

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Winter 2015

THE SAMUEL SWAGUER FAMILY OF HAYCOCK

As told by Clarence Wagner

To

Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

Samuel Swaguer was a resilient man, with a strong constitution and ethics. He did not allow adversity to break his will to raise and do right by his children. Samuel Swaguer, born in 1860, and his wife Catharina Hartman Swaguer, also born in 1860, are in the 1880 Census as living in Haycock Township. They had a small farm, as remembered by their grandson Clarence Wagner (b. 1926), son of Annie Swaguer Wagner (b. 1898) and Milton Wagner. Clarence was told that the old homestead is now under Lake Nockamixon, but there is evidence that it escaped that fate. On the 1891 map of Haycock Township the name "S. Swager" is located on what is now called New Harrisburg School Road. If that was Samuel's home, it stayed on dry land. In addition, there is the name "Hartman" across the road from "S. Swager." This must have been the home of Catharina's parents, whom Clarence knew to have lived nearby. The Swaguers lived a short distance down the road from the New Harrisburg one-room schoolhouse, which Samuel's children must have attended. His daughter Annie liked school, and told her son Clarence it was nice.

In the 1900 Census, Samuel is widowed with five children: Emma age 15, Samuel age 13, John age 8, Annie age 4, and Frank age 3. About three years earlier, Catharina had died from an infection incurred from "milk leg." Clarence was told that the infection was brought on after Catharina massaged her leg in a cold room. Baby Frank was just a couple of weeks old. Samuel had five children to raise without his wife Catharina.



Swaguer and Hartman farms near the New Harrisburg School 1891

When his children were small, Samuel lost a hand in a gun accident. He was standing with a shotgun when a friend approached from behind, slapping Samuel on the back, and greeting him with a "Hello, how are you, Sam?" Startled, Samuel dropped the gun, the safety went off, and the gun fired at Samuel's hand. With the handicap of having just one hand, and the loss of his wife, Samuel was still able to run his farm with the help of his five children. He made a living cutting down cedar trees and hauling them by horse and wagon over 30 miles into Philadelphia. Clarence's mother, Annie, told him that her father worked very hard to keep his farm and raise his children. She said that her father, Samuel, was a good man. "Everyone liked him." Clarence remembers his grandfather as a "mild, very nice person who was wonderful to me."

The family had a wood stove for cooking, and when Annie Swaguer was eight years old in 1904, her maternal Grandmother Hartman (who lived across the road) taught her how to make pies. The grandmother would come and teach her grandchildren how to do their chores. Annie became a "wonderful cook and baker." She learned how to can fruits and vegetables and meat. On the farm they butchered hogs and had their own hams, bacon and scrapple. They had cows – a Holstein, Guernsey and a Jersey. The family churned their own butter. Annie milked cows and took care of the chickens and their eggs. Her father worked the land with his horses. On the wood stove they cooked big breakfasts of pancakes, ham, sausage, bacon, eggs, hash browns and scrapple. Samuel loved to hunt, and brought back rabbits and pheasants which his daughters cleaned and cooked for the family's meals. The Swaguers had a horse pulled sleigh to use in the snow. They would sometimes be snowed in for weeks, but were self-sufficient. Kerosene lamps were the lighting at the time, for electricity was a long time away for Haycock. The house had a wood stove and a fireplace for heat. Annie's brothers hunted and did trapping. They trapped muskrats and skunks, and sold the pelts in Quakertown. At Christmas the family made wreaths of cedar branches and cut down a cedar tree to decorate. Popcorn was strung to trim the tree.

For entertainment, Annie and her brother John learned to play button box accordions, and the family would get together to sing. They went to dances and square dances. Annie went to Kellers Church which was across the Tohickon Creek valley, on the Bedminster Township side. The Swaguers are related to the Keller family, but Clarence does not know just how.

When they reached adulthood, Annie's brothers John and Sam became motormen on trolleys for the transit company

in Philadelphia. Brother Frank was a butcher in a store in Quakertown, and her sister Emma worked at the Quakertown Hospital laundry. Annie Swaguer met her future husband, Milton H. Wagner, at a dance. They married and had a farm in Lehigh County, where Clarence and his four siblings grew up. Clarence loved his childhood on the farm, and would go back there to do it “all over again.” He remembers the “wonderful meals” his mother prepared. “We ate well.” Annie’s childhood experience prepared her for the art of cooking. As a wife and mother, she canned large amounts of vegetables and fruit. She made chow-chow and corn relish. She knew how to cold-press pork tenderloins, which were delicious, and “tasted like chicken.” Clarence recalls “we had a cellar full of canned goods, and wanted for nothing.”

