

HAYCOCK HISTORICAL NEWS

The Newsletter of The Haycock Historical Society • Winter 2019

THE RUDOLPH GEISER/GIESSE FARM

Haycock Township, Bucks County, PA

Lost to Nockamixon State Park

By Wayne Geiser and Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

Wayne Geiser, in Massachusetts, contacted the Haycock Historical Society for help in finding the old site of the farm of his great-grandfather, Rudolph Geiser. Relatives told him that Rudolph Geiser/Giesse and his second wife, Wilhamina Sweitzer Rosen Geiser, lived in Haycock Township, and the farm was sold in the early 1960's to the state in the making of Nockamixon State Park. Wayne found the name Giesse on the map in our book, "Our Lost Tohickon Valley." This was the Russian spelling of his ancestor's name. In the book's map, the Giesse home was on Old Ridge Road in Haycock Township. This site is now in the park. Wayne tells us that "Prior to finding it on the maps, two of my uncles put their heads together and provided directions to where they remembered it to be and it turned out to be quite accurate to what I found on the maps."

Before the park, there were Ridge Road and Old Ridge Road. The *original and present-day* Ridge Road *still* passes by St. Matthews Lutheran Church (Kellers Church). Going in the eastern direction, the road now splits off to the left from South Park Drive and dead ends into the lake, although its "ghost" continues under the lake and remnants of the road emerge on the other side of the lake. The eastern end of Mountain View Drive, at a point northeast of the lake, merges with and follows the path of the original Ridge Road (Rt. 563) to meet and end at Rt. 412.

Before the park took it, Old Ridge Road branched off to the right (south) of the original Ridge Road, at a point east of Kellers Church, and in the vicinity of Indian Trail Road. From there Old Ridge Road then made its way over the five-arch bridge at Tohickon Village, and continued farther eastward, past the Geiser farm and other homes, to again meet the original Ridge Road, farther down the line. At that point, Old Ridge Road ended. That old junction is now by the Haycock Boat Launch.

The Rudolph Geiser/Giesse farm on Old Ridge Road was taken by the state and demolished for the Nockamixon State Park. The now empty site of his farm is above water, on dry land. Old Ridge Road is still in the park, but not as the road it used to be. Going westward from the Haycock boat launch, the road has now dwindled to a trail through high weeds and brush. The trail leads past the site of the Geiser farm and into the lake where Tohickon Village was once situated. The five arch bridge is still there, under water. The farms of Rudolph's neighbors, the Ricks and the Preggs, were also demolished. The grounds of their long-gone homes also remain above water. Dolores Rick Warmkessel, daughter of Paul Rick, remembers the Geisers, who lived across the road from her home. She and her siblings would stand in front of the Geiser home while waiting for the school bus. Being children, they didn't visit much with the elderly couple. Dolores says that in spring-time, daffodils still bloom among the weeds where her family's farm once stood, but the tall, tick-infested grasses and weeds make it difficult to walk back to the site. Judy Preg McCarty remembers talking to Rudolph Geiser when she was a girl, walking her dog by his home. He had a dog which was also named Judy, and sometimes she wasn't sure which he was talking to, "Me or the dog."

From Wayne Geiser, great-grand son of Rudolph:

Rudolph Geiser/Giesse was born in Russia in 1884 to Louis and Mary (Nogle) Geiser/Giesse. Rudolph immigrated in 1897 to the United States. His wife, Dorothy (Lesner) Geiser, born in 1884 or 1886, immigrated shortly afterward. By 1913, Rudolph and Dorothy had three children, all of whom are reported to have been born in Pennsylvania (US Census). They went on to have 9 children in all: Adolph Sr., Amelia, Herman, Della, Caroline, Helen, Martha, John, and Charles (stillborn).

Rudolph and Dorothy purchased their first farm on September 21, 1918, from



Rudolph Geiser, standing on his porch

Fossey W. Cole for \$1,900. The farmhouse still exists at 527 Center Hill Rd. Upper Black Eddy, Bucks County, PA. Rudolph sold this farm to his oldest son, Adolph Geiser Sr.

