

Sewickley Valley Historical Society Signals

XXXVI, Number 7

May 2009

Wednesday, May 20, 2009, at 6:00 p.m.

Old Sewickley Post Office

Annual Meeting Members Share Their Treasures

Join us at 6:00 p.m. for wine and hors d'oeuvres
while members present their treasures to the appraisers for informal evaluation.



The Annual Meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m.
and will be followed by a program in which
the appraisers highlight the most interesting items.



The Appraisers

BLAIR BAUER: A lifetime resident of Sewickley, Blair owns and operates the Sewickley Traditions antique shop on Beaver Street. He and his mother, Anne Bauer, have been a mainstay of the Sewickley antique and auction business for over 25 years. Blair exhibits at the Scott Antique Show, a monthly show in Atlanta, Georgia. He is an avid collector of and expert in antique silver.

JOHN KROECK: John participates in a number of antique shows, is owner/manager of the Morgantown and Greensburg antique shows and is a dealer at The Antique Center of Strabane in Cannonsburg. He restored the oldest remaining structure in the Sewickley Valley, Lark Inn, where he and his family have lived since 1984. He is currently on the boards of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society and The Harmonic Associates at Old Economy Village.

JOHN MICKINAK: John, an antique dealer and appraiser in Greensburg, PA, for 32 years, is owner of Ligonier Antique Gallery and the Mickinak Antique Gallery. He is active on the antique show circuit and is co-owner of two antique shows. He serves as a docent at the Westmoreland Museum of American Art in Greensburg.

HEATHER SEMPLE: From 1989-2001, Heather was Corporate Art Curator at PNC Bank. In 2001 she received a degree in Fine Art Appraisal from New York University. She works as a freelance appraiser and art consultant, for the last two years for The Hardy Family Art Collection, Nemaocolin Woodlands, and, at present, as the Art Director for The Duquesne Club. Heather is a certified member of the Appraisers Association of America (AAA) and is licensed in Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices (USPAP).

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

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.

Arthur Nevin's Diary, June & July 1903

This is a continuation (see the March and April issues of Signals) of Arthur Nevin's diary, written during his stay with Walter McClintock on the Blackfoot Reservation in Montana. It was this experience that inspired Nevin's Indian opera, "Poia."

We have transcribed Nevin's spelling and punctuation as accurately as possible. Our additions or corrections are in square brackets.



Tribal Camp, by Walter McClintock

Wednesday, June 24th—1903

After breakfast we again rode over to the ditch as Walter was not satisfied with his pony and asked some of the Indians if they had any for him. At noon Walter rode into camp with the tribe, while I started north for a short ride. When I had gone about six miles I came to the Cut Bank River again. I got off my horse and lay by the river for a while and tried to take in the vastness of the prairies and the glorious sight of the tout ensemble, with downy clouds of pure white sailing towards me from the mountains against a blue sky. While lying there, I saw, on the horizon of one of the prairie swells, an Indian on horseback. Presently another appeared, then a covered wagon drawn by two spotted ponies (pintos). I mounted my pony and made out for them. By the time I reached them, I found there were about forty Indians coming from the north journeying to the Medicine Lodge. Such a sight it was! My pony, seeing the other [brancos], began to neigh and started at a smart gait to join the others who answered his call. There were four covered wagons,

ten riders and three travois (a vehicle the Indians use for conveying their luggage. Two long poles crossing over one another immediately in front of the saddle pommel, where they are made fast, and dragging, at their length, on either side of the pony. Cross bars are attached to these poles immediately behind the pony and upon these cross bars are packed, lodges, clothing and equipment belonging to a lodge). Seated in the saddle, on the pony with the travois, was a squaw. A dozen dogs followed the band and a herd of about twenty ponies following at large. Every Indian's face was covered with red paint. I found out they use the paint as a preventitive [sic] from the wind and sun-burning. I joined the party and rode into camp with them. When entering the outskirts of the camp they all stopped, each family surveying the circle



Travois, by Walter McClintock

and deciding at which point to pitch their lodge. Some went in one direction and some to the opposite side.

After eating our lunch, Walter and I rode in to the Agency for some provisions. My face was beginning to pain me frightfully from the wind and sun and by the time we reached the Agency my head was aching fearfully. I got some Pond's Extract (and thought of Martha) and some camphor ice. Also a pair of dark glasses as my eyes seemed to be burning in their sockets. Now my face is in a continual state of grease and black eyed am I.

