

# HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Winter 2024

## FRANCIS (FRANK) FACHET

FARMER, HUNTER, STEELWORKER, & GENTLEMAN OF THE 'HAYCOCK VALLEY'

by Lois Marie Fachet Weisberg

Chronicled by the third generation of the Fachet family in America, this story is focused on the life and times of my father, Francis (Frank) Fachet. His saga begins in 1904 when 18-year-old Fabian Sebastian Fachet (my grandfather) left his family in Konigsau- a small village in the Austro-Hungarian Empire located 100 miles northeast of Vienna- to come to America. Fabian was neither the oldest nor the youngest of 6 children.

From 1901 to 1910, over 2.1 million Austrian citizens arrived in the United States to become one of the 10 most populous immigrant groups in the United States. They left Europe behind with the hope to live, work, and thrive in a new world of opportunity and freedom. Brave and adventurous, Fabian sailed across the vast sea registering at Ellis Island in New York at the turn of the Century. He settled in Philadelphia, PA, taking a job as a machinist for the Railroad System while awaiting citizenship. In 1910 he married Paulina Barbara Sprosek, commonly known as Lena. Paulina was an 18-year-old Austrian who had migrated to the United States in 1906.

By the time Fabian received citizenship in 1915 he and Paulina had 3 children: Joseph, George, and Anna Mae. My father- Francis (Frank)- was born in 1916 in South Philadelphia where his parents first resided. In 1921 Fabian and Paulina bought an 80-acre farm in Kintnersville, Bucks County, PA.- nestled in the eastern foothills below Haycock Mountain.



The Fachet Farm today, Haycock Mtn. rising in the background

Dad (Frank) was around 5 years old at the time. Fabian and Paulina had 3 more children: Kathryn (known as Kay), and twins Alice and Rosie, all born on the Fachet farm

located at the end of Fachet's Lane, just off Durham Rd. in Nockamixon Township.

Aside from the attraction of reasonably priced, clean, fresh, and fertile farmland, was that St. John the Baptist Catholic Church was in the immediate neighborhood. For Catholic immigrants, the neighborhood church was not just a place of worship; it was the focal point of a tight-knit rural community- a whole way of life- providing spiritual guidance, education, and a social life. St. John's had been the first Catholic church established in Bucks County and was located only 2 miles from the Fachet farm.

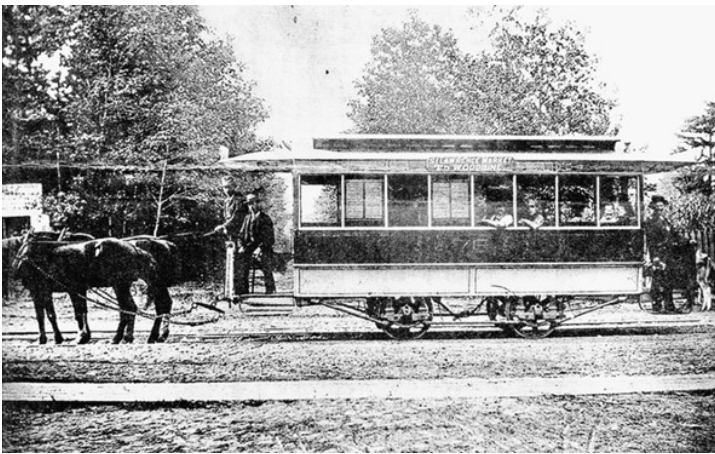
Fabian's brother Joseph arrived in the United States in 1911, eventually settling in Kintnersville as well. Between Fabian, Joseph, their wives, and a total of 11 children, the 2 families made up their own little Fachet clan... all nestled just below Haycock Mountain.

