

“The Sage of Chicques:” Samuel Stehman Haldeman (1812-1880) Marietta’s Internationally Renowned Scientist

Have you ever driven along Pennsylvania State Route 441 in Bainbridge and noticed a sign reading “Historic Haldeman Mansion?” Did you know, in the nineteenth century, along the banks of the Susquehanna River lived an internationally renowned scientist and philologist, whose publications contributed to the fields of conchology, entomology, arachnology, crustacea, geology, chemistry, philology, and archaeology? Did you know this famous person of the Susquehanna National Heritage Area was a friend and collaborator with the naturalist, geologist, and biologist Charles Darwin (1809-1882)?

Samuel Stehman Haldeman (August 12, 1812 – September 10, 1880) was born at the Haldeman family estate, Locust Grove, in Conoy Township, Lancaster, Pennsylvania on Wednesday August 12, 1812. The eldest of the seven children of Henry (1787-1849) and Frances Stehman (1794-1826) Haldeman. In 1784, John Haldeman (1753-1832) acquired the land for Locust Grove. In 1775, his father, Jacob Haldeman (1722-1783) served on the Committee of Public Safety, during the American Revolution, for Rapho Township. In 1790, John Haldeman inherited the Haldeman Homestead farm (present day Billmeyer Quarries) the residence, stone kitchen, smoke house, barn, mill, still house, and saw mill from his father-in-law, Mennonite leader, Melchior Brenneman (1714-1768) and built a grist mill and distillery at the mouth of the Conoy Creek.

In 1804, John Haldeman's oldest son John Brenneman Haldeman (1779-1836), elected to the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1795, moved to Locust Grove Estate to manage the sawmill, gristmill, and distillery. The Haldeman Mansion was originally a German vernacular house built in the 1730s and in 1811, Samuel’s grandparents, John (1753-1832) and Maria Brenneman (1760-1835) Haldeman expanded the house into a mansion remodeling it in the Federalist style. Eventually, John Brenneman Haldeman returned to the Haldeman Family Homestead to manage the farm while his brother, Henry Haldeman (1787-1849), Samuel’s father, took charge of the industries at Locust Grove.

In 1812, Samuel was born at Locust Grove. Today the Haldeman Mansion is a public historic site administered by the Haldeman Mansion Preservation Society, a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization whose mission is to preserve and interpret Samuel’s birthplace. In 1967, a group of local historic preservationists formed the Haldeman Society for rehabilitating Locust Grove. In 1977, the Haldeman Mansion was placed on the Pennsylvania and National Register of Historic Places, and it is number six on the inventory of historic buildings of the Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County.

At Locust Grove, Samuel read extensively from books in his father’s library and attended a local school located on Conoy Creek where he taught himself about natural history by collecting specimens of shells, insects, birds, and minerals. From a traveling Methodist minister, Samuel learned how to record observations of bird habits and stuffing birds and mammals. Samuel’s eclectic personal collection of natural history specimens included skeletons of rabbits, opossums, muskrats, and field mice.

The Locust Grove property was part of an Indigenous population stockade dating back as early as 1200. Samuel made archaeological digs at Locust Grove where he collected stone implements made by the Shenks Ferry Indians (1200-1550), Susquehannock Indians (1575),

and Conoy Indians (1718). The Conoy Tribe was a refugee community composed of displaced Senecas, Algonquins, and Susquehannocks.

In 1948, Pennsylvania State Archaeologist John Gerald Whitthoft (1921-1993) and Associate Archaeologist Samuel S. Farver (1885-1961), discovered a pictograph attributed to the Conoy Indian settlement at Locust Grove. On one side were etched a ceremonial calumet pipe and fire pit and on the opposite side a depiction of a seated Indigenous person wearing a headdress with five upright feathers. In 2020, Locust Grove (Native American) Archaeological District was designated by the U. S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service encompassing the Locust Grove Estate and three neighboring properties, containing prehistoric archeology, and placing them on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1826, at fourteen, Samuel attended Dr. John Miller Keagy's (1792-1837) Classical Academy in Harrisburg, Dauphin County. Currently the college preparatory school is Harrisburg Academy. Two years later Samuel enrolled with the class of 1831 at Dickinson College in Carlisle, where he studied, for two years, under the geologist Henry Darwin Rogers (1808-1866).

