

# LA GAZETTE HELVETIQUE

THE NEWSLETTER OF MUSEE DE VENOGE, INC.

Vol.1

Vevay, Indiana October, 2011

No.2

## IN EXPLANATION

LA GAZETTE HELVETIQUE (the Helvetian or Swiss Newspaper), is the official newsletter of Musee de Venoge (Museum of Venoge). The French adjective 'helvetique' refers to the latin name for Switzerland (Helvetia) in use for more than 2000 years. Rhyming with "antique" it is easier for English speakers to pronounce than its synonym "Suisse". In 1802 the settlers of New Switzerland in the southeastern corner of Indiana territory, renamed Indian Creek "Venoge" after a small river in the grape growing region of European Switzerland.

## VENOGE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

After many years of hard and work by a dedicated group of preservationists led by Venoge president Donna Weaver, Musee de Venoge, a living history museum dedicated to the interpretation of switzerland county's 1805-1840 settlement, opened its doors to the public on June 11-12, 2011.

During an open house attended by 225, visitors enjoyed period music while viewing demonstrations of stone carving, pottery and coiled basketmaking, as well as the domestic arts of sewing, spinning, and hearth cooking.



Peggy Taylor pours off the buttermilk from newly made butter.



Additionally, guests enjoyed the newly planted herb and kitchen garden that features heirloom vegetables grown during the time early Switzerland county settlers inhabited the house. Most of the plants date to the 18th century.



Venoge seen from the east, showing the kitchen garden and the distinctive "broken pitch" roofline.

Most importantly, guest toured the carefully and historically accurate restoration of one of Switzerland county's last surviving first settlement structures. The post and beam farm house set on stone piers with its exterior staircase entrance and distinctive, infilled brick walls is typical of the French Colonial architecture that once reached from New Orleans north into the upper Mississippi valley.

## FURNISHING THE HOMESTEAD

As none of the furnishings belonging to the original inhabitants of Venoge survive, we have had to make educated guesses as to what pieces to include as part of the interpretation of daily life at the homestead. For the most part our decisions have been dictated by the small area of the first floor of the cottage which necessitates maximum use of living and storage space. The essential pieces we have chosen for function are a bed, a table, a dry sink and a corner cupboard.



The new Corner Cupboard donated by Terry Wullenweber (our plasterer) is an early 1800 unit which came in pieces (the top only) and was put together by John Marsh (our master carpenter) who made the base of the cabinet to compliment the upper part. The cupboard originally came from the Brookville, Indiana area.

### WORK BEGINS ON THE DRY SINK

A dry sink is a multifunctional piece of cabinetry from American history. This versatile piece of furniture, was used in kitchens before homes had an external water supply. The dry sink was a common addition in most 19th century home providing a wash area with storage.

Roger Welch, a Madison millwright, will be making the dry sink which completes the kitchen equipment needed.



Roger uses the planer to give a poplar board destined for the dry sink, a F4S finish...finished on all four sides.

Welch Millwork and Design is a private business owned and operated by Roger Welch. Located in Madison, Indiana, Welch Millwork and Design specializes in 18th and 19th century restoration and replication of doors, windows, and furniture.

Beginning the business out of his own home with not much more than a simple table saw, Roger has since relocated to the north end of Broadway, right in the heart of historic downtown Madison. As a Madison native, he has been honored to work on pieces throughout the town, able to do his part in preserving Madison's history. In addition he has been fortunate to work on projects for state historical sites, including the Lanier Mansion and the New Harmony settlement.

And now Roger brings his expertise to Venoge. Stop by at our fall event to see his work.



## VENOGE RECEIVES SOUTHERN INDIANA PRESERVATION AWARD

Indiana Landmarks, a nonprofit organization fighting to defend architecturally unique, historically significant, and communally cherished properties, recently announced its 2001 Prentice Awards presented during Indiana Landmarks Movable Feast in Scottsburg, an event attended by Donna Weaver and Jane Richardson.

Musee de Venoge was recognized for the restoration of its 1805 Venoge Farmstead Cottage, a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places, in 1997. The Venoge cottage is an artifact of Swiss-French settlement in the area and is an example of the distinctive French post-on-sill construction, rarely found in Indiana. When the building was proposed as the site of a controlled burn to train local firefighters, in 1995, preservation advocates formed the nonprofit Musée de Venoge Inc. to save the landmark. Many hours of volunteer labor over the ensuing 16 years restored the rare cottage. Musée de Venoge celebrated its public debut in June, 2011.

