

WELCOME TO THE SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK

The Scripture Rocks Heritage Park was dedicated June 2016 by the Jefferson County History Center at a public ceremony where visitors can explore 4.5 acres of a forested hillside near Port Barnett containing the largest rock art site known in the country. Although not dedicated as a religious park, it contains 64 sandstone boulders engraved by Douglas M. Stahlman circa 1910-1913 detailing his perception of religion and personal aspects of his life and his relationship with the community. The Park is the location of Altar Rock, the largest boulder, which Stahlman converted into an open air chapel for community worship and upon which he later built his cabin wherein he penned his journal. The park also contains a small prehistoric Native American rock shelter, evidence of mid-nineteenth century quarrying, and a failed coal mine.

DOUGLAS MONROE STAHLMAN



Stahlman was born on August 17, 1861 on a farm near Kirkman, in Warsaw Township, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania. He was the fifth child out of ten brothers and sisters.

He attended Erie Commercial School and became a schoolteacher, teaching for a time at the Clear Creek School near Sigel. He also worked for a time as a book agent, meeting his wife, Marion Alsobrook, whom he married in Dyer County, Tennessee on November 4, 1897.

The newly-married Stahlmans moved to Valparaiso, Indiana where Douglas began

attending classes at the Northern Indiana Normal School. Their first son Glen Davis was born on September 26, 1898.

In February 1901, Douglas became entangled in a national headline-making scandal that revolved around the religious faith-healing movement of John Alexander Dowie. Applying the Dowieites beliefs to his ailing

wife, he prevented her care by a physician and she died from blood poisoning after giving birth to their second son, James M. Douglas was then incarcerated and declared insane. Through the intervention of friends were removed to his wife's family, thus beginning a long period of time for their return.

Early in 1907, Douglas returned to Brookville permanently. Shortly afterward, he began praying upon what would become Altar Rock, and began his public outdoor sermons and rock dedications. In fall 1910, he began engraving them, while recording his thoughts and ideas in a series of journals.

Not surprisingly, Douglas Stahlman's role within the community and his unusual behavior generated both support and dislike for his cause. His legacy today continues to invoke intrigue, speculation, and discussion.



UNCOVERING THE ROCKS

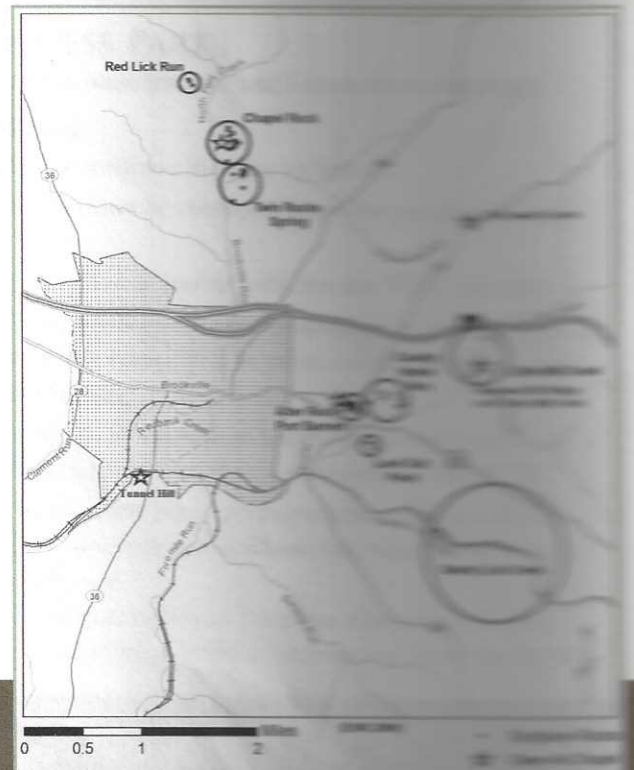
Beginning May, 2009, members of the North Fork Chapter 29 of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology began a systematic effort to find and record as many of the Scripture Rocks as could be found. Gleaning information from Stahlman's handwritten journals along with directions from local informants, the survey was successful in finding and documenting 151 inscribed rocks comprising eight separate groups around Brookville.

The Port Barnett Rock group is significant because it is the largest concentration of engraved rocks and the location where Stahlman developed the concept of dedicating rocks. Here he carved the first and last of his engravings and built a chapel on Altar Rock where he later lived and penned his journal.

