

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Fall 2012

ICE CREAM IN DECEMBER

by Jim Tirjan

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One cold day in December 1945 my mother told me we'd be going to Grandma's in Haycock that night, a trip of ten or eleven miles from our house in Quakertown. I had only been to the farm on summer days where I had explored the pastures and gardens and played in the long grass with her collie, Shep.

Car trips were un-usual in themselves because gas had been rationed during the war. And country roads were very dark at night and not often plowed in winter. I did not understand why Mom and Dad, my sister, Marge, and I would drive out on a snowy night but little children do not question such grown-up plans. As we headed down snow-covered roads Aunt Cass, Uncle Jake and their kids followed behind us in their car.

"Mom, I can't see," I whimpered. It was very cold on my side of the back seat. The absolute rule was that kids must sit in the back and Marge's own rule was that I must stay on my side of the driveshaft hump.

"Margie, let Jimmy have the middle tonight," Mom said. Margie grumbled. Her rule was not even a finger over the driveshaft hump. Mom's permission was a surprise.

"Ha, ha," I teased from my high point. "I can see right out the windshield and you can't." Big, beautiful snowflakes zoomed into the headlights and disappeared over the car like magic.

The dusty summer roads were now smooth and silent under the muffling snow. No cars passed us in either direction. Leaving the faint lights of little houses and dark open fields behind, the road entered low, marshy woods. Dad's old Plymouth heater had long since quit and you couldn't get parts during the war. Mom wiped the fog off the windshield so he could see. Marge and I cleared our side windows with our sleeves.

I didn't know that this was a special occasion but I was happy to be singing Christmas carols although Marge was grumpy on her side. I did rub it in because my improved status was proper and justified no matter what the reason. Mom and Dad were

cheerful in the front seat, always glad to be with more of the family. They were also relieved the war was over and the soldiers would be coming home. Dad wouldn't have to work long hours at Consolidated Vultee, the defense contractor at the Willow Grove Naval Air Station which built military aircraft.



Jim Tirjan and Shep at the Haycock farm of his grandparents, Bruno and Eva Schmidt

We were singing "*Santa Claus is Coming to Town*" when behind us, Uncle Jake flashed his lights and tooted. We stopped in the middle of nowhere. Then without explanation, Dad got out, opened the trunk and disappeared into the night with Jake. We heard loud thuds and smashes like breaking glass, then laughter. Margie and I couldn't see anything in the swirling snow. When they reappeared, they heaved something heavy into the trunk, brushed snow off the windshields and we set out again. Neither Dad nor Mom would say what they did in the woods or what went into the trunk. Mom just

began to hum "*Jingle Bells*" again and we all sang along.

The huge rock that marked the last leg of our trip to the farm on summer days now loomed like a white wall in the middle of the road, almost invisible.

"Somebody who didn't know it's here could drive right into it tonight," Dad said. "And the rock would win for sure." He inched us around it on the narrow road. "Years ago," he went on, "when the government, the WPA, built this road, the rock was so big they couldn't break it and so heavy they couldn't move it. So they left it." He sounded pleased that even the federal government could not move a Pennsylvania stone.

The road was very dark beyond the headlights because no electricity ran down it then. The road didn't even have a name until 1961 when it became Harrisburg School Road. The one-room New Harrisburg School house sat right across the road from Grandma's farm.

When we visited in summer we parked on the side of the road and walked up through Grandma's flower gardens, under a long grape arbor into the sunroom. There would be Grandpa

in his rocker reading his German bible or saying the rosary. Now in winter, potted flowers and cactus crowded benches and shelves, filling the porch with blooms and smells of spring. They never froze because she left the cellar door open. The warmer air rose from the bins where she kept root vegetables and the shelves of preserves she had put up the season before.

I made sure never to go anywhere near that cellar because a big black snake lived down there.

"You stay away from him. He's as good as a cat," she warned us kids. "He's there to catch mice. He knows me. I say hello to him every time I go down."

A few years later my cousin, Ed, was surprised by a black snake in the pasture the older boys used to play baseball. It was only innocently sunning itself on the stone that was their second base when he beat it to death with the bat. When Ed held it up it was as long as he was tall, about five feet. He was so proud of himself he ran to show Grandma what he had done.

Oh, she was furious. "You dumfkopf! Snakes are good!" She grabbed the bloody bat from his hand and flung it as far as she could. Nobody moved. "You're going to dig me a proper grave for this good old snake, my friend for years." Her hand on Ed's shoulder they marched off to the far side of her garden and that was the end of baseball for a long time.

