

Spring/Summer 2020

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Strasburg Heritage

Journal of the Strasburg Heritage Society



1732 Sampler

Catharine Barge Tavern

The Pequea Works

Poem by John L. Shroy

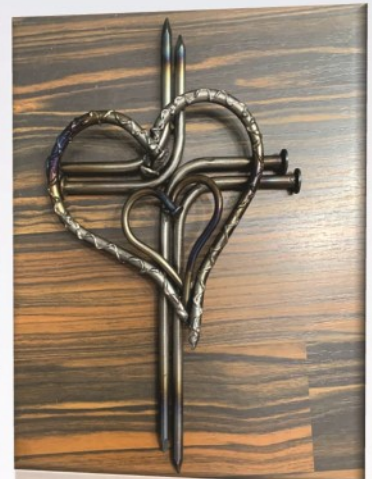
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A message from the Editor

Strasburg Heritage magazine has returned! The first issue, shown at right, was introduced last spring by the Strasburg Heritage Society. It was distributed free of charge to all households in Strasburg Borough as a way to promote a sense of community and pride in our town.



Our hope was to publish again in the fall of 2019, but funding issues prevented that. Some local businesses generously sold copies of the first issue in their stores, but revenue from those sales did not cover all costs.

Now, our local businesses are helping in another way. Their advertisements completely cover production costs, and will allow us to publish two issues each year. Advertising allows for articles that are more in-depth and better illustrated. And best of all, we can now extend delivery to Strasburg Borough *and* Township.

We hope you enjoy this magazine. If you missed the first issue, you can pick one up at one of the Heritage Society's monthly lectures. Check the schedule at www.strasburgheritagesociety.org. Please show your appreciation by supporting our advertisers!

Joe Deevy



Strasburg Heritage Society is proof that today can make a world of difference when committing to change. We're proud to be a part of what you do.

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From the collection

by Joshua Stauffer

The oldest piece in the Heritage Society's collection is a cross-stitch sampler dated to 1732. It is the handiwork of Maria Herr, a Mennonite girl who lived in Lancaster County in the early 18th century. Maria was born on October 13th, 1714 to John Herr and Frances Brechtbühl in Lampeter Township, Pennsylvania. She was a granddaughter of Hans Herr, her father John being one of Hans Herr and Elizabeth Kendig's seven children. In 1734, about two years after creating her sampler, Maria married Christian Forrer and shortly after they bought a 200 acre farm in the Strasburg area. They had four children and Maria lived to an age of 89 years. She died in 1803, her will having a probate date of July 26, 1803.

Maria's sampler was donated to the Heritage Society by Mrs. Ethel Bachman in the 1980s. A sampler is a textile created to practice and record embroidery motifs, stitches and alphabets for future use. They originate from a time before pattern books, when the skills of decorative sewing were passed through the tutelage and apprenticeship of one's parents, relatives or neighbors, generation to generation. Samplers were created by young women on the verge of adulthood and used as a place to preserve the sewing techniques and patterns that one had learned and wanted to use again.

Over time samplers have been created with a variety of approaches and in a variety of styles. These differences are typically related to the time period and region of the maker. A sampler from 17th century

Germany will look different than one created in 18th century America, for example, each exhibiting techniques and motifs common to its origin. The most obvious and interesting features of a sampler are the embroidered elements on the cloth. Typical elements include numbers, letters, images and decorative motifs. It will often include the creator's name and sometimes a date to place it in time. Some pieces will include sayings, phrases, and Biblical passages.

Samplers of the Pennsylvania Germans, a study of historic pieces from our region, recognizes four distinct sampler styles, distinguished by the arrangement of motifs on the fabric. In the *random* style, motifs are scattered or placed without a plan. The *rowed* sampler has motifs arranged according to size and in horizontal rows. A *centered* style has one or more motifs placed on the vertical center line of the sampler to form a basis for the location of others. A *mirror image* sampler has motifs repeated and placed so that a balance is achieved by identical motifs.

The sampler in the Heritage Society's collection, the oldest known Pennsylvania German sampler, is a *random* type sized six inches wide and fourteen inches high. It is stitched with linen thread on 42 count unbleached linen. Maria Herr used five colors of thread and stitched her sampler in the German style with rows of alphabets and numbers at the top and motifs in a random fashion at the bottom. Her stitches are counted cross stitches over two threads of linen.