After dark, I was seated by the lodge fire, Walter having gone over to see his Indian brother Dusty Bull, when in stepped three Indians. There is no knocking, and now entre [sic] is general, without any hesitation, to our lodge. Two of these Indians turned out to be chiefs. One named Medicine Bull the other, Powder Bull. The third was a young buck who could speak English. The first thing we did was to light our pipes. I handed them my Lone Jack tobacco and they seemed much pleased with it. But few words were spoken between us. I afterwards bought a tobacco cutting board from Medicine Bull for a quarter.

Before these three Indians left, Walter came in. After greeting them he said to the young buck, "tell Medicine Bull my friend (meaning me) is ill and I would like to have him 'make medicine' for him." Medicine Bull explained that I would have to undress and let him paint me all over with the sacred red paint and I also explained that the very idea of such a treatment had entirely cured me and that I considered him

a remarkable Medicine Man, that the very words had made me a well man. I must have been a good subject. He was sitting, in their usual crouched attitude, beside me. The fire was burning low and I was about to replenish it when he (Medicine Bull) of a sudden jerked out his tobacco board and I jumped nicely not knowing what was coming. Then I began to laugh at his surprised expression at my actions. Laughed loud and they all joined in. I bought the board.

After they had gone, in came Harry No-Chief (Indian name Cepenamke or Takes in the Night). For some reason or other Harry took a fancy to me and before he left to go out with the herd—he being one of the night herders—he presented me with his neckless [sic], taking it from his neck and saying—in broken English—“You like that?” “Yes,” I answered, “a present.” I took it and put it on. Pointing to Walter he said, “He a friend, you a friend, all friends” then he left our lodge. I afterwards went out to get some wood and saw him galloping out into the prairies to watch through the night.

Thursday June 25th—1903

This morning I was awaken[ed] by the old squaw coming into the lodge, excitedly speaking in Indian and making all kinds of signs. I called over to Walter that something was wrong and that he had better do a little “hand talking” with the old woman as I generally get everyone confused when I try it. It turned out that the Indians were breaking camp preparing to move in for the great Medicine Lodge festivities, and the old woman had lent us her lodge poles. I peeped out of the lodge opening, while Walter and the old squaw kept flinging their hands in all directions, jabbering away in Indian and English, and when I looked out, I saw a hundred or more lodge[s] being pulled down. The entire camp was in great commotion, packing wagons, travois and pack horses. Inside of an hour there were but three lodges left on the prairie where there had been 136. I have never seen such quick work at destroying a town as these Indian squaws make of it. Carry Nation isn’t in it! Horses were neighing, dogs were barking, children crying and Walter and the old squaw

using hands, feet and tongue by this time, while I crouched at the lodge door peeping out, then at Walter, my mouth open wide enough to capture all the black flies of the river banks. There I sat in my undersuit, expecting most anything to come along to give us a little more discomfort. Presently the old squaw left the lodge, Walter drew on his trouser[s] and made for an Indian that could speak English. While he was gone, back came the old squaw and began to pull the pegs from our lodge. I yelled out to her, “never mind that, old woman, can’t you see that I am not dressed yet?” and my hands began making signs that I couldn’t understand myself, but they naturally fell into the same habit as Walter’s because I wisely copy his experienced ways and manners. I don’t know if it was my hands or my voice, but one or the other made the old woman stop and look at me, first in a

blankets shivering—imitating a shiver—and saying “Now you wait. My friend will be here in just a moment,” and wondered where the devil Walter was all the time. I needed help! It was all right for him. He had his clothes on. I didn’t. Shivering as I did—and I acted well!—it had no effect upon the old squaw. She was married and I wasn’t. There’s a big difference concerning modesty under the two conditions, so down came a pole! I counted the others and wondered how many poles before Walter would come back, at the same time tearing a blanket from my couch on the ground and wrapping myself up in it. Down [came] another pole and no Walter! All right. It wasn’t my fault if I had to be caught in such a condition of dress. “Go on, old woman; pull them all down” I said to her and just then I saw Walter coming across the circle. I yelled to him to “hurry up for heaven’s sake.” When he came with his man arrangements were made that we might keep the poles until after the “Medicine Lodge.” But I didn’t wait to see how the end of the conversation would come out, but took that opportunity to get into clothes; and pretty quick too!