Life was hard on the farm. Pop-Pop Fabian still traveled to Philadelphia for work taking the stagecoach (and later, the trolley) that ran south on Easton Rd. from the Harrow Inn into the city. My dad had the responsibility of dropping him there via horse and buggy before dawn every Monday morning. Grandfather stayed in South Philly during the week only to return late Friday night. That left his older children to do the farm chores before leaving for school each morning: tending the horses and feeding the chickens and cows. In the summer and fall there were crops to sow and harvest. At that time Joe was approximately 10 years old, George was 8, and Anna Mae was 7. Dad (Frank) being so young probably just got in the way the first few years- or who knows, he may have already been assigned chores like helping to feed the chickens.

School for the Fachet children generally consisted of a makeshift one room schoolhouse within a few miles of the farm with a dozen or more students of ages ranging from 6 to 12. The high school was located in Revere on Rt. 611.

Dad often talked about childhood memories. He never mentioned playing much as a child, but when he and his siblings and cousins could get free time on hot summer days, they walked down to the Haycock Run Creek which was deep enough to swim. The kids were tough in those days, learning to fend for themselves and solve their own problems. When Dad was in second grade, the bullies of the neighborhood forced the younger kids to lay on the ground with their heads on the trolley tracks and when the trolley came, they weren't allowed to get up. If they tried, the bullies kicked them and forced them to lay back down. Dad said, "The trolley came to a screeching halt and the driver got out

and screamed like a crazy man. The bad kids just ran away laughing.”



Another time, the same bullies made the young boys chop down the school flagpole.

Dad soon learned to be tough too. He frequently got in trouble at the St. John's Catholic school. Once he put a skunk under the crawlspace of the school and the building had to be evacuated. He got thrashed by Pop-Pop Fabian, but the prank made him a hero with his classmates. In 4th grade he got in an argument with another boy in class and during recess he went outside and yelled into the open window of the school room, "Come on out here you bastard, so I can beat you up!" A nun heard him and sent him to the priest's office where he got his knuckles rapped and had to kneel in the corner the rest of the day.

Sunday morning was a day of rest and the entire Fachtet family put on their good clothes and went to church.

Pop-Pop Fabian continued his job with the Philadelphia Railroad. As the years passed, George graduated, married Blanche Markley, and left the farm. Joe was wild and rebellious. He recklessly lost his hand in a corn-shelling machine accident and left the farm at age 16 to ride the rails across the country... living like a hobo, eventually settling in Oregon. Anna Mae married Jule Lehman and took an apartment in Quakertown where she opened a hair-dresser shop. That left Dad at the farm with all the younger girls: Kay, Alice and Rosie. He had to assume responsibility for the majority of farm chores, so he dropped out of school, becoming a full-time farmer at age 14.

Eventually, as the Great Depression ended, Pop-Pop Fabian got a job working at Bethlehem Steel and no longer had to travel to the city, so he took over most of the farm duties which freed dad up to start his first real job at age 21 on a highway construction crew for 25 cents an hour. "That wasn't bad," he would say, "because you could buy 3 gallons of gas for only 50 cents." Dad's first car was a 1938 Chevy, after which he was always a Chevy man.

In 1942 Dad was rejected from the US Military because of his chronic asthma. He began working in the blast furnaces at Bethlehem Steel as the nation geared up for a 2nd World War. The huge open furnaces required coal to be shoveled in all day long to keep the steel production going. It was the toughest area in the factory. The gang he worked with made fun of Dad's "sissy" name Francis, and that is when he formally changed his name to Frank.

This is where my mother comes into the story. Grace Irene Anders- born and raised in Springtown, PA- was one of George and Katie Anders' 5 children. Mom and Dad met at a Rick family picnic and started dating in early 1942. In April 1943 Mom became Mrs. Grace Fachtet.



At first, my parents took an apartment on Main Street, Quakertown, but life didn't get any easier for Dad. They wasted no time starting a family. My older sister Judy was born in September of 1943. Dad was working full-time shift work at Bethlehem Steel, still in the sweltering blast furnace. He also had a part-time job working at Pleasant Valley Sawmill so he could get lumber (instead of money) used in the construction of a home on Stoney Garden Rd. at the northwest corner of the Fachtet farm. At the sawmill his job was unloading train cars of raw logs. Dad would work a whole day just for a small quantity of lumber. And the train cars were very hot inside. It was actually like he was working 3 different jobs at the same time because he was also building his house himself. All 3 jobs required hard physical labor. He said, "Man, I really worked!"

