot in the arm when Mrs. Walsh recommended my father to her friend and fellow author Carmen Phillips. Mr. Phillips was quick to hire him because of his work ethic and attitude during the dam construction the year before. Late in 1951, the Werner family left Green Hills Farm and headed to Tohickon Creek Farm, the Phillips Farm, located in Bedminster Township. The accommodations were not quite as nice as Mrs. Walsh’s (per my parents, I don’t remember) but the job of managing a dairy farm was more than my father could resist.

The first thing he suggested and persuaded the Phillips to approve was the acquisition of Golden Guernsey cattle. A new refrigeration system for the milk house and other improvements followed. My dad went on to raise two state champions for milk production. High calcium and vitamin D content were the characteristics my father looked for in his cows. One cow, “Goldie,” produced almost 27 quarts a day.

My sister Helen (Leni) joined the troops in 1956. My mother was still assisting Mrs. Walsh as often as she could. It was also during this time that Mrs. Phillips adopted an Amerasian girl, Mitsuko, through the Welcome House Agency. With the Phillips’ two sons, four Werner kids and Mitsuko the farm became a plethora of children. We ran rampant over the farm. Swimming in the creek or the farm pond was a summertime staple. Visits from the Aspinall boys, Eddie Gilmer, the Godlewskis and the Flecks were some of the highlights of my summer days.

My father would soon meet with a State representative and the Army Corp of Engineers to discuss the construction of a dam for a recreational lake. My father knew the terrain from his farming, hunting and fishing in the area. He also remembered discussions that he had during the construction of the 1950 dam. My father suggested the span would be the shortest at the steep slopes along the eastern side of the creek in the neighborhood of the 1950 dam. He had no idea how tall the dam would be or how much water was going to be retained.

As all this was going on my father began the task of



The gang (from left to right) Denny Aspinall, Eddie Gilmer, Rosi Werner, Freddy Werner, Jimmy Werner, Arlene Fleck and Dougie Aspinall.

dismantling his dream dairy farm as the State had already begun negotiations with the Phillips to acquire the farm. The Phillips allowed us to stay on the farm until settlement, but my parents bought a house in Quakertown. We moved to town in 1959 when the state took possession of the farm. My father would go on to become a policeman in Quakertown and spend 30 years on the force. Known as “Pops” by the locals, he was always ready with a story about dairy farming, his hunting escapades or just about anything else. He related well to almost everyone he met. He lost his dream to Lake Nockamixon but the experiences led him to his calling.

My mother got more than she bargained for so long ago. She worked for Pearl S. Buck (Mrs. Walsh), rubbed shoulders with Oscar Hammerstein and James Michener, helped my father realize his life ambition of being a successful dairy farmer and raised a family of seven children. She worked as a credit manager for Sears Roebuck, as a bookkeeper for Kelly Construction and Belle Haven Nursing Home. In her spare time, she spent 24 years on the Quakertown Borough Council.

Lake Nockamixon is a wonderful asset for the citizens of Pennsylvania, but the hopes and dreams of so many people are buried in its water.



A visit from some of the Welcome House Kids. They came to see Mitsuko. I believe the one on the far right is Pearl Buck’s adopted daughter, Henrietta, and on the far left is Paul Yoder.



Second Bluebird fledgling ready to leave our Bluebird house in the garden at the Stokes House.

Memorial Bench for Clayton Fox, Jr. in Nockamixon State Park

by Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

This Memorial Bench, located in Nockamixon State Park, has been placed here by "The Friends of Nockamixon," in honor and memory of my cousin Clayton G. Fox Jr. (December 30, 1941-September 8, 2024).

He is honored for all the years of heavy-duty volunteer work he did on the horse trails in Nockamixon State Park. Clayton and his beloved wife, Linda, worked with other volunteers to keep the trails clear of brush and fallen trees. Clayton operated his backhoe, chain saw, and a tractor mower to remove obstacles in the trails. Generous with his time, Clayton was a tireless worker who also volunteered for over 30 years with the Perkasee Garden Club, plowing their large lot at the corner of North Fifth Street and Blooming Glen Road. He was a long-time member of our Haycock Historical Society.

The bench is situated alongside the section of the walking trail which crosses between the boat rental and its parking lot in Nockamixon State Park. A small concrete bridge on the trail is adjacent to the bench.

This is the site of Clayton's childhood farm, where he helped his father, Clayton Fox Sr., farm the land. Clayton was driving a tractor by the age of ten, plowing and planting crops, and mowing and baling hay for their dairy farm. They raised Jersey cows for the rich milk they produced.

The boat rental area was once a field for crops. The parking lot site was once a pasture for the family's cows and horses. The entrance to the parking lot is on what was the site of the Fox farmhouse. Clayton loved the farm. Clayton was also a lover of horses, and rode their horse, "Mel Red." When Mel Red gave birth to a male foal, he became Clayton's horse, "Chief Pale Face," so named because the foal's face was all white.

In 1956, when Clayton was 15, his family sold the farm to the Search family and moved to the Mountain House on Old Bethlehem Road in Haycock. The Search family had to give up the farm to the state in 1961 for the Nockamixon State Park.

Clayton met and married Linda Scheetz. They shared their love of horses, and through the years took many trail rides over many states, as well as in Nockamixon Park. They loved spending time at their second home in the mountains.

