

Sewickley Valley Historical Society *Signals*

XXXV, Number 2

October 2007

A Visit to Iptingen

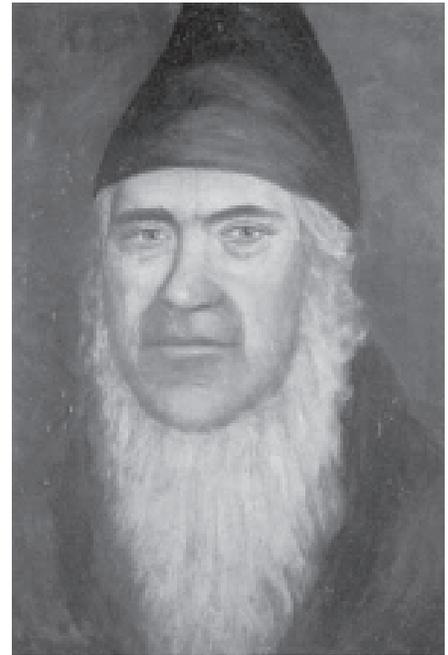
An illustrated lecture by John Ruch

Wednesday, October 24, 2007

7:30 p.m.

Old Sewickley Post Office

Iptingen was the home town of George Rapp, founder of the communal Harmony Society, who was born there 250 years ago this November 1. It is a 1,600-year-old village northwest of Stuttgart in southwest Germany. Rapp's Harmony Society established three towns — Harmony in Butler County, New Harmony in southwest Indiana, and Economy, now Ambridge, commemorated by Old Economy Village. All are National Historic Landmarks.



George Rapp, 1757-1847

John Ruch has been involved in historical organizations for three decades. He has been president and CEO of Historic Harmony since 1995 and previously headed the organization from 1984 through 1990. He was a founder and board member of the Western Pennsylvania Museum Council and is a member of the board of Friends of Old Economy Village, Butler County's Washington 1753 Commemoration Committee, and a former board member of the Butler County Tourism and Convention Bureau and Butler County Historical Society. He is also a trustee of a preservation group that owns a 1758 Quaker meetinghouse in New Jersey, where he was a founder of a statewide organization of municipal and county landmarks commissioners.

SVHS President Joe Zemba to Speak at Woman's Club

Joe Zemba will address the Woman's Club of Sewickley Valley in a slide lecture,

Home by Design:

Residential Architecture & Land Development in the Sewickley Valley

at the Edgeworth Club at 1:30 p.m. on Monday, October 29, 2007.

**If you are not a member of Woman's Club and would like to attend,
please call SVHS Headquarters, 412-741-5315. MEN ARE CORDIALLY INVITED!**

The guest fee is \$10.00.

The mission of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society
is to promote interest in and to record, collect, preserve, and document the history of the Sewickley Valley.



Some Reminiscences of the Harvest Festival

by Charles Lyon

(Mr. Lyon, who now lives in Clearwater, Florida, grew up in the house at 205 Church Lane, Edgeworth, which his dad bought in 1923.)

I just received my 9/6 *Sewickley Herald*, which has articles on the annual harvest festival. A little history... The first harvest festival in the Valley was held at the old Edgeworth grade school on Beaver Road in September 1942. The Victory Garden program had gotten underway that spring. My dad, along with Walter Sutton, whose house was on the corner of Church and Maple adjoining our property, and George Young, directly across the street from us, got together and started a large garden in the vacant lot next to Sutton's on Maple Lane. Although a lawyer, my dad was really a frustrated farmer. We not only grew a lot of stuff, but we also canned a lot of tomatoes, green beans and tomato juice. Because of all the V-garden activity, the borough decided to sponsor

a harvest festival. It was a real old fashioned affair, with everyone displaying their home-grown vegetables, canned goods and baked goods. There were also flower displays and a flower arranging contest. As I remember, our canned tomatoes won a prize, and my mother won a prize for flower arranging. The Stambaugh family, at that time, lived on Meadow Lane. Mrs. Stambaugh was either Swedish or Danish, so she prepared a genuine Smorgasbord, which was held in the school basement. Unfortunately, at that time in my life as a young teenager, smoked and salted fish did not appeal to me, but I did eat the meat balls. Edgeworth had one or two more festivals, and then Sewickley got into the act with a much larger affair at the YMCA ground, and it has grown from there.