Pop-Pop Fabian Fachtet was helping Dad build the house but passed away in February of 1945. The house was in the final stage of construction and my parents had just moved in. In the middle of one night, Dad's sister Rosie came running across the field screaming and crying that Pop-Pop had collapsed on the floor and they couldn't get him up. Dad rushed over, but by the time he arrived, Grandfather had expired from a massive heart attack.

After that, Dad had to do everything on the farm for Grand-mom Paulina Fachtet because Rosie married Remandus Charles (whom we called Uncle Mandy) and they moved to Dublin. Kay and Alice had both married and left the farm a few years earlier. Dad said, "They all left as soon as they could; George, Joe, Anna, Kay, Rosie and Alice." Dad was the only one to remain and help his mother run the farm.

After Fabian's death, Paulina wrote to Joe requesting he come home from Oregon and take over the responsibilities at the farm. He was the oldest son and she

felt bad because he lost his hand in the corn shelling accident. But that didn't go well. He had established a life out West and had a wife and children there. Joe did travel home, but instead of taking over running things, he insisted on selling the farm, took his share of the money and went back to Oregon. Grand-mom Paulina then moved in with Rosie and her husband Mandy.

But before I go any further with my memories of my dad Frank, let me tell you about the house we lived in on Stoney Garden Road. Our house was a modest cape cod with white shingles and a gray slate roof. It was plopped down right in the center of a 2-acre lot on the far corner of the Fatchet Farm. There was adequate distance between the house and Stoney Garden Road for a huge front yard, a shaded picnic grove to the left of the entrance, tall pine trees to the right, and a curved driveway leading to the side of the house by the kitchen door. The house was flanked on both sides by corn fields. There were tall aspens, a few fruit trees, walnut trees, lilacs, azaleas, forsythia, rose bushes, and a huge vegetable garden in the back yard, backed up by woods with a path that led to the old Fatchet Farm. And a square building at the end of the gravel driveway in which Dad raised chickens.



**The Cape Cod Frank Built on Stoney Garden Road**

Dad was a really hard worker. He never missed a day at Bethlehem Steel because of sickness or the weather. There could be 2 feet of snow on the ground and ice on the streets, but he went to work. He plowed, shoveled, spread ashes on the ice in the driveway, and he had snow chains that wrapped around the tires to increase traction.

Just installing the tire chains must have taken at least an hour. He never complained. He always had outdoor work to do if it was still light outside; mowing, gardening, tending to the chickens, tinkering with his tractor and his car. He hunted, butchered his own deer, made stuffed sausage, smoked pepperoni, canned sauerkraut, and many other vegetables from the garden. All summer there was a crock of dill pickles freshly made from our garden cucumbers. He grew onions and pulled them out of the ground with stems a foot long, dried them in the sun, braided the stems together into long chains of onions and hung them from the ceiling in the cold section of the cellar.

Dad liked to have fun too. He laughed a lot and especially loved the Christmas season. He got all bundled up,

carried an axe down into the Fatchet woods behind the house, and we impatiently watched for him to come back dragging a fresh cut Christmas tree. They weren't always the best trees. In fact, sometimes it would be nothing more than a scrawny cedar. My siblings and I gathered around dad and stood there staring at it, and rolled our eyes at each other thinking, "Oh man, is that our tree!" One time it was so bad we cried, and Dad had to go back down to the woods for a better one.

We bought our first TV set around 1952 and life changed in the Fatchet household after that, and as dad used to say, "You better believe it!" Everything revolved around the TV. The first few weeks we all watched non-stop. Dad came home from work and Mom had dinner all ready and the table set, and we didn't want to take our eyes off the TV set - which would have required we stay in the living room. I'm sure every family in America was having the same issue as "TV Dinners" were invented and showed up in the frozen food section at the grocery store. Entire meals were packaged on foil plates and all you had to do was stick them in the oven, heat them up, and take them to your seat near the TV.