On weekends, Annie (Swaguer) Wagner would bake fifteen to twenty pies, working on them Friday afternoon and Saturday morning. On Sunday there were many visitors. Relatives from both sides of the family came from areas all around for dinner, coffee and dessert. Two to three cars would come from Philadelphia. “Everyone came for a piece of Annie’s pie.” By the end of the day, all the pies were gone, eaten up by the appreciative guests. “Only crumbs were left.” After the meal, Annie and her brother John played their button box accordions and the family and their visitors gathered around and had a good time singing “all the old time songs.”

In his old age, Samuel Swaguer lived for a while with daughter Annie and her family in Lehigh County. Clarence recalls sitting on the porch with his grandfather, when Samuel remarked that he would love to have a drink of good cold water from the spring house. Clarence got a glass from the house and went down to the spring house where he filled the glass with water. He brought it back to the porch and gave the drink to his grandfather, who then opened up his coin purse and gave some change to Clarence. Clarence said he did not need to be rewarded, but his grandfather insisted he take the money. “That is how nice he was to me.” For fun, Samuel would tickle Clarence by poking him with the stump of his hand. Samuel also lived for a time with daughter Emma in Quakertown. Then Samuel Swaguer went back to his home in Haycock, where he died around 1934. Clarence was eight years old when his grandfather Samuel passed away, but he can remember the family farm in Haycock Township.

Clarence’s parents had met at a dance, and he did likewise, meeting his future wife, Anna Dobrosek, at a square dance. Anna was “wearing a blue skirt, a white blouse with puffed sleeves, white socks and brown and white saddle shoes.” Clarence asked a friend, “Who is the girl jumping around having a good time?” Next he told his friend, “That is the girl I’m going to marry.” As he danced with Anna he sang to her “The Blue Skirt Waltz.” He told Anna “that was her song.” Clarence gave Anna gardenias every Saturday date night. They “dated for three months, got married, and stayed married for 59 years until Anna passed away in 2007.” They had a “wonderful life, and a wonderful daughter, Donna.” Clarence is now 88 years old and he and his daughter both reside in Bethlehem, PA.



**School Souvenir Card
signed by John Swaguer, son of Samuel**



Gardeners are needed at Stokes

We can have social time in the garden. 2015 may be the best year yet for the Stokes garden.

Starting in May, every Thursday will be garden day, 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. It is a challenge because of the deer, but I think we can do a great "colonial type" garden, with even a few chairs and a small table for tea. If you see any good flea market finds of small chairs (2) or a small table, let me know. HHS could reimburse you.

Lawn maintenance - we did not get back on the county's list for lawn mowing, so we are going to have to do this ourselves. If you would like to volunteer for some mowing, please call me or e-mail. We do not have a mower so you have to bring your own.

215-804-0216 dewaldfarm@hotmail.com

Appreciate any help.

Thanks,
Pat DeWald

SALTPETER - THE MAIN INGREDIENT IN BLACK POWDER

(GUN POWDER)

by Pat DeWald

This winter, with the days gray and gardening only done in the mind, (although I did order my seeds and picture glorious gardens in the summer) and the Haflingers looking beautiful with their reddish brown winter coats against the snow, I thought I should start getting information about powder mills in the area. We know there was a powder mill in Haycock. It is listed on the 1798 direct tax records. This is the tax that the Fries Rebellion was all about and why the road 663 is called John Fries Highway. For some reason people in Haycock did not participate in the rebellion, but that is another story. This story was going to be about our powder mill, when did it start and was it the same one that exploded in 1848?