Clayton was employed as the Roadmaster for Haycock Township, then had his own business as an excavator for over 35 years before retiring in 2020.

Clayton and Linda did much volunteer mowing for other sites, including the grounds and cemetery at the Tohickon Church in Keelersville, and at the Stokes House, our HHS headquarters.

He did volunteer work with his backhoe and truck. Several times he smoothed gravel onto and filled in the washed-out areas of Apple Road leading to the Stokes House.



Banding the Purple Martins

By Marla Burke

The Haycock Historical Society's Environmental Enrichment Committee made the decision that the profits from their newest book, *Haycock Township - Through Nature's Lens*, would fund environmental enrichment. One of the first projects was to add another 18 gourd Purple Martin tower at the marina. This additional tower helped to create an extremely active year in and around where the towers are located.

Every gourd in the new tower had a nest built in them, with most gourds having eggs as well. By mid-June, there were a total of 212 eggs and 3 chicks in all the towers at the marina. That is an incredible number for this one location.

A few members of the Haycock Historical Society, along with some people passing by, were able to witness the counting and banding of some of the baby birds in early July. The towers were lowered, and each gourd was checked. If the young birds were large enough to band, information was logged in as they were weighed and their wings were measured. A blue band was placed on their left leg indicating the location (Nockamixon State Park), and year, and a silver band with a specific number on their right leg that helps the United States Geological Society to gather data. They will collect information like bird population, migration patterns, survival rates and environmental factors to help with wildlife conservation.

Banding must be done by a person that has a federal banding permit. The process will also be done in stages since the young will hatch at different times. It was fun watching the skilled hands of the people banding the birds and witnessing all the different stages of growth in each gourd. They will soon be migrating south on their long journey to Brazil to spend their winter before returning next spring. Safe travels little ones.



Fledgling Purple Martin being banded before being returned to its nest.



Gourd House lowered for banding the young birds



Four Bluebird eggs in our Bluebird house, all hatched and fledged successfully see page 3.



THANK YOU

Thank you **Cathy Weible** for the donation of her Grandmother's (**Julia Frances Cramp**) typewriter.



THANK YOU

Thank you **Mike Burkhard** for the donation of an egg basket from **Ewald and Lottie Hinz** farm (near Mt. Airy School) and yearbooks from Tohickon Church.



Clint Flack

Clint Flack, Exhibit Specialist at the Mercer Museum, gave a presentation on the Doan Gang at our April 2025 Meeting.



Colin Monahan

Colin Monahan gave a presentation on the Purple Martin project at Lake Nockamixon at our May 2025 meeting.

FRIDAY MORNING COFFEE

Friday coffee at Stokes will continue each Friday from 10 a.m. until noon, until the end of October. Members and visitors are all welcome.

KRINGLE 2025

Dec. 5th, 10:00 - 7:00

Dec. 6th, 10:00 - 6:00

Dec. 7th, 10:00 - 4:00

FREE ACCESS TO PENNSYLVANIA RECORDS ON ANCESTRY

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx>

Past years' issues of our Newsletter are available on our web site. www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org

"Our Lost Tohickon Valley" and "Haycock Township and Eddie Bauer" are available as E-Books on Amazon

PRINT VERSIONS

"Haycock Township and Eddie Bauer" is available at Stokes Headquarters, Haycock Township Building, and Margie Fulp

"Our Lost Tohickon Valley" is available at Sines 5&10, Stokes Headquarters, Haycock Township Building, The Treasure Trove in Perkasio, and Margie Fulp

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MEETINGS

September 18, 2025: 7 p.m. Barbara McLaughlin will do a presentation on old items from our past whose purposes have become obscure.

October 16, 2025: 7 p.m. "Oscar Hammerstein, The Journey of Highland Farm" presented by **Julie Flack**, board member of The Oscar Hammerstein Museum of Theatre and Education Center

November 20, 2025: 7 p.m. "Lenape" presented by **Carla Messinger**, **Turtle Clan Lenape**, and Director of Native American Cultural Heritage Programs.

Third Thursday meetings are held at the Haycock Community Center, formerly the Haycock Elementary School, at Old Bethlehem Road and Sawmill Road, in Applebachsville. The meeting room is Community Room West.'

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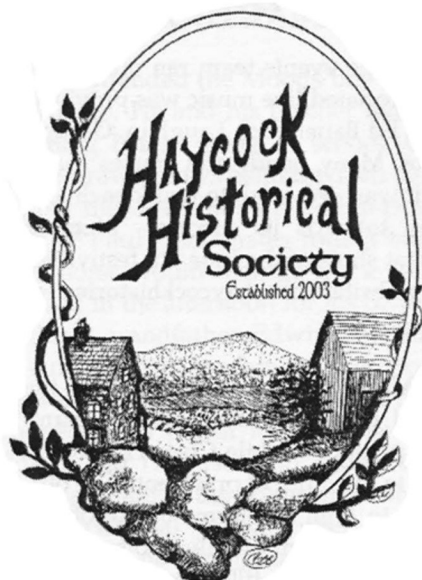
Please submit material for the newsletter or suggestions for interviews to Margie Fulp. (267-772-0711) or margiefulp@gmail.com

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I WANT TO BE PART OF RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY AND PRESERVING IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

- ☐ **Individual Membership - \$20/year**
Receive quarterly newsletter and attend all special functions this year – Jan. thru Dec.
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