In 2011, a special Keystone Preservation Grant provided by the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission to the Jefferson County History Center furthered the project by funding a formal mapping of the Port Barnett group location and outlining potential plans for development of a Heritage Park.

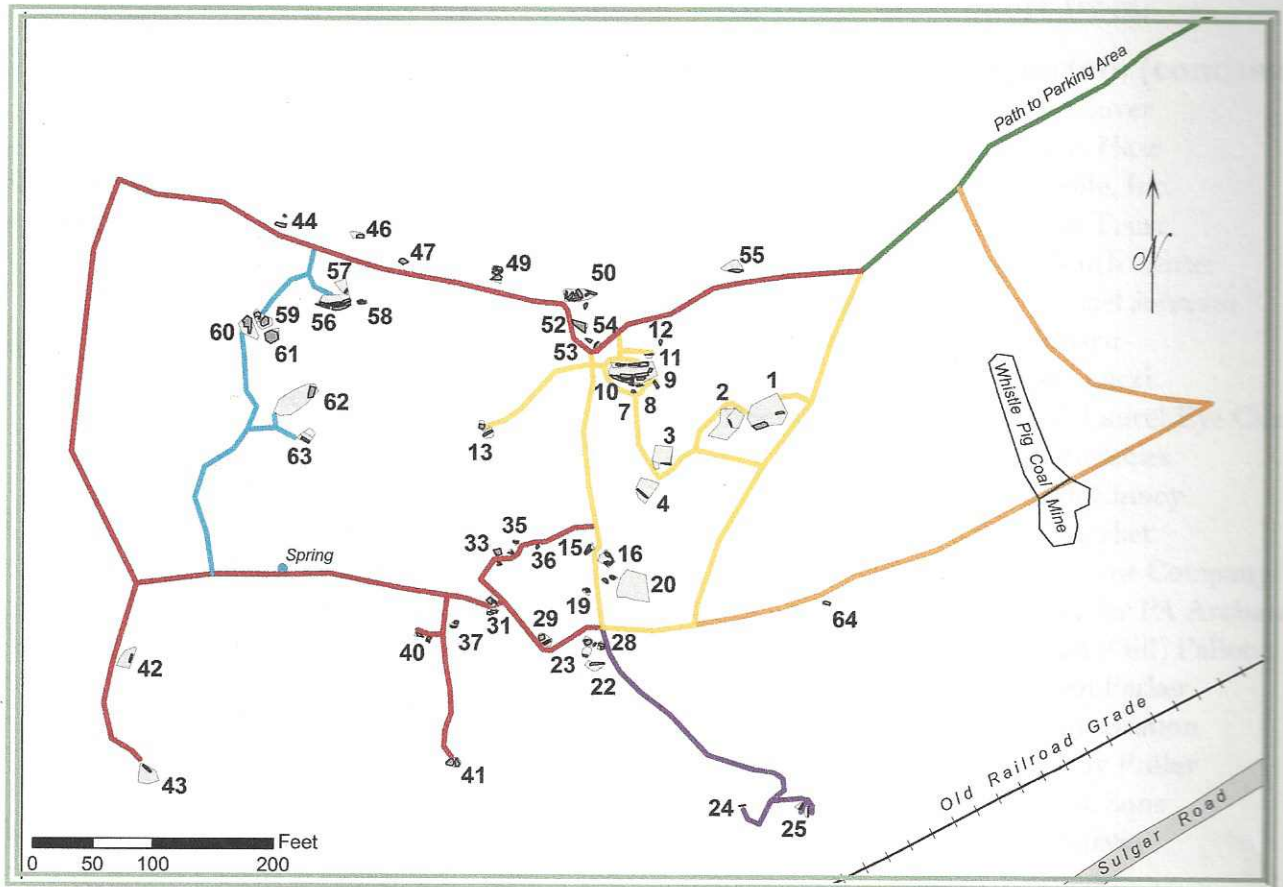
In the fall of 2014 the park concept became reality with the Jefferson County History Center undertaking the construction of the park through the cooperation of the landowners and financial assistance of numerous grants and private donors.