That winter night we lugged bags of heavy, drippy stuff in from the trunk. A paraffin oil lamp burned on the counter. White candles flickered on the tablecloth and the kitchen smelled really delicious. We hung our coats and sweaters on the rickety, old clothes tree near the door. In summer this was my secret hiding place even when we put our wet raincoats on it. I liked to hide under the coats and listen secretly to the adults who always spoke German together. They discovered me when I pulled the whole thing over and that was the end of that. Heated by a wood-burning stove, the kitchen was the only warm room in the house. A wood fire burned all night. There was no indoor plumbing, either. Everyone took a turn hauling



Haycock home of Bruno and Eva Schmidt

water from the well outside and truded outside for the other business.

"Will we have cake, Mom?" I asked.

"Not right away," she said, unloading a crunchy, heavy bag. Dad and Uncle Jake were making a lot of noise in the sunroom, moving something heavy around. There was more glass breaking.

"First we're going to have a very special treat. For you!" She pushed open the door to the sunroom. "Here's the salt," she announced through the doorway.

A big tin washtub now stood in the middle of the blooming room, half filled with crushed ice. Uncle Jake scattered salt from the bag on top of the ice and then poured on another layer of ice. So that was the breaking glass sound I had heard. In the middle of the tub stood a galvanized bucket with a crank handle on one side.

"We're going to make your favorite peach ice cream," Mom said. "Grandma's got everything all ready. All we have to do is turn the handle to stir it as it gets hard."

"You first, Jimmy," Grandma said. She showed me how. The older kids watched impatiently.



Ice cream maker

"He's too little," Margie said. Grandma glared at her.

"Got enough salt?" Mom asked.

"Took three pounds, I guess that'll cool it."

Grandma had stirred her cream, her canned peaches and precious sugar, still rationed, from another bag we had brought in from the trunk of the car. At home we had always gone out to the corner grocery store to get ice cream. I had never heard of anyone making it.

After a dozen turns the mix stiffened up and I could barely move the handle. I graciously allowed the big kids to have their turns but it still took twenty minutes to firm up.

"Okay, that's good," Grandma said. Dad and Uncle Jake carefully lifted the ice cream maker out of the ice. First Grandma lifted out the gooey wooden paddles dripping mushy ice cream. "This is for the special boy," she said, handing them to me with a towel to catch the goop. The soft ice cream ran down my chin. Margie and my cousins reached long spoons over to scoop up what was falling off. "Now we're ready for the cake."

Yet it wasn't until they all sang *Happy Birthday, Dear Jimmy* that I realized that this fuss was all for me! It came as a complete surprise that I was now four. There were no presents because December 11 was so close to Christmas.

We ate the whole can of ice cream and scraped the last frosting off the cake plate. I ate so fast I got a headache and a tummy ache. The celebration over, adult conversation drifted away from the subject of wonderful me and my birthday, to the weather, the old car, jobs and other dull topics. More and more they spoke German so Grandpa could join in. As the ice cream headache faded, my eyelids grew very heavy. I slipped into the living room, closed the door and crawled onto the cushiony sofa under warm wooly coats. The last thing I remember was the murmur of their rising and falling voices in the next room.

This was the best birthday of my entire life.



HAYCOCK PROFILES: OSCAR AND ALFRED FREI

By Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

Martin Frei (1884-1956), from Baden, Germany, and Magdalena Widmer (1886-1958), from Alsace Lorraine, married in Germany in 1910. Because Alsace Lorraine was at times under French rule, Magdalena could speak both German and French. Martin and Magdalena emigrated from Germany to America, and arrived at Ellis Island on October 10, 1910. They lived in Philadelphia for two years, and then moved in 1912 to Haycock Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, where they bought the Derstine farm. The buildings on the farm were a house, barn, smoke house, creamery, and four chicken houses. The house was lost in a fire, and Martin built an attractive, new, large farm house with a porch.

The 50-60 acre Frei farm was on what was then Ridge Road, now named Mountain View Drive, and lay at the base of Haycock Mountain. Up on the mountain was a constantly running spring, which flowed from a small opening in the ground. Martin made good use of this water, by piping it down to his farm by way of 1800 feet of one inch diameter piping. The pipe was buried underground, and ran down the Haycock Mountain to the Frei home. With such high water pressure, the Freis were able to have indoor plumbing not only on the first floor of their house, but also on the second story. Occasionally the pipe would clog, and they would have to climb the mountain and clear away the debris. In the basement was a separate open well, which was occasionally used. The water piped from the mountain would sometimes freeze, and at these times, water was taken from the well.