Dad started spending more time watching TV with us. He especially loved action programs such as Dragnet and comedy shows like Red Skelton. Dad loved watching professional boxing matches with champions like Rocky Marciano and Sugar Ray Robinson which were usually on TV on Friday night. He got his tray of ring bologna, cheese, and crackers and his mug of beer and sat on the edge of his chair sparring in the air and hollering at the screen. He also loved watching the World Series. The Phillies were his favorite team.

1954 was an eventful year. In October- during Hurricane Hazel- the roof lifted off the chicken coop. Rather than replacing it, Dad tore down the building and used the foundation to erect a 2-car garage. Dad bought a round brooder house that held 100 chickens and stuck that behind the new garage. The garage wasn't just a garage. It was heated with a pot-belly wood stove, had a double sink and refrigerator, a big gas stove for canning, work benches, and a loft upstairs used mostly for storage. But in later years, when the house was overrun with his teenage daughters, he added an oversize recliner, strategically placed in front of a large window overlooking the woods. He liked to sit out there and read western novels, always watching for deer passing through the back yard. The expression didn't exist yet, but it was truly his "man cave."

Dad stepped up his effort to support our growing family while working his way upward at Bethlehem Steel from the hot sweaty job in the Blast Furnace to an office job as Material Expediter. He now wore long-sleeved, stiff white shirts to work every day and dark pants. And in the summer, he wore white sleeveless muscle T-shirts to work outdoors, and his skin got as dark as an Indian. He was so handsome in his starched white shirts.

Mom and Dad had an active social life. They often went out on Saturday nights, making the rounds to all the local bars: The Harrow, The Landmark, The Springtown Sports Club, The Pleasant Valley Inn, The Elephant Hotel, and Nels' & Mary's Hideaway which was owned by Mom's cousins- the Markley family. Dad had so many friends; some with funny nicknames: Jake the Fake, Charlie by the Creek, Webb, Squirrelly Pursell, Jerk, Ed Youngkin, Tommy

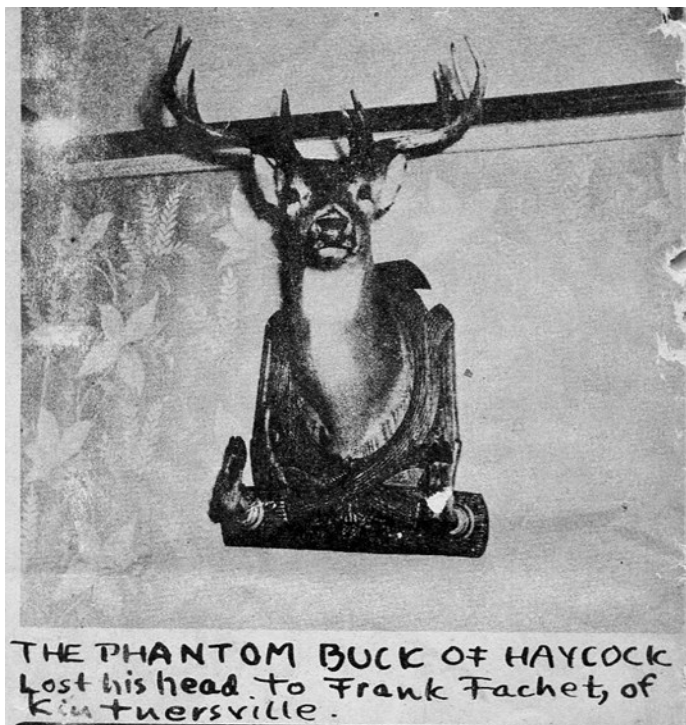
Ward, and Louie Beam. Frank and Grace Gasper were very close. Every time they went out with Frank and Grace, people would invariably say, “here come Frank and Grace and Frank and Grace.” They also hung around with neighborhood couples; John and Helen Makl, and Pete and Helen Moskauski. Dad was always telling funny stories and laughing with a big belly laugh. He was the life of every party. Some of his friends and Facht cousins dubbed themselves “The Haycock Outlaws,” not that they ever did anything illegal... except perhaps to hunt out of season, make their own moonshine, and throw wild parties into the wee hours of the morning.



