

# HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Spring 2015

## OUR NEIGHBOR FLORENCE CLYMER

Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

Florence (Texter) Clymer has led a very full life in her 95 years. For the past 76 of those years Florence has resided in East Rockhill Township, close to where the historic Sheard's Covered Bridge crosses the Tohickon Creek from Haycock Township into East Rockhill. Florence and her husband, Ira, came to live there in 1940, so that Ira could work at the mill owned by his father, John S. Clymer. The Clymer Mill is adjacent to Sheard's Covered Bridge, and they are both landmarks in the region. John S. Clymer began running the mill in 1915. Levi Sheard, from whom the bridge received its name, owned the mill in the 1800's. Farmers brought their grain to be ground, and apples to be made into cider with the wooden cider press which was put into the mill in 1889. Chicken feed was also sold at the mill.

Florence was born on October 7, 1919, to Frank and Lizzie (Bartholomew) Texter of Bedminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. The family had a farm on what is now Elephant Road, on the northwest side of Ridge Road. They lived a short distance from the Elephant Hotel which is at the intersection of Ridge Road and Elephant Road.

In the 1930 Census, in addition to her parents, Florence had five brothers: Harold, age 16, Charles, age 14, Mahlon, age 12, F. Emerson age 11, and Norman, age 3. Florence was 10 years old, and had one sister, Marian, who was 8 years old.

All of the family worked hard on the farm. Her father, Frank, used horses to work the fields, and in later years used a tractor. They raised their own food. There were chickens to tend to and cows to milk. They raised hogs to slaughter for meat, and although there was no smokehouse, her parents were able to somehow smoke the meat. Looking back, Florence and her sister wondered how their parents did this, since they did not use someone else's smokehouse. Their house had several fireplaces, which might have been used to do the job.

Her mother, Lizzie, cooked on a wood stove, and was a very good cook. She had to prepare three meals a day for nine people. The breakfasts were big, including bacon and eggs. When girls, Florence and Marian had the job of keeping the big wooden box, which was behind the stove in the kitchen, full of wood for the cook stove. The family canned their own fruits and vegetables. They walked a mile to pick the very sweet

wild strawberries, with which Lizzie made delicious strawberry shortcake. There were also blackberries to pick in the area.

Florence and her siblings attended the Myers One-Room School on Sweet Briar Road. There was not much time for play, but when possible, they walked miles to a friend's home for a ball game. They had no telephone, which became a problem one time when Lizzie was very ill. Frank gave a lantern to his small daughters, Florence and Marian, and sent them out into the night to walk to their grandfather's house to call the doctor. The girls were about ten and eight years old at the time, and Florence remembers that walk in the dark. Florence and her family also walked to attend church at what is now St. Peter's UCC in the village of Weisel. They went up Elephant Road to Ridge Road, and then on to Old Bethlehem Road, which went down into the village.

To help her family's finances, Florence, at the age of twelve years, went to live as a housekeeper for a family in Doylestown. She cooked the meals, and ate in the kitchen while the family had their meal in the dining room. She made \$6.00 a week, and sent \$5.00 home, being allowed to keep \$1.00 for herself. It was a "real nice family," and she lived with them for eight years.

Ira Clymer also attended St. Peter's UCC Church and Sunday school. He was friends with Florence's brother Harold, and that is how they met each other. Ira was born in East Rockhill Township on December 4, 1915. He had five brothers and three sisters. His parents, John S. and Emma (Althouse) Clymer, had a farm on Three-Mile-Run Road. His father farmed in addition to owning and operating the mill.

After Florence and Ira married in 1939, they lived for one year in Bedminster Township. In 1940

Ira went to work for his father at the Clymer Mill, and he and Florence lived in the house by the mill. Florence wasn't expecting the rocky, wooded land of East Rockhill. The roads were dirt, there was no electricity, and the water was pumped outside. She "had to get used to it!" It was not like the previous surroundings of her life. Ira ran the mill for his father, who had to spend more time working on his farm. Ira and Florence lived in the millhouse for seventeen years before building their own home nearby. They had one child, their son Walter.

