

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Summer 2016

OUR MEMBER VIOLET FREEH

By Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

Violet Benner Freeh, our fellow member of the Haycock Historical Society, is the great-granddaughter of Simon Singer, the well-known 1800's potter of Haycock Township. Her maternal grandparents were Edward and Rebecca Schmill Singer, and her parents were Frederick and Florence Singer Benner.

Simon Singer was from Baden, Germany, and immigrated to the United States in 1846. He moved to the German settlements of Bucks County, and into Nockamixon Township, where he worked in the pottery of his future father-in-law, John Herstine Sr. In 1848 Simon married Rebecca Herstine (b.1830, d. 1900), and carried on the pottery business. Violet recalls that her great-grandfather Simon was a member of the Masons, and would walk into Quakertown to attend the lodge meetings. He was the first foreign born member to become the Grand Master of the Quakertown Lodge. Simon's and Rebecca's son, Edward (b. 1850, d. 1909), married in 1873 Rebecca Schmill (b. 1855, d. 1942). In the 1880 Census, Edward was a potter. He also did some farming and worked on the local roads.

Edward and Rebecca Singer had eleven children, the youngest of them being Florence, who was born in 1895. The family lived in Haycock Township, in which Florence attended the New Harrisburg one-room school and the Dunlap one-room school. Florence's cousin Webster Singer taught at the Dunlap school. Florence often talked about New Harrisburg School, of which she had good memories. Florence and her sister Sadie loved growing up in Haycock Township. They had woods to run through, and in these woods were large, flat rocks on which they played house, each rock being a separate "house." Their family lived near Stony Garden, where Singer family members had carved their initials on trees.

Edward Singer died of kidney failure at the age of 59 years in 1909. The family had no phone and 14- year old Florence had to run across fields to a neighbor to call the doctor. She was the last child at home with her mother, for the others had grown up and left. Florence's sister Sadie had to come home from school in Kutztown, because there was no longer

money for her education. Rebecca and her daughters, Sadie and Florence, moved from their home and rented a house in another part of Haycock. The house was down a long lane across the road from the Haycock residence of the owners of the Zohlman Nursing Home (now Phoebe Richland) in Richlandtown. Florence, from the age of 14, and her sister and mother worked in a cigar factory in Richlandtown to support themselves.

In 1914 Florence married Frederick (Fred) Benner, whom she had known for years from working in the cigar factory. Frederick was born in 1894.

The couple lived in Richlandtown until 1925, and then a year in Lansdale, before moving to Springfield Township, where they raised their family of seven children. Violet was born on November 24, 1930, in Passer, located on Richlandtown Pike. She was the sixth of the seven children of Florence and Fred. The Benners lived in the former Fairmount Hotel in Passer, and Violet remembers it as a neat place to live. The house was cream colored when she lived there, and is now painted blue. Her family had a car, but also had a horse. The horse was used for plowing the gardens and the hayfield, and the children loved taking buggy rides to Flint Hill and back. They had dogs and cats, chickens and a cow, plus a hog for butchering. Fred had a peach orchard. Violet's parents, Fred and Florence, worked hard, growing and canning their vegetables and fruit, and raising hay for the horse to eat. Fred especially loved having flower beds, and passion flowers were his specialty. Violet shares her father's love for passion



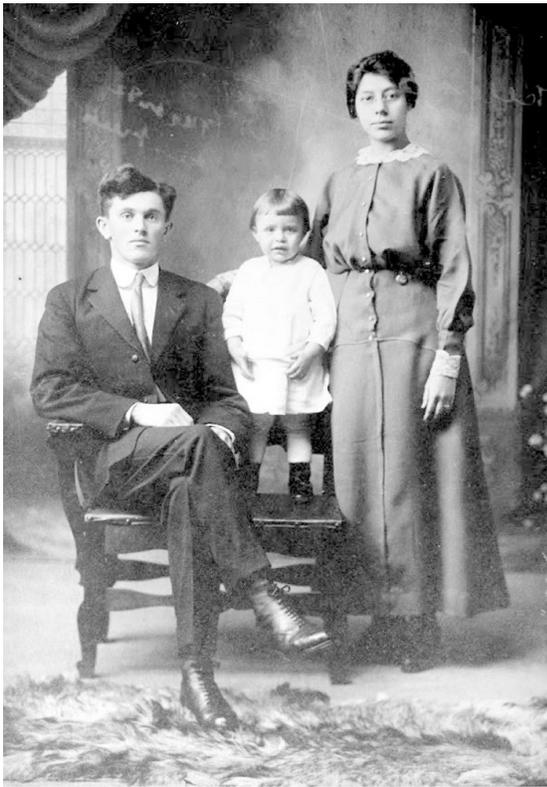
Louis and Violet Benner Freeh



Passion Flower

flowers and continues the tradition of growing them to this day. Their homestead had a barn and a chicken house. Violet and her siblings enjoyed riding the horse drawn hay wagon in from the field (“the horse brought in his own hay”) and

playing in the hay in the barn. Fred had different jobs, one of which was driving the Liberty Bell Trolley up to Allentown. He also drove a smaller trolley from the Red Lion Inn in Quakertown to the end of Richlandtown. This was before Violet was born. Later, the family rode the trolley to Allentown to go shopping at Hess Brothers.