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The top half of the sampler shows Maria working on numerals and letters, some of the letters being different types, including some lower case German script. Notice that both alphabetic sequences (lines 1 & 2, and 5 & 6) include some letters twice, but do not include “J” or “U” at all. In Maria’s world, “T” was used as both vowel “T” and consonant “J.” “V” was both vowel “U” and consonant “V.” The third line lists numbers 1 through 10 and then the date 1732. On the fourth line, Maria's name appears to be spelled as “Maria Herrin,” probably indicating the German feminine form of “Herr.”

The bottom half shows a variety of motifs placed at random. The motifs include a sampling of plants and animals, and a human figure. Two pitchers appear on the right, one spilling a string of tiny droplets. The authors of *Samplers of the Pennsylvania Germans* suggest that the flower garden motif in the bottom left hand corner is a modification of one seen on the first known German sampler dating to the first half of the 16th century.

Maria's sampler is simple in form and feature, but it showcases an embroiderer who has studied and practiced her craft. It is an excellent example of an early Pennsylvania German sampler and gives us a fascinating picture of the early American cultural world seen through the eyes of a local young person. It is an important piece of Lancaster County history and the society is fortunate to have it in its collection.

Sources:

Herr, Theodore W. *Genealogical Record of Rev. Hans Herr and His Direct Lineal Descendants*. T.W. Herr, 1908.

Hersh, Charles, and Tandy Hersh. *Samplers of the Pennsylvania Germans*. The Pennsylvania German Society, 1991.

Maria Herr, [13 October 1714 - (1-26 July 1803)], Born: Lampeter Pennsylvania, Died: Conestoga Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Father: John Herr, Mother: Frances Brechtbühl; Sources: Christian Forrer, Family, Genealogy, www-personal.umich.edu/~bobwolfe/gen/person/g23449.htm.

Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *American Colonial Women and Their Art: a Chronological Encyclopedia*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.



Strasburg Home Profile

“Catherine Barge Tavern”

written by Joe Deevy
photos by Chris Lainhoff
Tom Lainhoff
Joe Deevy

This issue’s featured home is one that has been pulled from obscurity to become one of the treasures of Strasburg. Thanks to the vision, perseverance, and hard work of Beth Gunnion, and the craftsmanship of father and son Tom and Chris Lainhoff of *Museum Quality Building Restoration*, we can now glimpse life in early Strasburg.

In 1759, Strasburg was beginning to take shape as a small village, with records showing nineteen property owners. George and Catharine Barge arrived around 1760, and by 1763, they had built a two-story log home which probably survives as 138 East Main Street. There, they opened a tavern, which was identified by the “Sign of the Red Lion” which hung outside. Travelers in carriages and drivers of wagons loaded with freight, making their way between Philadelphia and Lancaster or York, likely provided a steady business.

It is important to understand the role of taverns in the 18th century. A license to sell alcoholic beverages required that the licensee open their house to the public without discrimination. They were required to admit the rich and the poor, people whom they knew and those they didn’t know. Beyond serving alcoholic beverages, taverns also gave people a place to have a meal, to stay overnight, to get news, to discuss and debate. They provided a venue for public and private functions. Taverns were many things to many people. Surely there were some raucous ones, but they were commonly respectable establishments.

The Barge’s “Red Lion” tavern was probably not a rough barroom. We can infer this from the inventory of George Barge’s possessions, compiled after his death in 1776. The tavern had rum on hand, valued at one pound sterling. Then there were about 160 gallons of imported wine valued at 38 pounds! Additional items listed included an expensive tall case clock, tea table, looking glasses (mirrors), Delftware, and other valuables.

In death, George left behind his wife and five children (one newborn), but no will. This put Catharine in a difficult position. With no will, the courts would grant the entire estate to her children, once the youngest had “reached majority” at 21 years of age. Her options were to depend on her children for support or to start over on her own. She chose the latter path.