There are still more rocks to be discovered. To report a finding of a new unrecorded Scripture Rock at any of the locations around Brookville, please contact the Jefferson County History Center.





THE TRAIL GUIDE



THIS IS A FREE PUBLIC ACCESS PARK

Your donations, however, are greatly appreciated and will be used for maintenance and future improvements.

Safety Reminder:

No hiking trail is without a certain amount of danger. It is your responsibility to determine if it is safe for you and your children. If you have a problem with walking on uneven ground or slopes, it is best not to travel them. We leave that to your discretion.

Please:

- Stay on trails and beware of poison ivy.
- Take out what you bring in and help us keep the park garbage free.
- Keep pets on a leash and remove animal waste from trails.
- Report vandalism (you may be recorded on remote video while in the park).

Park Rules:

- Park Hours are from Sunrise to Sunset.
- All vehicles must be removed from the parking area by dark.
- Horses, bicycles or motor vehicles are NOT permitted.
- Vandalism causing intentional damage to park property, signage or the rocks will be prosecuted, including cost of conservation.
- No memorials or objects of any kind are to be erected or left in park without written permission of the JCHC.
- Group tours must make arrangements with the JCHC.
 - JCHC docents are available but must be scheduled in advance.
 - Any organization or business charging a fee for a tour must have written permission from the JCHC.





The Scripture Rocks Heritage Park was completed by the Jefferson County History Center with financial support from:

Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission
Keystone Grant

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation
and Natural Resources and the North Central
Regional and Development Commission
Greenways Implementation Grant

Jefferson County Commissioners

Lumber Heritage Region of Pennsylvania

Jefferson County Hotel Tax Committee

Major Project Supporters

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For more information:

The Scripture Rocks: Why Douglas Stahlman Carved His Legacy in Stone by Brian Fritz and Kenneth Burkett
Available at the JCHC Gift Shop.

Website: scripturerocks.com

Visit the Jefferson County History Center (JCHC)