Fred and Florence Singer Benner and son Frederick

Violet attended the Passer Elementary school and Springfield High School. The Passer grade school had two rooms, with the older grades in the smaller room. There was one teacher in each room. The school had play equipment, see-saws, in the woods which were around the school. The children played a lot of baseball and other games. In early years the family cut down a cedar tree from their property for Christmas. They attended the Lutheran Church in Pleasant Valley, and on Christmas Eve there was a program of singing and skits, after which each child received an orange and a box of chocolates. Sometimes they went caroling. The students at the Passer school also went caroling at Christmas, visiting the elderly and others who were home-bound.

Florence’s cousin, Edith Haines, lived in Tohickon Village in Haycock Township, and Violet remembers as a child visiting “Aunt Edith.” The children enjoyed playing on the five-arch bridge over the Tohickon Creek, and Violet loved and has good memories of the beautiful large wrap-around porch on Edith’s house. The village was a nice setting for taking walks. All of Tohickon Village is gone now, the land taken for Nockamixon State Park. The site of the village is now under Lake Nockamixon. All of the buildings are gone, but the five arch bridge is still there, under water.



Edith Haines Home

In 1948 Violet married Louis E. Freeh, who was born on April 5, 1924, in Springfield Township. Violet met Louis through his sisters who attended high school with her. Louis had seven sisters and three brothers. He worked as a metallurgical technician in the research center at Bethlehem Steel. Violet and Louis Freeh built their house and raised their family in Springfield Township. They had four children: Teresa, Ronald, Pamela and Robin. Louis was Tax Collector for Springfield Township for about fourteen years and Violet helped with the paper work of collecting taxes at home. They



Fairmount Hotel—Home of the Benners

took Violet's mother, Florence, for rides back into Florence's beloved Haycock, and Florence would show them the big rocks and boulders that she and her sister Sadie played on in their childhood.

Violet's mother, Florence Singer Benner, died in 1962. Her father, Frederick Benner, died in 1987. According to his obituary, Frederick Benner was a cigar maker, a conductor on the former Liberty Bell Trolley in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, worked for the PA Highway Dept. and was a crane operator for Bethlehem Steel. He served as Supervisor in Springfield Township. He was the son of Tilghman A. and Ellen Glassmeyer Benner.



Tilghman Benner Hearse

Tilghman A. Benner (b. 1868, d. 1952) was a funeral director in Springfield Township. He started the business around 1891. Tilghman had the morgue and did his funeral work in a house across the street, but the viewing parlor was in a part of his home. People would pay him with chickens, produce, such as cherries, and some money, "a dollar here and there." Tilghman was also an auctioneer, and a carpenter. In the early days he made his own coffins. His home later became the store named "Wood Heat," which deals in wood and coal stoves, and fireplaces.

Violet spent a winter hand-writing a copy of her grandfather Tilghman Benner's funeral records from his log books. That copy was then transcribed into records at Spruance Library in Doylestown, where they are now available to researchers. Violet's favorite activity was doing genealogy. She spent many hours at the Spruance Library in Doylestown. She also loves to read, and grows passion flowers. She is a member of the Springfield Township Historical Society, as well as the Haycock Historical Society.

Violet and Louis Freeh lived their entire lives in Springfield Township. In addition to their four children, there are eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Louis died on November 12, 2011. Violet still lives in the home she and Louis built in Springfield, and her son and grandson both now live in Haycock Township, returning to the roots of their Grandmother Florence's childhood.

Some genealogy and other information for this story was provided by our member Nancy Singer, who shared with us "The Singer Family in America."



Edward Singer, father of Florence



Florence Singer Benner age 18



Haycock's Artists Of Our Past

Exhibit Reflection

The recent exhibit of July 30th was made possible when Haycock Historical Society received a grant from the Bucks County Tourism bureau to help kick start the ambitious plan of sharing an art collection, celebrating the numerous renown artists who either lived in Haycock township or drew inspiration from this Upper Bucks region. Although many names were considered, thirteen artists from the past were featured. They included a fair number of locally known artists such as Calvin Ruth, William Atkinson, James Kendall King, Florence Fluck, Hilde Heinrich, Herb Sutter and Chief Joe One-Star. There were regionally renown artists as well. David Frame, "Bucks County Town & Country Magazine's" resident cover artist for nearly two decades, had his home/studio in Haycock Township. Friends, Matt Clark and James Schucker, both extremely successful commercial illustrators, bought farms next to one another in Haycock. Their work regularly appeared in the "Saturday Evening Post" during the 1950's and 60's. Every hospital within 100 miles has hanging in their halls portraits of their presidents and doctors done by the talented Jim Schucker. Ed Lehman, a famous concept illustrator from the township was favored by Jacqueline Kennedy to create picture illustrations of the rooms she redecorated in the White house. Last but not least, there was the wonderfully colorful husband and wife team of George and Helen Papashvily—he the sculptor and she the award-winning author. His simplistic sculpting style resonated with the new generation of art collectors. His works appear in libraries and galleries all over America. Helen wrote numerous books detailing her husband's incredible life story-- a Georgian immigrant during a time when America held endless possibilities. The Hollywood film industry was charmed enough by his life to make the movie, aptly named "Anything Can Happen," about this couple who made Haycock Township their home. For the exhibit, the society reached out into the community and was grateful to find individuals willing to share their private collections for the day at the Haycock Historical Society's headquarters, the historic Stokes House.