Before the 1940 census, Rudolph and Dorothy lived in Nockamixon Township, Bucks County. Dorothy died in 1940, about the time the 1940 Census was being taken. Shortly after, Rudolph Geiser moved to Haycock Township, Bucks County, to a farm that belonged to Rudolph Rosen, who had died in 1940 at the age of 60. Rudolph Geiser lived there with Rudolph Rosen's widow, Wilhamina "Minnie" (Sweitzer) Rosen Geiser, who was born in 1891. This was the farm on Old Ridge Road.

other evidence of the Rudolph Geiser and Minnie's farm."

Dorothy Geiser died on April 15, 1940. She is buried in the Nockamixon Union Cemetery, Ferndale, Bucks County, PA.

Rudolph Geiser died on April 1, 1962. He is buried in the Nockamixon Union Cemetery, Ferndale, Bucks County, PA. His gravestone is next to that of his first wife, Dorothy Geiser.

Minnie Rosen Geiser died on September 26, 1974. She is buried at the Nockamixon Union Cemetery, Ferndale, Bucks County, PA. Her gravestone is next to that of Rudolph Rosen, and the name on her stone is Minnie Rosen.

Rudolph and Dorothy Geiser's daughter, Della G. Breiner, born May 5, 1914, died at the age of 77 in 1991, and is buried in the parish cemetery of St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Haycock Township.



Rudolph Geiser and nephew James Kline Jr.

Here are some text messaged memories from Wayne's cousin:

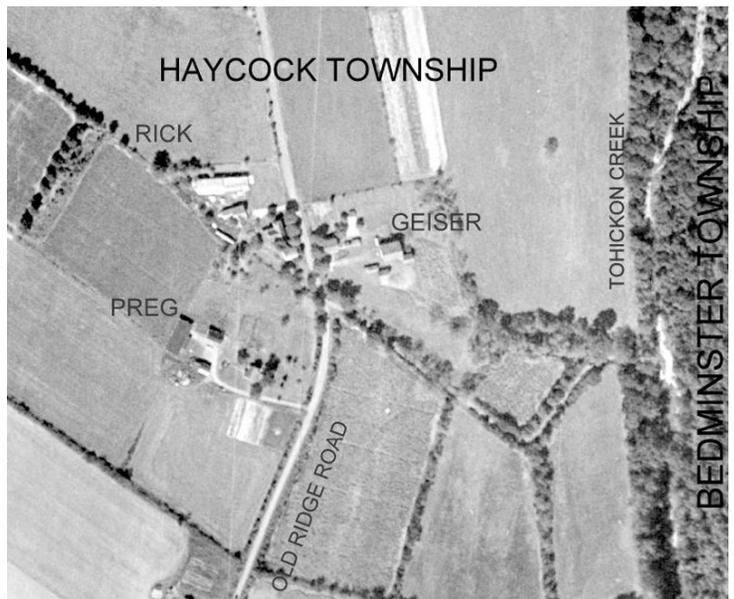
"I know the boys used to sleigh down the hill. The barn had a tar paper patch half the size of the wall that looked like a cat." "Pop and Grammy Minnie raised chickens. They sold eggs and the chickens. Pop chopped off a chicken's head in front of me. They do run around without their heads. The kitchen had an old cook stove run by wood. There was a water pump close to the wraparound porch. We kids were told not to go near it. We might break it. The farm was destroyed in 1962. The pump was still standing in 1974." "Grammy Minnie had a dog, Blackie, she had cocker spaniel in her. Blackie shared her lollipops with us kids. Grammy Minnie kept them in a bowl in the dining room."

The state of Pennsylvania began taking properties for the park in 1960. By 1962, Rudolph Geiser and Minnie were preparing to move. On April Fool's Day of 1962, Rudolph Geiser visited the Kellers Church Post Office and died there of a pulmonary embolism. He was 78 years old.

Wayne Geiser tells us: "The Geiser family periodically gathers at Nockamixon State Park for a family reunion. I hope to be able to walk along Old Ridge Road (which is said to be now just a footpath). Perhaps I can find foundations or



Wilhamina Sweitzer Rosen Geiser and dog Blackie



Rick, Geiser, and Preg Farms circa 1958

THE FLECK FAMILY FARM

Bedminster Township, Bucks County, PA

Lost to Nockamixon State Park

By Marjorie Goldthorp Fulp

The Charles and Catharine (Sabath) Fleck farm was on Indian Trail Road, on the south side of Ridge Road, in Bedminster Township. The intersection was in the vicinity of Johnny Frei's Garage and Walter Trauger's Kellers Church Granite Works.