172 Main Street, Brookville, PA 15825

(814) 849-0077 | jchconline.org



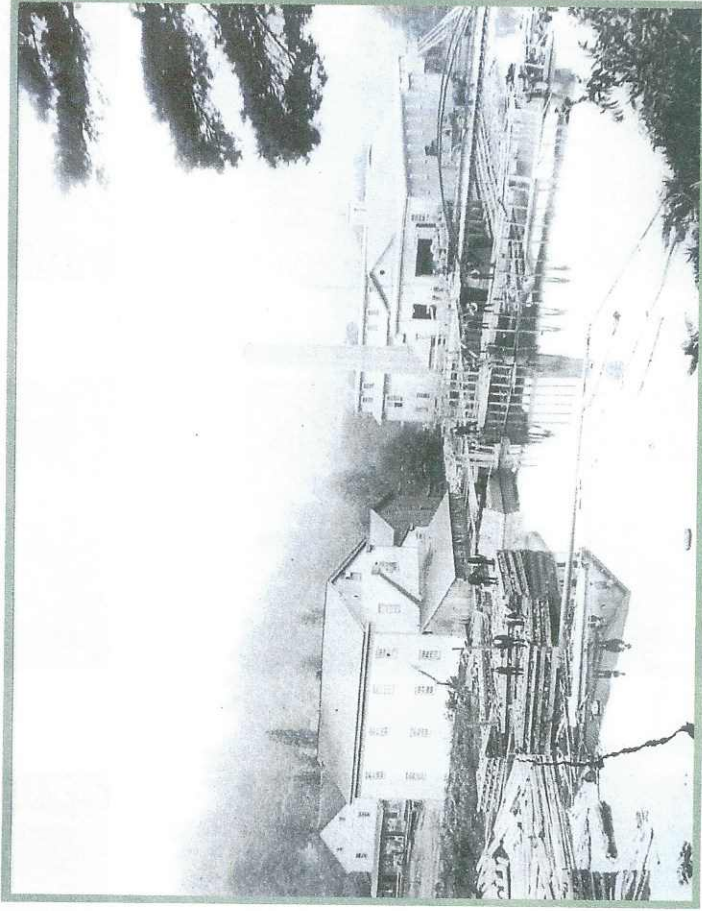
CLEARCUTS & CONSERVATION

SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK

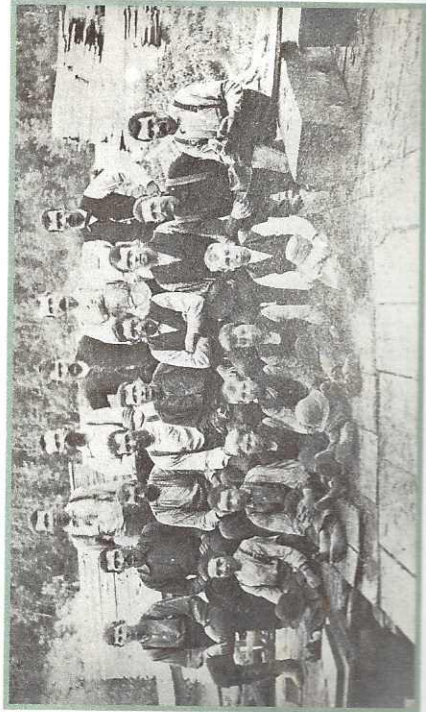
Today the forests of Western Pennsylvania are known for vast acres of black cherry, maple and other hardwoods. However, the makeup of the forest was not always this way. In the 18th century, eastern hemlock, American beech, white pine and oak trees dominated the woodlands.

Early in the 19th century the pine forests became a valuable lumber source for the growing towns and cities. Sawmills sprang up along nearly every tributary in Jefferson County. Lumber was harvested on a grand scale to be rafted down the Redbank Creek and Allegheny River to market. By the beginning of the 20th century the forests were decimated and only a few pockets of old growth timber remained.

Thanks to modern conservation efforts the forest has recovered, and is now managed with a concept of sustainability through selective cutting that provides a higher quality of timber, a more secure watershed and optimal wildlife habitat, all of which provide opportunities for public recreation.



Humphrey Saw Mill at Port Barnett taken in the 1880's. All that remains today is the big brick smoke stack which is a monument to the county's first big industry - Lumbering.



Workers at Port Barnett Mill.



PARK TREES

SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK



American Beech



Bitternut Hickory



Black Birch



Black Cherry



Black Gum



Black Oak



Eastern Hemlock



Eastern White Pine



Northern Red Oak



Red Maple



Shingle Oak



Sugar Maple



White Ash



White Oak



Witch Hazel



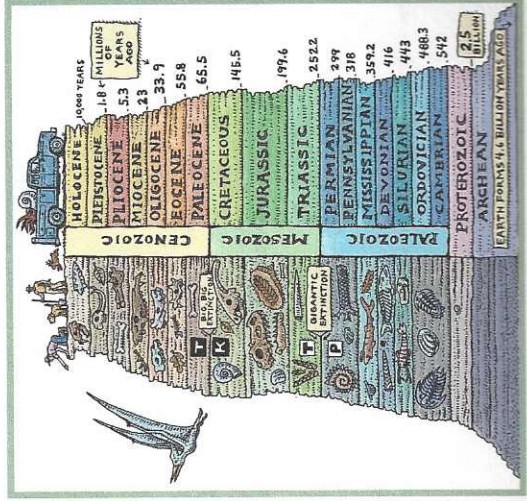
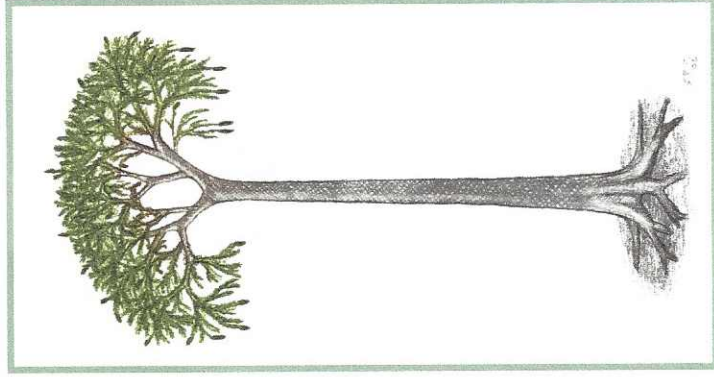
PARK GEOLOGY

SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK



The Scripture Rocks are a type of rock called sandstone. Sandstone is composed of rounded grains of river sand that became cemented together to make a hard durable stone. This sand was deposited 320 million years ago when western Pennsylvania was a tropical river delta along an inland sea. The sand was carried by the river from high mountains that then occupied portions of eastern Pennsylvania. Ripple marks formed by the river's current can be seen on the surface of the Veil-Lifting Rock. The river fed vast swamps that contained a luscious growth of tree-like plants called lepidodendron.

