

Sewickley Valley Historical Society

Signals

XXXVI, Number 5

March 2009

Wednesday, March 18, 2009, 7:30 p.m.
Old Sewickley Post Office

The Invisible Sex: Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory

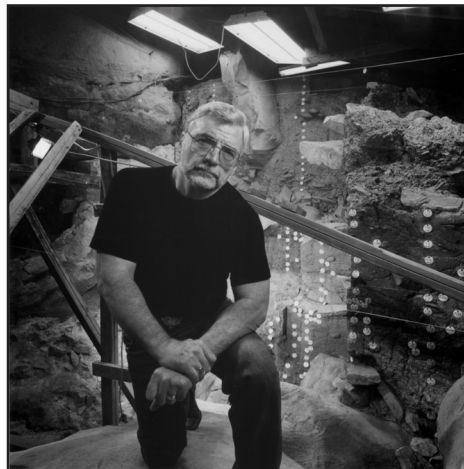
A lecture by James M. Adovasio, Ph.D.

FORGET THE DIORAMAS YOU'VE SEEN IN NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUMS of fur-clad male hunters fearlessly attacking mammoths while timid women hide behind boulders. In this lecture, based on his recent book (*The Invisible Sex: Uncovering the True Roles of Women in Prehistory*, by J. D. Adovasio, Olga Soffer and Jake Page, New York, Harper-Collins, 2007), Dr. Adovasio will present an exciting new look at prehistory. He and his co-authors argue that "female humans have been the chief engine in the unprecedentedly high level of human sociability, were the inventors of the most useful of tools, have shared equally in the provision of food for human societies, almost certainly drove the human invention of language, and were the ones who invented agriculture."

Dr. Adovasio, Director of the Mercyhurst Archaeological Institute, Mercyhurst College, Erie, PA, achieved world acclaim as an archaeologist in the 1970s with his excavation of Meadowcroft Rockshelter, 30 miles southwest of Pittsburgh. Meadowcroft has been widely recognized as the earliest well-dated archaeological site in North America, with evidence of human habitation dating to ca. 16,000 years ago.

He received his undergraduate degree in Anthropology from the University of Arizona in 1965 and Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Utah in 1970. He has served as a Post Doctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pittsburgh and as a Commissioner with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. While chairman of the University of Pittsburgh's anthropology department, Dr. Adovasio founded that institution's Cultural Resource Management Program (CRMP) as a direct outgrowth of the Meadowcroft-Cross Creek project. Under his direction, CRMP grew into the largest contract archaeology program in the world.

In 1990, Dr. Adovasio assumed the positions of Chairman of the Department of Anthropology/Archaeology and Director of Mercyhurst Archaeological Institute. He has since been appointed Provost, Senior Counselor to the President, and Dean of the Zurn School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics. Working at Mercyhurst with a staff of carefully picked specialists, Dr. Adovasio has built the first comprehensive archaeological research program in the tri-state region comprised of northwestern Pennsylvania, western New York, and eastern Ohio.



Noteworthy in his fieldwork are the ongoing multi-disciplinary investigations at Meadowcroft Rockshelter; Mezhirich, Ukraine; Dolni Vestonice/ Pavlov, Czech Republic; and Caesarea, Israel. During his 37-year career, he has specialized in the analysis of perishable material culture and the application of "high-tech" methods in archaeological

research. He has published nearly 400 books, monographs, articles and technical papers on subjects related to these topics and presents regularly at national and international meetings.

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.

New Members

Ben Avon Area Historical Association, Pittsburgh; Marilyn K. Smith, Sewickley; Mr. & Mrs. J. David Thompson, Sewickley

