

# HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Spring 2019

## MEMORIES FROM THE DEEP

### SUMMERS IN TOHICKON VILLAGE

By Thomas Schmutzler

I never knew its name, never really needed to. Never had to write a letter to anyone who lived there. It was just the place where my family spent every summer for five years from when I was about eleven. We just called it "The Cabin". They were the best years of my life!

We were city kids from Philadelphia, my two younger sisters, Bette and Karen, and myself. My father, Arthur (Schmutzler), was a fireman. Mom, Helen, was trained as a nurse and was a graduate of Sellersville-Perkasie High. She was also the daughter of John and Julia Hudack. They lived on Old Bethlehem Road in Hagersville, just across the street from where 5th street from Perkasie ends in a "T" at Old Bethlehem Road. And here is how I got to Tohickon Village.

I was familiar with the area since from the time I was "Little Tommy" (the first and, of course, the best!). There would be many weekend visits with 'grandpop and grandmom' in the country, with many extended visits. There were times when I would visit them alone. I was young, probably about eleven or twelve, but I could hop the train at Reading Terminal in Philly, get off in Perkasie, and with my little suitcase start walking to Hagersville, reading the Burma Shave signs up close. Most times I didn't have to walk far because it would not be too long before I was offered a hop. (In those days parents would brag about how their kids could navigate the transit system alone in Philly, let alone leave the city on a train. Never happen these days!)

Grandpop worked at a hosiery mill in Lansdale, I think it was called the Interstate Hosiery Mill. He would car-pool with his next-door neighbor, Charlie Gable. Sometimes when I would be visiting, I would frequently start walking towards Perkasie just to hitch a ride back to Hagersville as he was coming home. (If he left work late, I would almost be in Perkasie.)

When the family was visiting Hagersville over a weekend we would all pile into the '36 Ford on Sunday morning and head off to Tohickon (Lutheran) Church up Old Bethlehem Road, or out 563 to Keller's Church, depending on the week.

At the time two congregations shared the two churches and they would alternate weeks, maybe they still do. (I had to get my "visitor's card" to prove to my home church in Philly that I didn't skip a Sunday! I looked like a rifleman with about five bars hanging beneath the primary "medal" for perfect attendance. Never missed a Sunday for at least five years.) I recall pumping Pastor Shelly's hand at the end of the services and generally acting like a little imp.

While I don't know for certain, I have reason to believe that my grandfather was in some way familiar with or acquainted with Russell Gulden, probably through the church, and this is how he knew of or found out about "the cabin" on the Gulden property. I guess my parents had been looking for a summer vacation rental, although I am not sure if they initially intended it to be for the whole summer. (Prior to that a week in Wildwood, N.J. would be it.) However, it all came together, and I believe it was the summer of 1953 that we began spending entire summers at "The Cabin" on the Gulden property. Dad would come and go depending on

his shift at the fire department. Of course, our "home base" was the grandparents house in Hagersville. From Hagersville to the cabin was not much more than a fifteen-minute drive. North up Old Bethlehem Rd to the "Ridge Road" (563), hang a right and drive out past Keller's Church. After you passed Keller's Church and before the road slopped downhill to the bridge that went over the Tohickon Creek and the little dam, there was a dirt road that went off to the right. If you weren't looking for it you would probably never notice it.

Go downhill on that little dirt road until it was level with the creek bed. It was there that you could take your left, cross the stone arch bridge, and with an immediate right you would be on the meadow where our little cabin was located, on the banks of the Tohickon Creek in beautiful downtown Tohickon Village! I can still remember the springs of the '36 Ford (which I guess we had borrowed for the summer) squeaking as we gently bounced over the grass and parked in the shade under a Mulberry tree right beside the cabin.



Five Arch Bridge in Tohickon Village 1953

(If you didn't take that left over the bridge the road would start climbing back up and would pass an old quarry. I don't know where that road went after passing the quarry.)

If you were to pass our 'driveway' you would quickly need to take a right or a left at the 'T' facing a fairly-large house with a porch. The left quickly took you back to the Ridge Road, the right did also but a mile or so further down. If you took the right, you would pass the Gulden residence on the right side and shortly after that the Swartley barn. From there back out to the ridge it was just fields. Across the road and next to the house with the porch there was a large two-story building which I now know was the store. At the time it looked abandoned and I never saw any signs of activity, but the locals said it was "full of junk". (It could have been leftover merchandise and I am sure it would have been an antique collector's or picker's paradise, even more as the wreckers moved in.) In my mind the next house was the Swartley residence but an old air view which I recently saw showed a building between the "store" and the Swartley residence which I don't recall.



