

# Sewickley Valley Historical Society Signals

XXXIV, Number 3

November 2006

## The History of Post Cards and the Sewickley Post Card Book

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

7:30 p.m.

Sewickley Public Library Community Room

Susan Holton and Harton Semple, the staff of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society, and authors, with B. G. Shields, of the recently published postcard history *Sewickley*, will present a program about postcards. A short history will be followed by a power-point presentation of Sewickley postcard images, some of which appear in the book, plus some—from the Historical Society's collection and others—that have not been seen before.



The popularity of the postal card waned as the telephone was used increasingly for conveying short messages and “keeping in touch,” although the construction of the interstate highway system temporarily encouraged the use of a whole new stock of cards celebrating America’s scenic byways. In the 1950s, card and postage costs began to climb, and soon a mailing a postcard cost two cents, rising from there to the current 23 cents. Today,

the humble postcard has become quite an investment! E-mail and instant messaging will presumably soon provide the *coup de grace* for this venerable means of communication.

The private mailing card, which could be sent at a one-cent rate, was first allowed by an Act of Congress in 1898, and sending postcards became both inexpensive and fashionable. In 1908, 677,777,798 postcards were mailed in the United States, which only had a population of 88 million — about eight cards for every single person!

Come and see the Historical Society’s stock of postcards—you’ll be amazed at how many there are, and they provide an excellent way to view and appreciate our town’s history.

### National Trust Tour

On Friday, November 3, the Sewickley Valley Historical Society conducted an all-day motor coach tour entitled *Preserving 200 Years of Community* for attendees at the national convention of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Tour guides were Peggy Dury, Liza Nevin, Mary Beth Pastorius and Joe Zemba; and the stops included Sewickley Cemetery, Old Sewickley Post Office, A.M.E. Zion Church, *Newington*, Lark Inn, Allegheny Country Club, *Farmhill Dairy*, Sewickley Heights History Center and *Muottas*—with comments on everything in-between. Reviews from the visitors were all positive. The Historical Society thanks everyone who helped make the tour a success. It presented the Sewickley Valley in a most positive light, with its gorgeous fall foliage, its diversity and its landmark architecture.



Susan Holton, Joe Zemba and Mary Beth Pastorius at *Newington*

*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.

The following appeared in the Weekly Herald, vol. VIII, no. 4, September 17, 1910, and is excerpted from "Tales from the Flicker's Nest: Reminiscences of Sewickley Valley," a series of articles by Gilbert Adams Hays, son of General Alexander Hays.



Among the first Ordinances discussed by Council after the incorporation of Sewickley Borough in 1853, was one prohibiting the running at large of hogs. The possible passage of this law created great excitement, the village being rent in twain by reason of it, the more progressive faction, strongly in favor of its adoption, being an element mainly from the city, who had of later years become citizens, while those bitterly opposing it were the older residents, who apparently believed in letting things run on as they had for years previously. The latter party won, following the presentation of the following quaint petition to Council:

Sewickleyville, Pa., Sept. 13, 1853.

To the President and Members of the Council of the Borough of Sewickley:

Gentlemen: Having seen an Ordinance in your official capacity, prohibiting hogs from running at large, we, the subscribers and your petitioners, pray you to reconsider the act and repeal the same for the following reasons: The law came upon us unlooked for, and, being unprepared for such an act, we feel it onerous, and, if enforced, must be the cause of hard feelings and of considerable loss to those who are ill able to bear it, i. e., the poor. Moreover, we think the running at large of hogs productive of health, as the garbage that is thrown into the streets, being left to putrefy, must sooner or later be the cause of sickness.

By giving your immediate attention you will oblige your petitioners:

John Miller.  
Thomas Armstrong.  
Solomon Ague.  
Michael Marlatt.  
Samuel D. Miller.  
Stephen Dickson  
Charles Marlatt.  
M. Loughridge.  
Solomon Clemmer.  
D. R. Miller.  
Daniel Berdner.  
Joseph Marlatt.  
William Woods.