In the evening there were but three lodges illuminated by lodge fires. Ours, Medicine Weazle’s [sic] and Dusty Bull’s. After supper I strolled down to Medicine [Weasel’s] lodge, went in, and silently communed with him and his three wives. I bought from him a pair of Indian trousers (I had clothing on the brain) a tobacco bag and from two of his wives, their neckless’ [sic] which they took from their necks and handed me for a dollar. From his third wife a pair of brass bracelets. When I was leaving

Medicine [Weasel] tied his bracelet on my wrist. Some of the Indians are charming but the squaws need training a bit.

After luncheon, I saw, away off over the prairie, an Indian riding towards us on his pony. It was Harry No-Chief. He came right to our lodge and said, “Camp gone. I come Sunday with wagon. Take you and lodge in. Old woman (his wife) cook for you at Medicine Lodge.” Walter took his (No Chief’s) and my picture with my pony.



This photo is from the collection of Reed Schroeder and belonged to his aunt, Dorothy Slack. On the verso is written “Arthur Nevin in Blackfoot Indian Clothes; beadwork and ermine fur tails”

[?] amazement, then her face relaxing into a smile. So I smiled. Then she laugh[ed] and I laughed; any old thing to pass the time away until Walter would return with something [sic.] that could speak English. But she kept me in a perfect stew! The laughing had to cease sometime, then what could I do to keep her hands off the pegs that would lower the lodge and expose me in low neck and no sleeves [sic]? The laughing did stop and she began rattling something off her tongue to which I raised up from my

Friday, June 26—1903

After breakfast we started out for the mountains. A 15 mile ride. Shortly after fording Cut Bank river we struck an old buffalo trail and by one of the many buffalo wallows, I saw the scull [sic] of one of these animals. I dismounted and broke the horns loose and took them with me. At twelve o'clock we reached the pine forests that grow on the foothills of the great Rockies [sic]. Here began some very hard riding. The trees grow so close to one another, progress is most tedious. At length it was impossible to ride so we dismounted and climbed leading our ponies. Then came another fording to reach the spot Walter was anxious for me to see. The willows grow from ten to fifteen feet high along the river and the ground, at many place[s] is very boggy and marshy. Our first fording—in the foothills—was very exciting. Walter led the way. Just as his horse was about to enter the river, from the heavy bushes, I heard him yell at the nag and heard his spurs jingling, as they do when in use. I could not see him, the bushes being too high. When I did see his horse, the beast was mired up to the belly. I started my pony and down he went into the soft mud, up to his belly, floundering his way through this boggy soil into the river. The river rushes at a great speed in this locality, and one can hear nothing but its roar, this adding to the novel experience. Walter waited for me, in shallow water, where we both gave our [brancos] a bit of a breathing spell before entering the swift deeper channel. The water nearly carried the nags off their feet its speed was so powerful. At the other bank, Walter's horse went down into the mud again, and I knew what was coming to me. I took my feet out of the stirrups, so as to be perfectly free, should my horse fall back into the river again, the bank being about three or four feet high, muddy and at a very stiff degree. Sure enough! He did flounder and I leap[t], landing, fortunately on solid ground and still holding on to my bridle reins. I pulled for all I was worth to help the poor little animal out of the bogg [sic].



Cutbank Valley, by Walter McClintock

After we landed ourselves and horses safely Walter left me alone in the underbrush with the ponies, while he reconnoitered to find just the best way out of the bushes. Then I waited, ten minutes, fifteen, twenty minutes and no Walter. I began to think of his horrible experience in those very mountains, with a grizzly bear, and when half an hour had gone by, still waiting, I began to think how delightful the safety of home life was.

Especially when you might have some kind of fire arm in a cupboard [sic] you could place your hands on. I hadn't anything but a pocket knife with me. It took Walter three quarters of an hour to come back and tell me that we had to retrace our steps, that we had landed on a marsh island, and his trousers showed it, for they were wet up to his knees and covered with mire. He was so exhausted that he had to ly [sic] down and rest a bit. Back we went across the river, experiencing the same troubles as we had in getting to the miserable island, only a bit worse, as we both had to leap from our ponies, into the swamp and pull them out before they became stuck fast. My right shin is decorated with five beautiful black and blue marks and six on the left from bumping into the pines that we had to ride thro [sic]! But it was all very exciting, and the wonderful sight of the cañons well repaid the bruises.