Catharine continued to keep tavern at the “Red Lion,” but in 1785, she had the two-story log house built at present day 120 East Main Street. She kept tavern there and remained independent for the rest of her life. She died in 1807. Her estate inventory records her possessions, but time eventually obscured the details of life at the tavern.

The tavern’s name was forgotten. The original walk-in fireplace was removed to make way for more convenient cooking appliances. Layers of floor and wall coverings hid the old surfaces. The log structure disappeared behind siding, windows were updated, new shingles covered the roof and most people lost touch with the house’s age and history.

However, the Barge house’s layout suggests its pedigree. In the pre-restoration photo below, notice the asymmetrical arrangement of the windows and front door. This is typical of an early Pennsylvania German design that architectural historians call the “Continental Plan.” The design was adapted from folk houses in Germany. These houses invariably had an interior fireplace and chimney stack that divided the house. The front door led into the kitchen. The space on the other side of the chimney was usually divided into two rooms, front and back. The upstairs floor plan often replicated the downstairs layout. There are many examples of this façade in Strasburg. It’s a good bet that these are early log houses.



Pre-restoration photo, 2007

Beth Johnson was an elementary school teacher who had previously restored a small 1776 log house at 126 East Main Street. Tom and Chris Lainhoff had done some work for her on that house. She and Lainhoffs were among the few who recognized the origins of the Barge house. In 2006, owner Raymond (Red) Echternach passed away at age 94. With the house on the market, Beth, Tom, and Chris took an inspection tour and realized the potential. Beth decided on the spot to buy it.

With retirement approaching, Beth aspired to contribute to the preservation of Strasburg by restoring a significant house that she could then live in and enjoy. Her goal for the Barge house was to deconstruct the layers that had accumulated and return it to the way it was in the 1700s, when Catharine Barge operated her tavern.

The long process of discovery and restoration commenced in 2007. Beth's previous restoration had been done while she lived in the house. The Barge house would be different. The approach from beginning to end was slow and deliberate, taking the time necessary to reflect on the best ways to proceed. Funding also helped restrain the pace. One way that Beth managed that issue was by doing all of the work that she could by herself.

And what an effort it was! For the first two years of ownership, Beth worked by herself. She got up each morning to "go to work". She put in hard days on jobs like pulling up floor coverings, stripping plaster, carrying out debris, removing siding, and digging a deeper basement floor by hand. But as the layers were stripped away, the drudgery was often rewarded with new discoveries.

The discoveries could evoke a range of emotions, from laughter to excitement to distress. Laughter: linoleum with three layers of carpeting on top, displaying the prior 100 years of flooring décor. Excitement: perfect original unfinished wood flooring underneath! Distress: termite damaged logs. One of Tom Lainhoff's important duties at this point was to offer encouraging words, such as "Yes, repairing that termite damage will be a big job, but look at the original wall decoration!"

Nobody anticipated the original wall coloring. On finally exposing the interior of a log wall, Beth ran to find Tom and Chris, exclaiming, "It's a circus in there!" Throughout the entire house, the log walls had been covered in a deep red wash, then adorned with white polka dots a little over one inch in diameter! An analysis of the historic paint finishes revealed the original colors. In the final restoration, the polka-dot pattern was replicated, with an original wall section left intact.



polka-dots: originals next to replicas

At some later time, the upstairs had been freshened by repainting. Then thousands of daisies were stenciled on the walls and around the kitchen ceiling. The daisies were replicated upstairs in the bathroom. In the kitchen, the originals were left untouched, faintly smiling from the ceiling.



faint daisies

The kitchen wall contained another happy surprise. It had seemed that none of the original window sashes had survived. They would have to be recreated based on educated guesswork. That changed one day as Beth removed the siding from between the two kitchen windows. She uncovered an intact original window that had been hidden behind the siding! Inside the kitchen, a chimney had been built over the window. The two flanking windows were not original, having been added when the original window was encased in its "time capsule." Ultimately, the two newer windows were removed, and replacement logs were installed. Copies of the original sashes were fitted to the remaining windows of the house.