**L to R: Frank, cousin Johnny Facht & Gerald Mill**

Back in those days the women got all dolled up to go out with fancy dresses and lots of jewelry including glittering rhinestone necklaces. They danced to live music and the guys often just played pool and were in dart tournaments while the women sat and gossiped.

Dad was a lady’s man, The women fussed over and flirted with him. Some made it clear they were interested in more than flirting. He was also a man’s-man. An excellent marksman, he was particularly proud of taking the ‘Phantom Buck’, a monster deer which had been seen and reported by several local hunters who were unable to cover it long enough to get a good shot. The word spread, and hunters from out of the area came to Haycock State Game Lands searching for it, but the big buck evaded all bullets. Dad stalked the deer for days until he understood its habits and routes through the area. When he finally took it down and the Quakertown Free Press Newspaper came out to take photos and get the story, it was reported that he had shot the deer with a silver bullet. With a great sense of humor, Dad refused to confirm or deny that claim, and so that is the way it appeared in the newspaper... “Shot with a silver bullet!”



Dad was friends with Benny Surket who lived in Haycock and had an American Indian, Chief One Star living in a cabin at his farm. Dad often talked about Benny and Chief One Star, though I never was privileged to meet them. I doubt there was another white man who knew Haycock Mountain as well as Frank Facht. The mountain boasts the highest elevation point of Bucks County; it peaks at 960 feet above sea level. It was common knowledge to local residents that Haycock Mountain consists of a perplexing maze of trails. Just when a tired, unsuspecting hiker or hunter thought they should be coming to a clearing where their car was parked, they discovered that for the past hour they had been walking in circles and somehow doubled back to some isolated clearing at the top of the mountain. It was a legend that Dad knew Haycock Mountain well: every thorny trail and each narrow path. Over the years he was called upon to help bring many a lost explorer out of the hills and back to safety.

While Dad was the life of every party, Mom was the heart of the Facht Family. Grace Irene was the ideal name for her. Grace is short for “gracious, charming, genial, compassionate, and good-natured” and Irene was a Greek Goddess, and the name stands for “peaceful, tranquil, quiet, and calm.” Mom was all these things. She never seemed angry and on the rare occasions when we were being disciplined, she never raised her voice. Our kitchen door was always open to friends and family. There was such an abundance of food that anyone could drop in and be invited to stay for lunch or dinner, an afternoon snack, or just a hot cup of coffee. And she never said nasty things about anyone. Her motto was “If you don’t have something nice to say about someone, don’t say anything.” Just try living up to that standard!

Around this time, my parents began throwing their famous picnics, usually referred to as a clam bake because Dad and Ed Youngkin- once every summer- made the trip to the Jersey shore and dug for clams, bringing home bushels

and bushels of fresh clams. The clams were scrubbed, and all kinds of picnic foods prepared. I especially recall savoring Dad's home-grown corn on the cob. The picnic grove was set up with tables, lawn chairs, a portable bar, tubs of ice, kegs of beer and root beer, and electrical wiring to plug in lights and a record player. As many as 100 people showed up; all Dad's friends, Aunt Florence and Uncle Ralph, Mom's cousins- the Markleys, Rings, and many neighborhood couples with their children.

There was a dart board attached to a tree, badminton, and horseshoe games. The record player blared popular music. Everyone brought casseroles to add to the buffet table. Card tables were used for poker tournaments and after dark, Dad's talented friends got out their musical instruments and entertained with live music. Squirrely Pursell played solos on his accordion, polkas. The Beer Barrel Polka with everyone singing along was always a crowd favorite. As darkness set in and the evening wore down, Dad built a bonfire and we all sat around and sang country/folk songs.

