

Sewickley Valley Historical Society Signals

XXXV, Number 6

May 2008

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 21, 2008: "Legionville"
Old Sewickley Post Office
(Sewickley Valley Cultural Center)

6:00 p.m.: Wine & hors d'oeuvres; view the model of Legionville
7:00: Annual meeting & election of officers,
followed by a program on Legionville by Andrew S. Janicki

Master model maker Andrew S. Janicki lives in Georgetown, Pennsylvania, and is a member of the International Guild of Miniature Artisans. Although his interest in model making goes back as long as he can remember, most of his model building skills were perfected on a large train display in his parents' basement. In his adult years, he served in the U. S. Air Force and worked as a draftsman and industrial model builder for an engineering firm.

Always a lover of history and historic places, Janicki has visited every state in the Union as well as 15 foreign countries. For the past several years he has been a re-enactor with the Legion of the United States, which, under the leadership Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne, camped at Legionville, now in Baden, before the "Battle of Fallen Timbers" (see page 2 of this newsletter). Janicki is pictured at right in a Legionnaire's uniform; his model of Legionville will be on display in Sewickley Valley Historical Society headquarters.

In 2000 and 2003, Mr. Janicki helped Beaver County put together the program to welcome the Eastern Legacy of the Lewis & Clark Journey. In May 2004, he participated in the Discovery Corps II Expedition from Wood River, Illinois, to Camp Ike Skelton National Guard Training Center in Missouri, portraying Pennsylvania native Private Patrick Gass, the member of the Corps of Discovery who outlived all the others. He is currently involved in the Lewis & Clark Educational School Programs, teaching students about this amazing expedition.



Report of the Nominating Committee

The following have been nominated for two-year terms as officers or directors of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society for the year 2008-2009. The election will be held at the Annual Meeting, Wednesday, May 21, 2008.

Secretary: Elizabeth Stein

Treasurer: Margaret Gilfillan

Directors: Jay Brooks, Annie B. Freitag, Marian Miller, Peter Sour, Dan Telep

Respectfully submitted, The Nominating Committee:

Eliza Nevin, Chair; William Hawes; Jean Henderson; Peggy Standish; Judie Vescio

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.

Legionville

The antagonisms present in the Revolutionary War did not end with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, especially not on the Ohio frontier. Here, Indian resistance to encroachment by settlers coming across the Allegheny Mountains, which had been consistently bitter all through the years of the Revolutionary War, stiffened. This behavior was encouraged by the British, who, in contravention of the Treaty of Paris, had retained military posts in U. S. territory and continued to cause mischief, supplying the Indians with arms and provisions.

Trying to keep the hostiles at a distance, in 1784 and 1785 Pennsylvania purchased millions of acres of Indian land in the northwest part of the state from the Five Nations and the Delawares and Wyandots. The Sewickley Valley was part of this tract. The new purchase was to be used to pay off soldiers of the Pennsylvania Line whose pay had depreciated. The land was surveyed and made available, but there were few takers, mostly because not all Indians approved of the yielding of lands, and raiding continued.

Further west in the Ohio lands, a confederacy had organized, styled the "United Indian Nations," consisting mostly of refugee and remnant tribes: Miamis, Potawatomies, Ottawas, Chippewas, Wyandots, Delawares, Shawnees, Mingos, and Cherokees. They had been pushed ever westward and were determined to stop the expansion of American settlements down the Ohio River. Skilled leadership had arisen among the tribes, particularly an Eel River Miami chief named Little Turtle and the Shawnee chief Blue Jacket. So, the new government of President George Washington faced a major challenge. It had to protect the settlers in the west by containing the Indians and frustrating the British. Washington chose to use both negotiation and force and succeeded admirably.

In 1790, in the first year of his administration, George Washington sent an army under the command of Brigadier General Josiah Harmar to pacify the these Indians, but it suffered defeat on two separate occasions and was forced to retreat. The following year, Washington sent another larger army under

Major General Arthur St. Clair to punish the Indians who had beaten Harmar. St. Clair was ambushed on November 4, 1791, and suffered the loss of half his force. These victories only emboldened the Indians.

President Washington then simultaneously sent negotiators to treat with the tribes and made provision for a third army, choosing Major General Anthony Wayne to lead it. Wayne was one of the most successful of Washington's generals during the Revolution, and, in accepting this task, he faced huge challenges: raising an army from scratch, assembling and training it on the far side of the mountains while solving daunting logistical problems, then taking it into the heart of an aroused Indian homeland. Wayne's expedition has been likened to the march of Julius Caesar into Gaul. Civilization was to be brought to the fierce savages, in a military operation characterized by careful planning and methodical use of force. The army was accordingly called the "Legion of the United States."

