

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Summer 2005

SUMMER KITCHENS

by Jane Nase



Have you ever baked in your oven on a hot summer's day? Did you ever burn food on a charcoal grill and choked on the smoke? The heat and smoke were two main reasons summer kitchens were utilized in the northeast. The summer kitchen keeps the steam and cooking odors out of the living area of the house during the warm summer months.

Most summer kitchens are made of stone or brick. They were out buildings on the property but were close to the main house. In the south, the summer kitchen was often relegated to the outhouse, separate from the mansion because slaves did the cooking. Therefore, the workplace had to be separate from the living area of the masters because of the social standards of the time.

Most fires were on the floor of the fireplace, which was

floor level of the kitchen. Cooking over an open fire during the summer months was quite unpleasant. Consider the task of canning and other long preparations of regular meals. Cooking was dangerous, an estimated 25% of the women died from a cooking accident. Long dresses or aprons caught on fire.

At the time of the Revolutionary War, a kitchen crane was designed to help hoist heavy pots over the fire. Before that time the cooking temperature was controlled by hanging the pots lower or further way from the fire. Pots were made of iron, copper or bronze so they were very heavy.

The main meal of the day typically was served at 2 PM. The day started at 4 AM with collecting eggs and milking the cows. Water had to be drawn and carried from the well on the property.

So the next time you drive by a beautiful stone farmhouse with a summer kitchen, think of the women or slaves who spent most of the day cooking and preparing food in heat of the summer.



Two-story summer kitchen at the home of Harry and Grace Grim
Photo by Heather Radick



In foreground, summer kitchen with chimney at the Gimple house. Photo by Heather Radick.

HAYCOCK'S POST OFFICES

by Heather Radick

When the United States was developing as a country, numerous, unorganized attempts were made for mail delivery, but the mail system as we know it today began as an act of the Continental Congress on July 26, 1775.

When the postal system began, Benjamin Franklin was appointed the first postmaster and implemented much needed changes.

According to the 1897 Annual Report of the Postmaster General: "In cases where an office ceases to be a public necessity, or it is impossible to secure a suitable postmaster, the office is discontinued."

There were once five post offices in Haycock Township. The first to open and the first to be discontinued was in Strawntown, which operated from January 1, 1822 to March 4, 1852. The postmaster was Mr. Lester and when the Strawntown office closed, mail was then handled through Applebachsville, which was established the same day Strawntown closed.

The Applebachsville post office was located in the White Hall Hotel and the last recorded postmaster was J. Stover. It was discontinued September 30, 1907, and mail was rerouted to Sellersville.

Twenty years after a post office opened in Applebachsville, two more started in the villages of Haycock Run and Tohickon. On July 26, 1872, both opened their doors for business in each of the village's general stores, Tohickon closing for three months between November 1927 and February 27,

1928. It was discontinued June 15, 1932, with the last recorded postmaster as A.S. Stover. Mail was sent to Keller's Church after both closings. Haycock Run was the longest running post office in the township with service being discontinued August 31, 1948. After its closing, mail was routed to Sellersville. The postmasters listed are M.D. Frankenfield and George W. Ott.



White Hall Hotel, Applebachville Pa circa 1900

The village of Thatcher had a post office in its general store from October 17, 1890 to April 30, 1907. The postmaster was W.S. Lewis. After it was closed, mail was handled through Richland Center.

The start of the 'Rural Free Delivery (RFD)' system in 1896 may have contributed to the closings of Haycock's post offices. Since the beginning, those who lived outside of city limits did not have home mail

delivery. Residents picked up mail at their post office, which was usually located in the village's general store.

Many citizens in rural areas of the country who paid the same postal rate as those in the cities protested and petitioned for a system of home delivery like that in the cities, which was called Free City Delivery. RFD became a permanent service in 1902 and it is thought that the general stores that so often housed the post office suffered from the lack of regular mail customers.

People started ordering from mail catalogs rather than make what became an unnecessary trip to the store. While it was more convenient to have mail delivered, rural citizens inadvertently changed the social setting in their small villages.

George W. Ott
Postmaster



C. D. Smith



R. C. Allen
Auburndale,
Florida.

Postcards and letters
from Heather Radick's
collection.

Postmark below dates
from 1873.

42186
HAYCOCK RUN, BUCKS Co., PA. 8/31/48

Mrs. C. J. Mumbower
Heasletts
Bucks Co Pa

WHEN GOOD FENCES MADE FOR GOOD NEIGHBORS— THE OLD STONE WALLS AND BYGONE WOODEN FENCES OF HAYCOCK

by Beth Kerdock

Today the woods and fields of Haycock are littered with rocks and stones. But when early settlers first arrived in Upper Bucks they faced a natural landscape dominated by endless acres of tall, straight trees. What the settlers didn't know as they felled these giants was that millenniums of fallen leaves had buried boulders deep within the forest floor. As woods were cleared and fields plowed the rocks beneath the surface began to move. Caught in the throws of what is called the "Little Ice Age" (1300-1850); Pennsylvania frosts and thaws penetrated deep into the ground pushing the boulders onto the surface. Each spring the poor farmers of Haycock were faced with a fresh crop of stones to clear from their fields that they called the 'Devils Harvest'. At first, early settlers made stone piles and used the abundant wood and American ingenuity to invent the most popular and easily built fence of Colonial America known as the "Worm Fence."