In 1828, Samuel's father Henry purchased a saw mill, a chopping mill, and a hemp mill at the mouth of the Chikiswalungo (corruption of Chiquesalunga) Creek along the Susquehanna River in Marietta. In 1845, Henry Haldeman along with his son, physician, Dr. Edwin Haldeman (1814-1872), established E. Haldeman and Company and built an anthracite furnace on the west side of Chickies Rock and east of Chickiswalungo Creek. Samuel and his brother Edwin were put in charge of the new enterprise. Samuel was asked to name the iron works company and decided on the Indian name of the nearby creek, meaning "place of the crabs," hence Chikiswalungo Furnace. In 1858, when the name was abbreviated and corrupted to Chiques or Chickies, Samuel reluctantly approved changing the name to Chickies Furnace.

Leaving the commercial management of the business to his brothers Edwin (1814-1872), Paris (1831-1893), and Cyrus (1825-1892) Summerfield Haldeman, Samuel concerned himself with the scientific and technological aspects of iron smelting, becoming an authority on smelting iron. In 1848, Samuel authored two scholarly articles for the *American Journal of Science*, entitled "On the Construction of Furnaces to Smelt Iron with Anthracite" and "The Results of Smelting Iron with Anthracite." Samuel's scholarship demonstrated the benefits of anthracite coal furnaces over traditional charcoal furnaces for the iron smelting process.

In 1876, E. Haldeman and Company dissolved as a partnership and reorganized as a corporation named Chickies Iron Company by Paris Haldeman (1831-1893) and his nephew Horace Haldeman (1820-1883). In 1888, Chickies Iron Company became Haldeman, Grubb, and Company and this was the corporation which sold the properties in 1899, before demolishing the furnaces in 1911. Only the engine house of Chickies Furnace No. 2 survives today. In 1959, when Pennsylvania Route 441 was shifted west to a straight alignment between Columbia and Marietta, instead of bending east on what is now Old Chickies Hill Road, the bypass cut through the former Chickies Iron Company properties.

From 1833–1834, Samuel attended lectures in the Medical Department at the University of Pennsylvania to build on his interest in studying natural history. In 1835, Samuel wrote an article for the *Lancaster Journal* refuting the Great Moon Hoax, a sensational story claiming life had been observed on the moon. Raised in the Anabaptist tradition of his Swiss German ancestors and a Democrat, In the 1840s Samuel converted to Roman Catholicism after studying comparative religions and remained a member of the Democratic Party. Samuel's father was a major political player in the Democratic Party of Pennsylvania. Samuel was a member of St. Mary's Church in Lancaster City before joining St. Peter's Church in Columbia. In 1869, Samuel was instrumental

in raising funds for St Peter's to build the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in Marietta. Samuel managed the First National Bank of Marietta.

In 1835, Samuel married Mary Ann Hough (1812-1883) of Bainbridge and the couple had two sons and two daughters. Bainbridge was established in 1813 by the brothers Henry Haldeman (1787-1849) and John Brenneman Haldeman (1779-1836). After their wedding, Samuel and Mary moved to a new home in Marietta at the base of Chickies Rock. In 1833, Samuel designed the Greek Revival style mansion, naming it Rock Retreat, and laid out the extensive gardens with native specimens of trees and shrubs. In 1911, when Haldeman, Grubb, and Company sold the property and demolished the furnaces, they raised Samuel's mansion Rock Retreat. In 2018, the East Donegal Rotary Club and Rivertownes PA USA erected a historical marker on the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail, south of Furnace Road, on the east side when traveling south, to commemorate the location of Samuel's Greek Revival mansion, Rock Retreat.