OPENING RECEPTION

Saturday, October 20, 2007

6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Associated Artists of Pittsburgh in partnership with Sweetwater Center for the Arts & Sewickley Valley Historical Society will honor Sewickley residents and long-time members of AAP

CAROLYN COYLE

&

DOROTHY LINDNER

at 7:00 p.m. in the gallery at Sweetwater, Sewickley Valley Cultural Center, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley

For further information, call 412-361-1370, see the AAP website: www.aapgh.org, or email aapgh1@verizon.net



Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

Thanks to the following, who have generously supported the Sewickley Valley Historical Society with gifts in addition to membership dues:

Linda X. Benson; Dr. & Mrs. George J. Berry; W. Brewster Cockrell; Mr. & Mrs. David A. Ford; Margaret Shields Gilfillan; Patricia Johnston; Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Nevin, Jr.; Mr. & Mrs. Edmund Ruffin; Peter & Elizabeth Stein; James R. Wardrop; Joe Zemba



New Members

Linda X. Benson, Sewickley; Renee H. Exler, Monongahela, PA; Judy Fulton, Leetsdale; Rose K. Gartner, Sewickley; Patricia Johnston, Sewickley

History of the Samuel Adams House, 940 Beaver Street, Sewickley, PA

by Mary Beth Pastorius

The house was built for Samuel Adams, a native of Ireland, and his wife Jennie Arrott Adams in 1903-04. It was designed by Alden & Harlow, a Boston and Pittsburgh architectural firm whose work is considered to be of national importance and was documented by Professor Margaret Henderson Floyd, PhD, in her book *Architecture After Richardson: Longfellow, Alden & Harlow: Boston and Pittsburgh*, 1994.

The Samuel Adams House was one of Alden & Harlow's most widely published designs, having been featured in *The American Architect and Building News, International Edition* (Vol. 41, No. 1642, June 15, 1907), *The Brickbuilder* (October 1907, page 177), *One Hundred Country Homes: Modern American Examples* by Aymar Embury II (1909) and "The Homes of Pittsburgh, Part V" by architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler, published in the *Architectural Record* (1911, Vol. 30, No. 3, page 200).

Dr. Floyd wrote, "The important house for Samuel Adams was designed to be viewed from Beaver Street across the garden of its double sided lot." Also, "The Samuel Adams House has an intricately configured side elevation combined with a symmetrical main façade.... The ridge roof of the main section of the house is integrated into the landscape by the broken series of secondary roofs, visible on the flanking elevation.... The deeply sloped roof of an open porch punctuated with two arches at the ground floor rear anchors the composition firmly in the landscape."

She summarized by stating, "This extraordinary duocolonial design was widely published and, although not the largest of Alden & Harlow's houses, is the most remarkable for its visual strength. The cascading quality of the flanking elevation, its syncopated fenestration and the incorporation of a side entrance and two arched windows to illuminate the staircases admirably integrate the two elevations within a single coherent plan."

Present owners, Thomas and Mary Beth Pastorius, possess early photographs showing a formal garden with arched trellises and filled with roses, established along the west (garden) elevation shortly after the house was built. According to Roscoe Rider, an Arrott grandson, his Uncle Sam Adams kept the formal garden beautifully, in the English fashion. In a 1985 conversation with Mary Beth Pastorius, Mr. Rider remembered a tree across from the arched entrance that had several benches under it. Unfortunately, by the time the Pastoriuses purchased the house in 1981, the original privet was in poor condition and the roses long gone.

In 2003, they began a major garden restoration project, collaborating with Fred Bonci of the Pittsburgh firm of LaQuatra Bonci. The goal was to create a historically correct plan to complement the important garden elevation of the Alden & Harlow design. Inspiration was taken from American Colonial Revival and English Edwardian gardens.



The new garden was designed to better unite the two lots, align the front of the formal garden with the front of the house, highlight the Palladian staircase window on the side elevation and establish low maintenance plantings with more year-round green. It contains 12 American hornbeams arranged in groups of three at each corner with English ivy below. Arched trellises punctuate the yew border, and European hornbeams define the west property line. A Lutyens bench overlooks the pond and fountain.