Charles (1914-1993) and Catharine (1911-1975) Fleck started their farm on half an acre in the 1930's, and added on four more acres in the 1950's. They had four children: Arlene, born in 1948, Charles (Jerry), born in 1954, Eleanor, born in 1958, and Mary, born in 1960. Arlene (now Arlene Fleck Eichlin), the oldest of the children, helped to take care of her younger siblings. She also assisted her mother with the foster children who lived with the family at that time



The Fleck Home

The Flecks had a truck patch garden in which they grew a wide variety of vegetables. They had large yields from the garden and gave away the extra produce. The family raised goats, steers, chickens and pigs. A steer was raised every eighteen months for beef, and the goats provided milk for the family. Charles or Catharine did the milking of two goats in the morning and evening. The goats were bred to be kept in milk, and the resulting young goats were sold. Occasionally someone would need goat's milk for a special reason and would inquire at the Kellers Church Post Office if there was a local source for goat's milk. They were directed to the nearby Fleck farm, where the Flecks gave the milk for free to help the person.

Arlene loved playing with the animals out in the pasture. It was a safer time back then, and Arlene could go bike riding for three hours with her friends, without having to check in with her parents, as long as she was home by four o'clock in the afternoon. The girls didn't have watches but could sense by the daylight when it was time to get home. Arlene sometimes

went to ride horses at the home of her friend, Pauline Godlewski, whose family also later lost their farm to the park. There were many children in the neighborhood, and Arlene always had playmates. Two other friends were Nancy Printz and Mitsuko Phillips (Mitsuko's family's farm was also taken for the park. Situated near the dam, the Phillips stone farm house is still in the park, for use by the state. The stone tenant house, large barn and other buildings on the farm were torn down).



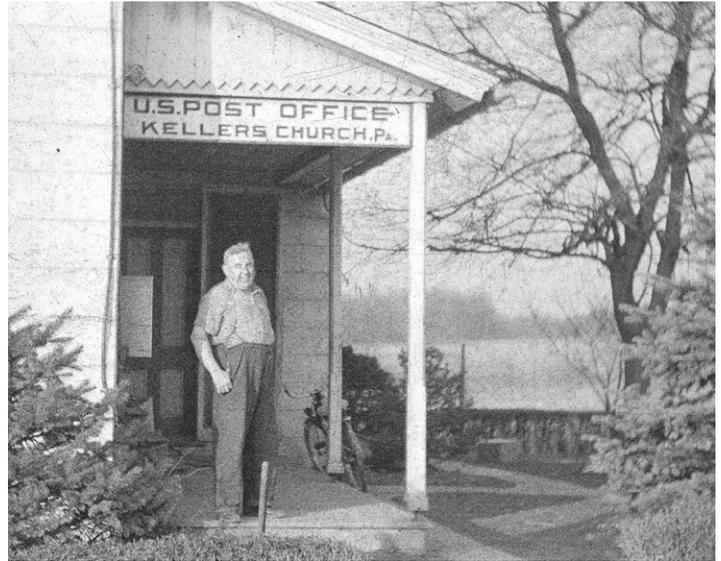
Jerry, Mary, Eleanor and Arlene Fleck 1962

To get the family mail or to run an errand, Arlene walked across the fields to the Kellers Church Post Office, which was with a store in Walter Trauger's farmhouse. Walter had a barber shop in a small building next his home. On the other side of the barber shop was the Trauger Kellers Church Granite Works. The Flecks and other residents with a Kellers Church address had to personally pick up their mail because the office was too small for a delivery service. While at the post office, Arlene enjoyed the side benefit of being able to buy candy and soda from the store. She remembers the Yoo Hoo chocolate drinks were five cents, and other sodas were seven cents. By chance, because of where they lived, the Flecks had two addresses. One was Kellers Church, and the other was Ottsville. Mail from the Ottsville Post Office would be delivered to the mailbox at their home.

For the oncoming Nockamixon State Park, the state took the Fleck's farm in 1962. In 1963 Charles and Catharine Fleck and their children moved to a residence on Church Road in Nockamixon Township, Bucks County, Pennsylvania.



