

LA GAZETTE HELVETIQUE

THE NEWSLETTER OF MUSEE DE VENOGE, INC.

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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 south eastern corner of Indiana territory, renamed Indian Creek "Venoge" after a small river in the grape growing region of European Switzerland.

Bill Richardson

It is with sadness that we mention that one of Venoge's board members has passed away. Bill Richardson was active with Venoge for the past three years. His professional experience was a help on many issues and his donations of items and time to Venoge helped to make it what it is today. His wonderful coiled straw baskets are one of the most useful kitchen items we have and very appropriate for the period.

RURAL HERITAGE TOUR



September 27-28

Saturday 10-5

Sunday 12-5

Free Admission
Donations Appreciated

Visit 3 sites in Switzerland County

Visit any site first.
Follow the
"Rural Heritage" signs.

1812 Muster
Civil War Unit
Early Trades Hearth Cooking
Period Music
Heirloom Gardening



Musee de Venoge
165 Hwy 129, Vevay, IN



Thiebaud Farmstead
5147 E. St. Road 56, Vevay, IN



Roman's Family Farm
6174 Pendleton Road, Vevay, IN



www.venoge.org



www.switzcomuseums.org



812-593-5726 or 812-427-3560

PHOTO CREDIT: Rosemary Bovard, Anjali Fong Photography, Geri Emmelman, Donna Weaver

RURAL HERITAGE TOUR

Experience the early life, music and trades of the French-Swiss settlers who made Switzerland County, Indiana their home at Musee de Venoge and the Thiebaud Farmstead. Also visit the Romans' Family Farm where the bounty of fresh produce for "Eating Seasonally CSA" (Community Supported Agriculture) is grown.

Musee de Venoge at 165 Hwy 129 is one of the few remaining examples of French colonial architecture once common in Switzerland County in the early 1800s. An 1812 Militia with cannon, cider making and food preparation in an outdoor bake oven and an heirloom kitchen garden are just a few of the special experiences for the site.

At the Thiebaud Farmstead at 5147 East State Road 56, an 1850s Greek Revival house restoration, the family will be preparing for their daughter's wedding (Saturday), with ceremony to take place on Sunday.

The Romans' Family Farm at 6174 Pendleton Run Road gives a real insight into coordinating a long growing season to provide a wide array of vegetables and other fresh produce. Amazing gardens!

Over The Blue Mountain

Jane DuPree Richardson

To collectors, museum professionals, and antique dealers, the Mahantongo Valley means one thing: exuberantly painted and deco-rated furniture made during the first decades of the nineteenth century. To the people who live in the Valley, it means home. Their friends and neighbors are also their relatives and have been for over two hundred and fifty years. Many continue to live in family home-steads. The older generations speak English with a German accent and some still speak Deutsch at home. They do what they have always done: live quiet, unassuming lives focused around family and church. Although they now have a wide range of choices to fill their leisure time, many continue to enjoy some sort of

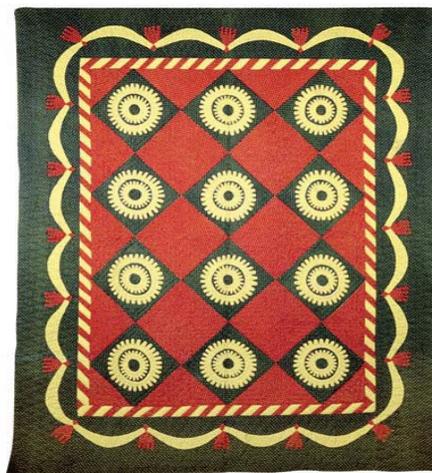
Mahantongo, which according to the Delaware Indians meant "plenty of meat" or "good hunting grounds," is the name given both to the creek that divides Northumberland and Dauphin Counties and to the mountain that divides the Mahantongo Valley from the Hargins and Lykens Valleys. Nestled in a pocket of the Blue Mountains, the northernmost of Central Pennsylvania's Appalachian chain, the Mahantongo Valley extends east from the Susquehanna River seven-teen miles. Bordered to the north by Line Mountain—once the boundary between the Penn's Commonwealth and Iroquois Lands—the Valley is delineated four miles to the south by Mahantongo Mountain. This geography is in accord with the expanded cultural definition of the Valley presented in this exhibition. Throughout Pennsylvania-German cultural history, this area has been described as "over the Blue Mountain." Sometimes overlooked is the fact that one of the reasons for their immigration to the New World was the invitation of the Penn family, who solicited these people from the Germanic States to settle their new lands—Penn's Woods. The Penn's last purchase from the Native Americans in 1749 extended these lands north to Line Mountain.

The watersheds of the Mahantongo Valley define two major church communities: to the north, Himmel's and Howerter's lie along Schwaben

Creek; to the south, Salem and Stone Valley follow the Mahantongo Creek.

The first Pennsylvania-German settlers in the Mahantongo Valley were the descendants of Queen Anne's Palatines who came into Berks County, Pennsylvania, from New York State's Schoharie Valley because the Dutch Patroons would not allow them to own land. Around 1740, they began to leave the Tulpehocken and moved north into the fertile Hargins Valley. These hardy pioneers left the Hargins Valley and moved through the gap in the Mahantongo Mountain at Klingerstown (then known as Spread Eagle). They then moved east into the Mahantongo Valley, which is smaller, narrower, less fertile, and more isolated.