Martin and Magdalena Frei had seven children: Helena, John, Eleanora, William, Oscar, Herman, and Alfred. Oscar, born in 1919, and Alfred, born in 1926, both remember attending the Hickory Grove one-room school on Ridge Road. Their teachers, whom they hold in high regard, were Margaret Litzenberger, Mary Horne Stone, Frances Guers, and Lando Moyer. Lando Moyer taught Oscar for most of Oscar's eight years at Hickory Grove. Water for the school was supplied by the Freis. The boys carried a bucket of water from home, with the bucket hanging from a stick, a boy on each side. Warren High, a member of the school board, would often visit the school and sit in on the classes to observe how the students were doing. At

recess the children played games such as tag, "fox and geese," and prisoner's base. Clarence and Emma Johnsons' children, Grace, Wilmer and Walter, were classmates of Oscar and Alfred Frei in the Hickory Grove School.

At Christmas time there was always a Christmas tree (a cedar) at school, and the students presented a program on Christmas Eve. Joe Pearson, another Haycock native, remembers a school program about the Charles Dickens's Christmas story of Scrooge, in which Joe played the role of Tiny Tim, and was carried in on the shoulders of Alfred Frei, who portrayed Bob Cratchit.

For a Christmas tree at home, the Freis cut down a cedar tree in their woods. Magdalena made many kinds of cookies. Alfred remembers her hard anise-flavored springerles, and Oscar recalls the cut-out cookies, called "butter confects." They always had a good Christmas.

In the beginning, Martin used big draft horses for his farming, but Oscar and Alfred have more memories of the tractors. The first one was a Fordson, and after that their father used John Deere tractors. Alfred remembers his older brother, Bill, putting him up on a tractor when Alfred was about 7 years old. The family grew wheat, corn, oats and hay. Corn was fed to the chickens, and oats and hay to the horses. The family had their own grinder and ground the corn and wheat to make mash for the animals, and ground oats for feed. Martin had a Ford Model T truck, which he used to take wheat to a mill in Perkasio, where the wheat was ground into flour for the family's use. He also drove the truck around to the farmers to collect their eggs, to take along with his, to the egg auction in Doylestown. The Freis had many chickens, pigs, and one Holstein milk cow. Alfred remembers helping with the chickens and keeping the wood box full in the kitchen. In earlier years they had sheep grazing on the lawn to keep the grass short. There were always dogs and cats. Oscar remembers a white dog, named Spitz, which their mother, Magdalena, taught to do tricks. Magdalena paid off the mortgage with her chicken momey.

To stock up on food for the winter, the Freis would butcher one or two hogs. Martin made scrapple, sausage, liverwurst, and hams. He used buckwheat flour in the scrapple, which gave the scrapple an



Arlene and Oscar Frei



Alfred and Ruth Frei



Martin Frei, pre 1910



Magdalena Frei in front of the Frei home

especially good taste. Nowadays Alfred buys his scrapple from Baringers' Meats in Richlandtown, because that scrapple is also made with buckwheat, and is much like his father's. The hams and liverwurst were smoked in the smokehouse. Magdalena canned some of the pork. She canned vegetables from the family's large truck patch. These included peas, corn, tomatoes, string beans, carrots, and lima beans. She also made jellies and jams from a large variety of fruits: apples, black berries, quince, raspberries, and pears. She used a wood stove and was an excellent cook. This stove also heated water for the house. Along with eggs and scrapple for breakfast, Magdalena would make "big pancakes," or crepes, in a large 12 inch skillet. The family would roll up fruit, jam, or jelly in the crepes, and sprinkle them with powdered sugar. Alfred remembers one sister made small griddle cakes. Magdalena made her own noodles. She rolled the dough out thin, cut the noodles in strips, and then shook them out to separate them. She also made spatzle, which was a tiny pasta eaten with meat and gravy, or fried with butter and bread to eat with fruit. Potatoes were another vegetable grown in the garden, and added to the meals.

Before they had electricity in their home, the Freis used Aladdin kerosene lamps, which gave out a bright light. Next they used a gasoline powered Onan generator for their lighting. The generator would be run in the evening, and turned off at a switch in the house when the family was ready to turn off the lights. Magdalena did her laundry with a gasoline powered washing machine, which was in the creamery. In this building was a big kettle over a boiler which was used to heat water for washing clothes. This kettle was also used at pig butchering time to cook the meat.