Artifacts of life at the tavern trickled out during the restoration. The ground outside of the kitchen window was especially fertile with relics. Items that were no longer wanted, like broken dishes, clay pipes, or buttons, had been unceremoniously thrown out through the kitchen window, landing on the ground within the radius of Catharine Barge's throwing range! One particularly dirty day was dedicated to removing nuts and dirt deposited by squirrels above the upstairs bedroom ceiling. The unsavory work was rewarded when a charming little carved and painted figure of man floated down like a leaf among the rest of the debris. Beth treasures her collection of artifacts found during the restoration.



As the exterior siding came off, the somewhat unusual bones of the house were revealed. The more common log building method was to cut notches in the ends of each log, then alternately stack one log on another; think Lincoln Logs. Instead, the Barge house was built with vertical corner posts. Slots, or "mortises" were cut into the vertical posts, and tongues or "tenons" were cut on the ends of the logs. The log tenons fit into the corner post mortises. The building was probably first erected with only the corner posts, a few full-length logs, and the diagonal braces in place, their joints secured using wooden pegs. Then shorter logs were installed to fill the spaces within the frame. This corner-post log construction derives from old European methods and is known by the German name *blockständerbau*. It is a blend of log and "timber frame" building techniques.

During the 200+ years since the house was built, the surrounding grade had risen, allowing direct contact between soil and wood. This created an inviting path for termites. They had destroyed the bottoms of all four corner posts. They had eaten all the way to the top of the southwest post. The bottom two logs in the front of the house were gone, and the bottom logs on the other three sides were in bad shape. In spite of the bleak assessment, Beth gave Tom and Chris Lainhoff the OK to proceed.

To avoid future insect problems, they created an 18 inch trough around the foundation. The trough and eventually all downspouts drain into an abandoned hand-dug well on the property. Stonework came next. The stone foundations were renewed one wall at a time, to provide a good base for the repaired corner posts. The chimney stack was rebuilt up to the attic level. Clear evidence had been found to define its size, configuration, and the placement of the walk-in fireplace. The completed chimney would provide a reliable reference from which to level the building.

With a good foundation, the repaired corner posts could be placed, and the walls could be rebuilt. Replacement logs were hewn flat by hand from new round logs. Installation of the bottom full-length logs required use of special “floating tenons”, but assembling the shorter logs was relatively straightforward. No heavy machinery was used. Logs were moved using only two men, a hoist, round logs for rollers, and a pry bar.

The assembled structure, still with daylight between the logs, was leaning in several directions. Squaring the structure was done using all of the chains, straps, “come-alongs”, turnbuckles, & other pulling devices that could be assembled. Several weeks of incrementally adjusting the tensions in multiple tightly stretched lines pulled the building straight. At last, the space between the logs could be filled with chinking made of mortar, horsehair, and log wedges.

Other work on the exterior included rebuilding of the roof structure and covering it with authentic cedar shake shingles. Siding was installed to enclose the gables, and cornices were completed. With roof, windows, and doors installed, the focus of work could move to the interior.

On the inside, some big changes included replication of the “winder” staircase in the corner of the kitchen. Witness marks left on the wall by the original stairs guided the work. A discrete bathroom was installed in the small room above the front door. Plumbing, heating, air conditioning, electrical outlets and switches were all made invisible, or nearly so. A total of seven years had elapsed since work first began.

Other changes had occurred during that time. Beth had met Vernon Gunnion and they were married in 2013. Vernon is a former museum curator. Beth and Vernon have chosen several special period pieces for the house. The restored tavern made its public debut on the Strasburg Heritage Society’s 2014 Holiday Home Tour.