Florence worked for a spell in a dress factory, but it "didn't



Ira & Florence Clymer

suit" her, so she got a job at Hoffner Rayon in Quakertown, where she worked for thirteen years. The number thirteen came up often in Florence's life. She says she went on bus trips for thirteen years, held family reunions for thirteen years, and she and a sister-in-law cleaned house for Bill Heefner in Bedminster for thirteen years. It was a huge house to clean. Bill Heefner had a beautiful grand piano, and he played it for Florence on her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The Clymer Mill ground its last grain in 1971. Using the mill's wooden cider press, Ira ran an apple cider business until 1985, when the mill was sold to Jerry Deegan and family. Ira next worked at J.G. Furniture in Quakertown. Florence joined him when an opening became available. Her husband retired three years before Florence did, but since she never learned to drive, he spent those three years driving her to and from work, until he suggested she retire, and she did.

Ira and Florence attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Applebachsville for many years, where they felt very much at home. Ira passed away in 2003. "He was a good man." In October 2014, the congregation at St. Paul's successfully held a surprise party for Florence for her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. Thinking that they were on the way to view the mums at Ott's Gardens, Florence did not suspect a thing when Winnie Knapp asked her to come on into the church with her, under the ruse of Winnie needing to pick up some papers. Inside was a large gathering of Florence's friends, all greeting her with "Happy Birthday!" Florence was "very surprised." Winnie did take Florence to Ott's another day.

Florence keeps busy with church activities and her home. She still cans and freezes vegetables from her son Walter's large garden. She does her own garden (her flowers are already planted for this year), and mows the lawn herself. She recovered nicely from a broken wrist (caused by a fall from a stool when she was dusting off the shelves in preparation for her home-canned food!). She had a hip replacement twelve years ago, and is doing well. Florence keeps moving, for she has always been very active. She has made many friends over the years and is well known in our community. She has two granddaughters and five grandchildren who enjoy and are amazed by her stories of what life was like when she was a girl in the early 1900's.



**Historic Sheard's / Clymer Mill**

## THE CHIMES OF STONY GARDEN

By William J. Buck

Here in a wood that long has stood,  
A mass of loosen'd rocks lie round,  
When struck emit a joyful sound--  
Then ring rocks ring !  
Why not have rhymes to Nature's chimes ?  
As are found at Stony Garden.

Ring out so free in kindly glee,  
The music's future yet to be  
That wildwood chimes go merrily --  
Then ring rocks ring !  
Why not good will and the player's skill  
Bring praise for Stony Garden

Let rocks so old then be well toll'd  
And Echo add a rival strain,  
Whose like we may not hear again,  
Then ring rocks ring !  
Why not be gay this pic-nic day ?  
The first herd at Stony Garden.

Let other sounds on other grounds  
Bring strangers from afar or near ;  
But none invite to such a cheer,  
Then ring rocks ring !  
Here let your strokes delight the folks,  
Assembled at Stony Garden.

Nature's sweet charms the bosom warms  
And long retired, here sought to dwell ;  
But Knowledge came and broke the spell --  
Then ring rocks ring !  
Near Haycock's hill, where whip-poor-will  
In June, welcomes Stony Garden.

## ON JUNE 14, 2015, JOIN US FOR A WALK TO STONY GARDEN

Exactly 125 years ago it was estimated that 200 people or more converged on Stony Garden to be entertained by the Buckwampum Literary Society. Bands played, important people read papers, and Dr. Ott rang the rocks each time the phrase "Ring Rocks Ring" was recited from the poem "The Chimes of Stony Garden." This was high entertainment for those days. If you were anyone you had to be seen at the Buckwampum Picnic.