**Russell Gulden's Cabin in Tohickon Village**

**1953 photo with Groff Store in the background**

I really didn't know what this cabin was doing there except that it might have been also a rental in previous years. It wasn't exactly the "Ritz"... only enough electricity for the light bulbs and I think just a small kerosene stove. The only water (running or not) was in the creek. I honestly don't remember what we did for fresh water, probably a well at the 'big house'. I do remember my mother bathing my then 4 month- old sister in what I recall was a galvanized, oval-shaped basin. Guess the water came from creek. For milk we took a stainless-steel kettle up to the Swartleys'. (None of that low-fat, 2% lite stuff and I am still alive!) No air conditioning during the day and no heat at night. We snuggled under feather quilts at night. From a kid's prospective it was great!!!

There were four 'neighborhood' kids with which to hang around. Russell and Erma Gulden had two, Norman and Gale, and Vernon and Dorothy Swartley had two, Vernon Jr. and Steven (plus Debbie later). My sister, Bette, would hang with Gale. I spent time with Norman (who was the oldest of the bunch) and the two Swartley boys. Usually it was either Norman or the two boys, depending on who was around and what the 'schedule' was.

If no one was around most of my days were spent

exploring and fishing in the creek, but then I needed bait! This is when I discovered the Hellgrammite. Never heard of them before but my father did. I made a screen that I would set down in the rapids, go two or three feet upstream from it, and swish my feet around the bottom to stir them up and have them float into the screen or find them on the underside of flat rocks. Ugly little critters but tough! My record was 18 sunfish on one. This is also how I found what I believe to be a genuine Indian artifact (which I still have but never had it authenticated).

I would fish from either the banks or sitting atop the stone arch bridge. From the bridge I could look down on the water below and see some bass facing upstream with their black tails swaying back and forth. I could dangle the bait right in front of their faces but never had any luck this way. I guess the bass thought that was too easy or maybe they were far-sighted, and the bait was so close they couldn't see it! Some days when the fishing was slow, I would sit on the bridge and, with my trusty Red Ryder bb gun, shoot at snakes sunning in the bushes below. Never killed any of them but sure annoyed them! The bridge was also good for eel fishing at night. Take an old rag along so you could get a good grip on the eel to get the hook out. Always threw them back.

There were a few deeper pools downstream which were guaranteed a few fish. Also, further downstream was what we called the Carp Hole except it was a rather shallow spot. You could see the carp daring you to catch them. Never did!

The distance from the back door of the cabin to the creek was only about 150 feet and the area just in front of the 'meadow' was between rapids. It was a good place to laze around on an inner tube. If we had a substantial rain and the 'creek would rise' Norman and I would flop into the inner tubes and float downstream. There was a point downstream where the road needed to ford the creek to get to other fields and this was our rendezvous point. We had a pre-arranged pickup area when Dorothy Swartley would come by to bring some lunch, and many times some home- made root beer, to the guys working the fields (usually her boys).



**Haycock Fire Company Tanker being filled from the Tohickon creek in the village in the 1950's**

There was one time in particular when we had a bit more than 'substantial' rain and I believe it was Hurricane Diane in 1955 (or Connie). While there were others in other years, I think I can pin-point this one because I recall my grandfather leaving to go to Stroudsburg to help with the clean-up.

Late that night with the rain pouring down, I went down to the bank of the creek with my flashlight and saw that it was within inches of overflowing the bank and into the meadow. I woke up mom and the four of us, mother, two sisters and myself, piled into the Ford about 1 o'clock in the morning and, driving through the rain, headed for Hagersville where we quietly opened a window off of the front porch, climbed in and took over the sofa and some chairs for the rest of the night, to the surprise of the grandparents in the morning. When we drove back later the meadow was completely flooded. Fortunately, the cabin was built high enough on blocks so that it didn't float away or even get damaged.

Now there was a "Legend of the Ringing Rocks" in Haycock Mountain which I heard my father discussing with Russell Gulden. They described them as "up there somewhere" and if you hit them with a hammer they would ring. I am sure to most of the locals they were not a legend and they knew just where they were.

Well, one day Norman and I set out to find them. We actually brought hammers just in case we were successful. Don't know how we got there but we tromped through the woods and actually did find them... without a GPS! We clanked around for awhile before heading back. To us this was our "Indiana Jones" moment. We felt as if we had discovered King Tut's tomb! Couldn't wait to get back and tell mom we had found the rocks. At one point I was squatting over the edge of a small cliff looking down. What I didn't know was that I was squatting over a snake. Norman said something like, "Back up fast!" Enough rocks for the day, ringing or not!!

