

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Spring 2003

HISTORY OF THE HAYCOCK FIREHOUSE

by Gail Phelps

On March 18, 1958, the deep growl of diesel engines powering several fire trucks bounced off the houses of Applebachsville as they stopped and parked in front of a new cinder block building.

It was early Sunday afternoon on that day 45 years ago when the firemen and their trucks from surrounding communities such as Quakertown, Richlandtown and Springtown gathered to officially dedicate the Haycock Township Volunteer Fire Company No. 1.

About 150 people attended the ceremony, which not only marked a permanent headquarters for the township's fire trucks and firemen, but also the fruition of nearly four years work.

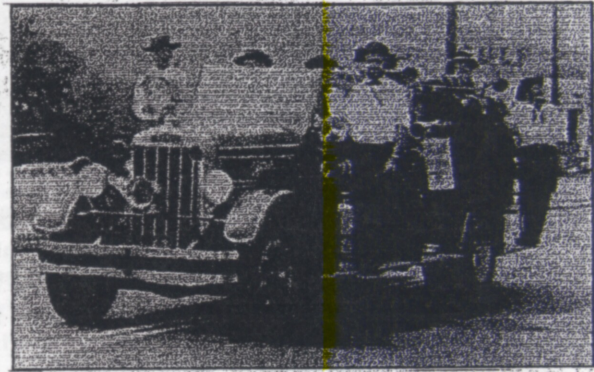
Ron Diehl, a former township fireman and producer of a recently completed video history of the fire company, said much of that day revolved around paying homage to the dedicated volunteers. Those volunteers raised money by collecting newspapers, selling refreshments at auctions and giving their time and skills to actually construct the building.

Diehl, whose late father, Howard, was a founding member, said the day was filled with speeches by the county fire marshal, chiefs of other departments and the swing music of the late George Dunn and his orchestra. Dunn was a big band musician from Philadelphia who later moved to a farm off Roudenbush Road where he produced plastic freezer bags.

The founders of the Haycock Fire Company met in 1954 via their mutual involvement in Civil Defense, a federal program developed at the start of the Cold War. The first meeting of the company was held at Howard Diehl's house on Apple Road. Meetings then moved to The Applebachsville Store, at the intersection of Apple and Old Bethlehem roads and owned by Willis Smell. Soon after, meetings moved to the then vacant Pentecostal Latvian Church on Old Bethlehem Road, which still exists today as a private home across from the Haycock School. The building was owned by Orvis Barndt who eventually installed a pool table, and refreshments were served after the meeting.

With funding as a priority, paper drives and the sale of donated articles began in earnest. Two of the area's most popular auctioneers, Jimmy Mohr and Henry Huddle, donated their services for auctioning of the items. Another fund raiser was selling refreshments out of a concession stand at the auctions and other functions.

Although still in his pre-teen years, Ron Diehl, along with his brothers, volunteered with his father and worked the concession stand. He recalled that one of the unwritten rules of running the concession stand was that it could not be shut



Haycock's first fire truck, the Hahn pumper, with firemen in a parade on Route 309, 1955

down until the last volunteer had a hot dog and a cup of coffee. He said most of the food served was donated by the township's small grocery stores such as the Applebachsville, Thatcher and Mountain stores. Another method of funding was to ask customers at The Applebachsville Store to contribute a dollar, which automatically entitled them to membership in the fire company.

Successful fund raising led to the purchase of a 1930 Hahn fire truck from the Plumsteadville Fire Company for \$500. Shortly thereafter, a 1951 Chevrolet panel truck was acquired as a utility vehicle, and a 1947 Dodge oil delivery truck was bought for \$275 and converted to a water tanker. During the winter months the fire equipment was stored in Martin's Blacksmith Shop on Apple Road. The garage and blacksmith shop behind Howard Diehl's home also housed one of the trucks. The heat generated in the blacksmith shops prevented freezing of the water in the trucks.

In 1957 ground was broken for the firehouse on the rocky, open field across from St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Diehl said the land cost \$500 and "was full of rocks."

"The foundation sits on a bed of rocks," Diehl said. "They had to drill holes for a week and set dynamite charges to break it up."

After blasting, construction began on the foundation that was dug mostly by hand. Many residents and fire company members donated their skills, such as masons and electricians, to erect the cinder block building. Much of the building materials were also donated, including the steel concrete reinforcing rods for the floor which came from PP&L (the reinforcing rods were actually pieces from a power line tower). The blocks came from the Haycock Block Works which used to operate near Cappie's Tavern off Route 563

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FRANK LENNARD

by Sue Kleiner Grew

Frank was about 20-years-old and recently married when he moved to the village of Applebachsville. It was the mid-1950s, a time when most of the roads in Haycock were gravel, when agriculture was still an important part of the region, and a time when the Springfield Township native first heard people talking about forming a township fire company.



Frank, now 70-years-old and still residing in the village, recollected in February about those early years and how nearly all the early planning was done at The

Applebachsville Store. The store, owned by Willis and Sadie Smell from about 1944 to 1973, is now a private home at the intersection of Old Bethlehem and Apple roads. In its time though, it was the place Frank would occasionally stop in to buy a few groceries.

