

# An Interesting Relic

---

## Discovery of Part of One of Baron Stiegle's Stoves.

The late Mr. John F. Sehner, who resided at No. 120 North Prince street, this city, a number of years ago unearthed a very interesting relic, probably the oldest-known or well-authenticated piece of iron casting made in Lancaster county. It was cast at Elizabeth furnace in 1758. Mr. Sehner had occasion to repair the hearth in an old-fashioned fireplace in one of his houses, No. 106 North Prince, just above Orange (the house is still standing). He was having the hearth relaid with brick, but when the fire was built it was laid with a flat piece of cast iron about two feet and a-half square. This he ordered removed and relaid with brick. After removing the plate where it had lain probably eighty or a hundred years, as the house is one of the oldest in that part of the city, he had it turned over and the underside cleaned off. Under the sand and rust, the accumulation of generations, was revealed a volume of "ancient history."

The lettering that can be distinctly made out is "Stiegle," "Elizabeth," "1758." There are other letters that require studying to decipher, scroll work and ornamentation, some very distinct, others obscured by rust and decay. But the words and figures given above tell the whole story.

The iron plate is believed to be part of the kind of stoves used in those

days in which cord wood was burned, and when wood was cheap and plentiful and houses cold. The history of the plate amounts to this: It was cast at Elizabeth furnace by Baron Henry William Stiegle, in the year 1758. The best authenticated account of Elizabeth furnace is that it passed under the management of Stiegle in 1757, and that he erected a new furnace. The first furnace was built there about 1750.

Elizabeth furnace was operated until 1856. In "Bishop's History of American Manufactures" it is stated that "some of the first stoves cast in this country were made by Mr. Stiegle, relics of which still remain in the old families of Lancaster and Lebanon counties." This same author says they were probably the same as the "Jam stoves," made by Christopher Sower, of Germantown, some of which were cast at or near Lancaster. They were, it is probable, the first stoves cast in America, and are described as similar in construction to the box form of the old template stove which superseded them, but they were without a pipe or oven. They were set in the side or "jam" of the kitchen fireplace and passed through the wall so as to present the back end in the adjoining room.

Professor Dubbs, of Franklin and Marshall College, is authority for the assertion that at least some of Stiegle's stoves bore the inscription:

Baron Stiegle is der mann  
Die de ofen machen kann.

The furnace that preceded the one erected by Stiegle, according to the first Coleman owner, Robert Coleman, was a small one erected by a German,

John Huber, prior to 1755, and had inscribed on it the following legend:

Johan Huber, der erste Deuche man  
Der das Eisenwerke volfuren kann.

Freely translated the lines mean:  
"John Huber is the first German who  
knows how to make iron."

In most histories the Baron's name is spelled Striegle, but on this plate it stands "Stiegle." We have followed the spelling of 1758.

---

\*This article, with a few later additions since his death, was prepared by the late Samuel M. Sener shortly after the discovery of the plate.

Author: Sener, Samuel Miller, 1855-1911.

Title: An interesting relic : discovery of part of one of Baron  
Stiegel's stoves / by Samuel Miller Sener.

Primary Material: Book

Subject(s): Stiegel, Henry William, 1729-1785.  
Stoves, Wood--Pennsylvania--Lancaster County.

Publisher: Lancaster, Pa. : Lancaster County Historical Society, 1915

Description: 153-155 p. ; 23 cm.

Series: Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society ; v. 19,  
no. 5

Call Number: 974.9 L245 v.19

Location: LCHSJL -- Journal Article (reading room)

=====

+++++

Institution Name

Institution Address

Institution Phone Number

Institution E-mail Address