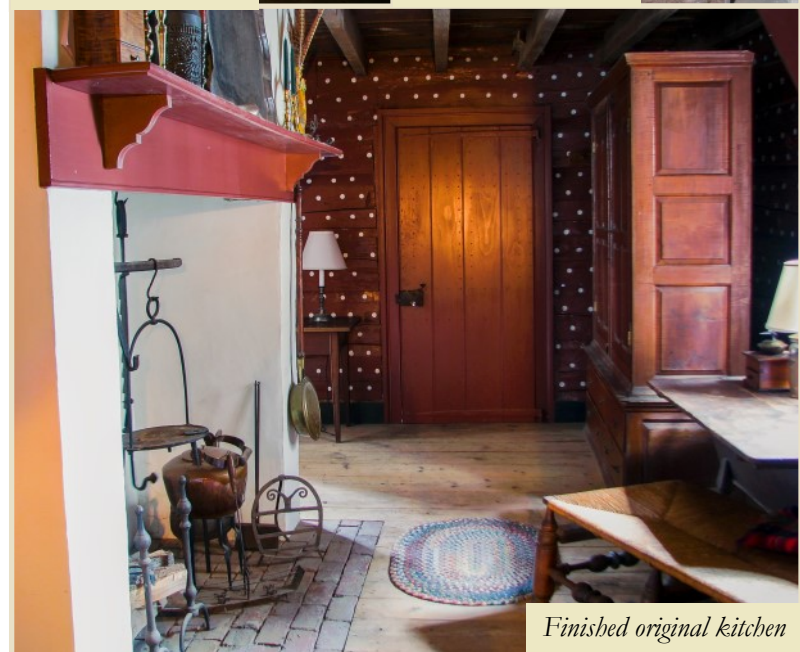
Deconstructed rear wall



Chris placing a log



Tom at the east wall



Finished original kitchen

It would seem that the story had reached its conclusion, but there was still another chapter. Beth had been firmly opposed to building an addition to the house, even though there had been an addition on the rear in the 19th century. Now, however, she and Vernon reasoned that an addition could provide accessible features that would allow them to enjoy the house for many years into the future.

Chris Lainhoff worked on the problem and came up with a sympathetically designed 1½ -story ell for the back of the house. The design included a full bath and kitchen on the first floor. Upstairs, the addition included a laundry,

closet space, and a small bedroom. Existing openings in the back of the tavern provide access on both floors. Chris was careful to lay out sight lines so that no modern amenities were visible as viewed from the original building.

Construction of the addition got underway in 2015. No original building “fabric” of the tavern was altered in any way in its construction. Features like molding profiles, doors, and exterior siding were kept distinct from those of the tavern, but were modeled on early 19th century local prototypes.

Pause to study the restored Catharine Barge house when you walk by. Imagine tavern patrons fumbling and dropping their money as they step through the front door. A multitude of coins were found here, some dating to the mid 1700s. Evidence suggests that there was a bench to the right of the door. People sat, drank, talked, and carved figures in the logs. Find the carving of a house (the tavern?), or the letter “B” (for Barge?). Can you find the dozens and dozens of old tacks nailed into the wall? Here people had posted handbills, sale bills, notices, and advertisements. Realize that the carvings and tacks are not recreations, but tangible testimonials to the lives of real people, from the time when our country was new.



2015 rear addition

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Pequea

The Story of The Pequea Works

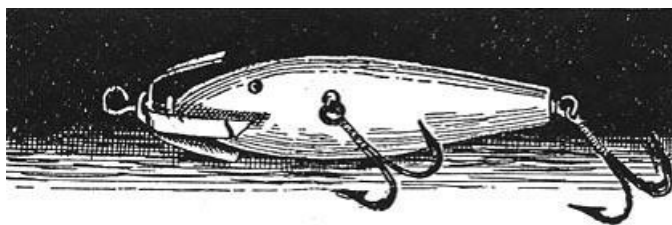
by Joe Deery



In the old rowboat, the cares of everyday life gave way to the warm whispers of the water and the summer morning air. Fastening the new fishing lure to the line, Morgan imagined it suspended beneath the water's surface, its shiny spinner flashing in the sunlight, and its trailing feathers dancing behind, concealing a hook. By twitching the fishing rod, the lure would dance and dart, convincing a hungry bass that it had found a meal.

An image like this likely played in the mind of a teenage Harry C. Kaufman in 1902, as he worked at home to craft fishing lures to be sold or given as gifts. His avid love of the outdoors and fishing was likely inspired during his early years living in mid-state Pennsylvania areas known for excellent hunting and fishing. Born in 1885 in White Deer Furnace, Union County, his family had relocated to New Berlin and then to Selinsgrove, before finally arriving in Philadelphia.

Harry's lure-making avocation began to mature and by May of 1905, his lures were advertised in The Amateur Sportsman Magazine under the name of H. C. Kaufman & Co. In 1906, 21 year-old Kaufman founded the Philadelphia Bait Company, and signed a three-year lease to rent factory space on North Franklin Street.