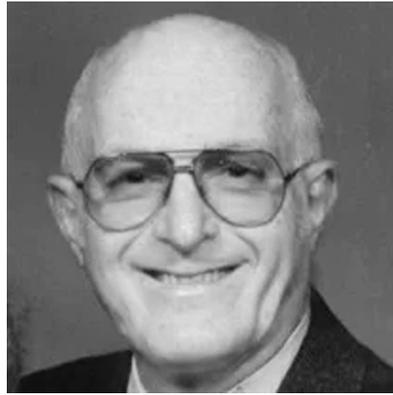
The Fleck Barn



Walter Trauger at Kellers Church Post Office



Aerial view of the Fleck Farm on Indian Trail Road



IN MEMORY OF
William "Bill" H. Cramp
Oct. 13, 1933—Dec 18, 2018



**Aerial view of the Trauger farm and Kellers Church Granite Works
Courtesy of Faye Rick and Angelo Berrios**

Kringle 2018 Review

Technology Marries History

Chris Handschin

For the second time, our annual Kringle fundraiser utilized the bigger space at the Haycock Community Center for the event. In 2017 we adopted the new location, happy in knowing the aging building would eventually be perfect for us, considering the great parking and space requirements. We painted, cleaned, draped and did our best to make the hall appealing. We shared with guests and participants alike the plan for a completely renovated space, in the near future, -- one that would include a state-of-the-art kitchen, vaulted open-beam ceilings, rustic barn paneling, a fireplace and all the amenities of a first-class banquet hall. Recalling last year's success, we plunged ahead with plans for Kringle XV, confident of an amazing new space in 2018. We also embarked on an ambitious plan.

One of the nagging problems we had faced in years past was our outdated cash register system. The machines were temperamental and difficult to master, making the cashier's job difficult to fill. For years we pondered if we could ever get to a point of using barcodes and scanners to tally sales.

Last March, with the help of a generous grant from the Bucks County Tourism Bureau, Haycock Historical Society's Social Events Team embarked on our own grand plan to have every item sold in the shop bar-coded. Two computer-linked registers were purchased, along with scan guns. Over the summer and late into November, member Charles Fulp diligently recorded thousands of prices for the nearly 50 hand-crafting participants' products, and turned them into bar-coded tags, with anticipation that our newly purchased cash registers would make it easy for helpers to assist as cashiers. The man-hours getting the new system operational seemed well worth the time and trouble- *IF* it would do the job?!

Eager anticipation turned into anxious worry by the end of summer. Trusses, ordered for the high-roof section of the hall, and the individual roof and wall heat units, did not arrive until the fall. Meanwhile, volunteers had removed the faulty boiler, cleared the ceiling to the rafters of old lighting, electricity and ceiling tiles. Massive sound baffles were removed, and studs put up to support the new trusses. A lot of work had been done but it was very late in the year. By November we were unsure if the space would be usable, as it had no heat, electric or lighting. Considering the direction and momentum this event had achieved, and the work each person had put into the project, the news was devastating.

Miraculously, with the help of electrical contractor and Haycock resident, William Shaffer, several of Haycock township staff and a few dedicated community members, we learned at the 11th hour that heat would indeed be supplied, with the help of two giant industrial heater/fans that had been specially adapted to fit our needs. In the nick of time, temporary lighting had been strung along the exposed rafters. So, the room *WOULD* become the warm and well-lit, albeit

rough, backdrop for the 2018 Kringle! Members of the Social Events committee, fondly referred to as "Elves," are ever grateful for the community support with this endeavor.

Sunday afternoon, the week before the big Kringle, sports fans postponed their game-watching, to help carry and drag props from the shed next door, from the unused rooms and from their homes into the big hall. Monday came, and all day and into the night, the team made displays and "rooms" for the visitors to travel through. Tuesday came and again, all day, the team defined the spaces. Props and panels were moved again to allow for the anticipated inventory. Drapes went over the ugly spots, a forest of trees emerged in every corner, tables were dressed in their simple red and green gowns. Anticipation! Wednesday and Thursday, from morning till night, participants brought in and unpacked their hand-made items. They were counted and checked for barcode tags, then thoughtfully displayed in the spaces provided. By Friday 12/7 at 10:00 A.M., the stage was set! Those Elves who have been helping with the show for a long time will tell you-- Friday (Show-day) makes them feel like proud parents on Christmas morning. The room had been transformed into a shopper's wonderland, with beauty and amazing talent at every turn. Eager guests lined up to be among the first through the doors.