Fishing upstream from the little dam on the other side of the Ridge Road was always good and I frequently went there for a change. It was a good place for the fishermen to park their cars. The water was more deep and calm. One night when my mother's brother (Robert) from Hagersville stopped in I overheard them talking about some late-night skinny dipping going on at the dam. (Remember, this was a small cabin and walls between rooms were rather just a formality, and the kids were supposed to be asleep!) The next day Norman and I decided to do a little 'overnight fishing' at the dam. We packed our sleeping bags, took the rods and reels and headed out. Caught some fish but never a glimpse! It must have been a slow night!

Rainy days tended to be spent with the Swartley boys playing around in the hay loft in the barn, building tunnels and mazes with the bales. Earlier that day I had dropped a bale down the hole in the floor to the cow stalls. Later that day I dropped myself down the hole in the floor to the cow stalls. I was sitting with my back to the edge and forgot there was no railing. I leaned back and kept leaning. In a second, I was staring at a bunch of cows who were staring back at me. I landed on the bale that I had thrown down earlier and got away with just a broken wrist. Except for that bale it might have been more of a splat than a bounce! No lawsuits or calling in OSHA as probably would happen today. Just go to the doc and get it fixed. The summer of the 'cast'.

One time someone had stolen a piece of farm equipment over night from 'Big' Vernon, a rake I believe. I overheard some conversation and grumbling the next day. It just so happened that morning I was out exploring around and wandered up to the quarry and guess what was sitting there

tucked away, out of sight, in the back of the quarry... Vernon's rake! Case closed in hours. Don't know if Vernon ever filed a police report, found the thief or anything like that.

At some point toward the end of our stays Norman got a car, a black '49 Ford, and he started to have "better things to do" besides hang around this kid from Philly who was only 14. But still we would spend time riding around the dirt back roads at the foot of the mountain, and I might say that this is where I learned to drive.



**Vernon Swartley Barn**

At the time hot rods with dual exhausts and deep throated mufflers were the in thing (and not much has changed). I can't remember if Norman's Ford had dual exhausts, but he did do something with the muffler(s). It was fun to hear it 'back off' when you took your foot off of the gas. But it wasn't enough to ride around with the windows down. No, we needed to get to the source to hear them better so one of us would drive while the other sat in the trunk and listened! Obviously neither one of us got carbon monoxide poisoning but we each might have knocked a few points off of our IQs, and I didn't get caught driving.

And this was also a time when it was the 'in thing' to have the car lowered in the back, to the point that the bumper practically was dragging on the ground. Norman tried this out too, but he loaded the trunk with some kind of weight (rocks, tombstones, cement bags - who knows?).

One rainy night we went out for a little spin. It never occurred to either of us that (unless you do it right) the lower the back the higher the front and less traction on the front wheels. Well, we were driving around, and we came to a right turn in the road that also went downhill at the same time. A wet road and front tires with minimal traction and even a normal speed, aren't a good combination. The road went to the right and down, we went straight, slid across someone's lawn and into a cornfield. We managed to keep enough momentum to plow through the stalks and back out onto the road. Norman's main concern was how to get all the mud off of the car when we got back before the 'old man' saw it. The owner of the house would probably have liked to have a chat with us the next morning too!

I was in high school when I heard of plans for Lake Nockamixon. I went to college in 1960 just as the reality of Nockamixon was setting in with the locals and I missed all of

the uproar and protests that were going on. The trips to the grandparents became further apart. Julia died in 1972 and John died in 1982. I regret the times I visited them without riding out to see "how the lake was coming along," partly because I didn't realize the magnitude of the project. I was under the impression it was just going to be a "nice little lake."

I didn't get to see the finished project until I came back from Viet Nam in 1969 and it was even a few years after that. I was surprised to find most of my familiar roads dead-end at water's edge. I took the rerouted Ridge Road around the north side of the lake and found what I think is the eastern end of "Main Street" Tohickon Village where it rejoined the Ridge Road. If Google Maps in satellite view are correct this is where the Haycock Boat Launch is now located.

I guess it is true of any place that progress necessitates sacrifice. We all live within history. When we drive down a six-lane interstate little thought is usually given to the land that needed to be acquired and taken from someone. People moving into 'luxury' apartments or condos in so-called gentrified neighborhoods have no idea of what happened to those (usually poor) folks who were displaced in the name of progress. Same goes for the folks who visit Lake Nockamixon. Future generations will come and enjoy the beautiful lake, some might even wonder if the lake is man-made or natural. But it won't be too many years before the people who have lived through and experienced the building of Lake Nockamixon will be gone. It is a beautiful lake to enjoy but the visitors will never know of the sacrifice, memories and stories that lie beneath the water, or even the stone-arch bridge.