Martin operated a saw mill on his farm. A steam engine was first used to power the mill, but was unsatisfactory for the job,

so Martin then used a tractor. He logged trees from his woods to saw up into lumber to be used for building. The Freis also put a saw on the front of a tractor and went to other farms where they sawed up fire wood for the owner.



Magdalena and Martin Frei family circa 1927

To provide a variety of meat for their meals, the Freis hunted rabbits, pheasants and deer. Some of the older brothers did trapping, and caught skunks, opossums, muskrats and the occasional weasel. They sold the furs to Bleams in Quakertown.

The boys went swimming at Stovers' Dam, which was a gathering place on Sundays. Ben Schmidt put a refreshment stand at the site, and sold ice cream, soda and candy. Other activities were riding their bicycles on the roads, and playing baseball at home. On Sunday afternoons, relatives from Philadelphia often visited the farm. Martin's sister Marie would bring her three children, plus some of their friends, up from the city. With the Freis' seven children, and about six visiting children, they had a large group with which to have fun. They liked to hike up Haycock Mountain, and climb the fire tower at the top of the mountain. From there they enjoyed a broad view of the surrounding countryside. The tower was built in the 1930's by the



Frei family - Alfred in middle, Oscar second from the right, and John on far right

WPA, which provided jobs for people during the depression years.

Neighbors to the Freis were the Kinzlers, Johnsons, Frilings, Richters, and Lindmeiers. The Friling blacksmith shop was between the Johnson and Frei farms. Fritz Lindmeier had a furniture shop at the Harrow, and made beautiful cedar chests. In World War II the Kinzlers' son, Eddie, flew many flights with the 8th Air Force in Europe. The Richters' son, George, flew 17 missions over Germany during World War II.

Before rural mail delivery, Oscar and Alfred walked to the post office which was down the road from the Richters' farm. Oliver Ott was the postmaster. The boys would cut across a field and walk down Richters' lane. When Oscar was in eighth grade, he drove his older brother's car to pick up the mail. Oscar and Alfred worked with Bill Gulden on his farm which lay alongside the Tohickon Creek in Bedminster Township. They also knew Winfield Keller, who had a farm in Haycock Township, across the Tohickon Creek from the Guldens. Winfield had a baler on his truck and went around to the farmers to do their baling. Alfred remembers delivering feed to Bruno Schmidt. Families in the valley were friends, and worked and helped each other on the farms.

The Kellers Church Grange No. 1802 was another gathering place. A meeting was held there every Monday evening. Once a year the members had a picnic and dance. At the grange, mock court trials were a source of entertainment for the community. Fictional cases were tried. Ted Lewis and Milton Hilmer often portrayed the opposing lawyers. Local people would play the roles of witnesses and defendants. Everyone had a good time at these trials.

Alfred and his future wife, Ruth Wampfler, were classmates at Nockamixon - Springfield High School (now named Palisades High School). They graduated in 1944 and married in 1946. Alfred bought land from his father, Martin, and built a ranch home on what is now Mountain View Drive (Rt. 563), where he and Ruth raised two daughters and a son. Alfred and Ruth now reside in Richland Township, Bucks County.

Oscar married Arlene Rosenberger in 1953. For awhile they lived on the Frei family farm, before moving on to Milford Township, Bucks County. They raised two sons and one daughter. Oscar did farming for a number of years, including custom farming with Alfred for other farms. Oscar and Arlene now reside in Sellersville, Bucks County.

Oscar's and Alfred's oldest brother, John, was well know as the owner of Johnny Frei's Garage, on Ridge Road in Bedminster Township.



Haycock Mountain and William Frei Farm 1970



**Oldest and Youngest Frei siblings
Helena and baby brother Alfred circa 1927**



Martin Frei on his 1937 John Deere Tractor



THANK YOU

Dave and Margaret Guttman donated Haycock Native American artifacts to our Society. The artifacts were collected by Daves's father, Michael Guttman.

Kathy Brown donated a new Keurig coffee brewer to the Stokes House.

THANK YOU

Thanks everyone for your help, enthusiasm and ideas which helped to make having the Stokes House as the Haycock Historical Society's headquarters a success. We accomplished many things this year with your help. The ugly garden shed has now become the beautiful focal point of our larger garden. The shed, new fencing, and a beautiful bird house all make Stokes look loved. We have a ten year lease and signs at Apple Road pointing to the Stokes House. We have had donations of written material and historical items. Our museum is growing and information about Haycock Township is increasing. We have come a long way in just two years thanks to you.