More information on the Arrott Family

The Samuel Adams House is one of three nearly adjoining homes built by members of the Arrott family in the 1903-1906 period. Jennie Adams's mother, the newly widowed Mrs. James West Arrott, Sr., built next door at 956 Beaver Street, and Jennie's brother, James W. Arrott, Jr., built across the street at the corner of Cochran and Beaver Streets. It is probable that all three houses were designed by Alden & Harlow, although only the Adams house is substantiated.

The family patriarch, James W. Arrott, Sr., founded American Standard Heating & Plumbing and Fireman's Insurance Fund and built the Arrott Building in downtown Pittsburgh. Before his death in 1902, the family lived in Osborne Borough.

The architects, Alfred B. Harlow and Frank E. Alden, each built a home for his own family in the same neighborhood. The Harlow House faces the Samuel Adams House across Beaver Street. Today, this area is the Second Historic District of Sewickley Borough.

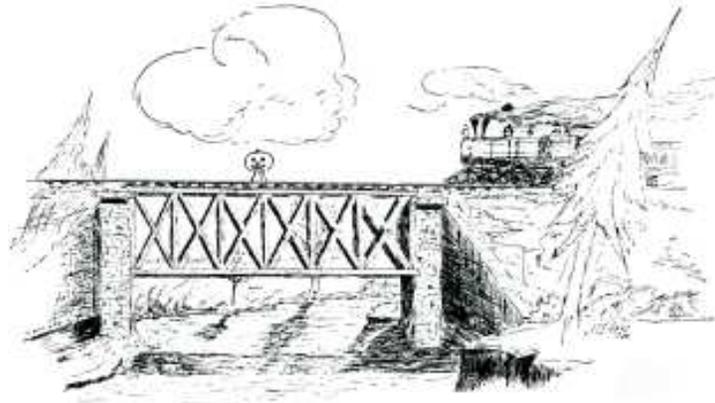
Thomas and Mary Beth Pastorius are recipients of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society's Preservation Award for 2007-2008 for their preservation and restoration of the Samuel Adams House. The award will be presented at the SVHS October 24th meeting, 7:30 p.m., at the Old Sewickley Post Office.

An 1870 Halloween Prank

From "Tales from the Flicker's Nest: Reminiscences of Sewickley Valley," by Gilbert Adams Hays,
in *The Weekly Herald*, vol. VII, no. 8, October 15, 1910, p. 2-3

Time hung heavily on the hands of the boys who, 40 years ago, lived around Fair Oaks station, on the old Ft. Wayne railroad, with the result that they were constantly in some deviltry, the railroad coming in for a full share of their attention. One Hallow'een they secured a number of pumpkins, which they cleaned out, cut into fantastic faces and lighted with a candle. After stampeding a large herd of the Economites' cattle in a nearby pasture in which fences were thrown down and the cattle scattered to the four points of the compass, the boys concluded they would have a turn at the railroad. On the high bridge which spans the Big Sewickley creek, one of these pumpkins was set up on three legs in the center of the track, and the candle lighted, which at a long distance looked exactly like a red lantern. Soon a freight train came around the bend from Economy, a few hundred feet away, and with the first sight of that

red light the engineer must have had a fit, for such shrieks for brakes were never heard. The engine was reversed, sparks flew from under the drivers, with the trainmen running along the tops of the cars, setting brakes for their lives, but they were not quick enough, as they hit that pumpkin and mashed it into a thousand pieces, which fell into the creek below. The train was finally stopped, but the crew, on running back, found nothing, the boys all the while lying in the tall bushes along the track. As soon as the train got out of sight, the pumpkin was replaced by another, this time catching the Cleveland and Pittsburgh express, which like the freight, was unable to stop before it hit the "spook," there being no air brake in those days.



A third pumpkin was set up with like results on a freight. A day or two later several of the boys were arrested, but after a good scare from the superintendent they were released.

Signals is designed and edited by Susan C. Holton. Visit our website, www.sewickleyhistory.org — or e-mail us at sewickleyhistory@verizon.net.



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