

# HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Summer 2003

## HAYCOCK MOUNTIAN SPIRITS SMILE ON HIKERS

by Chris Handschin

While most of the northeast experienced unseasonably cold, snowy weather, two days stood out like sentinels of spring, March 23 and April 6. Both Sunday afternoons and both slated for our group to explore Haycock Mountain. The mountain spirits seemed to be smiling on us!

With long time residents Joe Fite and Mick McCarty as guides, our first hike was aimed at gathering information on conditions and essentials for the hike in April. Joe brought his Global Positioning System (GPS) device and was able to establish an elevation reading and coordinates at the spot where Mick showed us had been the location of an observation tower. Having used the mountain as his childhood playground, Mick easily pointed out all the key locations. Two round bronze markers on a flat boulder marked this spot. They are stamped with the words, "Geologic Survey" and "50 Dollars Fine For Disturbing Site" in addition to the year, "1929" around the perimeter.

However, in the center, where the words "Elevation Above Sea Level" and "Feet" appear, the actual reading has been obliterated. Signals bouncing from 12 satellites to Joe's rGPS, establishing the elevation at 1,037 feet above sea level. The location was at 40 degrees 29.19 north latitude and 75 degrees 13.10 west longitude. Haycock Mountain and the Hilltown ridge have long vied for the title of highest point in Bucks County. With this reading, one can see why.

Pete Jarrett, who has made many trips up Haycock Mountain as part of the Allentown Hiking Club, was our guide for the April 6 excursion. We wound our way up the first leg of the hike which was a surprisingly smooth, wide path on a slow incline. As this path ended, we came to a huge, hidden water tower, rising 50 feet in the air, looking like a giant green thumb sticking out of the wooded mountainside. Virtually invisible from Sawmill Road, where we had started out, this tank was added to the landscape shortly after Lake Nockamixon was built in the early 1970's. It's purpose is to supply water to the camps and park facilities surrounding Lake Nockamixon and as a fire emergency water supply for the area.

The second leg of our hike went around behind the tower. Here, the path became narrow and encroached upon by underbrush and fallen timber. This chaos of fallen trees and underbrush are examples of recent selective forestry. Trees were thinned and harvested at the base of the mountain to allow a natural habitat for ground dwelling wildlife while maintaining an equal balance of tree species.

Just beyond the fallen timber, the incline became notably

steeper. The gray boulders increased in number and size as the 24 of us threaded our way up the path, strewn with abundant tulip poplar seed wings. Chestnut trees, which had abounded in this area until the turn of the century, were all but invisible on the landscape this day. A keen observer could find the first traces of woodland springtime with the white bloodroot flower poking through last year's fallen and decomposing leaves. The Lenape used the fascinating blood-red sap from the roots of this plant as an antiseptic, body paint and fabric dye. Occasional patches of ground cedar were visibly emerging, as were mayapples. But their trademark umbrella shapes would have to wait for several more warm days to reveal themselves. Grassy tufts of lobelia made abundant presence along the trail with promise to show plentiful blue floral displays in a few weeks.

The higher we climbed on the mountain, the less ground cover was to be seen. Either because of the colder temperature at this higher elevation or the lack of fertile soil, only occasional ferns were seen in rocky crevasses. The boulders began to show spectacular shapes and balancing acts. At one point we saw a boulder, the size of a large car, balancing happily atop another bigger gray stone mammoth, with only three small stones sandwiched between. Light streaming from between the sandwich seemed to levitate the upper giant!

The poplars tangle with the boulders for space, often twisting and deforming themselves to achieve their end. When finally at the top plateau, a sea of boulders studded with tree trunks emerged. Only because we were previously guided by the help of Joe and Mickey, were we able to identify the foundation and bronze markers set in stone below the remains of what was once the observation tower. Absolutely nothing remains of it, save the half-buried cement footers with steel bars embedded in them. We know from records that the structure was made entirely of the abundant chestnut lumber, which had succumbed to blight. In 1929, the government enlisted local men to build the structure as an observation tower. The construction was part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal employment program aimed at creating jobs during the Great Depression.

The tower was said to have been 50 feet high and straddled the location where we saw the bronze markers. A hole in the center of the observation tower's deck allowed for a plumb bob to be hang through the opening down to the markers below. It was at this point where the reading of 1037 ft. elevation was derived, although the location of the mark-

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# STONY GARDEN CHIMES

By Jane Nase

Have you ever listened to the chimes of Stony Garden rocks? The early Haycock settlers enjoyed this music on many occasions. One gathering was the third meeting of the Buckwampun Literary Association on June 14, 1890.

