

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Winter 2005/2006

WINTER MEMORIES

by Sue Kleiner-Grew

In the early 20th century, the snow in Haycock drifted, piled up and made for many fond memories. Several long-time township residents recollect a few of those memories below.

Rich Cope was born and still lives in Haycock with his wife, Jane, off Harrisburg School Road. Cope recalled some memories that went as follows:

“At Cope’s Corner, across from the Mt. Airy Schoolhouse (at the intersection of Thatcher and Mt. Airy roads), the snow was always deeper. It blew across Anna and John Ahlum’s fields. Snow fences were erected by the state to stop the snow blowing from the direction of Richlandtown.”

“One winter in the early 50’s we had a typical snow, which closed the road from (the village of) Thatcher to Quakertown. Often, the road was closed during a storm. We had to wait hours for the big state snowplows that would bust through the snowdrifts.”

“I remember one time, we were watching out the window and there was a band of men pulling a sled with a pregnant lady. They were guys from the fire company and they knocked on the doors of the houses they passed recruiting men to shovel snow so that they could get through. Just past the Ahlum farm was an ambulance to take the lady to the hospital.”

Martha Kocsis, owner of the Stoney Point Grocery on Route 412 in Springfield Township, grew up in Haycock on a farm owned by her grandparents, Floyd and Irene Streepy, located at Potters Lane and Stony Garden Road.

Martha recalled some winters when the snow was higher than her home’s windows. She said they would have to make tunnels in the drifts to get from the house to their outbuildings. She also said the family used to bake bread every snowstorm to keep the house warm.

Emer Chapman, daughter of the late artist Ed Lehman, said the pond on her father’s property off Country Lane froze over each year by mid-January. She said her father would test the strength of the ice by sliding out onto the surface on his belly secured by a rope. In regard to determining the strength of the ice, she said her father would say that if it held him it was strong enough and then they could go skating. Lehman was best known for sketches of the Kennedy White House, but equally well known in the area as an avid outdoorsman.

Albert Kinzler, who is in his 80s, still lives on the family farm on East Sawmill Road and continues to be an active farmer and gardener. He recalled that in 1937 or 1938 it snowed so much they shoveled for a whole week to get the level of the snow down to two-feet so a plow could handle the

rest. During the day and then by moonlight, he recalled, they shoveled, working from 8 am to 11 am the next day to begin clearing a route from Sawmill to Old Bethlehem roads.

Ivan Belac, who was born in 1932 in a house on Roundhouse Road, recollected ice skating at night on the frozen ponds in the woods next to the original Haycock school, which is now a private home across from the new school at Old Bethlehem and East Sawmill roads. He said they would build bonfires to keep warm on those winter nights and that snow usually arrived by Thanksgiving and remained for months.

Bill Pieschel, 86, was born at his family’s farm located on what was Pieschel Road, but now known as Woodbine Lane.

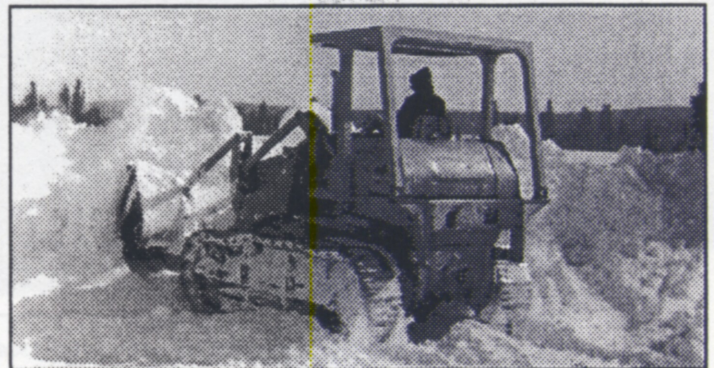
In 1928, he recalled, his brother Dick was born during a snowstorm. Dr. Bill Weisel of Quakertown came to the house to deliver the child and ended up getting snowed in with the family.

He said during heavy snowfalls, he and other members of the community would join what was called the “Haycock Snow Shovelers,” which was a temporary snow removal department of the township. Shovelers were paid 20-cents per hour.

Bill recalled, “If you saw a group begin to gather, you fell in. Men worked in pairs. You’d cut the snow in blocks the size of your shovel and heave it aside. Everything was done by hand. And you never walk where you are going to shovel so as not to make the job harder.”