"This was something great", he recalled, "right there in the heart of Applebachsville was where the whole thing got started...in the store".

Frank recalled that the first discussions of forming a fire company were actually started by Herbert Graham, who later became the company's first fire chief. Graham, he said, was a former resident of Chalfont where he was chief of that community's fire company.

"He (Graham) said something like, 'What do you think about starting a fire company,'" Frank recalled.

"Mr. Smell too, he owned the store, he was a big pusher for it. A big pusher," he said.

Those discussions eventually transformed into reality, which Frank said led to electing officers and raising money to

purchase a truck. One of the early methods of raising money was collecting newspapers that were sold to places like Blindermann's in Hellertown for about 23 cents per pound.

"We collected papers from all over Haycock," he said.

Another fund raising activity was having bingo and card games at the vacant and former Pentecostal Latvian Church (now a private home across from the Haycock School) on Old Bethlehem Road. For quite some time, Frank said, the church became the social gathering place complete with "second-hand pool tables"

Back then, he said, township residents were on a telephone party line. The system they developed to answer fire calls was that Willis Smell would answer calls while at the store during the week. On weekends though, he said, fire company members were called upon once a month to stay home and answer the phone.

If a call was for a fire, he said, many of the fire company members had a special red phone in their house that was used to call other fire fighters. In addition to the call from the red phone, the person who answered the initial fire call set off the siren which was heard as far as Quakertown.

After the fire company obtained its official charter in 1954, the company bought their first truck, a 1930 Hahn from the Plumsteadville Fire Company. The truck, Frank said, was housed in a converted stable owned by Ezra Barndt. The building still stands today and is next to the Whitehall apartments in Applebachsville.

Up until 10 years ago, Frank was an active firefighter and for 23 years, he was chief. He is also one of the last original members and is still a charter member.

What he said he finds most satisfying about his years as a volunteer, is, "I helped put something back into the community... and watch it grow into what it is today."

HAYCOCK FIREHOUSE *continued*

and the gravel from Tohickon Quarry which was also located off Route 563. While community volunteers donated countless hours of hard work, the final construction cost was \$15,109.

The first fire chief was Hubert Graham and the first president was Willis Smell. At the time of the dedication, Howard Diehl was chief. The first official event hosted by the fire company was the wedding reception for Robert and Lorey Smell on February 15, 1958. The day of their reception included not only 100 guests and food served and prepared by fire company's Women's Auxiliary, but also a major snowstorm.

"It was a snowy blizzard with big drifts," recalled Lorey Smell. "We were on our way to Virginia Beach (for our honeymoon) but we only got as far as Quakertown."

The Smells moved from Haycock to Dublin in 1969, but Mrs. Smell still fondly recalls the 10 years she and her husband lived behind her father-in-law's store.

"We lived behind the store in a mobile home and we had a phone in the store," she recalled. The phone was one dedicated to emergency calls to firemen. Once the calls were

made, Smell said, "You blew the horn ... I did that many times."

The fire horn, Diehl said, was first attached to the garage at the rear of the Applebachsville Store and later was moved to a utility pole in front of the firehouse.

Fund raising was a continuous effort and included an unusual type of bingo involving only silver dollars. Although silver dollar bingo was challenging for volunteers bearing heavy aprons of coins, the participants were enthusiastic since winnings could be quite lucrative. Firehouse breakfasts and dinners also helped to fill the coffers. In 1968 a new Hahn pumper was purchased for \$20,000 and in 1969 a new field vehicle was acquired.

Today, the Haycock Volunteer Fire Company, conceived, organized and built by community cooperation, continues to serve the Haycock area. Much of the fire company's budget still comes from fund raisers, such as breakfasts, as well as contributions from residents. The fire company now has more than 35 volunteer fire fighters and not only handles fires but also emergency medical situations and marine rescue.

GENERAL APPLEBACH'S HOUSE

by Jane Nase



General Applebach's House, 2003

General Paul Applebach was a descendent of Johann Heinrich Afflerbach who immigrated to this country from Germany in 1770. The "Affler" part of his name means apple tree and "bach" means brook in Old High German. Paul's great grandfather anglicized his name to Henry Applebach to conform to the requirements to purchase land in the colonies.

He settled in Springfield Township and worked as a blacksmith. Henry's third son Daniel moved to Haycock and married Catharina Apple in 1811. Daniel owned the sixty-acre farm now called Stone Walk Farm on what is today Woodbine Lane. Paul Henry Applebach, the couple's first born, arrived on October 22, 1815.

Described as an active, progressive and influential citizen of Bucks County, Paul Applebach was an important member of the community. By the age of thirty he became successful in the horse and cattle business. He also owned and operated the mail stage line between Philadelphia and Easton by way of Doylestown.

After Paul's failed attempt in 1846 to gain a seat in the state House of Representatives, he made a lucrative real estate venture with his brother. This deal put the family name on the map.