In Memoriam

Elysabeth Cochran Barbour Higgins

Donations in Memory of Phyllis Keister Semple

- Drs. Ernest E. Alvin, Jr., & Jeanne Gannon Alvin
- George D. Baker
- Katherine W. Bantleon
- Milana K. Bizic
- Mr. & Mrs. Fitzhugh L. Brown
- Elise R. Browne
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert Burnham
- Mr. & Mrs. James C. Chaplin IV
- Mr. & Mrs. Frederick W. Cook
- Mr. & Mrs. William S. Cook, Jr.
- Mrs. Hanley B. Cox
- Norton V. Coyle, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. George A. Davidson, Jr.
- Vincent J. Delie, Jr.
- Carole J. Ford
- Frank B. Fuhrer III
- Mr. & Mrs. Ronald E. Gebhardt
- Dr. & Mrs. Harlan R. Giles
- Mr. & Mrs. Joe S. Goff
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert M. Gordon
- Mr. & Mrs. M. L. Gould
- Virginia Grosscup
- Ellen Hagerty
- Mr. & Mrs. James B. Haines
- Charles H. Harff
- Mr. & Mrs. Thomas K. Hartley
- Betty S. Hetherington
- Gertrude O. Hetherington
- Philip Jones Family
- Mr. & Mrs. E. Niles Kenyon
- Mr. & Mrs. Jovanka Koledin
- Mr. & Mrs. Andrew F. Komer
- Elsie Y. Lewis
- Little Garden Club of Sewickley
- Robert E. Loucks
- Betty S. Mann
- Grant McCargo II
- Lisa H. McChesney
- Cathy B. McConnon
- June A. Melodia
- Frances Love Merryman
- Mr. & Mrs. William F. Millar
- Mr. & Mrs. Timothy P. Miller
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Muse, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. Hugh Nevin, Jr.
- North Allegheny School District, Athletic Office
- John Oliver III & Sylvia Dallas
- Mrs. Agnes N. Pangburn
- Helen McE. Patterson
- Sewickley Valley Hospital, Radiology Department
- Mr. & Mrs. John M. Roberts
- Mr. & Mrs. Frank Brooks Robinson
- Mr. & Mrs. Joseph C. Robinson, Jr.
- Mr. & Mrs. A. Reed Schroeder
- Sean & Amy Sebastian
- Alden J. Sector
- Mr. & Mrs. Edward W. Seifert
- Sewickley Heights Golf Club
- Sewickley Hunt
- Mr. & Mrs. Edward C. Sherry
- Betty G. Y. Shields
- Dr. & Mrs. John A. Shoener
- Jacqueline L. Shoener
- B. R. Shriver, Jr.
- Jirakorn Siriprasert
- Patricia A. Small
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard C. Smith
- Mr. & Mrs. Steven J. Smith
- Furman South III
- Hon. & Mrs. William L. Standish
- Mrs. Peter M. Standish
- Mr. & Mrs. Daniel M. Telep
- The Pittsburgh Foundation, Edward W. & Margaret H. Kleeman Fund
- Margaret G. Thein
- Mr. & Mrs. Steven C. Thomas
- Mr. & Mrs. Richard V. Thompson
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael J. Tomana
- Polly O. Walker
- Mr. & Mrs. Frank Wasco, Jr
- Watson Institute
- Mr. & Mrs. Marvin Wedeen
- Mr. & Mrs. Helge H. Wehmeier
- Western Pennsylvania Golf Association
- Mr. & Mrs. Malachy Whalen

Report of the Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee (Charlotte Bober, Chair; Pat Casella; Susan Craig; Margaret Dury; Betty G. Y. Shields) proposes the following slate of officers and directors for election at the Annual Meeting, May 20, 2009:

- President: John Kroeck
- Vice-President: George H. Craig, Jr.
- Directors: Margaret Dury
- James Haines
- John Menniti
- Mary Lou Scholl
- Mike Tomana

Arthur Nevin's Indian Opera

"When another member of a musical family begins to bud in the springtime of his career, the public eye turns on him to watch the flowering process and instinctively compares his efforts with his forerunner. It was true of the Bachs, and it is true of the Nevins, and will remain so throughout the ages. Ethelbert was a true lyricist; but in the case of Arthur, there is precision of style. [He] is more a master of form and has in his opera Poïa undertaken a more massive work than had ever been attempted by [Ethelbert]. He is less individual but more substantial; less romantic but more classic; less genius but more master."