The Legion assembled in Pittsburgh during the summer and fall of 1792, camping at the newly constructed Fort Fayette, a quarter of a mile up the Allegheny River from old Fort Pitt. For the troops, it was training and more training. Wayne also hewed to his reputation as a disciplinarian and was draconian in dealing with unacceptable behavior such as desertion.

As winter approached, delaying any campaigning until spring, some way had to be found to protect the frontier while continuing the training of the Legion. Soldiers were sent to bolster the garrisons such as Marietta and Cincinnati, down the Ohio River. The bulk of the Legion would also spend the winter somewhere downriver to show the flag. To this end, on October 22, General Wayne, with a small escort, crossed the Allegheny River and marched down the north bank of the Ohio River on a four day reconnaissance to find a suitable winter campsite. In so doing, he traveled along the path that led to the Beaver River and Fort McIntosh. Today this is Beaver Road, which passes through Sewickley. A suitable location was found on an elevated plain between two streams above the bank of the Ohio River, 22 miles downriver from

Pittsburgh, some 7 miles above the mouth of the Beaver River. This was very near the site of an Indian village called "Logstown," which had figured prominently in pre-Revolutionary times. The new training camp was to be called "Legionville."

Returning to Pittsburgh, Wayne sent a force by barge down the river on November 9 to construct the encampment, which would consist of four blockhouses, one at each corner, sufficient huts for the army and stables for the horses. The site was not surrounded by a palisade, as it backed up to high hills and was protected by ravines on two sides and the river on the third.

On November 28, the Legion and all their baggage descended the Ohio in barges to Legionville, leaving a small force at Fort Fayette. Dragoons came down the Beaver path, both parties arriving by evening. A headquarters building was constructed for General Wayne and his staff, and by mid-December, all were housed. General Wayne carefully prepared the army for its upcoming campaign, training them in marksmanship and tactics. Mock battles were conducted. There was a large parade ground constantly used for drill.

Meanwhile, as much intelligence as could be had was sought among the enemy by spies, and negotiations continued without much result. As April 1793 drew to a close, preparations for departure quickened. Sixty vessels would be required for the trip downriver, and boatyards upriver were busy constructing what was needed. Finally, on the morning of April 20, the Legion was loaded up and pushed off into the spring freshet-fed Ohio River to begin its long awaited voyage westward to glory.

The Legion carefully and systematically proceeded against the Indians along the Maumee River, always guarding its ever lengthening supply line. Negotiations with the Indians in Detroit were unsuccessful, and Wayne pressed on. He built forts as he proceeded, spending the winter of 1793-94 at a new fort called Greeneville. The corpse-strewn field where St. Clair had met defeat was reclaimed, and a fort called Recovery was constructed there. The Indians assaulted it and were repulsed. The Indian army was finally brought to bay on August

(continued on next page)

Sewickley, Earthquakes & Capt. Fred Way

Earthquakes in the Midwest have been in the news recently. Remember the 5.2 magnitude temblor on Friday, April 18, 2008, centered six miles from West Salem, Illinois? It was felt in Chicago, Milwaukee, Des Moines and even Atlanta and is believed to have involved the Wabash fault, a northern extension of the New Madrid fault. Which brings us to the great New Madrid earthquake of 1911 and Capt. Fred Way. The following is excerpted from an unpublished manuscript in the Sewickley Valley Historical Society collection of Capt. Way's unfinished autobiography, *Sewickley Valley Stern Marks*, written about 1960. Capt. Way has been talking about floods on the Ohio...

The Pumpkin Flood crested on November 10, 1810, with 32 feet at Pittsburgh. Thousands of bobbing pumpkins dotted the river. The next benchmark was the "great commotion of the earth" on December 16, 1811, when an earthquake shook the neighborhood with an intensity sufficient to cause damage. This tremor, or series of tremors, was centered in the mid-Mississippi valley near New Madrid, Mo., with such violence there that the course of the Mississippi River was changed and forests leveled. Shock waves threw chimneys down in Cincinnati, St. Louis, and many places in Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, and bricks were reported to have fallen from chimneys in Georgia and South Carolina. It was strongly felt in Butler County, Pa. Baltimore and Boston felt it, and Charleston, S. C.

Many of the dug water wells hereabouts were caved in. An old story is that of all the wells only one survived. The architect and builder of this one well, which was so well built (my apologies), was...Capt. Henry Ulery, the pioneer settler of Sewickley Borough. Captain Ulery was a retired German sea captain who bought, on April 10, 1798, for 98 pounds, 15 shillings, a slice of Sewickley Bottom, the tract called "Loretto."

