

'Sugarloaf:

The Quest for Riches and Redemption
in the Monocacy Valley'



Staff photo by Skip Lawrence

Chris Haugh has recently finished shooting a documentary on Sugarloaf Mountain. The film, "Sugarloaf: The Quest for Riches and Redemption," explores the landmark's role in Frederick County's history from 1699 to 1722. The documentary debuts on Cable 10 at 8 p.m. Sunday, March 26.

Documentary offers a historical look at a natural landmark

By KAREN GARDNER
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Chris Haugh has parlayed his own interest in history into a series of documentaries on local history for Cable 10. The latest, "Sugarloaf: The Quest for Riches and Redemption in the Monocacy Valley," airs Sunday at 8 p.m.

As producer and production services manager for Cable 10, putting together local documentaries is a part of his job. It was in 1993, a few years after his arrival at GS Communications, that Mr. Haugh got the opportunity to blend his two passions.

"I'm not a historian, but I'm a fan of history and a disciple of Ken Burns," he said, referring to the producer of the acclaimed PBS "Civil War" series. "I was a fan of his before that series (aired), but I was really impressed by the simplicity of the series, the mood shots and the quotes."

In 1993, he learned that Frederick was celebrating its 250th anniversary in a couple of years, and that became the focus of the documentary "Frederick Town." He did the research and much of the writing, and produced a four-night, eight and a half hour documentary series that aired in 1995. "Frederick Town" was honored by the Historical Society of Frederick County.

In doing the research for that series, he uncovered stories about slavery and the civil rights movement in Frederick County. That led to "Up From the Meadows," his second documentary. For that, he depended

on some local African Americans, especially Kathleen Snowden, Bill Lee and Lord Nickens. "I'm an outsider and I was born after the civil rights movement," he said.

He moved to Frederick in 1974 at the age of 7, and then returned to his native Delaware to go to college. In his senior year at the University of Delaware, he did a research paper on a Philadelphia family that made its fortune in spices. "It started with a little dot on a map and a story from my grandmother," he said.

The resulting 36-page research paper won the Craven Award of Excellence, for the top research paper in the state of Delaware in 1989. "That was how the bug started," he said.

"Up From the Meadows" won a national cable award, the Beacon Award, for documentary of the year from the Cable TV Public Affairs Association.

After "Up From the Meadows," Mr. Haugh produced "Monocacy: The Prehistory of Frederick County, Maryland," which premiered last March on Cable 10. That focused on the hundreds of years before the European explorers and settlers arrived in Frederick County. This documentary called for some creative illustrations, since none existed. "I looked at it like a bus trip through time, and the viewers were the time travelers," he said.

While doing research for "Monocacy," he came across the geological history of Sugarloaf Mountain, which is on the southern Frederick County boundary with Montgomery County.

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"The two most fascinating landmarks around here are the Monocacy River and Sugarloaf," he said. "I think Sugarloaf has always intrigued travelers. It was a beacon for travel and a landmark of natural beauty."

"Sugarloaf" explores the years between 1699 and 1722, the gap between the "Monocacy" documentary and "Frederick Town." In those years, Native Americans from three tribes and the first European explorers came to the area.

"I try to paint the picture of why these people came here," he said. The Susquehannock Indians used the area around Sugarloaf, and much of Frederick County, as hunting grounds. The Piscataway Indians from Southern Maryland moved through the area after the European settlers pushed them out of their ancient home. The Tuscarora Indians occupied the area from about 1710 to about 1720, after the Piscataways had left.

The French explorer Franz Louis Michel drew the earliest known map of the Monocacy region, in 1705, and spent a night on Sugarloaf. The mountain is an unusual geological formation known as a monadnock, or a mountain which juts up well above the surrounding landscape. At the peak is a wall of quartzite.

"The top resembled raw sugar, peaking out from a green or brown wrapper, depending upon the sea-

son," Mr. Haugh said.

The documentary also chronicles the adventures of Baron Christoph von Graffenried and his hope of obtaining silver mining rights in the area. This Swiss adventurer took a band of settlers from Switzerland and Germany first to England, then to North Carolina, where they settled. Indian uprisings ensued, and von Graffenried began looking for a new place to take his colonists.

Von Graffenried headed north, aware of a silver mine in the Massanutten Mountains of Virginia. He crossed the Potomac River and climbed Sugarloaf, using Michel's map, to look for a spot to bring his colonists. He realized that the map was incorrect when he reached the summit. Still, he negotiated for mining rights in the area, but failed to get permission to bring his settlers to the area. Frustrated, he headed back to Europe, alone. His settlers remained in the town of New Bern, N.C., named after their Swiss homeland. New Bern still credits von Graffenried as its founder.

"Von Graffenried could have had the first settlement here," Mr. Haugh said. The documentary includes footage from New Bern, as well as some images from their Swiss homeland.

Images of Sugarloaf also help to set the mood of the documentary. Mr. Haugh climbed the summit three times, carrying 25 pounds of camera equipment. At the rocky summit, he was able to see across the Potomac

to Virginia, as far away as Front Royal. From another vantage point at the summit is a panoramic view of Frederick County. He also hiked over to the Monocacy Aqueduct for some footage.

The documentary also explores the life of fur trader Martin Chartier. It concludes with the Tuscarora Indians, who had come to the area from Virginia, leaving in the early 1720s. In 1722, land speculators were moving into the area, paving the way for the early settlements in and around Frederick.

"We tried to keep it simple," Mr. Haugh said. Besides New Bern, the documentary includes footage from Southern Maryland, the home of the Piscataways, interviews with modern-day Piscataways, footage from the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania and Conestoga Bohemian Manor in Cecil County and Great Falls, Va.

The documentary is narrated by Tim Marrone and includes commentary by writer Paul Thibault, writer/historian Raleigh Boaze, and two representatives of the Piscataway tribe, Caveno Proctor, assistant director of tribal affairs, and Gladys Proctor, Clan Mother of the Piscataway.

Mr. Haugh has already begun the research for his next historical documentary. This one will be on Thurmont, and will be aired in the summer of 2001.

"I see myself as a conduit of history," he said.