

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Summer 2019

THE ASPINALL FAMILY HOME

Bedminster Township, Bucks County, Pa

Lost To Nockamixon State Park

By Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

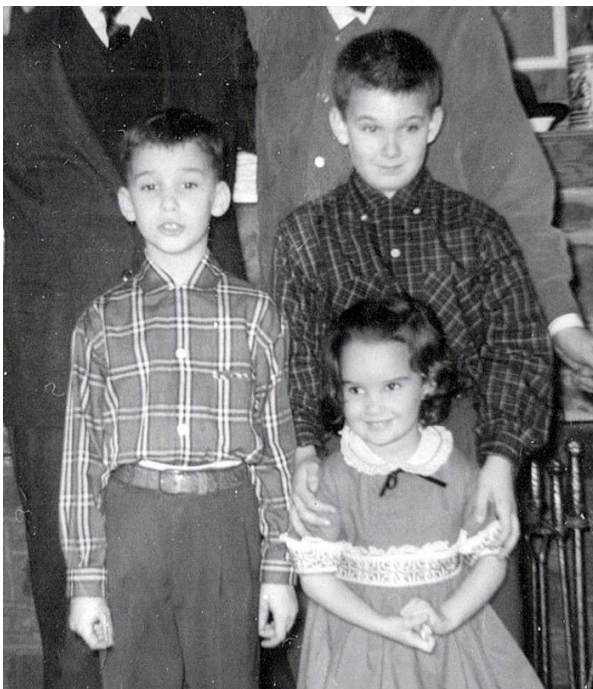
In 1956, the Aspinall family moved from the city of Philadelphia to their new home in the country, on Ridge Road in Bedminster Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Raymond (1919-1966) and Mary (Douglas Ramsay) (1923-1966) Aspinall wanted to raise their children in a rural environment. Based in Milford, NJ and New York City, Raymond worked for Riegel Paper Sales. Douglas, their oldest child, was born in October of 1947, Dennis L. was born in September of 1949, and Mary Susan (Susie Coatney) was born in September of 1954.

Their home was in a pretty setting, with woods behind the house and evergreens and dogwood trees on the front lawn. Doug remembers how their mother loved so much the picture window in their house, and the view it gave them. It overlooked the valley and the Tohickon Creek, and across to Haycock Mountain. Nature surrounded them. Susie and her

brothers have the special memory of hearing Christmas music coming out from the Haycock Mountain. Susie recalls, "Every Christmas we would hear the music floating down out of the mountain towards us. It is a great memory." The Aspinalls and their neighbors would sit outside on the lawn to listen to the music, the source of which remains a mystery.



Aspinall House on Ridge Road



Dennis, Doug and Susie 1958

Doug and Dennis attended the Parochial school at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Haycock. The school closed in 1959. It is now used as the Management Office of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Susie attended the church's new elementary school on Route 412.

Their home was in the landmark area of Kellers Church. Eastward on Ridge Road, past Kellers Church (St. Matthews Lutheran), the Murray Farm was on the left, before Walter Trauger's Granite Works on the right. Next, past Johnny Frei's Garage, all on the right side of Ridge Road, were the homes of John Funk, Raymond Aspinall, Lloyd Ketterer, and Tommy Snyder. The home of Charles Fleck was on Indian Trail Road to the South of Ridge Road. This community provided many children in the Aspinall siblings' age group, which included the Fleck and Murray children, Richie Ketterer, David and Marguerite Funk, and Nick Frei.

Doug, Dennis and Susie have happy memories about the good times they had playing with their friends in the woods, exploring and making trails, and studying the rocks. They haven't forgotten the plentiful skunk cabbage which grew in the woodland.