Join us June 14, 2015, 125 years later as we pay homage to the literary persons of Haycock and the surrounding area. The walk starts at 1:30 p.m. from the game lands parking area across from the mailbox (marked 1984) on Stony Garden Road.

Wear appropriate clothing for hiking in the woods. We will be reading the poem "The Chimes of Stony Garden" and making the rocks chime.

Bring a hammer if you want to play the rocks.

**No rain date.**

# THE WORLD'S FIRST "ROCK" CONCERT

by K. Zingaro Clark

It's true. One hundred, twenty-five years ago, on Saturday, June 14, 1890, Bucks County's Haycock Township hosted the world's first ever "rock" concert. Many have heard of it, some are confused about it, but that it occurred and was a noteworthy occasion is certain.

Interestingly, the groundbreaking musical performance, short as it was, took place during a heavily promoted "literary feast" of presentations & poetry readings by notables from around the region. It happened at Danielsville, Stony Garden's lost hamlet (not at Ringing Rocks in Bridgeton Township as many believe) during the Third Annual Picnic of the Upper Bucks Literary Association.

The organizers, who were also known as the Buckwampum Historical Society of Bucks County, invited all lovers of nature, science and literature. Anticipating a large crowd of over several hundred, the Association's Committee of Arrangements organized advanced preparations. In an area described as "wild and barren," woods were cleared on the northwestern slope of Haycock Mountain to accommodate a grandstand, speaker's podium, and space for (parking) "all manner of conveyances." Others set about accumulating the special "instruments" upon which the public would become so enthralled. Combing through the adjacent three-acre boulder field, massive rocks were laboriously removed from their beds and carefully selected for their musical octaves.

Enticed by promotional newspaper display ads, a large assemblage of eager attendees from Upper Bucks and Lower Northampton Counties began arriving hours before the scheduled one o'clock start time. In addition to the main event and refreshments, Springtown's popular Euterpean Orchestra and numerous distinguished speakers promised to make the partially overcast, but mostly sunny, day memorable.

The gathering officially began with an ode to Stony Garden written for the occasion by local author and historian William J. Buck. During the poem's reading by Springtown resident, Emily Boyer, Dr. John Ott gave a small taste of his upcoming "rock" concert. As the phrase "ring rocks ring!" was repeated in each stanza, Dr. Ott, accompanied by his Pleasant Valley Brass Band, sounded "chimes" by striking a "rudely constructed lithophone" with a steel hammer. Ott's lithophone actually consisted of pieces of the mysterious pre-selected rocks collected earlier. Startling in their resonance, the audience was awed to hear musical sounds from such objects of nature.

Following Ott's unusual introductory piece, first speaker Charles Laubach, a local geologist, explained the curious landscape of Stony Garden as "the remains of an extinct volcano." Nineteen other talks, interspersed between orchestral numbers, followed.

Most of the presenters spoke on subjects of local interest, some conjuring up lovely memories through personal recollections. "The Old Seifert Homestead," "Education Then & Now," and "Old Time School Games" were among the papers read. Memories of playing rural outdoor games such as Pen Ball, Wolf and Sheep, Sogger Up (similar to "Dodge Ball"), and Sky Ball were recounted. Unfortunately, how the indoor game,

"Mommy hut abra Stupnoodle ferlora," was played remains a mystery.

One crowd-pleasing topic, then as now, was the cost of goods and services in the "old days." When William Buck took the podium to read his piece, "Goods, Produce and Labor 1826-36," little did he know the price of goose quills (once four for a penny) would soon be totally irrelevant. On the other hand, Buck's factoid about a 50% wage gap between male and female field laborers in 1832 may still raise some eyebrows given the continuing controversial earnings gap between the sexes.

## *The World's First "Rock" Concert*

Most of the day's presentations were designed to be uplifting. Several odes and speeches extolled the virtues of view-inducing Buckwampum ("fair as Eden's land!"), Durham Valley's eventful history and beautiful scenery, and Haycock's Top Rock, Flat Rock, wilderness and springs. One speaker did, however, take the opportunity to warn the young'uns to avoid non-productive activities such as novel reading (nothing but 'trash,' she warned), and "coarse hobbies" such as playing musical instruments. How the intellectuals and musicians in the crowd regarded these biased opinions in unknown.