Bill used a grain shovel and said it helped to wax the shovel so snow will slide off easier. He said they had to shovel out Woodbine Lane nine times one winter.

“We weren’t equipped like today,” Bill said. “There were a lot of poor people in Haycock (then) so men might shovel in the worst conditions in clothes and shoes not fit for the task.”



Fred Calabrette on snow plow, Old Bethlehem Road, 1978
Photo courtesy of Dick Landgreen

HAYCOCK CONSTABLES

by Jane Nase

Constables were the peace keepers in rural America since the mid seventeenth century. Since violent crimes were rare at the time, their primary duty was local law enforcement. A constable works for the district court by serving summons to a witness, bench warrants and transporting offenders to the court. Another job responsibility, which still stands today, was to serve as a peace officer at the election polls. It is illegal for the police to enter a polling place. Previously the constable was an appointed position, but currently the job is secured through the election process.

Constables who served Haycock were Milton Singer, Lawrence Kepner, Howard Kressler, Earl Cope, Al Wenhold and currently Carl Chew. The constables followed rules set in the Constable Guide. It was interesting to find out current day constables didn't have any formal training until 1997. Now they must have 80 hours of classroom training on arrest techniques, laws and other legal matters. If they carry a weapon, which is not required, they must be certified each year on the weapon.

Nancy Diehl Singer remembers the stories told by the Singer family about Milton Singer. Nancy writes: "Many older teens and even those in their twenties would wend their way to the hotel in Applebachsville where there was a bar. After a few rounds they would get into an argument and outside there would be a brutal fight. Constable Milton Singer would be summoned to break up these fights and

when they saw him coming, they usually would sneak off in the dark to avoid arrest.

Milton became owner of the Singer Pottery farm where he grew up. He was one of the potters, but for extra income became a constable. It was rough work at times and he knew how to keep the peace. He didn't have a cruiser as do the constables today. Instead he would hitch up his mare, Doll, to the wagon and go to the scene of the crime or the home of the suspect to apprehend the offender, perhaps for theft, which was not uncommon.

When it was necessary to arrest a person, he would handcuff them to a secure part of his wagon, take up the reins and head toward the jail in Doylestown. One miscreant thought he could be released by threatening to put his foot through the spokes of the turning wheel. Milt told him to go ahead, but that he was going to jail with or without a broken leg. The offender wisely kept his foot inside the wagon.

It is interesting to see the old handcuffs and other things that he carried. His star was plain without any words inscribed on it, but it was recognized as official and was respected throughout the area."

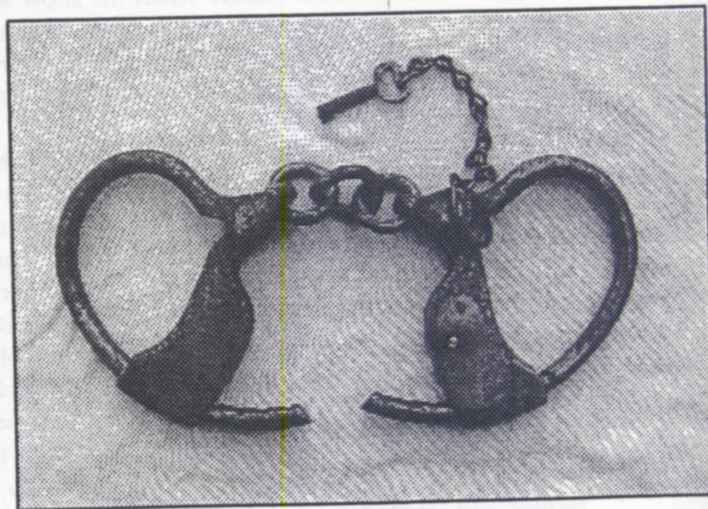
A former Haycock man remembered his teenage years as being chased by a constable many times. Once he threw corn kernels at the constable's house and when the constable came out he ran home. He was nearly caught but he knew a neighbor had a ladder in his backyard and ran around it. However the constable didn't see it and tripped. He got away that time. He has been law abiding ever since.



Constable Milton Singer, approx. 1880
Photos courtesy of Nancy Singer



Padlock, blackjack, powder horns and star used by Milton Singer



Iron handcuffs used by Milton Singer
Photo by Charles Malinchak

MOONSHINE AND STILLS

by Sue Kleiner-Grew

For a brief time in the mid-20th century, Haycock was home to what may have been one of the largest moonshining operations in the area.