In 1836, Henry Darwin Rogers, Samuel's former professor at Dickinson College, was conducting New Jersey's state geological survey. Professor Rogers was appointed State Geologist for Pennsylvania and appointed Samuel in charge of the geology field operations in New Jersey. In 1837, Samuel returned to Pennsylvania assisting Professor Roger's state geology survey, and personally surveying Dauphin and Lancaster counties.

In 1840, Samuel returned to his home in Marietta, Rock Retreat, where, along the Susquehanna River, he studied the natural history of invertebrates, especially the taxonomy of beetles and freshwater mollusks. In 1842, Samuel established the Entomological Society of Pennsylvania, the first scientific society formed to study insects in America. Members of the society published hundreds of descriptions of American insects and gathered the first permanent insect collections in the country. In 1842, Samuel published his first entomological paper, "Catalogue of the Carabideous Coleoptera of South Eastern Pennsylvania." In 1842, Samuel was appointed Professor of Zoology at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia, his lectures were the basis for numerous articles published in the *Proceedings of the Academy of Natural Sciences*, the *Boston Society of Natural History*, and the *American Journal of Science and Arts*.

In 1842, Samuel published his *Monograph on the Freshwater Mollusca of the United States* via the Conchological Section of the Academy of Natural Sciences. In an addendum Samuel described *Scolithus linearis*, a trace fossil of some burrowing organism, the most ancient organic remains known at the time. Samuel was a member of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. In 1844, Samuel was elected a member to the American Philosophical Society, he was one of the founding members, and served as its president from 1876-1877.

In 1844, Samuel wrote a paper, "Enumeration of the Recent Freshwater Mollusca Which are Common to North America and Europe," in which he defended the case for Lamarckian evolution and transmutation of species. From 1838-1842, U. S. Navy Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes (1798-1877) was the leader of the U. S. Exploring Expedition surveying the Pacific Ocean. In 1848, Wilkes asked Samuel to study the Lepidoptera specimens discovered on the expedition. Simultaneously, as Samuel's eyesight deteriorated his hearing became remarkably sensitive, and he discovered a new organ of sound in Lepidopterous insects, which was described by him, in 1848, in Benjamin Silliman's *American Journal of Science*. In 1848, Samuel published an article on his discovery of sound organs in certain moths. From 1851-1852, Samuel was editor of the *Pennsylvania Farmer's Journal*.

Samuel chaired the meeting of the International Convention on Behalf of the Amendment of English Orthography, which organized in Philadelphia to address spelling

reform in the American English language. In 1858, Samuel was awarded the Trevelyan Prize, by the Phonetic Society of Great Britain, for his article entitled “Analytic Orthography: An Investigation of the Sounds of the Voice, and Their Alphabetic Notation,” for reform in English spelling. In 1875, Samuel was named to a committee for reviewing Noah Webster’s new spelling and determining necessary changes to the English language. Samuel contributed to *Worcester’s Dictionary*, the *National Dictionary*, and *Johnson’s Cyclopaedia*. In 1868, Samuel was appointed the first chair of the Department of Comparative Philology at The University of Pennsylvania. In 1869, Samuel helped found the American Philological Society dedicated to the study of Greek and Roman languages, literatures, and civilizations.

Samuel was especially interested in the languages of Indigenous populations in the U. S. and abroad and traveled throughout the American East, Midwest, and internationally to study the speech of various tribes. Samuel met visiting tribal delegations in Washington, D. C., and requested Indigenous vocabularies from western naturalists. In 1849, Samuel’s reputation as an eminent philologist was established when he presented a paper at meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Samuel introduced a new, more empirical approach to the study of languages, listening to sounds and studying their meanings. Samuel studied Indian, Chinese, and English dialects. Samuel studied and published scholarship on the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect authoring the first dictionary of the Pennsylvania Dutch language. During six trips abroad between 1847 and 1875, Samuel focused his investigations on multilingual cities and regions in Europe. When studying the human voice in Rome, Samuel determined the vocal repertoire of 40–50 varieties of human speech. Samuel wrote widely on linguistic topics such as the pronunciation of Latin terms for naturalists, the relationship between Chinese and Indo-European languages, the origin and use of prefixes and suffixes in Pennsylvania Dutch, and a general outline of etymology.