With a desire to preserve history and scientific finding the Buckwampun Literary Association was formed in 1885 with the help of historian, William J. Buck. Each year the Buckwampun Literary Association would host a free gathering that offered a wide variety of programs to the people in the Upper Bucks county area.

The Stony Garden meeting was described as a grand meeting. The day was glorious and the attendance was large. This meeting had a special musical feature, the ringing of the Stony Garden rocks.

Various musical groups used the rocks as part of the accompaniment. "The Grenadier," Euterpean Orchestra of Springtown conducted by H. S. Funk played the opening musical piece on the rocks. Emily Boyer read this poem entitled "Chimes of Stony Garden" written 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 held 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 the whip-poor-will  
In June, welcomes Stony Garden.

During each stanza the musicians responded with chimes produced from the rocks.

Other parts of the program included music from Dr. J.J. Ott who played "Sounds from the Ringing Rocks", "Durham Valley in the Summer", "Old Time School Games", "The Old Beihn Homestead", "Riegelsville Library", "What Books to Read", and "Geology of Stony Garden" were some of the program titles that were offered during the picnic. Participants enjoyed various music selections throughout the program. This meeting was a great success for all who attended.

So when you are in the neighborhood of Stony Garden why not see what chimes you can produce from these special rocks.

The information for this article was gathered from "Account of the Buck Family of Bucks County, Pennsylvania" written by William J. Buck in 1893.

## HAYCOCK SPIRITS *continued*

ers in itself is not the highest point. To the northeast about 100 feet on the plateau is what appears to be the highest point named "Top Rock". Here, four massive boulders are stacked like rugged building blocks, each vying for the highest accessible point.

Just 50 or 60 feet to the south of this high point is "Indian Look Out Rock." It truly seems to be the 'mother of them all' from a distant glance. On closer observation, one can see it is actually made of a cluster of rocks, lying in such positions as to appear to be one huge, flat rock atop another, even bigger support rock. Standing atop this giant, one is almost transported back to the time when the earth shifted its subterranean plates, cracking, buckling, then spewing the huge boulders from it's depths. The location of this rock seems a

truly sacred place. Perhaps because of this, it is distressing to see graffiti sprawled across the giant. From this observation point, one can imagine standing in the footsteps of native chiefs, viewing the land toward the rising sun and peering down at the contrasting rugged west face of the mountain.

This fascinating east side of Haycock has trails blazed throughout with colorful stories attached, such as "Dead Man's Cave" and strange vistas as well, but after nearly two hours of exploring, our troop promised to save that adventure for another day. Joe Fite agreed to host another excursion to the some of those eastern rock shelters on June 22. Hopefully, the same smiling mountain spirits will be with our group for another great outdoor experience!





Joe Fite, Historical Society Member and enthusiastic collector of primitive artifacts, guided a pre-hike expedition, March 30, 2003 along with Lifetime resident, Mick McCarty, below. Mick pointed out the foundation remains and bronze marker at the sight of the former Observation Tower



Some of the naturally occurring rock formations seem to defy logic, as shown in this example.



Haycock Historical Society members pose before embarking on the first planned outing, A walk up Haycock Mountain on April 6, 2003, in search of the remains of the WPA Fire observation tower, (center, below), and the various notable rock formations recorded in albums such as "Top Rock" shown below on right, and "Indian Look-out", a large flat rock formation at the top of Haycock Mountain. The group was also interested in learning what flora exists on the mountain currently and if the Chestnut Tree population, devastated by blight in the early 1900's was making a come back.



A 1950 photo, taken of the tower when it had already begun to show signs of deterioration. The tower rose to a height of 50 ft. and had a hole in the floor platform where a plumb line was dropped to determine the placement of the bronze marker on a rock below.



File photo of a man in a derby sitting on "Top Rock" as a man in the background bridges the gap between the two boulders. Photo taken in 1919.

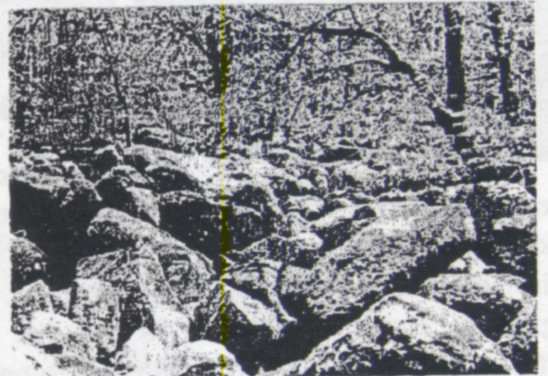




Children pose with Linda Blaisse, standing on one of the great rock formations of Little Haycock, the hump north of Haycock's peak.