Current Upper Bucks Impressionist, Jim Lukens contributed a plein air painting of the Stokes headquarters for a silent auction to benefit the society and also brought his painting class for the day to paint the building from different angles. Haycock sculptor and instructor, Ron Bevilacqua gave sculpting demonstrations to add a current dimension to the show about history.

To the great satisfaction of the planners, a steady stream of nearly two hundred visitors, curious about our featured artists, arrived all throughout the day. Some recollected having met or having known the artist. Some had just moved to the area and wanted to know the local history. Others were just curious about the historic Stokes House. But the most rewarding of all the experiences that day were hearing the parents and grandparents who brought young people to view the exhibit. The finest moments of an historical preservationist group is to know what they've gathered has been passed along to the next generation.

Judging from the comments, "This artist was our neighbor!" or "That artist gave me lessons." or "Those were

painted by your great-grandfather.", we can rest assured that the next generation may now carry the historic torch forward!

Chris Handschin, Events Coordinator for Haycock Historical Society



Present day artists were working outside all morning



Ron Bevilacqua demonstrated wood sculpting



Visitors enjoying some of our artists



"Baking Day" by Tom Schenk



Several Artists of Our Past



The George Papashvily Display



Lehman Home by Ed Lehman



Chris Handschin, Nancy Stemler and Sue McLaughlin at Haycock's "Artist of Our Past" exhibit



Sterner Mill by Hilde Heinrich

IN MEMORY OF

Nancy Bauer Yodis

May 17, 1945—May 22, 2016

A beloved life long resident of Haycock, Nancy worked for Haycock Township in various positions for 45 years. She most recently served as Secretary and Treasurer.



Nancy Courtney and her mother Virginia by the fireplace



THANK YOU

Nancy Courtney and son Brett Buteau for the marble fireplace surround which was in the Atherholt/Luszczak Victorian house (lost to Nockamixon State Park)

SEPTEMBER SUNDAY MEETING!

Our September meeting will be held on Sunday, September 25, 2016 at our Stokes house headquarters. Steve Applegate will demonstrate his Pennsylvania Rifles. One is a flintlock, the other percussion or “cap and ball.” He will also bring some of the utensils that a pioneer would have on his person as he travels around the wilderness trying to stay alive: knives, tomahawks, bags, pipes, powder horns, and other items of interest. Most of these items were hand made by Steve.



THANK YOU

Kathleen Fedorocsko for the donation of the Calvin Ruth painting “Farm on Whalan Road”

ACTIVITIES

Fall Cleanup at Stokes - Saturday - November 5, 2016 - 9 a.m. to Noon- With Lunch.

Rain date - Saturday - November 12, 2016 - 9 a.m. to Noon with Lunch.

Rakes and weed whackers are welcome. I think we have most of the large brush cleaned out, so we may take stock of what we next want to do with the yard at this clean up time. I appreciate all your help and each year the yard looks better.

Thanks, and hope to see you in November for clean up.

Pat DeWald

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

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, and Margie Fulp

MEETINGS

September 25, 2016: 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. SUNDAY MEETING

Steve Applegate will give a presentation on the Long Rifle. This will be held at the Stokes House and will replace the usual Thursday Evening meeting in September.

October 20, 2016: Susan French will give a presentation on The Walking Purchase. She has hiked the route 22 times with a hiking club.

November 17, 2016: Steve Gratias will give a presentation on Old Musical Instruments from the Civil War Era, and others.

With the exception of the September meeting!

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

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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

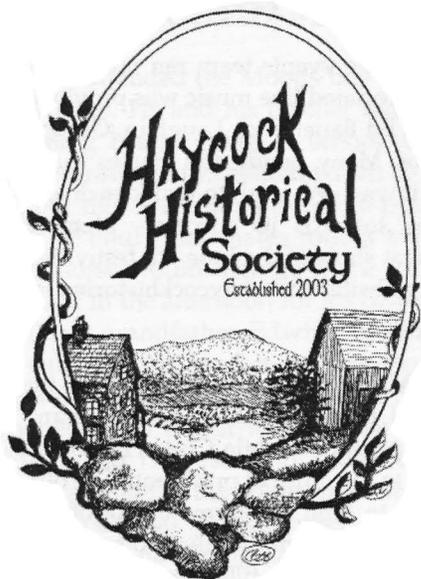
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www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org

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 _____

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**SEND APPLICATION ALONG WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO:
P.O. Box 715, Quakertown, PA 18951**