I take it there was no natural spring close by the Ulery cabin, else he would not have gone to such labor. The stone for his

well was brought in small boats from present Stoops Ferry, across and downstream from Ulery's plantation, where today may be seen the sandstone outcrop once the quarry. The old ferry house at Stoops Ferry, still there as this is typed, although buried to its second floor in fill, was also built of this rock, as were the piers for the Sewickley-Coraopolis Bridge and the lockwalls for old Davis Island Dam at West Bellevue, Pa.

After the water well had been excavated to a considerable depth, one of the Ulery children—there were at least two boys—was drowned in it. Sometime later, while bringing over a load of rock, a sudden summer squall caught the German navigator unprepared, the boat upset, and a young man helper was drowned.

But, and regardless of these calamities, the well was completed in good sturdy style. It withstood the earthquake. It did business for generations after. Who can tell? For one of these days a bulldozer may knock its brains out on a curious cylindrical structure of stone, approximately under Sewickley Bridge. People will offer free advice as to what it is. Then the reader may say, "Why that is Capt. Ulery's water well that withstood the great commotion of the earth in 1811." There will be in your mind a fleeting thought of a little boy drowned in it.

In Memoriam

Charles F. Lang; John W. Todd, Jr.

Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

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

Carroll W. Ferguson; R. P. Simmons Family Foundation; Richard V. Thompson

New Members

Richard V. Thompson; Elizabeth Zamagias

Legionville (continued)

20, 1794, and decisively routed. The battlefield was called "Fallen Timbers," because a windstorm had left fallen trees covering the ground. All organized resistance to the Americans collapsed, and when the British declined to interfere, the Indians had to sue for peace.

The Treaty of Greenville, September 18, 1795, extinguished all native claims in the

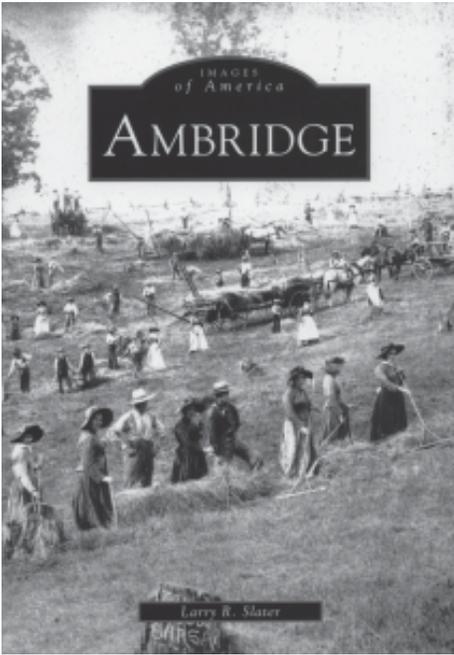
area, and a flood of settlers from the Atlantic states crowded into the Northwest Territory and Kentucky. The British had also finally agreed to evacuate their long-held forts., leaving the United States free to expand westward.

The Legionville site was left to deteriorate. In the time of the Ecomomites, the area was a picturesque ruin used for pasturage,

occasionally visited by the traveler, but otherwise forgotten. In modern times it has not fared much better. Despite efforts to get the State or the Federal government to preserve the site, it remains privately owned. By busy Route 65, it is ripe for commercial development.

Harton S. Semple, Jr.

New book on Ambridge for sale



Ambridge, by Larry R. Slater, is the latest volume relating to our area in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series. The author is a trained archivist and historian who owns a market research consultancy in Pittsburgh. Slater states:

The town of Ambridge...defies one to describe it neatly... Sprawling along the Ohio River some 12 miles from Pittsburgh, it has been a meeting place for Native American and Colonial leaders, a military encampment during the Federalist period, the third and final home for a unique and somewhat mysterious German millennial society, and the site of an industrial goliath owned by United States Steel Corporation that employed thousands and was key both to the nation's war efforts, to the construction and repair of bridges coast to coast, and to the manufacture of metals-making machinery.

The introduction talks of the strip of land that was known as Logs Town in the 1750s; of the establishment of Legionville in 1792 by Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne, where United States troops were drilled before the Battle of Fallen Timbers; of the purchase of land by the Harmony Society in 1824 to form Economy, the third home of the Harmonists; and of the sale of the entire town in 1905 to the American Bridge division of the newly formed U. S. Steel.

Slater uses vintage photographs, primarily from the archives of Old Economy Village and the Laughlin Memorial Library, to paint a picture of the economic booms that defined Economy and Ambridge as well as the economic bust of more recent times.

Ambridge is available for \$21.39 (\$19.99, plus 7% sales tax) in person,
or for \$21.39, plus \$5.00 shipping and handling (by mail) from
Sewickley Valley Historical Society, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143

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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