

Saddle Brook Historical Society

We've often heard that history repeats itself. In the distant past, wildlife of all kinds was abundant throughout the 2.7 square miles that we now call our township. Many were hunted by the native Indians, the Lenni-Lenape. Deer, bears and beavers were hunted for their meat and fur. Surprisingly, the beaver's tail was a fatty, prized treat. Others such as wolves and coyotes were hunted by the early settlers for their fur. In 1716, a bounty was placed on wolves. The hunters needed only to substantiate the kill by producing the wolf's ear to the appropriate government agent. At one time in our early history, the Plauderville (section near Garfield) was called Bear's Nest. Hunting was prevalent into the 1950's. A beaver dam was present on the river in the area of our park in the early 1950's. Muskrats, hunted in the past for their fur, are still present in the park area. Deer have been seen by the river and on several streets including Danna Way.

Several months ago, coyotes were photographed behind St. Philip the Apostle property. They were photographed at night using a movement-activated camera by one of our policemen, Matthew Benus. Mr. Benus has also caught an adult black rat snake by the industrial park. He also photographed a red-tailed hawk with a squirrel in its talons by St. Mary's and a fox trying to get a gosling from its parents in Riverside Cemetery. As far as wildlife is concerned, history does repeat itself. We thank Officer Benus for his extraordinary effort and interest in Saddle Brook.

Jack Wasdyke

Township Historian

