



OUR HERITAGE

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20 YEARS LATER

This year of 2021 marked the 20th anniversary of HMPF. During the passing years, the organization has had some interesting activities and more than 40 informative programs. The years have also brought some great acquisitions to HMPF. More than sixty artifacts have found their way back to Manheim. Some of the items were purchased and some were received as gifts. Also, because HMPF was established, items from the Hershey Museum and private collections were at times placed on loan and exhibited in our museum. Since our organization had connections with antiques dealers and collectors through one of our members, certain important local historical items were offered for sale to HMPF. One of the items was the detailed map of the Manheim to Lancaster Turnpike (11 feet in length) that is now in a frame and on the wall in the hallway leading to our Ensminger Library Room.

In our July 2017 newsletter we announced the acquisition of the three Daniel Danner items acquired from the American Textile History Museum, Lowell, Mass. It was through the assistance of the Hershey Museum; the ladies in Lowell, Mass; Nancy Zimmerman and her brother and many emails and calls from HMPF that these items are back in Manheim and in our collections. The one item, the Daniel Danner ledger, originally left Manheim at the auction held for Sylvia Rupp back in 1991.

Because of our relationship with the Hershey Museum, we acquired the Manheim map drawn in 1769 for Henry William Stiegel and Isaac Cox. What a wonderful early Manheim treasure. George Danner saved it and now HMPF is its guardian.

By the Foundation keeping a watch on what is known to exist and might come up at auction, many items have returned to Manheim.

More Than Forty Years Ago

The article seen below appeared in the Winter, 1972-1973 issue of **The Pickets Post**, the quarterly publication of the Valley Forge Historical Society. The writer, John Reed, was a director of the society and an avid collector of any 18th century document with ties to the Valley Forge encampment and the related battles. His collection of 63 documents related to Valley Forge was donated to the Valley Forge National Historical Park. The collection contains two letters by Gen. George Washington and two letters written by Robert Morris from Manheim while he lived in the Stiegel Mansion.

Baron Stiegel

Some persons have an innate genius for success yet, because of wasteful habits, achieve only disaster rather than that which their abilities presage. Such a person was Henry William (ne Heinrich Wilhelm) Stiegel. He was a perfect example for the famous Latin phrase which translates "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Although Stiegel closed his life in financial ruin, he was at least a romantic failure, if failure he really was. Despite his ruin his name has rung down through two centuries not only for his history but more famously as a creator of rare and exquisite beauty. Stiegel glass---the original that is, not its modern counterpart with a borrowed name---is a byword among American antique glass connoisseurs.

Stiegel was born in Cologne, Germany in 1729, and emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1750 at the age of 21.

His first extended American employment was as a bookkeeper to John Jacob Huber, ironmaster of Elizabeth Furnace in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. In 1752 Stiegel married his employer's only daughter, Elizabeth, for whom the furnace had been named. In 1757 Huber, desirous of retiring from business, sold his iron furnace to Stiegel and the latter's financial backers, Alexander and Charles Stedman of Philadelphia and John Barr of Lancaster, though Barr did not long remain a partner. With this backing Stiegel rebuilt Elizabeth Furnace to increase its efficiency. He soon extended his holdings, mostly by borrowing money, to include Charming Forge and more than 10,000 acres of land. In 1763 he commenced his glass business rather modestly at Elizabeth Furnace. Later he transferred this business, on greatly expanded scale, to Manheim, a town he founded nearby, which he named for the city of the same name in German. Manheim became his principal residence, though he constructed mansions both there and at Elizabeth Furnace. Eight months after the death of his first wife, who had borne him two daughters, he married Elizabeth Holtz of Philadelphia, much to the chagrin of his former father-in-law, Huber.

Although Elizabeth Furnace and Charming Forge were his prime sources of income, Stiegel generally ignored that business in favor of his Glass Works. His luxurious manner of living, which earned him the local pseudo title of "Baron," forced him into increasing debt, and by 1773 he was on the verge of extreme financial difficulties. Nevertheless, his vanity being insatiable, he declined to reduce his expenditures. The firing of a cannon and a band of music announced his comings and goings in and imported carriage bearing his personal crest. Although he could scarcely afford it, having received a release from his creditors, he donated land for a Lutheran Church at Manheim, demanding for it only a token five shillings in payment and "yielding and paying therefore . . . in month of June hereafter the Rent of One Red Rose if the same shall be lawfully demanded." In 1774 Stiegel's inevitable financial collapse drove him into bankruptcy. He spent some weeks in debtors' prison in Philadelphia, but was released on the day before Christmas by an Act of

Assembly approved by Governor John Penn.

Even rarer than original Stiegel glass, most of which is now in museums and literally impossible for the collector to buy, are Stiegel manuscripts. In more than a quarter of a century of collecting this writer has seen only three offered for sale, and these were all offered at one time. The author is fortunate enough to possess one of them, a holograph letter signed, written during the period of Stiegel's financial collapse. The letter, dated from Manheim, September 24, 1774, depicts Stiegel's increasing financial difficulties coupled with his nearly, at that time, incurable, almost incredible optimism. The letter was written to Jasper Yeates, the most prominent Lancaster attorney of the period. Stiegel had previously, and unsuccessfully, appealed to Yeates for aid in Stiegel's efforts to stave off creditor pressure.