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But a year later, the company became insolvent, and Harry relocated to Strasburg, Pennsylvania to make a new start. He brought with him his mother, one sister, the company's production assets, and many of his employees.

In Strasburg, Kaufman formed "The Pequea Works," after the Pequea (pronounced "Peck-Way") clan of Native Americans indigenous to the area. Over the years, the company would use the names "Pequea Tribe" and "Pequea Fishing Tackle." Financial backing for the new company was found through a partnership with former Strasburg Public School principal Edwin Brown.

Pequea Works set up shop at 19 Miller Street, in the former Hildebrand Tobacco Warehouse, and began producing fishing tackle in 1907. The new venture was a success. Payroll records show 25 employees in 1909. In that year, Harry married Virginia, whom he called Vergie. She became an active player in the company's workings, and was a salaried employee.

From the start, the majority of Pequea's employees were women. It was common practice throughout the company's history for Pequea workers to work from their homes. This arrangement probably benefited the company as it allowed the workforce to grow when necessary without expanding the factory. But it would have also provided opportunities for women to earn money without abandoning their responsibilities at home.

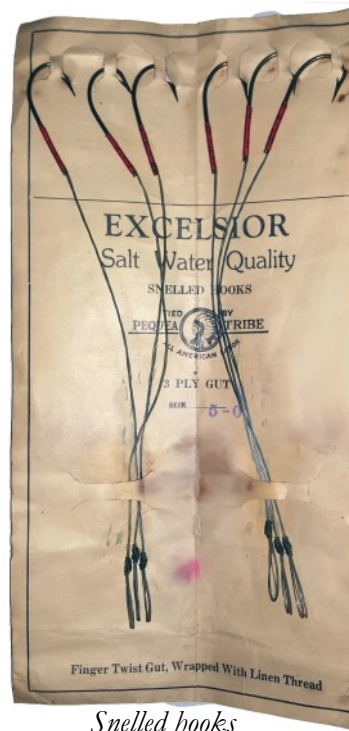


*Harkauf minnow
circa 1906*

Pequea produced an ever-expanding range of products. One of the staples was the “snelled” fishhook. A snell is a strong traditional knot used to attach a leader line to the hook in a way that enhances its ability to hook a fish. Pequea went a step further by using leader lines made of silkworm gut. This natural fiber was made from the silk-producing organs of a silkworm. The resulting line was incredibly strong, flexible, and translucent.

Procuring enough raw materials to meet demand was a constant problem, and Kaufman regularly had to prioritize orders for his largest and oldest customers. In 1912, the Strasburg Weekly News reported on a delivery of 200 lb of silkworm gut from Japan costing \$1200 (estimated at \$32,000 in 2020 dollars!). In 1916, the paper reported that Edwin Brown was travelling to Maryland in search of white feathers needed for lures. And a 1922 article detailed the delivery from Norway of four cases of fish hooks, totaling more than a ton. Pequea consumed twenty such cases in each year!

In 1924, Kaufman and Brown became partners in Yale Metal Products of Manhattan City, New York. This company made a range of metal products, including a line of fishing reels and other tackle items. In December of 1925, Pequea purchased the remainder of Yale, including “rights, title, property, good will, stock on hand, machinery and patents” for the sum of \$7,225. Shortly thereafter, Yale’s manufacturing was relocated to Strasburg, and production of Yale products resumed quickly. This apparently seamless transition suggests that some of the employees from Yale of New York likely relocated to Strasburg.



*Snelled hooks
with gut leaders*



*Lure made with
mother of pearl
& feathers*

*Yale reels
through
the years*



Pequea employees, 1935



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Around 1920, the old tobacco warehouse building had been enlarged to cope with the company's continual growth. An addition was built on the west end, featuring large windows to provide improved lighting and ventilation. In 1926, the Department of Commerce confirmed that the U.S. fishing tackle industry was now the largest in the world. In 1935, employing 115 people, Pequea claimed to be the largest fishing tackle factory east of Chicago.