The Worm or Snake Fence got its name from the zigzag pattern it formed across the countryside. The Worm Fence basically adapted the design elements of a log home and applied them to fence construction. It required no fasteners, such as nails, to keep the fence together. Logs were split into quarters "four axe handles long" (11 ft.), laid on flat rocks and consecutively stacked in a criss-crossed pattern until the fence was high enough to meet the needs of the farmer. Low fences were for sheep, medium for cattle and up to seven or eight rails high to keep horses (or deer) from

jumping over.

At first farmers would dump the excess field stones around the zigzag of the Worm Fence as reinforcement and to prevent neighbors from repositioning the fence because of boundary disputes. Eventually, the farmers used the field stones to mark their property lines with low lying single faced walls because it was difficult for a disgruntled neighbor to relocate a stone wall. When land and timber became scarce, the disadvantages of the Worm Fence became more

pronounced because the zigzag design of the fence wasted good farmland. They also required vast amounts of lumber-between seven and eight thousand rails were required for each mile of fence or enough to enclose 40 acres. So farmers with rocky fields turned to stone wall construction.

Rock walls built for livestock containment were of dry stone, two-faced construction. A "batter board" would be angled along the sides to guide stone placement so the bottom of the wall would be wider than the top. In most areas the height and quality of walls and fences were strictly regulated and inspected by "Fence Viewers." It was hard to build a stone wall high enough so walls were often topped off with wooden rails that combined the permanency of a stone wall with the convenience of a Worm Fence.

By the end of the 19th century, the needs of cattle ranches in the West were to change fencing across the nation. Too barren for wood, too sprawling for stone, the open Plains made barbed wire the "Devil's Rope" and king of all fencing.

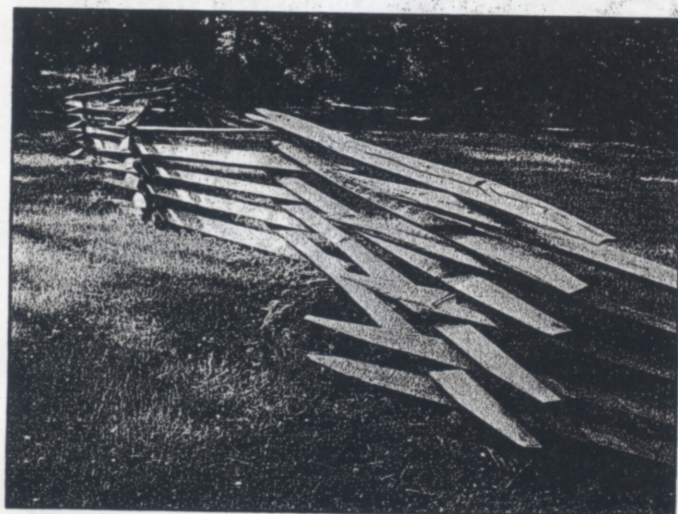
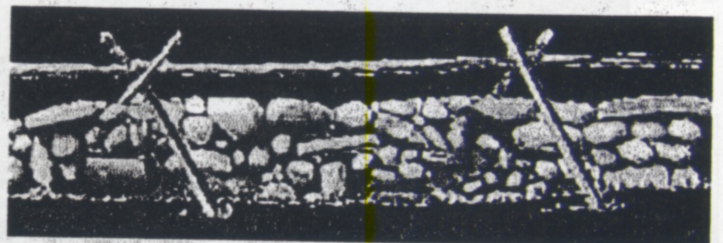
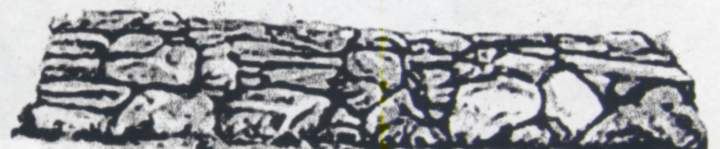


Photo of Haycock worm fence by Heather Radick



Examples of stone walls



TOHICKON VILLAGE

by Sue Kleiner-Grew

Little is known about the village of Tohickon that is now under the waters of Lake Nockamixon. As late as the 1950s, the village was located on the banks of Tohickon Creek, just east of Old Ridge Road.

A typical Bucks County village contained a general store and several homes and Tohickon was no different. Gulden's dry goods store was just across the large stone bridge that led into the center of the little town. On one side the stone bridge, just inside the village, was a dirt parking area where people would come to picnic and enjoy the pleasures of the creek.

The larger of the two bridges that existed in the village was a favorite gathering spot for folks who came to swim, fish and wash their cars beside the creek. There was even a rope swing where children would swing out over the water and then splash down into the creek.