The brothers purchased a 373-acre tract of land known as "Stokes' Meadow" from George F. Dutch in 1847. This parcel was in the John Stokes family since 1743 and was sold to Mr. Dutch in 1837. The land was largely meadow and woodland admirably suited for grazing purposes. Paul and his brother Henry saw the land ideally situated for real estate development. The property ran along Old Bethlehem Road, which was a major thoroughfare between Philadelphia and the Lehigh Valley.

The Applebach brothers built the first new house in the village in 1848. The house was called the "red brick man-

sion" which still stands today at the corner of Apple and Old Bethlehem roads. The village grew slowly as they laid out land on both sides of Old Bethlehem Road for building lots and built houses, most of them made of brick.

By 1850, the village of Applebachsville was founded and thriving. To accommodate passengers on the stage coach the brothers built the Applebach Hotel, later renamed the White Hall Hotel across the street from the red brick mansion. A livery stable and blacksmith shop were also on the property. They also built a general store on the other corner of Apple and Old Bethlehem roads.

Paul was commissioned as a Major General in the Second Division Pennsylvania Uniformed Militia. This organization was mostly for parades and incidental police duties. They had fancy uniforms and were an important source of business contact and socialization in rural America.

A member of the Reformed congregation, Paul helped build the Applebachsville Church in 1855. He was a very generous donor when the church needed repairs and wanted to build a steeple and bell tower in 1869.

Paul made two more unsuccessful bids to the Pennsylvania Senate in 1858 and 1867. His health declined shortly after that and he died on March 21, 1872. He is buried in St. Paul's Lutheran Church cemetery. The obituaries described him as "the perfect type of Pennsylvania gentleman...affable and agreeable in manner... firm in friendship... generous... and courteous in his disposition. His vision of Applebachsville still serves its residences well.

This information was gathered from an article entitled Applebachsville: The Metropolis of Haycock Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania by Rollin Smith in 1995. Mr. Smith owned Applebach's house from 1989-1995.



SOCIETY SOCIAL EVENTS

THE MYSTERY OF HAYCOCK'S ROCKS

May 15, 2003 7:30 PM
with Gene Anderson & Indian Artifacts
presented by Joe Fite
at St. Paul's Lutheran Church
ALL ARE WELCOME!

HAYCOCK MOUNTAIN HIKE

Family Event
April 6, 2003 2:00 pm
For more information, contact
Chris Handschin (215) 536-0364

SOCIETY BUSINESS

GENERAL MEETING

The second general meeting of the Haycock Historical Society was held January 16th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Applebachsville. It was decided that the following three subcommittees would be formed: communication, historic research, and social events. Nominations for officers were opened, but nominations will continue to be accepted until elections are held at the next general meeting on March 20. Members of the Haycock Volunteer Fire Company were presented a video history of the fire company (1954-1977). The video will be viewed during the March 20 meeting which will start at 7:30 p.m. at the Haycock Fire Company on Old Bethlehem Road.

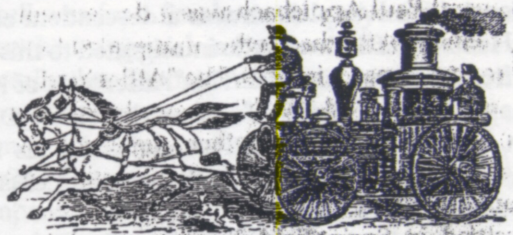
The Haycock Historical Society expresses sincere thanks and appreciation for the hospitality of both St. Paul's Church and the Haycock Fire Company.

HISTORIC RESEARCH

The Historic Research Committee met February 13th at the Dewald residence. Members reviewed and discussed a memo from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation about Applebachsville's eligibility for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Committee member Jason Urban will condense information about how to research the history of your home for possible presentation next year.

A. E. Anderson was scheduled to make a presentation about the geology of Haycock at the May general meeting. He is also scheduled to speak on the Walking Purchase in the



fall. Joe Fite offered to research local archeology. Pat Fite and Valerie Slauter will begin archiving historical material at the municipal building. Dick Gieseke and Bill Peischel discussed producing a presentation about Papaschewy, a Russian-born 20th century township author and sculptor, and Chief One Star, also a late township artist believed to have been the last Lenni Lenape in the area.

The next committee meeting is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. April 24. For more information about this committee, contact Diane Kelly at 215-536-4297 or rdrdk@juno.com

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communication Committee met Feb. 4th to establish the layout and format of the first newsletter. Chuck Malinchak was selected the newsletter's editor, Heather Radick offered photography services, and Sue Kleiner-Grew is interviewing residents to record oral history. Jane Nase and Gail Phelps have offered to write articles for the publication. Anyone who would like to be involved with the newsletter or who has suggestions for a story can contact Beth Kerdock at 215 538-1807 or bjsnipa@worldlynx.net

SOCIAL EVENTS

The Social Committee met February 20 during which plans were discussed to have an organized hike on Haycock Mountain in April. The hike would be guided by Joe Fite and Herman McCarty. The hike is scheduled for April 6 with April 13 slated as a rain date. More information about the hike will be available at the March general meeting or at the township building. Those interested should ask for the notice called, the "Mountain Hike Flyer."