John Beattie.  
J. W. Beall.  
James Ellis.  
Josiah Winters.  
T. Hamilton.  
Samuel Morrow.  
Thomas Dean.  
John Hamilton.  
Thomas Hamilton, Sr.  
J. W. Porter.  
George P. Rudisill.  
Robert Cochran.  
Josiah Fox.

Elias Grimes.  
Alex. McDonald.  
Garret Bolley.  
John Way.  
James Miller.  
G. H. Starr.  
James W. Stephens.  
William A. Ellis.  
Joseph Brush.  
J. W. F. White,  
John McLaughlin.  
Abraham Miller.  
William Sarver.

James Porter.  
Samuel McFarland.  
John C. Little.  
William C. Gray.  
William H. Marlatt.  
William Miller.  
David R. McPherson.  
James Blackstock.  
Robert Dickson.  
(For other reasons,  
not for those mentioned  
above.)  
William Sheath, Sr.

Several other names were affixed, but are now undecipherable.

It was not until twelve years later that an Ordinance prohibiting the running at large of "Horses, Cattle, Sheep, Hogs and Geese," was passed, and a public pound established for their temporary keeping while in custody, said animals to be sold at public auction unless claimed by their owners within forty-eight hours. The "pound" was located about where Marlatt's livery stable now stands, near the old school house.



Katharine Amsler presents

## ***The Last Picture Show: Works of Frank Dininno (1919-1983)***

ONE NIGHT ONLY

Friday, November 17, 2006

Cocktails: 6 - 9 p.m.

Sweetwater Center for the Arts, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143

Contact: Katharine Amsler: 412-741-8888



**Victorian Tea Time** at  
Sweetwater's **h\*oliday**  
**mART**



Pamper yourself with afternoon tea, including delectable pastries, fruit and other tasty bites, then shop for unique, handcrafted gifts at Sweetwater's annual sale.

**Tuesday, November 28 or Thursday, November 30**

**1:00-2:00 or 3:00-4:00**

Call 412-741-4405 for reservations. \$10/person.  
Sweetwater Center for the Arts  
200 Broad Street, Sewickley

**Holiday Mart: November 26-December 3**  
weekday hours: 11:00-7:00; weekend hours: 11:00-5:00



**CHRISTMAS  
BENEFIT  
DINNER 2006**  
Christmas for  
"das Kinderhaus"

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**6:00 p.m.: Wine & Cheese Reception at "das Kinderhaus"**  
plus display of auction items

**7:00 p.m.: Dinner**  
a German-inspired buffet catered by Michael Lench  
**at Old Economy's Historic Feast Hall**

**Auction & Raffle**

**Entertainment by Old Economy Musicians**  
with the school music of Jacob Henrici

**Anna Singer**  
vocalist & WQED broadcast personality

**\$100 per person**  
**\$85 for Harmonie Associate members**  
**or groups of 10 or more**

**Of Corset Is.**



\* This \*  
is the  
shape of  
a woman's waist  
on which a corset tight  
is laced. The ribs deform-  
ed by being squeezed, press  
on the lungs till they are  
diseased. The heart  
is jammed and  
cannot pump.  
The liver  
is a  
tor-  
pid pump.  
The stomach  
crushed cannot  
digest, and in a mess  
are all compressed. There-  
fore this silly woman grows to  
be a fearful mass of woes, but  
thinks she has a lovely shape tho'  
hideous as a crippled ape.



\* This \*  
is a woman's  
natural waist  
which corset never yet  
disgraced. Inside it is  
a mine of health. Outside  
of charms it has a wealth.  
It is a thing of beauty true  
and a sweet joy forever  
new. It needs no art-  
ful padding vile  
or bustle big  
to give it "style."  
It's strong and solid  
plump and sound, and  
hard to get one arm around.  
Alas, if women only knew the  
mischief that these corsets  
do, they'd let Dame Nature  
have her way, and never  
try her "waist" to stay.

In the late Victorian era, medical reports and rumors claimed that the tightlacing of corsets was fatally detrimental to health. Women who suffered to achieve small waists were condemned for their vanity and excoriated from the pulpit as slaves to fashion. Too small a waist was frequently claimed to be ugly rather than beautiful. Dress reformers urged women to abandon stays and free their bodies for work and healthy exercise.