The Pennsylvania-German immigrants who settled the Mahantongo Valley loved color. Like their European ancestors, they used color to set apart those objects that marked the special events in their lives. While color has always been used to gladden everyday life, in Pennsylvania-German folk culture, color often denotes specific rites of passage: Taufscheine at the time of birth and baptism; dower chests, chests of drawers, and desks at the time of marriage; and quilts as a part of those items needed by young women to get a good start in married life. However, in isolated, rural, nineteenth-century American communities, from the backwoods of Upstate New York, to New England, to Pennsylvania's Blue Mountains, the use of paint to decorate both furniture and interiors reached new heights. Why? Because paints became affordable to a growing middle class.



"Blazing Suns" pattern made by Salome Falk Diehl

There is an old Pennsylvania-German adage that a "Dutchman" likes any color as long as it is red. But in the Mahantongo Valley area, green and yellow were used in addition to red, and robin's egg blue often appears on both furniture and interior moldings.

Two hundred and fifty years later, the Valley's descendants not only love and use the same colors, they use the same symbols and designs. Some are derived from simple geometry: the heart and the compass star, dear to all Pennsylvania-Germans. Many, such as pomegranates and angels, come from religious iconography and are deeply rooted in Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions. Others reflect the natural world so familiar to agricultural peoples everywhere: birds—the distelfink (the yellow finch), robins, and parrots; fruit of all kinds, many with Biblical significance such as apples and grapes; and flowers, especially the beloved tulip. These symbols occur prominently in their Taufschneide and other fraktur or graphic arts. Using these symbols, the residents of the Mahantongo created an art, which added meaning to their lives and continues to delight.



One of the tenets of a folk society is that all members share its cultural precepts. The very nature of a folk society dictates that the values of community supersede those of the individual. Indeed, it could be said that the happiness of the individual is dependent on a stable, predictable community, as is the case with the modern Amish. Nonetheless, individuals do emerge to assume special roles. They are often defined by the church in the larger community.

In the Mahantongo Valley area, four church communities emerged to order the lives of its Lutheran and Reformed families: Himmel's in 1773; Howarter's in 1803; Salem in 1827; and Stone Valley, sometime before 1775.

The history of these churches is richly recorded in the many publications of the Northumberland County Historical Society. Their ministers, schoolteachers, and printers are well known. This exhibit includes documents that pertain to the history of two churches: Himmel's and Salem. Individuals who are readily identifiable from these churches are the Reverend Isaac Faust Stiehly at Salem Church and Peter Montelius, printer and schoolteacher at Himmel's.

However, a community is best defined by its families. For two hundred and fifty years, as the men and women of the Mahantongo Valley have lived, worshiped, farmed, and raised their families, they have documented their own lives by the objects that they have crafted.



This text is from the introduction in the companion booklet to an exhibit by the Northumberland County Historical Society, Sunbury, PA in 2000.

War of 1812!



Perret Dufour writes: "During the spring of 1812, Elisha Golay, who was a captain of the militia, received orders to enlist men in his company by voluntary enlistment. This order and similar orders to captains of other companies were promptly obeyed."

During the Rural Heritage Tour, the militia will again be present, 202 years later...along with their cannon!

ELLA THOMPSON WINS AWARD

Ella Thompson is state essay contest winner for "My Favorite Historic Place in Indiana". Ella placed second in the contest sponsored by Indiana Department of Natural Resources for 4th graders statewide. Ella entered the contest from home since her school class did not participate.

Musee de Venoge

My name is Ella Thompson and my favorite historical site is Musee de Venoge. The reason that I chose Venoge to write about is because of how much fun I have when I volunteer there.

Venoge is always open in the summer on weekends but only certain weekends in the spring and fall. Musee de Venoge is a rare French-Swiss cottage. Jacob Weaver, Charlotte Golay Weaver, and their seven of ten children moved into this house. Venoge was built in 1805-1815. Jerry Golay has a relation to these people. That is the reason why Jerry volunteers at Venoge with us.

The first thing I ever did at Venoge was help the cook. She showed me how to skin potatoes, cut carrots, and make noodles and other stuff too. I would also wash the dishes for the cook. In all my free time at Venoge, I sew. I didn't learn to sew from my mom. I learned to sew at Venoge. Last year, some people came and made a clay oven. Now we are able to make bread and other pastries.

The garden is where we get all of our herbs, spices, potatoes, beans, and other things to cook. That's where my friend Fiona Thompson and I go and pick beans together. (No, she is not in any relation of me.) Fiona and I do a lot of our work together at Venoge.



Ella at Venoge this spring during our Open House.

2014 SO FAR

This year the garden has done well. Six different types of heirloom beans were tested. The Red Calico (1794) still seem to be the best producer followed by the Purple Cherokee (mid-19th c).

A second crop of Cincinnati Market (1885) radishes are doing well. The Marrowfat Peas (1809) are a big winner too. They completely covered the frame that Mark Reed built this spring.



Brandywine tomatoes, Armenian cucumbers and red potatoes.



Thanks to Jerry Golay, David Graves and Donna Weaver for keeping Venoge open on Sundays. Our visitor numbers for those days are not large but good to see that visitors are coming.



The period clothing collection is expanding thanks in part to the grant we have received from the County Tourism office. We have added a gentleman's jacket, vest, trousers and two hats, three ladies gowns and several small items. We hope we will be well turned out for the Rural Heritage Tour.

Venoge

If ever there were a Masterpiece that held the beauty of a rose
 It lies deep within the petals of the flower....Venoge,
 I step back in time and meet my forefathers here at this place
 It offers up a respite, as their footsteps I retrace,
Back when it was hard to see the difference of a woman and a man
 When it was a year long war to conquer the seasons on the land,
 The same blood that pumps deep within me, allows an insight
 I was born with the name and I too am up for the fight,
When I'm on this land, their waters once again flows
 That's when I feel most, I'm part of this place....Venoge.

Jerrold L Golay
 4-9-14