Although the presentations and organizers were lauded and the day acclaimed a success, it was truly Dr. Ott, accompanied by the Pleasant Valley Brass Band, who kept the event alive in the collective memory of locals and regional historians. For it was the doctor, hammer in hand, who ultimately wowed the crowd when he performed several numbers, including "Home, Sweet, Home" upon pieces of rock whose qualities and arrangement produced "clear, bell-like tones (audible) above the notes of the horns."

It was a first; no one had ever seen nor heard rocks make music before that day. And while it wouldn't necessarily be exciting by today's standards, in the words of William Buck, it was "a novelty... deserving honorable mention in our future history as an extraordinary event."

Today is that future, and the extraordinary event during which Stony Garden "rocked" is duly and hereby honorably mentioned.

## ***Undeniably – the World's First "Rock" Concert***

Doylestown Panorama June 1961; "Music from the Ringing Rocks," Richard J. Alliger, p 19

Bucks County Historical Society papers read 1937; p416\*

Bucks County Historical Society papers read 1939; p2004

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringing\\_rocks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringing_rocks)

[https://www.archive.org/stream/accountofbuckfam00buck/accountofbuckfam00buck\\_djvu.txt](https://www.archive.org/stream/accountofbuckfam00buck/accountofbuckfam00buck_djvu.txt)

News articles (Springtown News most likely) from 1890.

Copies @ Haycock Historical Society.

7 areas with ringing rocks in PA per B.F. Fackenthal, jr, paper 10-4-19; p 3168

p. 3168 online (p216 in book): Dr. JJ. Ott, Pleasant Valley

# The Italian Affair

Sunday, July 19 Starting at 5:00 P.M.

On the grounds of Stokes House in Haycock Twp.

*A taste of Italy in Haycock Township!*

Full Course Italian Dinner Buffet

Complimentary Italian Music  
under the big top tent.

Plus, Stokes Headquarters Open-House

Limited Seating - **\$10.00/Ticket**

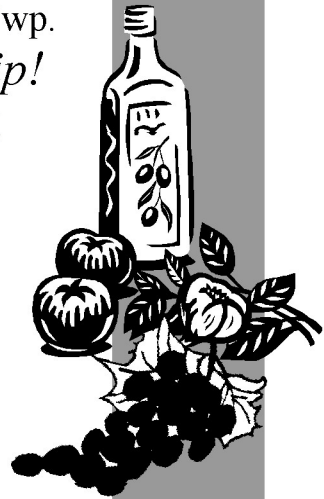
Purchase tickets by July 10, 2015

Tickets sold at Stokes house every

Friday 10 'till Noon *or* email

Pat DeWald:

**dewaldfarm@hotmail.com**



**Members, come hungry!!!**

Invite your neighbors and friends to dinner and share our Stokes House with them.

*(This "fun"-raiser is by invitation only. Non-members must be invited by members.) Sorry, alcoholic beverages are not permitted on county property. Enjoy our sparkling water, cider or Italian soda.*

If any readers are familiar with the activity shown below, please contact Margie Fulp

## *Haycock Mountain Sportsman's Club*

Presents

SPORTS CAR AUTO CROSS

APPLEBACHSVILLE

(Quakertown)

PENNSYLVANIA

SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1957

Rain Date  
JUNE 29 th

The Haycock Mountain Sportsman's Club welcomes you to SPORTS CAR AUTO CROSS. This is the first of our summer events.

The cars and drivers you are watching today are both of a special breed. The cars are light, maneuverable and very responsive. The drivers race purely for the sport and perhaps for a silver trophy... they receive no money.

Read your Program for more information about the cars and drivers. Keep score and see how really tight the competition gets... And be sure to see our Club's display.