*Tom Schmutzler was born in 1943 and grew up in Philadelphia. When he graduated college in 1964 he moved to Connecticut where he remained until 2006. He now lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.*



**THANK YOU**

**Winnie and Bob Knapp** for donating this large chain. It was hand forged by local blacksmith, Sylvester Martin, in his shop at Old Bethlehem Rd and Cobbler Lane, around 1950. This is now on display at the Stokes House.

**THANK YOU**

**Alice Millar** for donating her beautifully crocheted snowflakes to be sold at Kringle.



**Aerial Photo of bridges and dam and part of Tohickon Village, now under the lake.**

*Photo courtesy of Faye Rick and Angelo Berrios*

## Oh Latvia! - A Cultural afFair

The date is set for Sunday, **September 29, 2019** from 1:30 p.m. thru 4:30 p.m. on the grounds of our Stokes headquarters. Twelve members of the renown **Latvian Choir** will be our guests of honor as they perform traditional Latvian folk songs, dressed in their native costumes. Samplings of traditional Latvian foods and beverages will be offered as well as Latvian crafts and Baltic Amber Jewelry for sale. Guests will be invited to take home song translations and recipes as well as informational pamphlets covering the Latvian settlement in Haycock Township from the early 1900's onward through the aftermath of WWII. Books on this topic will be available for sale.

The event will have limited seating under a large outdoor tent. Members and other guests are invited to reserve seating by purchasing tickets.

Tickets will be \$7 per person and may be purchased online beginning June 1, 2019 by visiting [www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org) and following the links.

Haycock Historical Society members will be offered first choice of seating.

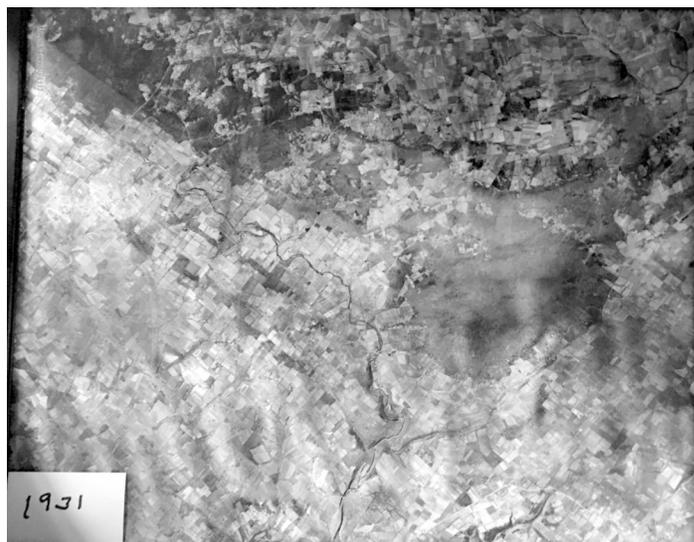
Our Stokes house will be open during the event and guests may tour the inside as well as stroll the beautiful grounds.

LIVE - LEARN - LOVE



**THANK YOU**

**Kathy Zingaro** for spending many days organizing the Stokes Library. One end is shown in these photos.



**THANK YOU**

**Nancy and Tom Schnabel** for donating this large aerial map of Haycock Township and surrounding area. Nancy pieced together four maps to produce the large photo. This is now on display at the Stokes House.



**THANK YOU**

**Vicki and Fred Vasta** for donating a photo of the Applebachsville Hotel. The sign in the photo says "Adam Scheidt Brewing Co. Lager Beer" and Applebachsville Hotel (M.L. Miller, Pro.) At another time this building was named Whitehall.

# Quakertown Borough Hometown Heroes Banners 2019-2020

The Quakertown Borough Hometown Heroes Banner Program is a living tribute created for the community to recognize and honor Veterans who are serving or have served our country in the United States Armed Forces.

To qualify, a Veteran, living or deceased, must have had a connection to Quakertown Borough (attended local schools, relative, friend, etc...) at some point in their life; also, those honored on war memorials within the community and Veterans recommended by Organized Veterans Groups, such as, Veterans or Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Marine Corps League, Vietnam Veterans of America, etc.



The banner will be 24"x 48" heavy vinyl, printed the same on both sides, will display the service person's photograph, include their full name, branch of the military, and the era of service (WWI, WWII, Vietnam, etc...). Banners will be displayed from May through Veterans Day in November in observance of all military branch birthdays. Banners will be removed and stored until the same period in the following year at which time they will be re-displayed. The normal life expectancy of each banner is a minimum of two years and a maximum of three years depending on weather conditions during the years flown. At the end of the normal life cycle, sponsors will be removed from the list and replaced by a pending application.