By the early 1900s, the small corseted waist had begun to fall from fashion. The feminist and dress reform movements had made practical clothing acceptable, and couturiers such as Fortuny and Poiret began to design alluring costumes for evening wear in pleated or draped fabric, calculated to reveal slim, youthful bodies.

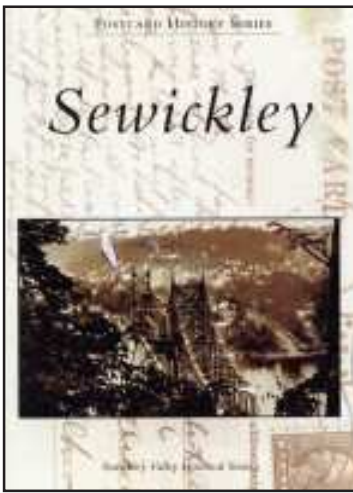
The ditty shown above was pasted into what seems to have been a church attendance book, found behind a radiator in a house on Logan St.

Signals is designed and edited by  
Susan C. Holton

*Crafton Historical Society's Annual Gala & Auction: Mistletoe & Martinis*  
Saturday, December 2, 2006 — \$35 per person

An evening of cocktails & hors d'oeuvres, live & silent auctions, in one of Crafton's elegant private homes on Hawthorne Ave.  
(Address provided upon ticket purchase)

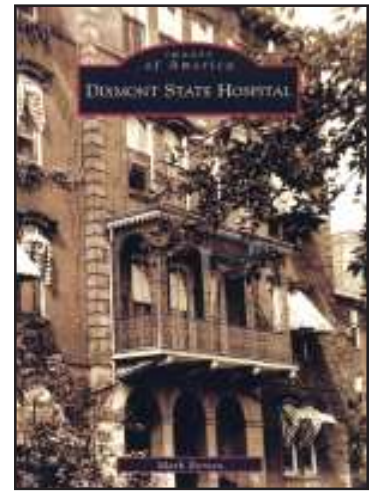
Call 412-921-7747; or send a check payable to the Crafton Historical Society Gala,  
140 Bradford Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15205; or go to PayPal at [www.craftonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.craftonhistoricalsociety.org).



Published in 2006 by Arcadia Publishing in its “Postcard History Series,” *Sewickley* is a 128-page, paperbound book with over 200 captioned photos, most of which are from the SVHS collection, plus an introduction by the SVHS staff giving the history of the Sewickley Valley.

*Dixmont State Hospital* by Mark Berton, also published in 2006, is in Arcadia’s “Images of America” series. The recent landslide at the site of this 1859 refuge for the mentally ill named for health care reformer Dorothea Dix makes the book especially interesting. The 128-page, paperbound volume includes illustrations, maps and plans.

Each of these books is available for \$19.99 (plus 7% Pennsylvania sales tax) or for \$25 postpaid. Come to SVHS Headquarters for your copy, or mail your check to Sewickley Valley Historical Society, 200 Broad Street, Sewickley, PA 15143.



Also for sale: *The Dixmont State Hospital: A Historical Documentary*

A DVD video by Stargazer Video Productions; sponsored by The Senator John Heinz Pittsburgh Regional History Center & The Ben Avon Area Historical Association; narrated by Bill Chappo; written, produced & directed by Kate Guerriero. \$15.00, tax included

## Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

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

Don & Sally Dunbar; Mr. & Mrs. David A. Ford; Mrs. M. P. Rea-Joyner, in honor of Joe Zemba; Sewickley Traditions

## New Members

Duane J. Bennett, Erie, PA; Jamie Danker, Stuart, FL; Lannie Gartner, Sewickley; Gloria J. Kerchner, Leetsdale

Visit our website, [www.sewickleyhistory.org](http://www.sewickleyhistory.org) – or – e-mail us at [sewickleyhistory@verizon.net](mailto:sewickleyhistory@verizon.net)



November 2006

Non-Profit Org  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit 70  
Sewickley, PA

Sewickley Valley Historical Society  
200 Broad Street  
Sewickley, PA 15143