Gene Anderson's fascination with the unique boulders of the area have led him to research how they got there. An avid researcher and active historian, Gene has provided valuable insight for the fledgling Haycock Historical Society's archives.



Haycock's Stony Garden has long fascinated people with the bizarre pile of boulders covering a massive area. It truly is a Garden of Stones. Gene Anderson, a long-time resident and mineralogist will offer a presentation on the "Mystery of Haycock's Rocks", at the May 15'th, 2003 Haycock Historical Meeting.



# JOE FITE: THE MOUNTAIN BEACHCOMBER

by Sue Kleiner Grew

If you are resident of Haycock, you've probably had your own encounters with the geology of the area. The township is home to many rocks: medium, large, and huge.

There is one person in the township that enjoys the rocks in all their many varieties. Joe Fite has a great appreciation for archeology and was kind enough to share his enthusiasm for the local geology with me. His favorite pastime is discovering Indian artifacts. He describes himself as, "like a beachcomber on land," searching for the hidden clues that will lead him to tools and weapon pieces that are approximately 6000 thousand years old. These artifacts can be found on Haycock Mountain. His collection includes spears heads, meat choppers, a stone ax, scraping tools, and hammer stones. There is even a cooking device made of stone. It is as round and large as a golf ball and would have been placed directly into the fire to gather up heat then placed in a basket containing food in order to heat up the contents.

If you didn't know better, you'd think they were just plain old rocks but Joe brings your attention to the details. He'll show you where the stone has been what he calls "pecked into shape" to make a sharp flat edge of a meat chopper or the pointy edge of a spearhead. You can feel the hollow shaped for a hand to hold comfortably if you were to use the tool.

Joe's searches have led him to discover several rock shelters on Haycock Mountain. At one cave, one could stand there and look at the rocks and never know there was anything there.

Discovered through his tendency to be "newsy," the caves

are actually rock formations created by falling boulders. They can be as little as six feet deep providing only overhead shelter, or as large as a good size room measuring about 16 feet by 20 feet. There is one that has two separate entrances and has existed for thousands of years.

Joe explains that there is evidence that Indians used the shelters. There are places where fires had been built inside the caves and artifacts have been found nearby. Bucks County legend has it that the Doane brothers, a local band of outlaws, used one of the shelters on Haycock Mountain to stash their stolen loot.

But the real treasure to be found and preserved are the Indian artifacts, which come to light when seen through Joe's eyes. One in particular is an effigy of a bird. When viewed, you immediately see the contours of a grouse. Its head has the short beak in front and the small tuft on the crown of the head. The tail fills out the shape of the bird.

Joe pointed out that the stone representation of the bird was created in order to "maybe leave a little story behind" or perhaps show visitors one of the birds native to the area.

Joe was very generous in sharing his collection of artifacts. He also shared his philosophy about the exploration of the mountain.

Curiosity, he said, is a big part of it but in addition, being respectful of the nature around him is quite important. He told me that once he has completed his exploration, "You'd never know I was there" because he doesn't like disturbing things. He leaves the area just as he found it so in the future many people can enjoy the places he finds fascinating.

## PRESERVING THE CHARACTER OF HAYCOCK MOUNTAIN

by Linda Blaisse

Haycock residents are showing a growing interest in the history of Haycock and the preservation of its history. Hand in hand with this, is the preservation of its natural history. Haycock has a rich and diverse environment from the farmland on the western side to the uniqueness of Haycock Mountain on its eastern side.

Haycock Mountain has been designated a number one priority site for preservation by the Pennsylvania Natural Resource Diversity Survey. They point to the area between Haycock Mountain and Lake Towhee as especially important. Our whole wooded area has been included by the Woodland Trust, a tri state organization seeking to preserve the swath of woodland that stretches from New York through to Chester County, as worthy of preservation.

A walk up Haycock Mountain or Little Haycock as the eastern side (Stony Garden Road, Haycock Run Road and Top Rock Trail) is called can be almost magical. The forest floor is dappled with color in the spring as trout lilies, many varieties of violets, hepatica, pennywort, showy orchis, Star of Bethlehem, woodrue, bloodroot, mayapple and the endangered golden club make their entrance. There are other intriguing plants including the edible morel mushrooms.

The area includes rare ringing rock gardens, where a turn of the century handbill proclaims a township picnic took place complete with orchestra. The trail from the ringing

rocks continues and is documented by a web site [www.letterboxing.org](http://www.letterboxing.org) where people hide letterboxes and give clues to their whereabouts on the internet. When people find them they leave a letter in the box. Their description of the rocks includes rocks that look like dinosaurs to them.