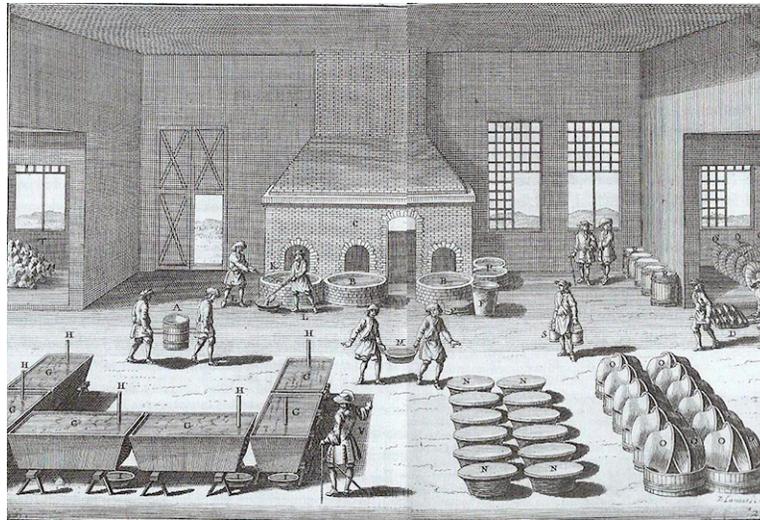
A speaker was needed for the April general meeting and Margie Fulp and I volunteered to gather some information about Haycock and present it at that meeting. My part of the talk was going to be on our powder mill. Well, over time, Morris Metz was suggested as a speaker. He does a great talk on the Battle of the Bulge in WWII, so Margie and I were replaced by the Battle of the Bulge. I was relieved as the only thing I had done was to order some books on saltpeter and weapons of the revolution, to try to get some background on black powder.

From the brief research I started, our powder mill did not supply powder during the revolutionary war. When the powder mill began I do not know. It appears the only powder mill in the colonies during the American Revolution was the Frankford Powder Mill on Frankford Creek in Philadelphia. It had been built in 1774 by Oswald Eve. The colonies made gun powder before the French and Indian war of 1753 but after that England supplied gun powder to the colonies. During the revolution the colonies tried to make their own gun powder and started a few mills, none being very successful. The French had learned how to make good black powder and excellent armaments at this time and supplied the revolutionary army with powder.

The one reason the French had gotten so good at making gun powder is they had found a way to make saltpeter. To make gun powder the ratio is 6:1:1, six parts saltpeter, one part charcoal and one part sulfur. Saltpeter was a mysterious compound and although France had found a way to make it, England was way behind. Most of the time they imported it from the continent. They did try to make their own and had what were called Saltpetermen, who were employed by the crown to go around and look for saltpeter. This was usually

found in stables, pigeon houses or any where you have a pile of poop and urine. The English populace became very annoyed with these Saltpetermen when they would come and dig up the garden, stables or pigeon houses. The crown began importing saltpeter from India.

Saltpeter is the compound potassium nitrate. It occurs as a mineral salt and is a natural solid source of nitrogen. I guess if urine collects in one spot for a long enough time and is leached out you will eventually see saltpeter, or potassium nitrate. The Swiss had a method where they stabled the animals on sand which they then dug out and then used the leaching process with potash to get the potassium nitrate.



French Saltpeter works - 1702

Another reason the French were very good at making Saltpeter, was that they had niter-beds which were about 1.5 x 2 x 5 meters in size with a mixture of manure, wood ash, earth, and straw, kept out of the rain with a cover but kept moist with urine and turned often. After about a year this mixture was leached with water to get the soluble calcium nitrate and then was leached through potash to get potassium nitrate. Finally after a year you have the main ingredient for gun powder. But then you

have to break down the potassium nitrate into particles and mix it with charcoal and sulfur. This is where the milling processes start.

In more detail, these manure piles were leached three times and then the residue was mixed with lye water, then boiled to produce crystals of potassium nitrate. If the batch did not look good enough, the batch may be re-dissolved and re-crystallized several times, with each time improving the purity.

At the mill site the mixing process began. One of the advancements in the mixing process was the addition of water. This cut down on accidental explosions and made the process of corning the powder possible. This also helped with the un-mixing of the ingredients during transport.

Gunpowder and Flintlocks. "Black powder is a very "hot" explosive. When fired it creates a flash of flame close to two feet long from a smoothbore's muzzle and another ten-inch burst at the lock's flashpan. After only four or five rounds the barrel can become too hot to touch. The formula is also hygroscopic, which varies its shooting performance depending on the weather's humidity and temperature. The primary problem is its residue.

An ideal gunpowder changes completely into a gas upon

ignition to push the projectile out of the barrel with maximum force. The black powder in use until the late 1800's transformed less than half of itself into a gas. Close to 55 percent remained in the weapon after firing as a clinging black fouling. Successive layers from each round steadily reduced the effective diameter of the bore, as well as clogged the barrel's touch-hole and coated the striking surface of the flint and frizzen. The soldier carried a small pick and brush, usually suspended from one of his crossbelts, in an effort to keep the lock, pan and touch-hole clear. But the accumulation of fouling inside the bore meant that, following less than half a dozen firings of a tight-fitting round lead bullet, the ball would become clogged after being rammed part-way down the barrel (with the danger of rupturing the breech if fired in that position)."