But even before that, Haycock was no stranger to moonshine, having had several small stills operate in the 1930s and earlier.

In a publication called "Applebachsville: The Metropolis of Haycock Township, Bucks County," by Rollin Smith, the earliest production of alcohol was by Paul and Henry Applebach. The spirits they produced were served to patrons at the village's White Hall Hotel in the late 1800s.

The Applebach's still, like many in early, rural America, were somewhat commonplace. Most were used expressly for personal consumption and not considered illegal.

Albert Kinzler, who came to Haycock in 1925 from Philadelphia, said he recalls a story about a moonshiner who lived next to the township building on Harrisburg School Road.

He said the incident happened in the 1930s when Constable Lawrence Kepner stopped at the house for a visit, but was unaware the friend was a moonshiner.

During the visit, he said, the man began to sweat, which Kepner noticed and asked the friend if anything was wrong.

The moonshiner, he said, eventually blurted out that if he did not get down to the cellar immediately "to tend the still, it'll blow up."

Also in the 1930s, Kinzler recalled, Benny Schmidt operated a small still in the village of Tohickon, now under the waters of Lake Nockamixon.

"He didn't make very much. He really just made it for himself," he said. "I think it sold for \$4 a gallon."

The largest still in the township, recalled Kinzler, was operated out of a building that no longer exists off Route 563 near what is today the Lake Nockamixon marina. Although not certain of a precise date, he said, it operated either in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

Kinzler said he didn't know the name of the people that operated it, but it was so large that tractor-trailers would come in frequently loaded with supplies and leave late in the night full of moonshine.

"It only lasted about six months. Federal agents came in and shut it down," he said.

Ivan Belac, a Haycock native now living in Quakertown, recalled his father, Joseph, knowing a Haycock moonshiner. Belac said his father had one time tasted some of that moonshiners brew and when he came home, his wife, Katie, became upset when she smelled it on his breath.

In response to his wife's reaction, Belac recalled his father saying, "Katie, I only touched a skunk with the gun barrel."

Belac's mother's response, he recalled, was that he would not be allowed back in the house until he rid himself of the odor.

Bill Pieschel, who grew up on a farm on Woodbine Lane in Haycock, said his father purchased moonshine for \$1 per gallon. He brought his own gallon jug to the still to be filled. Upon returning home, his father would modify the liquor with cherries to improve the flavor. Bill said he helped pick the cherries used to sweeten the moonshine.

Moonshine was also used for medicinal purposes, recalled township native Eddie Bauer. The 72-year-old said his grandmother, Katerina Strba, better known as "Strubie," used moonshine as the base for cough medicine.

He said she bought about one quart a year and added garlic, camphor, red peppers and peppercorns to make a potent cough remedy.

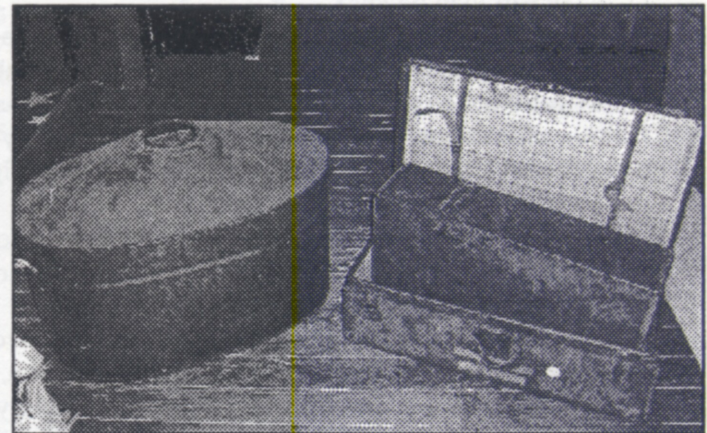
Moonshine is produced through a distillation process requiring heat to boil the 'mash.' Mash consists of grain such as corn or rye and sometimes potatoes, sugar, water and yeast. The ingredients were fermented to produce alcohol.

Distilling the mash produces smoke, steam and a sweet odor. In order not to be detected, cooking was done at night by the light of the moon, hence the nickname 'moonshine.'

The process of creating moonshine is dangerous because the still must be watched to ensure it does not blow up while the mash is brewed. In addition, if the brew did not ferment enough, consumers of the drink might die of alcohol poisoning. The liquor was typically 100 proof.