The picturesque Tohickon Village was nearby, and it was a favorite place to visit. The Tohickon Creek flowed alongside the village, and they loved the beautiful stone five-arch bridge which crossed the creek. Susie, when about six years old, enjoyed swimming under the bridge. She noted that at that age, one is "closer to the ground," and notices more of what is there. She remembers little "creeks" which fed into the Tohickon under the bridge. There was a solid rock bed with



Jimmy Jackson, Susie, Dennis, and Doug Aspinall

grooves cut into it which formed the tiny creeks, making a miniature world of its own, perfect for a child's imaginary play in the setting under the bridge. Dennis says he would spend the day fishing off the bridge. He liked walking along the creek and observing all the many butterflies and dragonflies, and at one time, a weasel, by the creek. It was an idyllic world. The dirt road which went down into the village provided a good hill for sledding and engineless go-karts. Six kids at a time would sled down the road, bouncing and bumping around in the snow, with no one getting hurt. Doug and Dennis played with the Swartley boys, Vernon and Steve,

who lived in a big house on the Swartley family's farm at the east end of the village. They played in the barn and searched for mussels in the creek. The Aspinall parents were friends with the Gillihans, who owned Great Valley Mills in the village. Susie and her brothers played in the Gillihan's barn. Doug recalls, "We had lots of friends, great fun in our country community."

The road into the village crossed the bridge to the Bedminster side, and meandered up past a small quarry. Further up was the home of a friend of Dennis. This house was later taken for the Nockamixon Park. When the outer covering of the house was torn off for demolition, the house was discovered to be a log cabin. Dennis remembers the deep windowsills in the house, and what a nice cozy home it was. He isn't sure if the cabin was razed, but wishes it was left to stay. He also recalls Walter Trauger's store and barbershop on Ridge Road, and the spittoon on the floor of the barbershop. The boys enjoyed spending time at their neighbor, Johnny Frei's Garage, on Ridge Road. They liked rummaging through the treasure trove of junked cars kept behind the building.

Doug and Dennis and their friends climbed Haycock Mountain in Haycock Township many times. They remember the tower, now gone, at the top of the mountain. They went swimming at the Stover Dam, just down the road from their home. The dam was on the Tohickon Creek, on the north side of Ridge Road. At this point on the road, a bridge crossed the creek, which was the border between Bedminster Township and Haycock Township. The dam had been made to create a mill pond for the Stover Mill in Tohickon Village. The mill had been torn down in the early 1940's. The water was deeper in the mill pond, and a rope, tied to a tree limb, hung over the water. The swimmers had a lot of fun swinging out on the rope and jumping into the water. This was a very popular spot in the area. Many people came to the dam to



Dennis and Doug and their 4H goats

swim and play. Dennis noticed the mill race, which flowed from the dam, and followed it to where he found the old millwheel, where the Stover Mill once stood. In winter, when the Tohickon froze over at the Stover dam, people came to ice skate. Doug remembers a go-kart driver pulling skaters around on the ice. Susie's "fondest memories as a little girl living in that area were learning to skate there and also to swim."

The boys liked to walk to Kellers Church, where there were activities for the children. Doug, Dennis, neighbor Ron Murray and other friends were in scouts and 4-H. The brothers raised Toggenburg goats for their 4-H Club project. Doug recalls a friend of their parents driving up in a truck and delivering a large chicken coop, which was then converted into a goat shelter. The boys entered the goats in a fair held at the Quakertown Farmer's Market. Mary, their mother, was an avid sewer, and made matching shirts for the boys to wear for the event. Doug won first place and Dennis won second place. When Doug was about eleven years old, he and Dennis and two friends had a sleepover one night in one end of the goat shed. The goats were at the other side. The campers were instructed by their parents to stay there, and not roam around the woods during the night.

Mary Aspinall drove her 1953 Chevy woody station wagon to go looking for antiques in the area. She procured some nice furniture for their house this way. She took her children to various activities, and on shopping trips in Perkasio and Quakertown. The A & P in Perkasio had a coffee grinder available for the customers to grind their own coffee into bags. Doug would do this fun task for his mother. One day Mary got Doug and Dennis into the station wagon and drove them to the nearby Phillips' farm, where she told them they were going to work. They mowed, baled hay, and put the hay into the barn, among other chores. When the boys were done with that, Mr. Phillips gave them a .22 rifle, a can of gasoline, and instructed them to drive the flatbed truck out into the field, where they were to shoot groundhogs. The purpose of the gasoline was to pour it down a hole to force the groundhog to exit from its other hole.