Examples of lepidodendron fossils can be found on several rocks throughout the park. In the succeeding millennia, tectonic forces uplifted the Appalachian Plateaus of western Pennsylvania. Today, our streams and rivers are slowly eroding our hills and rolling mountains. The strata newer than the Pennsylvanian Period has been carried downriver and deposited in the Mississippi delta as sand and silt (see diagram on the right).



ANIMALS OF THE FOREST

SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK



TOP ROW

Bear: Solitary animals that roam large areas before hibernating for the winter in a den. With strong claws they are excellent tree climbers. Bears eat grass, berries, nuts, fish and small mammals.

Bobcat: Named for their short tail, they live a solitary life in dens among the rocks and can range as far as 20 miles. They are opportunistic predators, catching small mammals and rodents.

Coyote: They are a mix of wolf and coyote parentage and can weigh 30 – 40 lbs. They are omnivores and will prey on whatever is easy to scavenge or kill.

Porcupine: Means “one who rises up in anger.” Rodents with a coat of shaped quills, they stand straight up when attacked. They eat vegetation.

Raccoons: Have a distinctive black mask and ringed tail. Highly intelligent, their delicate fingers can easily open almost anything. They are omnivores and eat fruit, insects, nuts, eggs, corn, and crayfish.

BOTTOM ROW

Chipmunk: Have cheek pouches that expand three times the size of their heads to gather food. Diet includes fruits, nuts, seeds, and insects. Chipmunks partially hibernate in winter.

Squirrel: When in danger they run to a tree, circle the trunk and climb to safety. They help the forest by hiding nuts. Some sprout into new trees.

White-Tailed Deer: They browse on leaves and grass at dawn and dusk. With a warning flick of the tail they sprint away from danger. Bucks grow antlers in the spring but shed them late in winter.

Striped Skunk: They forage at night on plants, insects, worms, eggs, reptiles and rodents. When threatened, skunks stamp their feet, raise their tails and can spray a foul liquid up to 12 feet.

Fisher: The size of a small fox, fishers were recently reintroduced to PA. Agile climbers, they hunt in full forest feeding on small animals and fruits.



BIRDS OF THE PARK

SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK



TOP ROW

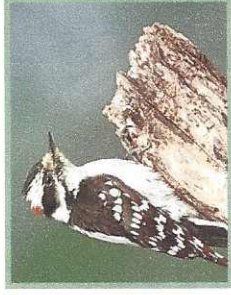
American Crow: Aggressive, but intelligent living in social family groups. Prey is carrion and other birds nests, seen in flocks, harasses other birds, practically hawks.

Black-capped Chickadee: Small, friendly bird with black cap, bib and white cheeks. Forages all levels of the forest. Nests in tree cavities.

Blue Jay: Noisy, harasses other birds, but intelligent. Living in family groups. Fondness for acorns. Credited with spreading Oak trees after the Ice Age.

Downy Woodpecker: Smallest black and white checkered woodpecker at 6 1/2". Acrobatic forager while searching for insects.

Hairy Woodpecker: Similar to the Downy, but 9 1/2" with elongated bill. May feed in large numbers, helping to control infestations by feeding on wood-boring larvae and bark beetles.



BOTTOM ROW

Pileated Woodpecker: Largest of woodpeckers. It pecks square holes, creating large nest cavities in tree trunks that other birds and bats use. Feeds on carpenter ants.

Song Sparrow: Small brownish flocking bird with boldly striped belly. Song is loud notes and trills. Feeds on seeds, berries and insects.

Tufted Titmouse: Small gray and white bird. Common in mixed flocks with Black-capped Chickadees. Flits through canopy hanging on twigs. Cracks seeds with its bill.

Turkey Vulture: Eagle-sized carnivorous bird with red head. When soaring, wings have a pronounced V-shape. Feeds on carrion.

White-breasted Nuthatch: Small cheerful blue gray bird. Call is soft honking. Feeds on nuts.



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