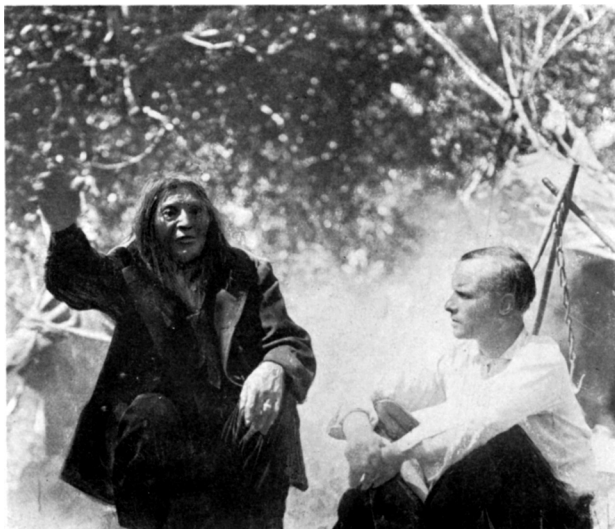
These are the words of John C. Dickson in an article from *The Index* entitled "A Critical Review of Poïa," written shortly after the opera's premier performance at the Carnegie Music Hall on Wednesday, January 16, 1907. Of the premiere, which was conducted by Nevin himself, *Musical America* wrote, "Mr. Nevin shows a sure grasp of the essential characteristics of Indian music, incorporating a number of the folk-melodies of the Blackfeet. It is a score full of picturesque and harmonic beauty." Not all of the reviews were this kind, but they were generally favorable. In fact, Nevin was invited that same year by President Theodore Roosevelt to give a private recital of some of the music of the opera at the White House, and it was presented in 1910 at the Royal Opera in Berlin at the order of Kaiser Wilhelm in honor of then ex-president Roosevelt. It was the first American work of its kind produced in a foreign opera house, and the Germans demonstrated against it, calling it an "Americanization" of the Royal Opera, which had recently refused to accept modern German composers except for Strauss. After being forgotten for almost 100 years, "Poïa" was performed again in 2005 in Great Falls, Montana, as a Lewis & Clark Signature Event.

How did Edgeworth-born Arthur Finley Nevin (1871-1943), younger brother of the more famous Ethelbert (1862-1901), come to write an opera about the Blackfeet Indians, an opera that was called by one critic "one of the most pretentious all-American musical compositions of the day"?

Nevin had a friend from Pittsburgh named Walter McClintock, the second son of Oliver and Clara Childs McClintock. He graduated from Yale in 1891, and five years later, in 1896, went to northwest Montana as a photographer with the Bureau of Forestry. After his assignment was completed, he stayed in the area as a guest of William Jackson, a mixed-blood Blackfoot Indian scout who had served under General Custer and was one of the few survivors of the massacre at the Little Big Horn. McClintock remained among the Blackfeet for several months and returned two years later, when he was adopted by Chief Mad Wolf. On his return to Pittsburgh from this 1898 trip, he interested his friend Arthur Nevin in Indian music, and in June 1903, Nevin accompanied him to the Blackfoot reservation. Nevin was enchanted with the picturesque and romantic surroundings of the Indian camp at the foot of the Rockies, and, at the urging of McClintock, set himself to composing an Indian opera based on the legend of Poïa, the great mythical hero and prophet of the Blackfeet, who braved the dangers of a journey to the home of the Sun God and, on his return to earth, established the Indians' sun worship. Nevin made another journey with McClintock to the Blackfoot reservation in the summer of 1904; the opera premiered in January 1907. McClintock went on to become one of the greatest photographers and chroniclers of the American West. By 1910, he had taken some 2000 photos, and his book of that same year, *The Old North Trail*, contained a vivid portrait of Indian social life and an accurate record of the legends, ceremonies and sun worship of the Blackfeet. The *London Times* wrote that the book