However, the village's days were numbered as plans for the creation of Nockamixon State Park were being developed. A headline in the Daily Intelligencer on February 18, 1961 read: "Tohickon State park will doom 230 tracts" of land in the area.

The dam that would help create Lake Nockamixon was to be constructed on the Tohickon Creek one mile west of Ottsville.

In Tohickon village, buildings, including Gulden's dry goods, were demolished and all the trees were cut down. The village's two bridges were left untouched and to this day remain intact at the bottom of the lake.

In 1963, the General State Authority purchased 90 properties totaling 1,800 acres in the townships of Bedminster, East Rockhill, Haycock and Nockamixon. By September 1964, the land acquisition was nearly complete.

In 1967, an article in the Daily Intelligencer was calling the project Nockamixon State Park. Construction of the park started in 1968 and was slated for completion by 1970. In a January 1971 issue of the Perkasié-based News Herald newspaper, it was reported that the dam was 75% complete. In the News Herald story, it was said the park would hopefully be open by the summer of 1973.

Included in the park plans by that time was the construction of a public swimming pool. The pool and lake now stand as a less quaint substitute for the simpler times of swimming and fishing in Tohickon Creek in the now extinct village.

Thanks to Dave Funk for providing photos and information on Tohickon Village.



Photo of Old Tohickon Village by William Reed Dunham, Jr.

SOCIETY NEWS

We are still collecting stories and memories for our Recipes and Remembrances Cookbook. If you do not have a favorite recipe, you may share a favorite story or tale about your life in Haycock. You can send your information to Natalie Searl at Natalie39@epix.net or call her at 215-536-3939.

We will have our official Haycock Historical Society informational brochure available for June 25'th Market place at the fire house. The society will be printing 1,000 of these to hand out to folks who are curious about our society. Please pick up a few and send them to your out-of-town neighbors and friends who may have an interest in joining our group.

The first 50 of our Haycock Historical Society 150 limited edition collectors plates will be on sale during the June 25 Marketplace. For those who have signed up for the plates, please contact Chris at 215 536- 0364. Your lowest available series number will be reserved for pickup before June 25. These \$30.00 plates will be available throughout the year and also at the Kringle Christmas Shoppe Dec.2, 3 and 4, 2005.

Note-cards, 6 cards per set, illustrated with an ink drawing of the current St. Paul's Lutheran Church drawn & donated by Chris Handschin will be sold at all upcoming events this year. Profits from the sale will benefit St. Paul's & the Haycock Historical Society. All items may be ordered through the society's address at P.O. Box 715, Quakertown, Pa. 18951.

The Haycock Historical Society would like to extend their appreciation to the following people or groups for their various contributions to the society:

- The Haycock Fire company for allowing us to use their facilities on June 25th for the HHS Marketplace.
- Heather Radick for taking on the formidable task of transferring all our collected photographs onto CDs and creating picture boards for display at events.
- Joe and Pat Fite, Heather Radick, Chris Handschin, Pat DeWald and Sue Kleiner-Grew for representing HHS at the Haycock Elementary School "Festival of Learning" held May 14., 2005.
- Steve and Paula Applegate and Linda Blaisse for guiding the hikes on Haycock Mountain in May 2005.

The annual Society picnic will be at the home of Pat DeWald July 24 from 2 pm to 6 pm. this year. Please bring a covered dish to feed about 8, lawn chairs and a swim suit.

The first public meeting of the Haycock Historical Society for Fall 2005 will be held September 15 at 7 pm. It will be hosted by Harold Bellmeyer who will hold our own "Haycock Antiques Road Show". Feel free to bring you antiques or items that may be antiques and Mr. Bellmeyer will provide a free appraisal.

November's public meeting will be hosted by our own Pam Varköny. She will present information about the quarry that existed in Haycock township.

A WORD FROM HHS PRESIDENT RALPH J. ROSENCRANS:

"It's been a pleasure serving this community as the president of Haycock Historical Society. I continue to be amazed at the amount of talent our community shares. Each of our meetings reveals yet another interesting aspect of our Haycock heritage and culture. As a growing society we continue in our search of presenters for our future meetings. From rock formations to gristmills of yesteryear we continually strive to understand and embrace our past and look to our future. I am grateful for all of our members and their continued support of Haycock's Historical Society. Thank you."

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY — GENERAL INFORMATION

The Haycock Historical Society is a non-profit organization whose mission is to research and record the history of Haycock Township and the surrounding environs. General meetings are open to society members and the public. Meetings are held six times a year, clustered in the fall: September, October and November; and spring: March, April and May, and usually held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Applebachsville.

The society's newsletter is published four times a year and distributed to members and also available to the public at general meetings, the Haycock Township Building and other public locations in the area.

Officers 2004-2005

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MembersGreg Seifert

Government Meetings are held the first Monday of the month at 6:30pm in the Haycock Township Building. Society members and the public are invited to attend.



Photo supplied by Heather Radick