In *Battle Weapons of the American Revolution*, by George C. Neumann, he explains that as a solution to the clogging, a smaller bore bullet was used. This bounced around in the barrel and created inaccuracy. Armies just came closer together in fighting and were armed with a second type of weapon, a sword or ax or bayonet.

By 1890 the manufacture of black powder was industrialized and any type of burn rate could be produced by different milling times and granular size. Then smokeless powder became widely used and black powder use declined.

The following books will be available at the Stokes House. *Salt peter the Mother of Gunpowder*, by David Cressy *Battle Weapons of the American Revolution*, by George C. Neumann

The Pennsylvania Kentucky Rifle, by Henry J. Kauffman *Guns on the Early Frontiers*, by Carl P. Russel



**Old News from the Doylestown Daily
Intelligencer: August 12, 1932**

**COPPERHEADS NUMEROUS IN THATCHER
SECTION**

Japanese Beetles Have Found Their Way to The Community

PURPLE MARTINS LEAVE

Rev. Wilbur J. Kohler Will Conduct Services at
Applebachsville Sunday --- John H. Rosenberger Making
Improvements to His Property

Thatcher, Aug 12—Copperheads in this community this season have been quite numerous and no less than six have been killed in the Haycock section. While Russell McNair and a number of Richlandtown Boy Scouts were in a hike a few days ago they killed a medium sized copperhead on the Tobias Hinkle farm in Haycock.

Japanese beetles have made their appearance in this vicinity. A number of them have been found on the Charles Thatcher farm.

Purple martens which annually make their Summer residence on the Charles Thatcher property are leaving for the Winter. They migrate in sections and a majority of the sections have left for the season.

Rev. Wilbur J. Kohler will conduct services at Applebachsville on Sunday. The church service at 2 p.m. will be preceded by a session of the Sunday school at 1 o'clock.

John H. Rosenberger, proprietor of Clear Spring creamery, paid his patrons 23 cents a pound for butter fat at the begining of this month. Mr. Rosenberger has installed an electric water system and a bath at his residence.



Diane Vosburgh, Paula Laughlin, Pat DeWald visiting



Rich Laughlin performing at our Victorian Tea 2014



New Harrisburg 1908 William Streapy on left. Annie and Frank Swaguer may be in this photo



Mt. Airy School 1894

A REMARKABLE DOG CASE

A dog case occupied the undivided attention of the court on Wednesday. William T. Ziegenfuss, of Haycock, prosecuted Godfrey Long, George Ruth and Jacob Kunkel for taking his dog "Zeke," a black-and-tan hound, which he valued at \$25. Ziegenfuss bought the dog of Robert Courtney. George Ruth claimed the dog. A great deal of law was discharged at the court by the lawyers on the general subject of dogs. The defendants' counsel maintained that dogs were not the subject of larceny. A motion to quash the bill was overruled in order to give everybody a chance to hunt up more dog law on a motion for a new trial. This prospective dog law entertainment was, however, knocked into a cocked hat when the defendants testified they took the dog under a claim of property. A verdict of not guilty was rendered. This closed the case in court, but the controversy was renewed in the streets of Doylestown. During a greater portion of Wednesday the town was entertained by an almost incessant wrangle about the possession of this dog. The defendants had the dog in their possession and the prosecuting party and his adherents resorted to all sorts of devices to get hold of the animal. The dog, which appeared to be worth about \$1.50 in the general sausage market, seemed to have more owners than Reading railroad stock. More or less whiskey was consumed in trying the case over again out-of-doors and many persons, friends of the parties, were drawn into active participation in the case who only took a languid interest in the dog when he first reached Doylestown. The dog was made almost insane by the whistling, hugging, pulling and swearing which were lavished upon him.

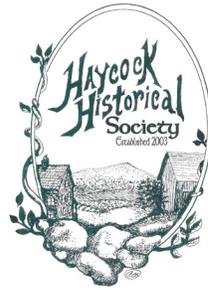
The contending parties moved up and down Main street all day long, constantly abusing and swearing at each other in the German, Irish, Haycock and other Indo European languages, which no dog could quite understand. Finally the dog was taken down to the Railroad House and the defendants and their party were about to take the train for Philadelphia. The other side of the dog case followed them up and tried to take the dog away. Then followed the tug of war. One side seized the dog, the other the chain, and both sides began to pull. The chain would not break, and the dog would not stretch safely beyond a given point. When that point was reached one side quickly ended the battle by sending in a few well directed kicks and a few Sparrow-Golden, Marquis of Queensbury blows.