The product might be transported out of Haycock in a suitcase like the one now owned as a collectible by township resident Richard Cope. Inside, it has a metal can that would be filled with moonshine.

Moonshine also came to be called bootleg because early Americans hid the spirits in flasks tucked in their tall riding boots. The XXX on moonshine jugs represents each time the spirits were run through the still. An X represents every run through the still, so XXX is a more refined hooch than X.



Copper boiler and suitcase used to brew and transport moonshine. Courtesy of Richard and Jane Cope.
Photo by Heather Radick

HAYCOCK PROFILES:

EDIE REISS

by Charles Malinchak

Sometimes the road home takes twists influenced by world and personal circumstances and for Strawntown's Edie Reiss, those influences were as taunting as World War II and as personal as a desire for a rural lifestyle.

Edie (Detweiler) Reiss, 86, is a Pennsylvania German, or as she calls it, "I'm a Dutchy." She was born in Perkasio on Cemetery Hill to a Lutheran mother and a Mennonite father, who were both raised on farms in Bucks and Montgomery counties.

In the late 1930s, Edie met Ray Reiss, a native of Hellertown. She said they were introduced at a live country music hall called the Circle J, which was located in back of Quakertown High School.

Edie and Ray were later engaged, but their relationship took a pause when Ray was drafted into the U.S. Army and shipped to Newfoundland. She said Ray's assignment was to guard the coast of the north Atlantic country.

Once war was declared, Ray remained in Newfoundland and Edie stayed in Perkasio where she continued working for Royal Pants, a factory that in wartime was primarily producing military uniforms. A furlough that Edie described as "very short," gave the couple the opportunity to marry. Ray then returned to Newfoundland where he stayed until the close of the war.

After the war, Edie said Ray was reassigned to a fort in the state of Washington. She recalled having a suit made, getting on a train and meeting Ray in the town of Port Townsend, a community northwest of Seattle on the Strait of San Juan de Fuca.

"The town was like a wild west town. We lived in a hotel first and later got an apartment. I remember when I got there all I had was that suit," she said.

The couple lived in Port Townsend for nearly two years, during which Ray completed his military obligation and Edie got a job in a clam cannery.

"I remember, I had that suit on my first day on the job," she said. That job was placing labels on the cans and also making diced clams.

The couple lived in Washington for nearly two years and was the place she gave birth to her first son, Gary (the Reiss' later had three more children, Don, Cindy and Lori). The death of Edie's father brought the family back to Perkasio.

"I remember the trip back. It was on a train and I was the only lady on the train and Gary was the only baby. The

train was full of soldiers... Ray would use the hot water pipes on the train to heat his bottle," she said.

Now in Pennsylvania, Ray began working at U.S. Gauge in Sellersville, but soon got a job as a brick mason at Bethlehem Steel Corp. The family eventually moved to Bethlehem where they later built a new house.

The family hadn't been living in the new house very long when Edie spearheaded the plan to move to a farm. That plan culminated in the family moving in 1962 to a 19th century brick farmhouse on Old Bethlehem Road.

"I remember when we found the house (in Haycock). There was a beautiful sunset," she said.

The family's new life in Haycock brought about a new venture of operating a riding stable. Ray continued to commute to the steel mill, which took about 30 minutes.

At its peak, she said, the stable had 30 horses with herself and her sons leading people on horse rides into fields off Roudenbush and Strawntown roads.

The stable operation went on for about 10 years, she said, keeping her as well as her children busy. In addition to the horses, Edie said her sons worked briefly at the neighboring Ahlum-Nichols dairy farm on Strawntown Road.

In the 1970s, she took a position as a cook at Richland Elementary School She stayed at the school until retiring in the 1980s, which was about the same time Ray retired from the steel company.

Edie said Haycock is basically the same, even cars traveling too fast on Old Bethlehem Road. "We tried to do something about that years ago, but it didn't do any good," she said.

Most of the changes are happening outside the township, she said, including dramatic increases of traffic in Quakertown and more stores.

She said grocery shopping has changed to some degree, with the greatest change being central heating in the Quakertown Farmers Market.

"The farmers market was always cold," she recalled. "They only had coal stoves heating the place."

Since her husband's death more than 12 years ago, Edie has never wanted to leave her Haycock house. Of all the places she's lived, Haycock has been the best and happiest.