Doug still remembers all the parents of his friends, and how they drove the kids to events, and spent time to talk with them. The parents were all friends and had get-togethers. It was a close community, which provided good times back then.

Doug and his neighbor, Richie Ketterer, liked to play war with soda can "grenades." They never realized they would be in real combat in ten years, in the Viet Nam War. Doug was interested in military things and won first place in a competition at Sears, with a model he built of the aircraft carrier, the USS Hornet, the carrier from which Jimmy Doolittle and his crew flew 16 Hornet B-25's in the first raid over Japan in WWII.

Doug and Dennis liked to sit in front of their house in the afternoons to watch Jake Vargo, whose father owned the nearby Vargo Dragway, speed down Ridge Road, in his 1959 Chevy convertible, at high rates of speed, 70, 80, maybe 100 m.p.h. This may have influenced Doug's following escapades. Doug's parents were friends with the Jacksons, who lived in a large four-story stone home on Creek Road. This road connected to Kellers Church Road, downhill and north of the church. This house, remembered by Doug and Dennis as "beautiful inside and out," was also taken by the state and torn down for the park. Dennis remembers the old stone well on the property. Doug was friends with the Jacksons' son, Jimmy. After Jimmy's parents left the house to pick up Doug's parents to go out together, Jimmy, who was 15, and not licensed to drive, would get out his family's blue 1953 Chevy Sedan and go to pick up Doug. The boys knew how to drive from working on the Phillip's farm, and driving the pickup truck and flatbed truck in the fields. Jimmy and Doug took the hubcaps off the car to make it look "cool," and took the air filter out to make the car noisier. These were stowed away in the trunk. Emulating the older teenagers and their cars, Doug and Jimmy next went cruising around Doylestown, Easton, or Quakertown. Sometimes Doug, also underage, drove, using his family's 1957 Plymouth. They did it for the sense of freedom it gave them, after spending so much time in their local home surroundings. One time the boys ran out of gas. They had to knock on a stranger's door asking for some gasoline to get them home. The fun stopped when they onetime failed to put the hubcaps and filter back in



Mary, Susie, Raymond, and Doug Aspinall on the ice at Stover's Dam

place. Jimmy's father found the items in the trunk and questioned why they were there. The boys tried to say they were working on the car, but Mr. Jackson also noticed the low reading on the gas gauge. Doug's parents also caught onto what was going on. Doug and Jimmy were grounded. They were not allowed to see each other on the weekends or to be together unsupervised. "They couldn't take the cars away from us, so they took us away from each other." Before the car adventures, another activity they enjoyed was going for walks along the Tohickon Creek in a westward direction from the Jackson home toward the village of Weisel. In the creek they found a vernal pool, which was perfect for skinny-dipping and cooling off. In another adventure, Doug and Jimmy were riding horses along Creek Road. "As a trick we were riding bareback. Jimmy took off and left my horse and me behind, with me screaming, bouncing-up-and-down on the horse, holding onto the mane, I'm trying not to fall off, it was really scary, and we ran along that dirt road heading up to the swimming hole." Doug tells of another incident: "I was in the house when Mother answered the phone and screamed. Jimmy had been accidentally shot by his brother with a shotgun while hunting. She ran out of the house to the Chevy towards Jimmy's house. I was told to remain in the house. Never knew why Jimmy had numerous pieces of birdshot in his back, legs, etc." Jimmy was taken to the hospital to be treated and have the birdshot picked out. The accident happened when his brother tripped and fell, causing the gun to go off.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania decided to make a state park by damming the Tohickon Creek and flooding the valley to create a recreational lake, for the use of state residents from as far away as Philadelphia. This called for the displacement of the residents of at least 240 properties in Haycock, Bedminster, Nockamixon and East Rockhill Townships. The state sent agents around to buy up the properties. In 1961 the Aspinall family moved from their cherished home in Bedminster to Riegelsville, Pennsylvania. Their neighbors-the Murrays, Ketterers, Funks, Flecks, Freis and others all had to give up their homes to the state for the creation of the park. The Ketterers were the last to leave in their neighborhood. The nearby and loved Tohickon Village was also taken for the park. All the houses, of which there were about seven, and barns and other buildings in the village were torn down and removed. Only that beautiful stone arched bridge, on which the children played and fished, was left remaining, to be covered by water, as was all the land on which that enchanting village once stood. Today the bridge rests under about 25 feet of water. The Stover dam where they swam and the bridge on Ridge Road, including the road, are now under the lake. Johnny Frei's Garage was taken and torn down. The Frei family's house was moved in its entirety to a new location.