"I wrote you," Stiegel began "by Mr. Welch"---- Joseph Welch (also Germanized at times to Weltche), a resident of Manheim employed in Stiegel's glass house----" and have not yet hath your Answer for which I am very anxiously waiting there seems to be a misunderstanding between me and Mr. Michael"----John Eberhard Michael, manger of Elizabeth Furnace; Stiegel owed Michael back wages----"occasioned by sons [*i.e.*, Jacob Stiegel, whom Stiegel had fathered by his second wife] inad vertently speaking some words he did not like, as young people generally speak without thinking. Heartily I can't account for wat he [Jacob] might have Said I have sent him [Michael] by the bearer" - ---Conrad Reinhard, another employee at the Manheim glass house . . . "an other message," undoubtedly in an effort to mollify Michael. "Hope he will act with Humanity and friendship and think of the kindness he and his whole Family Recved from me and that I was the means and source of their raising in the world and if it hath not ben for me they would never hath a fart (h) ing of this money" owed Michael by Stiegel " to get which this man [the bearer, Reinhard?] can tell you and was no longer than two weeks ago throwed in my face in his presence that I was served right for my kindness." This was undoubtedly meant as a facetious remark by an unnamed speaker. "I have spoke to many of my other

creditors and they are all willing to come into an Agreement with me to wait four years my paying them every year one fourth part of his debts "and I am sure them in Philadelphia," *i.e.*, the Stedmans, will not Hestitate to agree to it, there is no time to be lost for as soon as this [letter? or agreement?] is finished I shall push my Debts to raise a sum of money to push on my manufactory with alacrity as all the workmen lay Idle and on Expenses now on my hands they [his creditors?] should consider what a looser I must be the longer I stand [still] the worse it is I hope you will do all wat is possible for me and Remain in Exspection of your kind Answer,

Dear Sir Your most obliged Hble servant HENRY WM. STIEGEL."

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However, Stiegel never recovered financially. His properties, which had been mortgaged far beyond his means, passed into the hands of his creditors. The American Revolution, commencing in 1775, ended his dreams of reestablishing his Glass House. The revolutionists had no money to lavish on such luxuries as fine glassware. Most person with money to spend were Loyalists who soon fled from American vengeance. Stiegel spent his declining years first as manager of Elizabeth Furnace for its new owner, Robert Coleman, later becoming a school master, then finally an impoverished and broken man dependent on his wife's nephew, George Ege, for charity. The date of his death, which probably occurred at Ege's house at Charming Forge, and the place of Stiegel's interment in Lancaster County are unknown. Stiegel's memory lingers on, however, not only because of his surviving beautiful glassware, but also through the revival of the traditional rental of "one red rose forever" given yearly on the second Sunday of June to his descendants by the Zion Lutheran Church at Manheim.

Footnote: Mr. Reed loved early American history and he was dedicated to preserving the history for coming generation, hence his gift of 63 Valley Forge documents worth multiple thousands of dollars.

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The Stiegel letter eventually found its way back to Manheim, since Mr. Reed and a local collector both belonged to The Manuscript Society. In parting with the Stiegel letter, Mr. Reed said: "perhaps it ought to go home to its place of origin". The letter came to Manheim in 1979, after years of correspondence.

The two Robert Morris letters written from Manheim have content related to Valley Forge and that is why they are now in the Valley Forge National Park collection and not here in Manheim. Both letters were written to John Langdon. He was a member of the Continental Congress (1775-76) and the New Hampshire legislature (1777-82). Areas from the two letters appear on page four.

Mr. Read was a true collector of early history. Besides having documents written and signed by many of America's founding fathers, he had a diary that contained notes related to the many struggles and hardships facing those who were involved in the Valley Forge campaign.

John Langdon Esq. Manheim in Pennsylvania
Oct. 6th, 1777

Dear Sir

You will have heard before this reaches you of the unhappy fate of poor Philadelphia, it is a subject I can hardly bear to think of & I must avoid writing on it.



Original Washington's Commander-in-Chief Flag

The original Washington's Commander-in-Chief Flag is in the possession of the American Revolution Center in Philadelphia. It was donated to the Center's predecessor, the Valley Forge Historical Society, in the early 20th century, by Francis B. Lovell, a descendant of George Washington's sister, Betty Washington Lewis.

John Langdon Manheim in Pennsylvania
October 27th, 1777

Sir

for our defense on the Delaware turned out beyond all expectation, the enemy have been repeatedly repulsed & have now lost some of their Capital Ships,

A 1792 Treasure!

On August 17, 2018, The gold piece seen below was sold at auction for a price of \$1,740,000. It's believed to have been the property of President George Washington and carried by him as a pocket piece.



Mentioned in a National Publication

The Mid West Tool Collectors Association recently mentioned Manheim's Jacob F. Bauder in their publication, **The Gristmill**. Jacob had his tool manufacturing shop at a S. Charlotte St. location in Manheim. In the October 2010 issue of **Our Heritage** is a five column article on Jacob F. Bauder. Since Mr. Bauder was an important person in the history of Manheim's early craftsmen, we have decided to add his story to our website under **Special Publication**.

Have a Merry Christmas !