The result of it all was that Christian Schoen Jebles arrested Robert Courtney, and Godfrey Heller arrested James Courtney, for assault and battery, and both gave bail in \$300 for their appearance at court. John Fosbenner is bail for Robert, and Ezekiel Groom for James. The dog case is likely to be tried over again in court shortly.

Property of Spruance Library
Bucks County Historical Society
Doylestown, Pa.

Sending a great big thank you to all the members and friends who generously donated cookies and treats to our Kringle Shoppe this past year. Your thoughtfulness was appreciated by many and enjoyed by all. Thank you, thank you, thank you!. Looking forward to seeing you at our upcoming meetings and Society events.

Sincerely,
Nancy DePue, "Hospitality Elf"



Mission Statement

The purpose of the Haycock Historical Society is to research and preserve the history of Haycock and to promote and perpetuate public interest and educate the public generally of the rich heritage of Haycock Township and vicinity.

Dear Members,

I would like to thank everyone for the volunteer hours and support you have given to the Haycock Historical Society. Without this we would not be the viable organization that we have grown into. Every member should be proud of what we have accomplished. We have a historical headquarters, money in the bank, we publish four newsletters a year, organize six programs open to the public, and create a wonderful shopping experience with the Kringle Shoppe fund raiser. All these activities, plus others like getting our archives in order, cutting the lawn, and checking on the house in the winter, take time and commitment. Without you we could not accomplish any of this. You have made this happen.

With your help we have become an asset to the community and we are fulfilling our mission statement.

Thank you all for making 2014 a big success.

Pat DeWald, president

ACTIVITIES

New Event - July 19 - 5:00 p.m.

**Dinner under the tent - An Italian Affair
Stokes House, 1299 Apple Road.**

Members and friends, get your tickets for \$10.00. Invite your friends, sit together under the tent, and have a luscious Italian dinner. Visit the museum and peruse the one room school exhibit.

Victorian Tea - Dec. 20 - 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Stokes House

Kringle Christmas Shoppe - Dec. 4, 5 and 6.

**Spring Clean up - April 18 - 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with
brunch - Stokes House, 1299 Apple Road**

Each year the place looks better. Chain saws, weed whackers, and rakes are welcome. We would like to finish clearing in the back corner and along the trail. If there is enough time we would like to clear brush from an old stone wall.

Rain date is April 19 - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**Stokes will be open Friday mornings April through October
from 10 a.m. to Noon.**

HAYCOCK TOWNSHIP RESIDENTS

If you have not had your septic tank pumped in 2013 or 2014 then you are due, as required every three years.

Please feel free to contact us at [215-536-3641](tel:215-536-3641) or at www.haycocktownship.com if you have questions.

Bucks County

magazine

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MEETINGS

March 19, 2015 - Frank Lipicoli of the Quakertown Historical Society, will speak on the "History of the Quakertown School District."

April 16, 2015 - Morris Metz, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, will speak on "General Patton and the Battle of the Bulge during WWII."

May 21, 2015 - Bruce Mowday will speak on his new book *Pickett's Charge in the Battle of Gettysburg*.

Sept 17 - a presentation by the Audubon society.

Oct. 15 - In the 60th Anniversary year of the great flood on the Delaware River, Mary Shafer, author of *Devastation on the Delaware*, will give a presentation on the history of the flood.

Nov. 19 - a return of Ann Atkins, "Flash History." Ann will speak on Golda Meir.

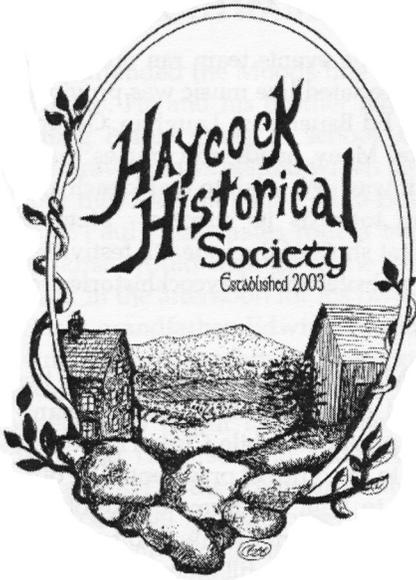
Meetings are held at the Bucks County Latvian Baptist Church in Applebachsville and begin at 7 p.m.

OFFICERS

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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

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