Doug joined the Army because he wanted to fly

helicopters. Dennis went into the Air Force. Nick Frei joined the Marines. Doug, Dennis, Richie Ketterer, Nick Frei, and Susie's husband, Howard, all served their country in the Viet Nam War. Susie met and married Howard after the war.

Raymond Aspinall passed away in January 1966. Mary Aspinall passed away on New Year's Eve in 1966, when Doug, aged 19, was home on leave from the army, and before he went to Viet Nam. Susie was only 12 years old when she and her brothers lost their mother. She went to live with her Uncle William Ramsay near Washington D.C., in Silver Springs Maryland. Dennis, 17 years old, lived with the Luehrs family in Riegelsville for a time, then moved to Washington D.C., and then on to the Air Force. Both parents are buried at the St. John the Baptist Cemetery.

After Viet Nam, Dennis went to see the arched bridge in Tohickon Village, while the lake was being constructed. The water level would vary and sometimes the bridge would be visible, only to disappear again from view. He and Doug went back to the site of their home, which thankfully is above the water line. Looking around the grounds, they found an old shoe where the house once stood. It was a poignant moment. Susie says "Whenever I travel back to PA, I make it a point to go to the site where our house stood and look for evidence of our life there. I've found rock cropping's that I played near, and slate from our roof. Our swing set frame remained for many years after the house was removed." Susie still has the piece of slate as a remembrance and a part of her childhood home.

Dennis and Susie both have their homes in Arizona. Dennis misses seeing the hex signs on the barns of Pennsylvania. Doug and his wife Denise (Thibeault) now live in a small town in Massachusetts. The town resembles Riegelsville, and there are small back roads which remind him of the Kellers Church area.



View of the Tohickon Valley from the Aspinalls' front yard



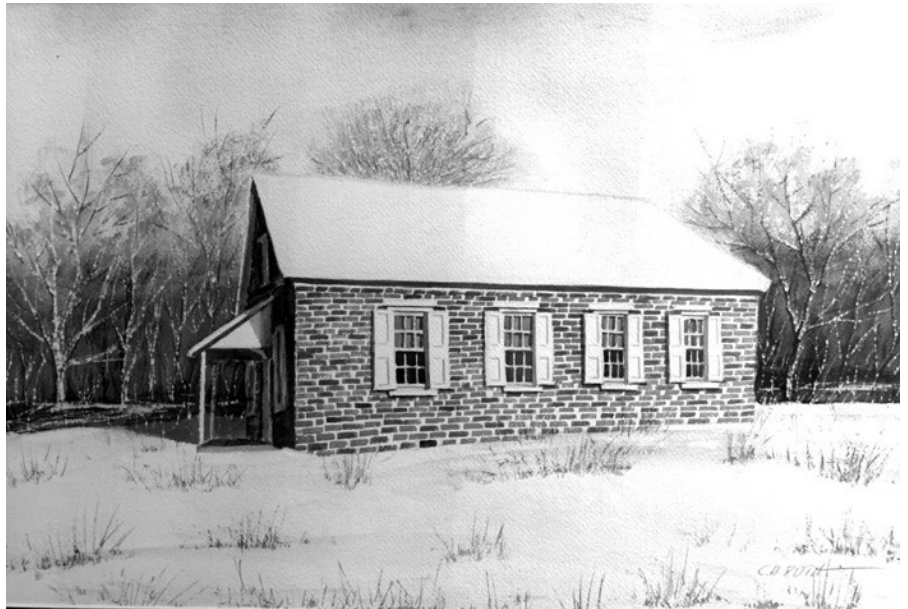
IN MEMORY OF

Margaret Guttman

March 03, 1946—June 19, 2019

THANK YOU

to **Faith Cope** for this Calvin Ruth watercolor of the Applebachsville one room school. Faith's mother, Loretta Belac, received this treasured watercolor from her long time friend, the Quakertown artist, Calvin Ruth. Loretta's husband, Ivan, attended the school in his youth, as did many other Haycock and former Haycock Township residents. We are honored to add it to our collection.