"My kids say I should get a smaller house and cut the trees. I love these trees, I love my flowers. I love it here. I'll never go," she said.



Photo by Charles Malinchak

SOCIETY NEWS

GENERAL MEETING-THURSDAY, MARCH 23

Slide Show on Old Postcards
Presented by the Bucks Co. Historical Society
Business Meeting 7pm • Speaker 7:30pm
St. Paul's, Applebachsville



GENERAL MEETING-THURSDAY, APRIL 21

Speaker To Be Announced
Business Meeting 7pm • Speaker 7:30pm
St. Paul's Applebachsville

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly the Haycock Historical Society lost three of its valued friends and members this year. They will all be deeply missed.

Clementine (Peischel) Hottle, 90, daughter of the late John and Anna (Wukovits) Peischel died in December. One of the oldest members of the Society, Clementine grew up with her brothers on their family farm on Woodbine Rd. in Haycock. She was a life member of Eastern Star Chapter 318 in Perkiomen, and the Ladies Auxiliary of West End Fire Co. in Quakertown. She is survived by her brothers William and his wife, Janice, of Quakertown and Richard and his wife, Esther, of Wilmington, Del.; and several nieces and nephews.

George Wesley 'Wes' Kuehnle, Sr., 84, died in January. Born in Philadelphia, he lived many years in both Bedminster and Haycock townships and owned several area businesses as well as serving as a past president of the Philadelphia Tool and Die Association. Kuehnle served in the U.S. Army during World War II in western Europe. He was in Company B 508 Paratrooper Regiment 82 Airborne Division and later as a personal guard for General Dwight D. Eisenhower. He was also a 32nd Degree Mason.

Dzintars Gulbis, 66, died in October. He was a member of the Latvian Baptist Community in Haycock. He is survived by his wife, Gaida B. (Statkus) Gulbis, their daughter, Benita Van Lieu, a brother, John Gulbis and his wife, Inta of Haycock. Gulbis was born in Latvia and attended Quakertown High School and Penn State, Allentown. He was an electronics designer for Bae Systems (American Elec. Lab.) for 37 years.

Research Committee and Haycock Historical Data Base

The Research and Historic Preservation Committee held its first meeting of the new year Jan. 26th at Pat DeWald's house. Pat presented the work she and Nancy Janyeszski have been doing on the creation of a Haycock Historical Society Data Base program for the computer. This informational resource will permit anyone doing research to enter a subject, place or person into the search engine and retrieve cross-referenced facts pertaining to the subject matter. Assistance typing data into the data bank is needed. Any members interested should contact Pat DeWald at 610- 804-0216 or wdewald@fast.net. Anyone interested in attending a Research Committee meeting should contact Diane Kelly at 215-536-4297 rdrdk@juno.com.

Kringle Shoppe

Once again the Kringle Shoppe was a smashing success generating approximately \$3,000. The Society would like to extend a sincere thanks to our gracious hostess, Pat DeWald, all of the Kringle committee and to the contributions made by members and friends. Thanks also to the talented performers: Gordon Allem, Steve Applegate, Eddie Bauer, Jonnie Handschin, Richard Laughlin and Steve Wysocki. And a sincere thanks to all the artisans who brought their wares to sell at Kringle.

Haycock Fraktur

At the October General Meeting fraktur expert Ron Trauger displayed a mid-19th century Haycock fraktur that he purchased at a recent auction. He offered to sell the fraktur to the Society at cost. Society members Art and Gail Silveira offered to purchase the fraktur and donate it to the Society. Pat Fite volunteered to frame the fraktur. The framed fraktur will be presented to the Society at the March general meeting and afterward will be displayed at the township building. A big thanks to the Silveiras, Mr Trauger and Mrs. Fite for all their generosity.

Cookbook Update

The first printing of 680 books has sold out and an additional order of 400 have recently arrived. Cookbooks can still be purchased at society meetings, the Haycock Fire Co. breakfasts, the township building, Grandma's Country Kitchen at the Tohickon Family Campground, Friendly Bookstore and Richland Feed. Books can also be ordered by sending in a request and check (\$15 first book, \$12.50 each additional) to the Haycock Historical Society- PO Box 715, Quakertown, Pa. 18951. A sincere thanks to the cookbook subcommittee in the success of this project in both funds generated and the value of the book as a remembrance of community life. Special thanks to former member Natalie Searl; without her immense efforts the cookbook itself would not have been possible.



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