Arthur Nevin



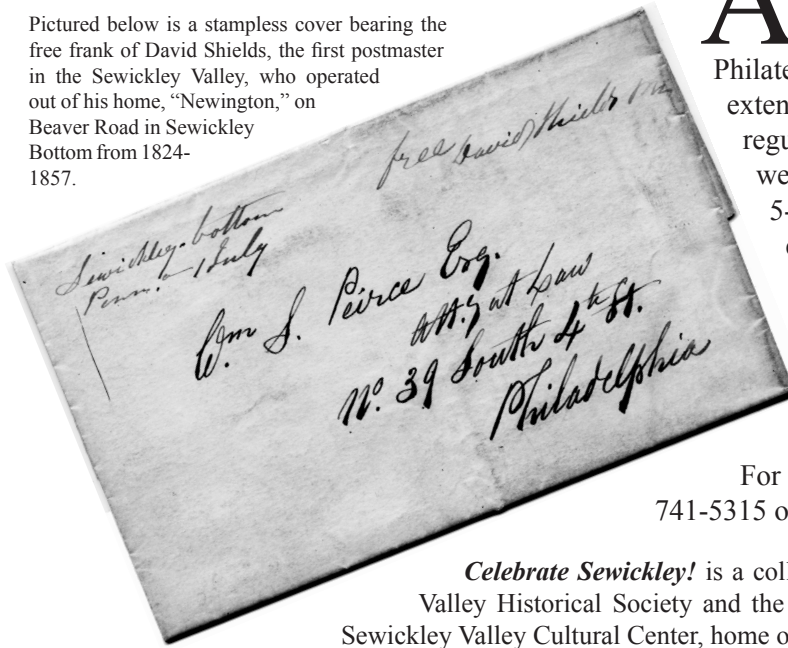
Walter McClintock and a Blackfoot Indian

"... is a mirror in which the soul of the red man, misunderstood for so many generations of his conquerors, is faithfully reflected, and yet is luminous with light from within." In his honor, the U. S. Department of the Interior gave the name "McClintock Peak" to a mountain in the Cutbank Pass, Glacier National Park, Montana. McClintock's books are still available, and his beautiful lantern slides are at the Beinecke Library at Yale and can be viewed on the internet.

A recent acquisition of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society is Arthur Nevin's diary of his visit to the Blackfoot Indian camp in the summer of 1903. In addition to diary entries, the leather-bound volume contains lists of phonetic pronunciations of Indian words as well as a few lines of musical scores, one of which is called "Sung as bringing brush for sweat houses." In the next several issues of *Signals*, we plan to publish the writings of this "tenderfoot" as he experienced for the first time the wonders of the West—the vast prairie with its violent storms, the customs and rituals of the natives, the foreign sounds of their language and music—all of which contributed to his Indian opera, "Poïa."

CELEBRATE SEWICKLEY! April 4-25

Pictured below is a stampless cover bearing the free frank of David Shields, the first postmaster in the Sewickley Valley, who operated out of his home, "Newington," on Beaver Road in Sewickley Bottom from 1824-1857.

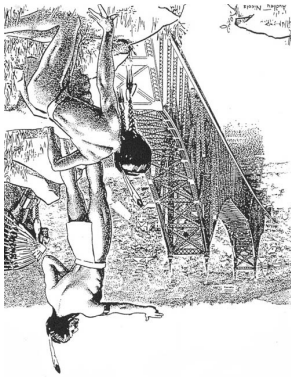


As one of its contributions to the fourth annual *Celebrate Sewickley!*, the Sewickley Valley Historical Society will sponsor an exhibition of Sewickley Postal History. Philatelist and SVHS Board member Dan Telep will have his extensive collection on display in our headquarters during our regular opening hours (10 am - 2:00 pm, Tuesday-Friday) as well as during the opening *Celebrate Sewickley!* art auction, 5-7 pm, Saturday, April 4 (\$25 in advance, \$30, day of the event), and the closing reception, Friday, April 24, 6-9 pm (free). In addition, we will be conducting walking tours of the Village on Saturday, April 25, 11 am and 12 pm. The tours will start at the Farmer's Market at St. James Church and will concentrate on Sewickley's third historic district.

For further information on these events, call SVHS at 412-741-5315 or Sweetwater Center for the Arts, 412-741-4405.

Celebrate Sewickley! is a collaborative effort of Sweetwater Center for the Arts, Sewickley Valley Historical Society and the Old Sewickley Post Office Corporation; proceeds benefit the Sewickley Valley Cultural Center, home of the 3 organizations.

Signals is designed and edited by Susan C. Holton. Visit our website, www.sewickleyhistory.org — e-mail us at sewickleyhistory@verizon.net — or call us at 412-741-5315. We're open 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., Tuesday through Friday, or by appointment.



March 2009

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Sewickley, PA

Sewickley Valley Historical Society
200 Broad Street
Sewickley, PA 15143