Over and over we heard, "How beautiful!" "What a great event!" "Great Job!" It was not an accident. The elves worked diligently to achieve this end so that everyone would benefit - local businesses, the Haycock Fire Company, participants, visitors, and community members as well as our Haycock Historical Society.

Over \$2,600 was gained from sales of the beautiful raffle baskets and wreaths and over \$1,500 from sales of H.H.S. books and merchandise. Additionally, twenty-five percent of each item purchased in the shop went directly to Haycock Historical Society. Revenue aside, the most rewarding part of Kringle 2018 was the speed of sales with the new flawless barcode system! It worked so well that extra baggers and wrappers were needed to keep up with the cashiers! The system logged in each product and was able to pinpoint the busiest times of day, top sellers, return visitors and other curious data, plus-- after the last sale, was instantly able to account (with deadly accuracy) each participant's pay-out. While final expenses related to the event are not yet available, it is likely that 2018 Kringle will have matched, if not topped, 2017's revenue.

Grateful thanks to all those involved!

Members, please consider joining the Social Events Committee. There are places for people of all skills, levels and interests. Contact: kringleshoppe@gmail.com for more information.

THANK YOU

Janice Peischel, for your donation.

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.

DUES for 2019

A reminder for our annual members will be found with this newsletter. Dues for 2019 were due by the end of this December. If you receive the reminder and your dues are already up to date, please contact Charles Fulp.

ChasFulp@gmail.com

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, Mar. 21, 2019: 7 p.m. Hugh Boyle will give a presentation on *General Dan Sickles: Congressman, General, Adulator (flatterer) and Murderer*.

Thursday, Apr. 18, 2019: 7 p.m. Tammy Schane will give a presentation on *Strange, Odd and Wonderful: Examples of over the top 19th-Century Monuments and the Fascinating Stories of the People Under Them*.

Thursday, May. 16, 2019: 7 p.m. Bruce Lewis, wood carver, will give a presentation on *The History of Fish Decoys and Winter Spearing*. Bruce will also display fish decoys which he carved.

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.

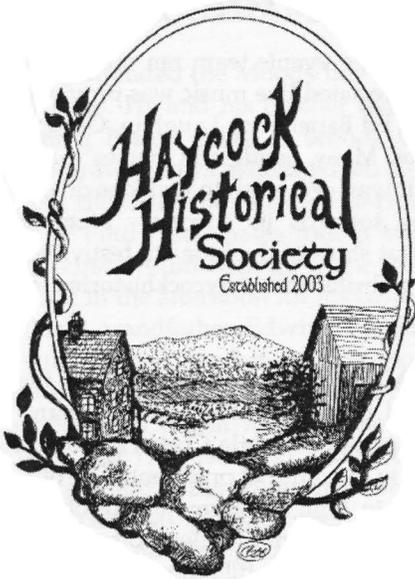
The meetings begin at 7 p.m.

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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



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www.haycockhistoricalsociety.org

AN INVITATION TO MEMBERSHIP

YES, ENROLL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE HAYCOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

I WANT TO BE PART OF RECLAIMING OUR HISTORY AND PRESERVING IT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

- Individual Membership - \$20/year**
Receive quarterly newsletter and attend all special functions this year – Jan. thru Dec.
- Family Membership (Parents & Children in household) - \$30/year**
Receive quarterly newsletter and attend all special functions this year – Jan. thru Dec.
- Corporate Sponsor - \$100/year**
Gain advertisement in our newsletter by yearly sponsorship (ad size smaller than business card)
- Corporate Patron - \$200/year**
Gain advertisement in our newsletter by yearly sponsorship (ad is full business card size)
- Lifetime Individual Membership - \$200**
Receive honorary lifetime status, receive quarterly newsletters and attend all special functions
- Lifetime Household Couple Membership - \$250**
For just \$50 more, join as a household and enjoy all the benefits of lifetime membership

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

P.O. Box 715, Quakertown, PA 18951