

# LA GAZETTE HELVETIQUE

THE NEWSLETTER OF MUSEE DE VENOGE, INC.

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## Independence Day, 1815 Our National Day At Musee de Venoge

4085 Hwy 129, West of Vevay off of St. Rd. 56

**June 30 – July 1, 2018**

Saturday events 10 am - 4 pm Free Admission  
Sunday events 12 noon - 5 pm Free Admission



Celebrate Independence Day, 1815 style! The War of 1812 has ended and Indiana is on the verge of statehood.

### Join us at Venoge for great family fun.

Hearth cooking demonstrations, bake oven in use both days.

Music provided by Michael Thompson and the Travelling Caudell's. Our dance caller is Deborah Hyland. The Forget-me-nots will lead the dancing.

The Thomas Family Winery will be selling their wines and brick oven baked breads plus cheese.

Gun smithing demonstration, rope making, weaving, plus other artisans sharing their skills. Also for amusement and edification will be the Grand Camera Obscura! Don't ask, you have to see it and walk inside!

The new barn at Venoge will be open to the public for the first time with exhibits of local history plus children's games and a small shop to amuse and engage you and your family.

There will be children's games of the period and you can try your hand at vinegar graining a small box.

## A special Independence Day program by ticket only 5 – 8 pm Saturday, June 30.

The patriotic custom of celebrating The Fourth of July by the Swiss settlers began in Switzerland County in 1805. The event included the reading of the Declaration of Independence, orations given by citizens, thirteen toasts to the Republic followed by country dancing. Trenches were dug for an all-day fire to roast an ox, a technique learned at the First Vineyard in Kentucky. At Venoge we will be recreating that historic celebration!

Tickets are required for the Saturday evening dinner which includes the ox roast (main course and two sides plus dessert), speeches, music and dancing. Mingle with the militia and the French Swiss residents and celebrate independence the 1815 way.

### Special Evening Program:

**June 30, 5 PM – 8 PM**

\$15 adults, \$10 children, under 6 free,

Only 50 tickets available

For ticket information, call 812-593-5726 or

[info@venoge.org](mailto:info@venoge.org)



**You can also  
buy your  
ticket at the  
Switzerland Co.  
Historical Society**

## 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.

## 'The Tale of Two Barns' Progress

The Switzerland County Historical Society and Musée de Venoge have been partnering on events since 2012, resulting in better events made stronger by collaboration. When the Switzerland County Tourism Commission shared information about grants and developing destination-based tourism, they became a third partner in pursuing a grant from Indiana Office of Tourism Development..



The barn from the site that was burned by the previous owners. The new barn is very close in size but not in the same location.

A Destination Development grant from the Indiana Office of Tourism Development (IOTD) in the amount of \$75,000 was awarded to the Switzerland County Historical Society. Musée de Venoge is a partner. The two organizations each had a farmstead property in need of a barn.

Venoge is constructing a building similar to the 19th century barn originally on the site. The inside will be devoted to an exhibit/program area, modern facilities, a small shop area, storage space for docent apparel and a reference library. The exhibit area will introduce the history of Indiana, Switzerland County, the Venoge cottage itself and the first Swiss occupants. The barn will complement the existing cottage.

After a long delay the barn is becoming a reality, thanks to John Marsh Restoration.

The Switzerland County Historical Society operates the Thiebaud Farmstead, located three miles west of Vevay on St. Rd. 156. It focuses on the second generation of a Swiss immigrant family and the economic impact of the haypress barn on the agriculture of the region. Their reconstructed hay Press barn is complete and functional.



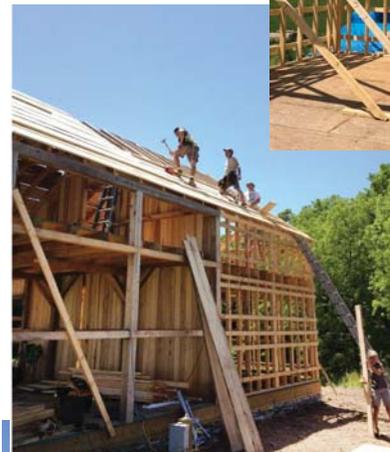
Foundation last fall.



Sonny Ash making a mortise for the front part of the barn.



Getting the first wall up.



Installing the roofing took a larger crew. The rear of the building will be modern construction and the front traditional timber frame.

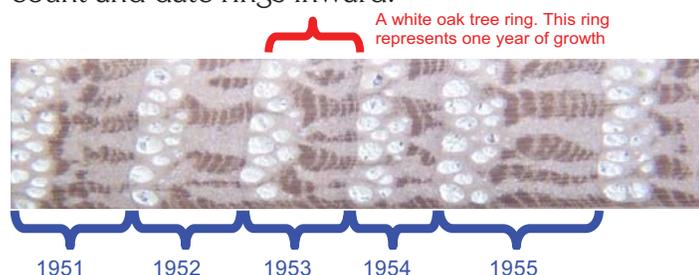


Current photos of the barn are not available.

Photo credit: Sonny Ash, Donna Weaver

## Dendrochronology

Dendrochronology is the study of tree rings (dendron = tree, chronos = time, logos = the study of). Every year here in the temperate zone, trees deposit a layer of wood around their circumference. This layer of wood is referred to as a tree ring. After carefully preparing a piece of wood, a dendrochronologist (a tree-ring scientist) can assign a calendar year to each tree ring. Date assignment is a fairly straightforward process for living trees since one knows the date of the outermost ring and can count and date rings inward.



The pieces of wood used to date, were obtained during renovation of the house here at Musée de Venogé. Many samples from numerous species were analyzed. Assigning actual dates to the timbers was a bit more complicated since no information regarding their age or date of cutting was available. In order to date the timbers, a process called crossdating was used. This technique utilizes pattern matching of small and large tree rings (note the variability in ring width in the above photo). To date a piece of wood of unknown age, a dendrochronologist closely observes the pattern of small and large rings and compares it to the pattern in pieces of wood of known age. By matching the patterns, one can be certain of date assignments in timbers such as these. The dating of old buildings is a sub-discipline of dendrochronology known as dendroarchaeology. Using dendroarchaeological methods, it was determined that this house was erected in 1828.

The benefits of dendroarchaeology are numerous. First, a researcher can determine when a particular structure was built. Also, dendroarchaeological studies may provide dated material much older than any living trees in an area. One can then observe growth conditions in forests farther back in time

than is possible with living trees. For example, tree rings can be used to help reconstruct climate patterns hundreds of years into the past through the use of mathematical models. This branch of dendrochronology is called dendroclimatology. Ultimately, the tree-ring data obtained from these timbers will be utilized in reconstructing climate for the Ohio River Valley prior to the time for which climate records are available.



Written by Darrin Rubino, Hanover College & Chris Baas, Ball State

## Another Puzzle

We know from the letters of Jacob Weaver that in 1814 he says he had “rented a piece of ground of my brother-in-law, Mr. Jay (Gex), Where I intend to move in a fortnight or three weeks.” We assumed that he was referring to the piece of ground that Venogé sits on and that the house was there then. They did not move, however, because of the death of Charlotte’s father. They stayed at the family home until 1828. Then in April of 1828 Jacob writes “...I am preparing to leave the place where I now live and go on a small place I had wrote you before I had bought of Mr. Jex (Gex) Oboussier about one and a half miles from where I now live containing forty one acres of land” Because of the research of Chris Baas and Darrin Rubino, we now know that the Venogé cottage was newly built in 1828, the year when Charlotte and Jacob finally moved.

One fact confirmed, one puzzle remains. Was it the same piece of land? Or was there another structure on the current property?