From 1851 until 1855 Samuel was Professor of Natural History at the University of Pennsylvania. Samuel accepted a similar professorship at Delaware College (now the University of Delaware) while also lecturing on geology and chemistry at the State Agricultural College of Pennsylvania (Now Pennsylvania State University). In 1851, Samuel visited Texas exploring the presidency of an academic institution there but declined the position. On his return trip from Texas, Samuel was offered the position of president of Masonic College in Selma, Alabama, which he accepted and held from January to October 1852, the same year he wrote a description of the insects collected by Captain Howard Stansbury’s (1806-1863) 1849 geographical survey of Utah’s Great Salt Lake.

In 1861, Charles Darwin wrote in a preface to his, *On the Origin of Species*, an acknowledgment of Samuel’s ideas supporting of the theory of evolution. Samuel authored 150 publications including important works on entomology, conchology, and philology; 120 were scientific and 30 were linguistic. Samuel was elected to honorary memberships in twenty-eight scientific societies worldwide.

Fascinated by exercise physiology, on one of his many trips to Paris, Samuel discovered a French gymnastic apparatus and studied the benefits of physical exercise. Samuel’s physician, his brother Edwin, prescribed, for him, outdoor exercise, resulting in his hiking at Chiques Rock where he engaged in archeology field work, discovering and excavating an Indigenous prehistoric settlement. In 1878, Samuel read a report before the American Philosophical Society, about his archaeological field work conducted at a prehistoric cave on his Rock Retreat property in

Marietta, which was published in 1881, as a monograph in the *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*.

From his home, Rock Retreat, in Marietta, along the Susquehanna River, known as the “Sage of Chiques,” letters of inquiry from all parts of the world came across Samuel’s desk; publishers asking opinions of books; writers begging information; teachers with a pronunciation to be settled; naturalists forwarding packages of shells, insects, or minerals for identification; farmers sending clays to be analyzed; invitations to lecture; requests for data from scientific journals; and assistance asked for reviews from editors.

On the evening of Friday September 10, 1880, following his return from attending the American Association for the Advancement of Science meeting in Boston, Samuel died of a heart attack, at his study desk, in his Marietta home Rock Retreat. Samuel was buried in the Haldeman family plot at the Marietta Cemetery on West Fairview Avenue in Marietta.

In 1991, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission dedicated a Pennsylvania Historical Marker to Samuel, located along Pennsylvania State Route 441 north of the Locust Grove Estate. In 2018, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection recognized Samuel as one of forty-one men and women who shaped Pennsylvania’s environmental heritage.

When Samuel died, the landscape and portraiture artist, from Columbia, a neighbor along the Susquehanna River, Lloyd Mifflin (1846-1921), known as “America’s greatest sonneteer,” wrote these lines, published in Collected Sonnets of Llyod Mifflin (1907):

The Storm Clouds
In Memory of Samuel S. Haldeman, L. L. D.

I stand beside the River as the night
Unrolls her sombre curtain o’er the day;
The pyres within the west have paled away
And only left their embers, dimly bright,
To illumine the sullen hill-top’s purple height;
Then, from behind the crags, the clouds of gray-
A troop of lions held too long at bay-
Arise from out their antres in their might,
And low along the mountain ridges prowl,
Tossing their shaggy manes with lordly roar;
While, by the lash of lightning still uncowed,
They, raging and rebellious, long and loud,
Send many angry and deep-throated growl
Rumbling along the caverns of the shore!

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