The site, currently open to the public on weekends from 1:00-4:00 p.m. until the end of October, is preserved as a public resource for the education and enjoyment of residents of Switzerland County as well as those living throughout the upper Ohio River Valley.



## PUTTING BY FALL AT VENOGE

Food preservation  
and hearth cooking.

Presently, we are planning both spring and fall open houses at Musée de Venoge.

The dates of our 2011 fall event will be October 22-23, 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public!

In keeping with this year's theme of "Putting By," we will be featuring period demonstration of food preservation . . . drying pumpkins and herbs, making sauerkraut, cheese and getting the garden ready for winter.



Michael Thompson will again bring his violin and play for the group.

Visitors will also enjoy period music and are invited to sample hearth cooking.

EXERPT FROM  
**JACOB WEAVER'S LETTER  
 OF MARCH 12, 1814**

*Jacob Weaver lived in the Venoge cottage from 1828 - 1839. He writes to his father about the crops, the vineyards and the status of the Native American threat.*

"One of the people here tell me the crops of corn in a common year are 50 bushels of shelled corn to the acre and from that to 60, 70 and 80. There are lands to be sold on the other side of the river in caintucky cheaper then here but it is more difficult for the title. There are several have bought and when having a handsome improvement, there would come another ones with a better title and they had to leave it all and go away.

As for a black smith was much wanted, there was some but they had farms and the land brings so much that they are hard to get in the shop to work. As for axes were hard to be got but now there is one a building a shop in town who pretends to be a great hand at axes. But the country being large, I make no doubt it would answer good for some more good workman at that trade.

As for a doctor, is hard for me to tell anything. About the new town is fast a settling and I know of no doctor settling in it as yet.

As for the enemy, I hear of no more danger here then where you know live by what I can understand the distance is far from them, at least two of three hundred miles.

The people here have another way of living than where you live. Their principle bread is corn, not because they can't raise no other sorts of grain. Mr. Gex has raised from a small piece of ground, I suppose, about from a peck to a half bushel sowing

11 bushels of wheat and he tells me rye yields more. The best cultivation for this country to make money, is to plant vineyards, which there are several. They tell me that they can raise from two to three hundred gallons wine to the acre and it sells at two dollars a gallon and at one a half dollars a gallon by the barrel. The vine has to be trimmed every year and the vines they cut off you may cut in pieces about 2 feet long and plant them and in three years they begin to bear. These pieces of vines are called slips which I intend to plant some this spring to let them get roots by the time I get some land cleared to plant a small vineyard.

This kind of cultivation would be good for you to undertake if you should think fit to come to this country. If you should judge it to be your will to come to this country."

**BOOKLETS AVAILABLE**

I Will Now Inform you,  
 Letters of Jacob Weaver 1813-1848 ..... \$5

Life In New Switzerland 1805-1826,  
 Inventories, Wills, Law Suits & Indentures .... \$4

**Contact us at:**

Email [dw1836@embarqmail.com](mailto:dw1836@embarqmail.com)  
 or call 812-427-9404

**Donations always welcome**

Musee de Venoge is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible

GAZETTE HELVETIQUE copy and photo contributors, William Richardson, Donna Weaver.



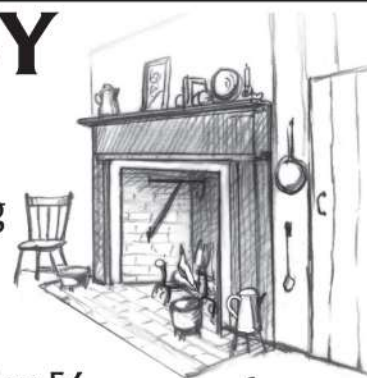
**PUTTING BY  
 FALL at  
 MUSEE de VENOGE**

Food preservation & hearth cooking

**October 22-23  
 Sat. 10-5 Sun 12-5**



West of Vevay on Hwy 129, off of Hwy 56  
 812-593-5726 or [www.venoge.org](http://www.venoge.org)



*free  
 admission*