### THE HAYCOCK MOUNTAIN SPORTSMAN'S CLUB A Country Club You Can Afford Now

Between now and September 30, the HAYCOCK MOUNTAIN SPORTSMAN'S CLUB offers to each of its members FREE:-

- \* SPORTS CAR AUTO CROSS
- \* HORSE and DOG SHOW and FIELD TRIALS
- \* OUTDOORSMAN'S SHOW
- \* 8 WEEKS of SUMMER THEATER
- \* SPORTS CAR ROAD RACING ON 1 MILE PAVED COURSE
- \* SQUARE and SOCIAL DANCING
- \* PICNICING, CAMPING, HIKING and TENNIS COURTS

Individual admission to the Club's events this Season totals to a cost well above the low membership fee.

#### SPECIAL OFFER

Apply Today's Admission - \$1.25 - Towards The Annual Membership Fee of \$10.00. JOIN NOW - PAY ONLY \$8.75 - And Enjoy A Full Year of Recreational Activities.

#### — BY NEXT YEAR —

- \* 2½ MILE GRAND PRIX SPORTS CAR CIRCUIT
- \* 50 ACRE LAKE with BOATING, FISHING, SWIMMING
- \* LARGE SAND BEACH
- \* 9 HOLE GOLF COURSE
- \* CLUB HOUSE with DINING FACILITIES
- \* AND MANY OTHER ACTIVITIES and SPECIAL EVENTS

GO TO THE CLUB REGISTRATION DESK  
FOR DETAILS

## ACTIVITIES

Walk to Stony Garden - June 14 - 1:30 p.m. (see page 2)

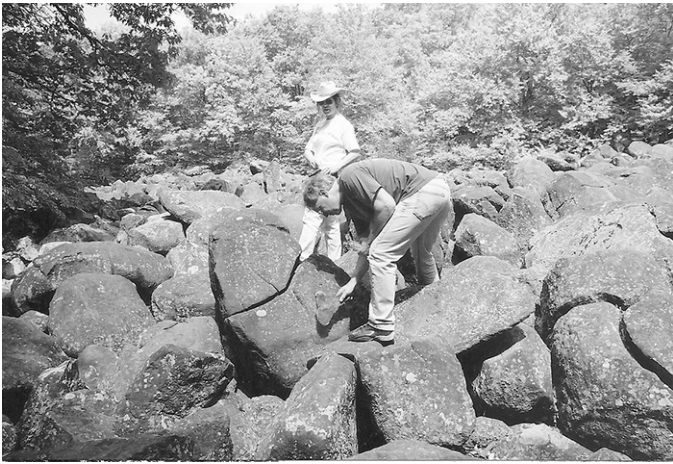
New Event - July 19 - 5:00 p.m.  
Dinner under the tent - An Italian Affair  
Stokes House, 1299 Apple Road.  
(See page 4 for details.)

Victorian Tea - Dec. 20 - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Stokes House

Kringle Christmas Shoppe - Dec. 4, 5 and 6.

Stokes will be open Friday mornings April through October from 10 a.m. to Noon.

Gardening hours at Stokes are every Thursday morning - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.



Stony Garden photo by Chris Handschin

## MEETINGS

September 17 - a presentation by the Audubon society.

October 15 - In the 60th Anniversary year of the great flood on the Delaware River, Mary Shafer, author of *Devastation on the Delaware*, will give a presentation on the history of the flood.

November 19 - a return of Ann Atkins, "Flash History." Ann will speak on Golda Meir.

Meetings are held at the Bucks County Latvian Baptist Church in Applebachsville and begin at 7 p.m.

## THANK YOU

Thank you to Haycock Township for their generous \$2500 donation to HHS.

## OFFICERS

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Please submit material for the newsletter or suggestions for interviews to Margie Fulp. (215-257-7472) or m\_fulp@hotmail.com

**Bucks County**  
magazine

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