Pat DeWald



Gordon Allem repaired the stone work on the end of the porch



Ironing board made by H.J. Frederick of Quakertown, and found in Maine - donated by Barry and Nancy Yodis.



**Diploma from a Haycock one-room school - donated by Jane Cope.
Easel - donated by Heather DeSario**



Painting by Hilda Heinrich - donated by the staff of the Haycock Township Building.



Golf course sign - donated by Bob Cope.

KRINGLE CHRISTMAS SHOPPE

Kringle Christmas Shoppe (*Now in our NINTH successful year!*) will open its doors at the Bucks County Latvian Baptist Church on -

Friday, December 7 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
 Saturday, December 8 10:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m..
 Sunday, December 9 12:30 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.



Kringle Christmas Shoppe 2011

MEMORIUM, GLADYS KODER

It is with great sadness that the board of directors notes the passing of long time board member Gladys Koder this past May. The passing of Gladys at a relatively young age came as a shock to her many friends. Gladys was a retired LPN and EEG Tech from St. Luke's Hospital, Fountain Hill, and subsequently worked for the Palisades School District. She was seldom hesitant to volunteer her talents, and always offered a helping hand, her busy schedule permitting. Gladys had many and varied interests, with a particular passion for animals, and she was an active certified dog trainer. Gladys operated an amazing small farm and it seemed there was little she couldn't do. For years she compiled our outstanding Springfield Township Historical Society Calendar for the community, and as our photo archivist put on her acclaimed annual picture slide show at the Church School. Gladys's loss not only impacts the Society, but is a great loss for her family, the greater Springtown community, and Springfield Township. She will be greatly missed.

REPRINTED FROM: The Springfield Township Historical Society newsletter.

VICTORIAN TEA

The Haycock Historical Society's Victorian Christmas Tea/Open House will be held at the Stokes House on Sunday, December 16, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

You are invited by George F. Dutch and his four sisters, in the year 1842. Come and celebrate a Victorian Tea with a modern twist.

TIME TO RENEW

If you check your mailing label, you will see a date such as 12/2012, or letters such as LM. All members with 12/2012 should renew right now. There should be a form inserted in this newsletter for all members that are due to renew by the end of the year. Please fill out the form, note any changes and send your form and check to **Haycock Historical Society, Post Office Box 715, Quakertown, PA 18951.**

MEETINGS

March 21, 2013, 7 p.m. - HERB KAUFMAN
Civil War Secrets and Spies

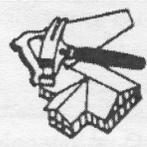
April 18, 2013, 7 p.m. - MATT BIELECKI

May 16, 2013, 7 p.m. - To be announced

OFFICERS

President:	Chris Handschin	chandschin@verizon.net
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Please submit material for the newsletter or suggestions for interviews to Margie Fulp. (215-257-7472)

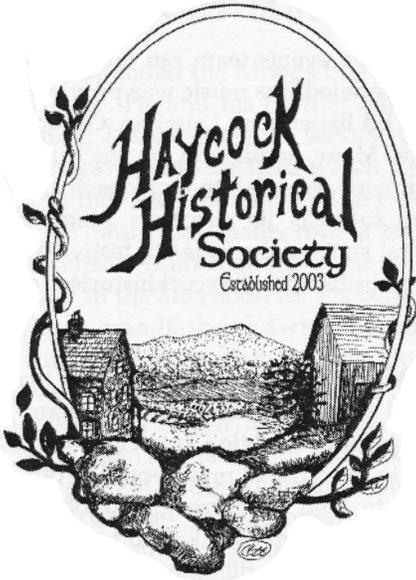


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www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org

AN INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

YES, ENROLL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

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.
- Family Membership (Parents & Children in household) - \$30/year**
Receive quarterly newsletter and attend all special functions this year – Jan. thru Dec.
- Corporate Sponsor - \$100/year**
Gain advertisement in our newsletter by yearly sponsorship (ad size smaller than business card)
- Corporate Patron - \$200/year**
Gain advertisement in our newsletter by yearly sponsorship (ad is full business card size)
- Lifetime Individual Membership - \$200**
Receive honorary lifetime status, receive quarterly newsletters and attend all special functions
- Lifetime Household Couple Membership - \$250**
For just \$50 more, join as a household and enjoy all the benefits of lifetime membership

DATE _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

**SEND APPLICATION ALONG WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO:
P.O. Box 715, Quakertown, PA 18951**