Part of this trail comes to two story boulder piles that are like a giant's jungle gym. You can climb up, around and underneath these giant boulders. People from all around the region come to "boulder" or climb on these rocks. Along the way you pass a one story boulder with a tree growing from the top of it. These boulder piles curve around the mountain to face the silhouette of Buckwampum in the distance.

Years ago the mountain was divided into woodlots and people from town owned lots to dump their trash and to get firewood. Hunting cabins with Byzantine crosses and wood cook stoves can be found and under the brush are old dump sites. There is supposed to be an old Native American dam on one of the streams in the area.

The history and the land of Haycock are intricately intertwined. The preservation of one necessitates the other, in many instances. Working together to preserve the land and the historical structures on it represents a positive marriage of resources for those of us interested in preserving the character and quality of life in Haycock Township.



## GENERAL MEETING - HISTORY OF THE HAYCOCK FIRE COMPANY

The third general meeting of the Haycock Historical Society was held on March 20th at the Haycock Fire Company. About 60 to 70 persons turned out to watch a film produced by Ron Diehl on the creation and history of the Haycock Volunteer Fire Company No.1 (see Haycock Historical News Spring 2003 newsletter for related articles.) Mr. Diehl, whose late father Howard Diehl was one of the first fire chiefs, attended along with Frank Lennard, the last original founder who is still a charter member. The Historical Society and its members would like to extend a big thanks to Mr. Diehl for sharing his hard work in researching this important part of Haycock's history. In addition to thanking Mr. Lennard, a special thanks to the Haycock Fire Company for allowing the Society to use the firehouse for the meeting and for all the effort the fire company puts forth on a constant basis to protect the physical heritage of the community. May we all remember the Company in our thoughts and donations.

## GOVERNMENT MEETING

The Government Committee met for the first time on April 17th, Society President Bob Gelwicks presided. The committee discussed the development of a mission statement and by-laws. The constitution and bylaws were examined of other area historical societies. Treasurer Dick Landgreen also discussed the efforts he has made to register the Society and establish its non-profit status. A rough draft of the by-laws proposed will be presented at the May General Meeting as well as minutes of this meeting. The Government Committee will meet again at 7:00 pm - a half an hour before the start of the General Meeting on May 15th at St. Paul's Church.

## HISTORIC RESEARCH

The Historic Research Committee, graciously hosted by Pat Dewald, met on April 22nd. Committee Chairwoman Diane Kelly presided and Dawn Kline acted as Secretary. Pat

Fite presented a collection of historic research she has been gathering. This information included the 1976 minutes of the first Haycock Historical Society; a copy of a book on the cemeteries of Haycock and Bedminster listing the names and dates of persons and location of cemetery plots in each of the grave yards until the 1980's; the history of St. John's Church. Mrs. Fite also discussed establishing a relationship with the Genealogy Society of Bucks County in Doylestown and obtaining a Society membership to the Bucks County Historical Society, which would allow Society members access to the Spruance Library. Also in attendance was Pamela Varkony, former member of the Allentown City Council and current columnist for the Morning Call. Ms. Varkony grew up in the area of Haycock now under Lake Nockamixon, and her father owned and operated the stone quarry there. Plans were also discussed for having a Benny Surket/Chief One Star Memorial Lunch at Emil's Restaurant, which still has murals painted by Chief One Star. The next Research Meeting will be held at 7:30 pm June 5th. For information call Diane Kelly at 215 536-4297 or e-mail rdrdk@juno.com

## SOCIAL EVENTS

The committee will meet 7:30 pm, May 21 in the downstairs meeting room of the Haycock Fire House. New members are welcome! Plenty of exciting ideas are being discussed!

Goschenhopen Folk Festival, August 8 & 9th. A Living History Festival of the Old Pennsylvania Dutch. New Goschenhopen Park 3rd Street, East Greenville on Route 29. For more info visit their website at [www.goschenhopen.org/festival.htm](http://www.goschenhopen.org/festival.htm)

The Mystery of Haycock Rocks, a lecture about the geology of Haycock presented by Gene Anderson. Also, Indian artifacts presented by Joe Fite. To be held 7:30 pm, May 15th at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. ALL ARE WELCOME!

**JUNE 6-8TH**

### THE MID ATLANTIC AIR MUSEUM WORLD WAR II WEEKEND AIR SHOW

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**SEPTEMBER 21, 1 PM**

### HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S COVERED DISH PICNIC AND ONE ROOM SCHOOL HOUSE REUNION

Bring your favorite casserole or dessert and share in the history of Haycock's one room schools. To be held at the field opposite Haycock Elementary School on Old Bethlehem Road.

For information, call Beth Kerdock (215) 538-1807,  
e-mail [bjsninpa@worldlynx.net](mailto:bjsninpa@worldlynx.net) or Chris Handschin (215) 536-0364