Upon reaching camp, our lodge was the only one left. A most pathetic sight that night was an Indian dog, baying on the spot where his master's lodge had stood. Evidently the dog had been away when his master left the ground. It was weird, that

animal howling, our one little lodge and two horses left alone on that vast prairie where so lately was a large Indian village.

Saturday, June 27th—1903

When I awaken[ed], I found, lying at my feet the Indian dog left alone the day before. He had crawled in our lodge during the night.

This morning we decided to shift camp down Cut Bank River, about five miles. We prepared our luggage and after dinner I rode into the Agency for provisions while Walter rode to Dusty Bulls [sic] and got him to cart our lodge and truck to the spot we had picked to spend two or three days. It was about half a mile from White Calf's ranch. After Walter had seen Dusty Bull and arranged matters, he met me at the Agency. I noticed the clouds gathering over the mountains, but did not pay much attention to them. After we had gone a mile from the

Agency, on our return to new camp, I found out what those clouds meant. It was one of the worst wind storms I ever experienced, called a "Westener." I felt icy, for in the fierce wind, one could fairly feel the snow. One always carries their coat strapped on the saddle for just such occasions. I was most thankful I had mine. The wind howled and blew at such a rate that at times Walter and I would have to throw ourselves flat over our horses' necks. We were riding directly into it. The horses seemed to understand how to take it. They wouldn't loop [lope], but just kept up a steady jog (or trot) all the way out and stuck close to one another. The only words Walter uttered—or yelled—to me, was, when he was close by me, "don't lose your hat Art, for you'd never catch it!" Then we rode, side by side nine miles at a steady trot the whole way without saying a word to each other. I'd often have to hold my hand over my ear, the wind seeming to cut right into my eardrum. When we came to go down, off the prairie to the river, I just looked at Walter and said, "Whew!" He asked me if I was all together? I never imagined the winds swept the prairies at such a speed.

Of course, the river lying fifteen or twenty feet below the prairies, with a bank cut by it, straight up and down, protected us. That is the reason the river is called Cut Bank. It was fortunate we happened to change camp that day.

Sunday, June 28th—1903

We have our lodge pitch[ed] in the patches of willows, in a cozy little spot, close by the river. After breakfast, we saddled up and rode to Mad Wolf's ranch which belongs to his widow and son, Dusty Bull, now, Mad Wolf having died a year ago. There was to be an Indian service there and we went to attend. There were thirty some Indians there Walter and I being the only white men. Seated on blankets placed around the room close to the walls were the Indians. Women on one side men on the other. Bull Plum [Plume?] was leading the service, singing the most weird hymns I ever heard; all in the minor. Bull Plum motioned to Walter to sit with him and the other chiefs, namely Middle Calf, Big Mike and Sits beside Eagle Feathers. There, Walter was handed a rattle made of raw hide pressed in the shape of a ball, containing within a number of pebbles [sic], the ball being attached to a handle. Placed before these performers were tanned buck skins and deer skins upon which the rattles were to be struck to give their songs rhythm. After a number of songs were sung, a large roll covered with deer skin was brought forth. Just before untying the strings of this bundle, a hymn was sung, the hands of Bull Plum being slowly extended towards the strings as the hymn went on. At the close his hands rested upon the knots. When he undid the bundle, there were beaver skins and [weasel] skins, stuffed crows, hawks, red-headed woodpeck[er]s, ducks and eagle feathers. Perhaps forty in all. Each one of these skins and stuffed fowls were to be prayed over and sung to. Walter has explanatory [sic] notes concerning these

religious service[s] which I will gather later. The service started at eight we left at five and they were not through yet. Just before lunch, Walter was motioned to go and kneel before Bull Plum where he was painted with the sacred red paint, to ward off all evil and give him good luck. Then Bull Plum motioned to me. I went to him, kneeled and was also painted, it being explained by a buck, that spoke English, that it was to bless me that I might reach my home in the East safely. A big circle of paint is made upon the forehead, then a line down the nose to the chin where another circle is made. The paint is prepared during a very profound service. It's a peculiar kind of red clay softened with bits of fat from bacon. I also smoked the medicine pipe with them, which passes around the circle until its contents are exhausted. Always stem first.

Monday, June 29th—1903

This morning, after breakfast we went down to Dusty Bull's to get him to take our things into the Medicine Lodge camp. We rode into the Agency in the afternoon and got some mail. We did but very little today.