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 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

Meetings have begun for Kringle for the event slated for December 6 to December 8, 2019. If members wish to be a part of this great event in any way, please contact the committee at kringleshoppe@gmail.com

Pennsylvania Historic Marker Dedication Richard Moore Home

Conductor of the Underground Railroad
402 Main St. Quakertown
Saturday, September 14, 2019 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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 leisurely 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

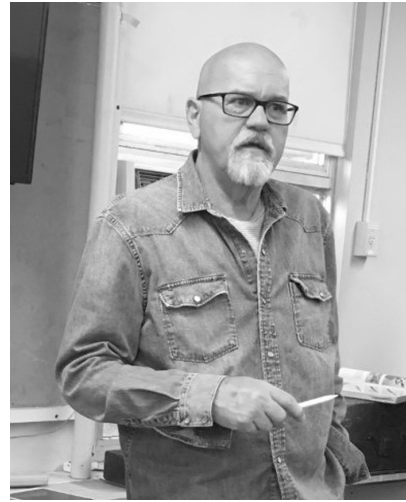
Group meets at the Doylestown Train Station @ 1:00 p.m. (Rain Cancels!) 4 miles

Haycock Township

Once cobbled together
of unwanted parts
now an heirloom
patchwork quilt-
velvet trees,
silken lakes,
calico homesteads,
stitched together
by the needle beaks
of herons.

Lynda Gene Rymond

August 6, 2019



Bruce Lewis spoke about fish decoys at our May 2019 meeting.



Some of the fish decoys made or collected by Bruce Lewis.

William Groner has contacted HHS, looking for old friends and classmates from Haycock. If you can help him, his email address is williamgroner@thalesgroup.com

EVENTS

Sunday, September 29, 2019: 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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

Saturday, November 9, 2019: 10 a.m. to 12 Noon with Lunch.

Stokes Fall Cleanup Day

We have lots of walnuts to gather, a garden to mulch and holes to fill in. We have wheelbarrows, but a rake would be helpful. Your help is much appreciated and will keep Stokes looking good.

As chairman of the yard work, I want to thank all the people who have spent hours mowing, picking up branches, and weed whacking. The house and grounds are looking fabulous thanks to you all.

Pat DeWald 267- 467- 7608

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

"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

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MEETINGS

Thursday, September 19, 2019: 7 p.m. Scott Bomboy will give a presentation on **The Covered Bridges of Bucks County.**

Thursday, October 17, 2019: 7 p.m. Dr. Robert Leight and Thomas Moll will speak about their **new book on the history of Haycock Township.** They will bring copies of Dr. Leight's book, *Richard Moore and the Underground Railroad at Quakertown*, for sale.

Thursday, November 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.

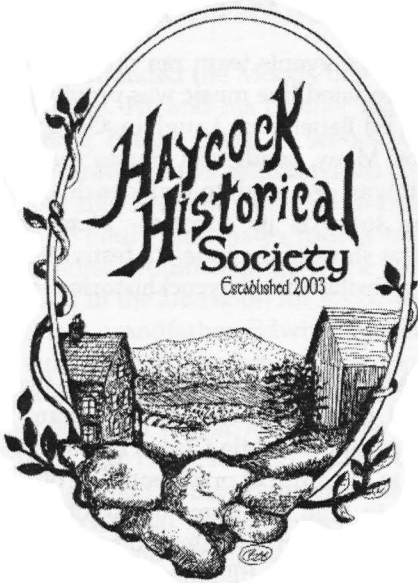
The meetings begin at 7 p.m.

OFFICERS

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Secretary: Nancy Stemler grandmom42@comcast.net
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Ad Hoc: Nancy Janyszeski ncj@epix.net

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

HHD
USA



P.O. Box 715
Quakertown, PA 18951

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