The summer parties usually started around mid-afternoon and didn't end until the campfire embers burned out around 3 AM. Dad pulled out his old, dented army bugle and played Taps for the grand finale. I'll never forget one year a disgruntled neighbor called our house around 1 AM and threatened to call the police if we didn't quiet down. Dad got on the phone and said to the neighbor, "Hold on a minute, I'll go get em" (meaning Frank Gasper- the Springtown Constable). The neighbor, realizing it was useless said, "Never mind" and hung up.

Some pitched tents and stayed over. If there was leftover beer, a few people returned the next day to finish it. That is when I developed my own love of big party picnics.

Dad may not have been the most attentive father a lot of the time. He was so busy trying to make enough money to support us all, and the house was often crowded and noisy. He didn't understand us, sometimes felt we were lazy and too wild. But he loved us and did the best he could to take care of us. And he was so courageous. One time some college kids came to the house on a Saturday night around midnight with their faces all painted like blood was running down their cheeks. They banged on the front door- the door no one ever used. My sister Pat and I were still up watching TV, and we turned on the porch light. They laughed and ran under the trees on the side of the house. Dad got out of bed, told us to lock the doors, got his shotgun, and went outside through the cellar door in the back of the house. Turns out it was a fraternity from Lehigh or Moravian College doing initiation, so it was probably harmless, but Dad didn't know that when he left the house. He was fearless. That is the way he lived his entire life.

In the Spring of 1967, a small Cessna airplane crashed on Haycock Mountain. Mildly injured, the pilot abandoned the plane and stumbled down the mountain. Shocked, disoriented, and limping in pain, he was found by the Carl Fisher household on Haycock Run Road. He had no way of knowing exactly where the plane crashed. Crews went out in search of the wreckage but found no trace of it. Dad, my brother Frankie, and former husband Leon made a trek up Haycock Mountain and located it. When they got back home Dad called the police and the local newspaper. They sent a reporter and other authorities to our house the very

next day. They wanted my father to take them to the site of the accident, but he couldn't get off work. My younger brother Frankie- only 11 years old at the time- led them up the mountain to the site of the accident.



**The Cessna that crashed on Haycock Mtn. in 1967**

Frank Facht resided in his modest home on Stoney Garden Road until 2010 when he peacefully passed away at the age of 93... just short of his 94th Birthday which would have been on New Year's Eve. Frank outlived my mother Grace, half of his 6 siblings, and most all of his friends. The greatest challenge as his caretaker in the final years of his life was to get him to slow down. He loved life and remained active with his work around the house and garden right up until the end.

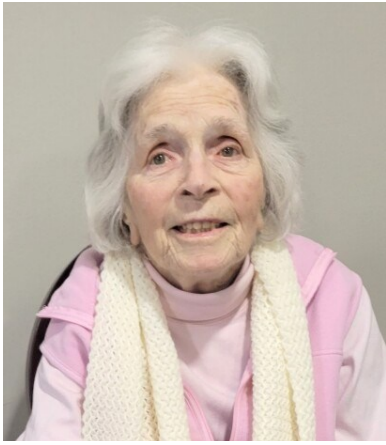


**Frank Facht**

**2009**

**Facht Home**





**IN MEMORY OF**

**Nancy Singer**

**January 13, 1926-Januray 26, 2024**



**IN MEMORY OF**

**Victor W. Stevens, Sr.**

**April 28, 1937-Januray 20, 2024**

**THANK YOU**

We would like to thank Ron Smolen for allowing HHS to place a Kringle sign on his property.