To a large measure, Pequea's growth was fueled by the relentless and skillful salesmanship of Harry Kaufman. He was often on the road with his chauffeur (Harry didn't drive). He was kept busy finding new business and pacifying customers who had experienced trouble. Pequea products were very attractively priced, and were sold in a wide variety of shops. Prior to World War II, they were well represented in sporting goods shops and corner mom and pop stores, but also showed up in less typical places like gas stations, tobacco shops, drug stores, and tire stores.

World War II put the brakes on the fishing tackle business. Metal fabrication skills fundamental to the Yale product line were useful in securing contracts for war related goods.

Pequea's heyday came in the years immediately following the war. Millions of GIs returned home, and they were ready to stock their new tackle boxes and go fishing. When the war ended in 1945, Pequea had only 55 employees. The next year, 12 men and 239 women were employed, for a total of 251! A branch factory was opened in Loganton, PA in 1946, and another was established in Milheim, PA in 1947. The spike in demand eventually subsided, and by 1950, employment was back down to 88.

Harry Kaufman's health began to decline in 1949, and without his energy the company began to decline as well. By 1950, he handed the reins over to his nephew, S. Dale Kaufman. On April 14, 1952, at age 66, Harry Clay Kaufman passed away. On his passing, the "Associated Fishing Manufacturers," of which Harry had been a member, passed a resolution expressing their sympathy to the family, with "*sincere hope that some measure of comfort may be theirs in the sure knowledge that his years of unselfish service to his associates and the industry will ever stand as a source of inspiration.*"

S. Dale Kaufman had studied architecture at Penn State and looked forward to a career in his chosen field, but now found himself in at the helm of a fishing tackle company. A difficult decision was finally reached, and Pequea was sold to Donald Z. Esbenschade in July 1954. Competition and changes within the industry eventually took their toll, and after a long and colorful history, The Pequea Works was dissolved in 1986.



Float with "Pequea Tribe" marking



Fishhook packages spanning Pequea's years

The auction of the contents of the Miller St. factory revealed a trove of documents tracing the history of the U.S. fishing tackle industry. Over the years, Pequea had dealings with nearly all significant producers and retailers of fishing tackle. Records simply don't exist to document the histories of most of these old companies. The collection that emerged from Miller St. provided not only a comprehensive record of The Pequea Works, but also shined a light on the history of the entire industry.

Catalogs



Harry Clay Kaufman

Special thanks to **Bruce Ryder**, who made available his extensive collection of Pequea items to be photographed to illustrate this article. Bruce also extremely helpful in providing information on the history of the Pequea Works.

Thanks are also in order for **H. Dale Kaufman**, son of S. Dale Kaufman and great nephew of Harry C. Kaufman. Dale generously shared the family history and photographs that were invaluable to writing this article.



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Down by Old Pequea

by Strasburg native, poet, and educator

John L. Shroy (1864—1920)

It seems to me in early May,
When bees begin to hum,
And nature, dressed in bright array
Tells us that spring has come; –
It seems to me that I must dig
Some worms without delay
And with old clothes and fishing rig
Go down to old Pequea.

I go right down Decatur Street,
As oft I've done before,
And hurry by with nimble feet
The fellows at the store,
Who wish me every kind of luck,
And smile me on my way –
It always took a lot of pluck
To carry rods that way.

Through Hartman's bridge I'd fleetly go,
And climb the left-hand fence;
Bait up, unwind, and in I'd throw
Then wait in sweet suspense
Beneath the big elm trees
Where coolest breezes play, –
I tell you there's no finer breeze
Than that by old Pequea.

Perhaps I'd sit and sit and sit
And never get a bite.
Perhaps they'd nibble just a bit
And all my nerves excite;
And so with some, or maybe, none,
I'd watch the fading day,
Then through the bridge, on a dead run
I'd leave the old Pequea

If I had only one or two
I'd sneak around the "Square,"
And try to keep away from view
Of fellows standing there;
But if my string was long, – so proud
I'd be of luck that day
I'd march right through the biggest crowd,
When coming from Pequea.

But whether none or twenty-three
One thing was uniform
A someone was awaiting me
With supper good and warm
A someone that just always knew
The most persuasive way
To treat an appetite that grew
Down there by old Pequea.



*Hartman's Bridge over the Pequea Creek,
where Route 896 now crosses the Pequea near the "Amish Village"*

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