Tuesday, June 30th—1903

Last night I had an experience that I don't believe I will ever forget. For the last two nights Walter has been sleeping out on the open plain, some distance from the lodge. Last night he left me about half past ten. It was a beautiful clear night, and as I lay in my blankets, I watched the stars twinkling through the opening of the lodge at the top. There was a slight breeze coming and going over and about me, sighing and whispering gently. I was just about falling off to sleep, when I heard the bushes by the lodge rustle. My first thought was, that a gopher (a small prairie dog species) was running about, as I had seen them there during the day. But the step became more distinct, then I thought it was a dog prowling around for our provi-

sions. I got up, went to the lodge opening, lifted the drop aside, and there, ten feet from me, stood an enormous grizzly bear! My heart beat like a drum, for I had no weapon and again I thought of Walter's experience with his bear. The animal just stood and looked at me and I remained as motionless as possible, looking at him. It seemed ages, but I suppose it was but a minute until he dropped his head low between his shoulders and walked, in a swaying manner, into the bushes of willows. As soon as he was out of sight, I dropped the lodge door flap, and made for the other side, crawling out under the wigwam. How I got out without tearing out a lodge pin, I don't know, but I wasn't wasting any time. I darted through the tall willows and made for the open plateau where Walter slept. Grabbing the covers off of him, I whispered, excitedly, "Walter, there's a bear at the lodge." When I grabbed the covers from him, he thought I was a horse and began scaring me away. We both ran back to the lodge and the first thing Walter did was to go for our can of butter. Walter slept the rest of the night with me in the lodge.

After breakfast we packed up our goods and waited for Dusty Bull. He couldn't come, but Bear Tail came with his wagon and squaw, who had her papoose bundled up in a shawl over her back. After packing the wagon we all forded the river (Cut Bank) and mounted the prairie and started across to the Medicine Lodge with Bear Tail, his wife and child and six dogs. When we came within sight of the camp, we could see hundreds of lodges up. Indians riding dashing here and there and their blankets of many colors giving the scene a picture one can never forget. And all this just as the sun was setting over the Rockies [sic].

[Wednesday] July 1st—1903

No more time for diary. Busy getting Indian songs and tunes.

An added note, written several pages after the diary entries:

Indians

While the present generation insults & ridicules the Indian a generation will come which will eulogize him, speak of him as the emotional and romantic aborigine of this Western Hemisphere. But the race will have by then disappeared and the cause of its extinction will never be laid against the present government but the explanation of [the extinction of] this race of the past will be passed over with many inspired reasons for the dying out of the Red man. Most likely the blame [will be] laid at the door of the Indian himself.



Congratulations

to B. G. Shields, Editor Emeritus of the *Sewickley Herald*, founder and former Executive Director of the Sewickley Valley Historical Society, on receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award at the *Sewickley Herald* Honors Dinner, and to the *Herald's* 2009 Man of the Year, Joe Zemba, Sewickley Valley Historical Society President.

Walking Tours of the Village Scheduled

The Sewickley Valley Historical Society will conduct one-hour walking tours of the Village at 11:00 a.m. on every other Saturday, beginning May 9 and running through June. The tours will concentrate on one of the three historic districts of Sewickley and will look at the historic development of the town as well as domestic and institutional architecture. Park in St. James School parking lot; meet in front of St. James convent. Please call Sewickley Valley Historical Society at 412-741-5315 to schedule tours for groups of 10 or more.

Donations

In memory of Elysabeth Cochran Barbour Higgins

Mr. & Mrs. Harold Bonnett; Joe Zemba

In memory of Phyllis Keister Semple

Mrs. Barbara L. Barry; Mr. & Mrs. Harold Bonnett; Mr. & Mrs. Frank V. Cahouet; Mr. & Mrs. C. O. Gilson;

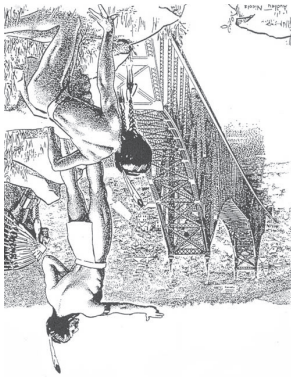
Mrs. William Metcalf, III; Mr. & Mrs. Fred I. Sharp; Joe Zemba

Sponsors, Patrons, Benefactors

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

Mary V. Odom; Joe Zemba

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.



May 2009

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