**THANK YOU**

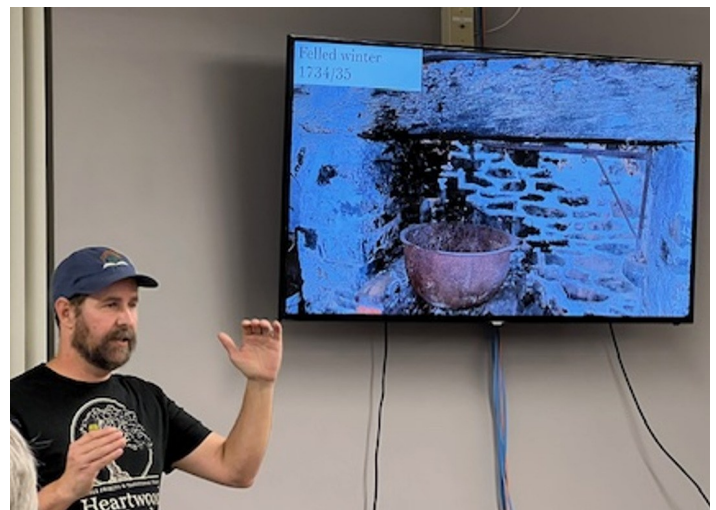
Pat DeWald, Joe Cappella, Carol Colantonio and Karen Bedics for their dedication to archiving Stokes's library.

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

(From Bernie DuBois)

Folks, In May the Haycock Historical Society's meeting will be featuring old, local recipes of unusual wording and content. If you have something that you think would be of interest for this presentation, please contact me at the HHS web address:

[HHSCONTACT001@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HHSCONTACT001@GMAIL.COM)



**Michael Cuba**

Our Vice President, Michael Cuba gave a presentation "Tale of two Houses" at our November meeting.



**Our Kringle fund raiser was a great success.**

## DUES REMINDER

If we have not received your 2024 dues, you should find a reminder form with this newsletter. Please reply as soon as possible.

## FRIDAY MORNING COFFEE

Friday coffee at Stokes will resume every Friday starting in April through the end of October. Hours are 10 a.m. until Noon.

## FREE ACCESS TO PENNSYLVANIA RECORDS ON ANCESTRY

<https://www.phmc.pa.gov/Archives/Research-Online/Pages/Ancestry-PA.aspx>

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

**HHD**  
**USA**

## MEETINGS

**March 21, 2024:** 7 p.m. Scott Bomboy will talk about the moving of the South Perkasio covered bridge to Lenape Park in Perkasio.

**April 18, 2024:** 7 p.m. Barbara Michalski, Chief Bluejay, will tell us about her Lenape heritage.

**May 16, 2024:** 7 p.m. Bernie DuBois will feature old, local recipes of unusual wording and content. If you have something that you think would be of interest for this presentation please contact Bernie at the HHS web address: [HHSCONTACT001@GMAIL.COM](mailto:HHSCONTACT001@GMAIL.COM)

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.

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Please submit material for the newsletter or suggestions for interviews to Margie Fulp. (267-772-0711) or [margiefulp@gmail.com](mailto:margiefulp@gmail.com)

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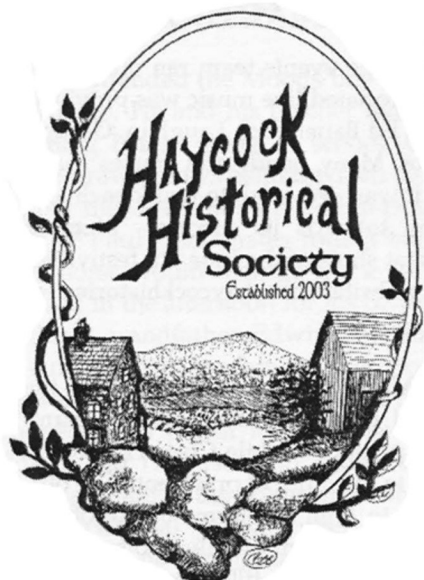


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## AN INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

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

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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SEND APPLICATION ALONG WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO:

P.O. Box 715, Quakertown, PA 18951