If the hero was an alumnus of Quakertown High School and you wish to have it displayed near the school, please indicate on the application.

Each banner requires the Hometown Heroes form to be filled out, a photograph of the hero in uniform, and a payment of \$130.00 for each banner, payable to: "Quakertown Borough"; in the memo indicate "Hometown Heroes". Send it to the Quakertown Borough, 35 North Third Street, Quakertown, PA 18951.

Questions concerning qualification or application, contact John Rivers VFW Post 11322 at (215) 529-0500. Leave a detailed message and phone number. You will be replied to.

**You may download the application forms**

<https://quakertown.org/home/showdocument?id=3028>

## EVENTS

**Sunday, Sept. 29 2109: 1:30p.m.**

**Oh Latvia!- A Cultural affair** at the Stokes House HHS Headquarters

**History Lovers and Walkers are invited to join tour guide, Susan French (610) 847-5709**

**Delaware Canal Walk - "From Tincum to UBE" - Saturday, September 21, 2019** - Meet at 10 a.m. - 10 mile, all flat at a leasurely pace. The walk is combined with the Eatona and Hunterdon hiking clubs.

Meet at Tincum Park (Rt. 32/Between Headquarters Road & the Frenchtown Bridge on Pennsylvania side) Group will eat at the Homestead Store , meet UBE Larry, whose grandparents were "Lock-Keepers on the Canal," and perhaps run into the great blue heron ,who may tag along?!

**"Legend & Lore" Doylestown Historical Walk - "The East Side" - Saturday, October 19, 2019**

Group meets at the Doylestown Train Station @ 1:00 p.m.  
(Rain Cancels!) 4 miles

## FRIDAY MORNINGS AT STOKES HOUSE

Our headquarters will be open from 10 a.m. to Noon every Friday starting April 5th through the last Friday of October. Everyone is welcome to visit and enjoy refreshments.

**Past years' issues of our Newsletter are available on our web site.**

**[www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org](http://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

## CORDES LAW LLC

**ANDREW J. CORDES**  
Attorney at Law

27 SOUTH STATE STREET  
NEWTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA  
18940  
WEBSITE [cordeslawllc.com](http://cordeslawllc.com)

PHONE 215-968-2248  
FAX 215-968-4568  
E-MAIL [a.cordes@cordeslawllc.com](mailto:a.cordes@cordeslawllc.com)  
E-MAIL [cordeslawllc@gmail.com](mailto:cordeslawllc@gmail.com)

## MEETINGS

**Thursday, Sept. 19, 2019: 7 p.m.** To be announced

**Thursday, Oct. 17, 2019: 7 p.m.** To be announced

**Thursday, Nov. 21, 2019: 7 p.m.** ..To be announced

**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.**

**The meetings begin at 7 p.m.**

## OFFICERS

President: David Long [cadklong@verizon.net](mailto:cadklong@verizon.net)

V. Pres: Andrea Silvestri [asilvestri@haycocktownship.com](mailto:asilvestri@haycocktownship.com)

Secretary: Nancy Stemler [grandmom42@comcast.net](mailto:grandmom42@comcast.net)

Treasurer: Chris Bauer [cbauer@haycocktownship.com](mailto:cbauer@haycocktownship.com)

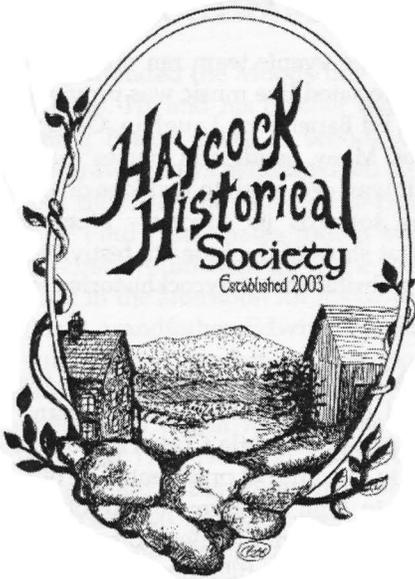
Ad Hoc:: Pat DeWald [wdewald@verizon.net](mailto:wdewald@verizon.net)

Ad Hoc: Chris Handschin [chandschin@verizon.net](mailto:chandschin@verizon.net)

Ad Hoc: Nancy Janyszeski [ncj@epix.net](mailto:ncj@epix.net)

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

**HHD**  
**USA**



P.O. Box 715  
Quakertown, PA 18951

[www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org](http://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