

JOHN SLAGENHAUPT

*By Mrs. Thurston W. Hull*

John Slagenhaupt, the maker of the much sought Slagenhaupt chairs, was of German Descent. His grandfather came from Germany about 1770. Very little is known of his family, except that he had one son, Samuel who married a Miss Dehoff and lived on a small place between Uniontown and Revanion, just back of the farm, now owned by Mr. William Flohr. The buildings have long since fallen to decay. Samuel was a chair maker also, but I have not been able to trace any chairs of his make.

Samuel had several children, John was one of the older sons, born July 6, 1821. When he married he moved into three rooms, one story, log house about two miles south of Taneytown, and lived there the balance of his life. The house has been remodeled and is now owned by Mrs. Maurice Angell.

Mr. Slagenhaupt's wife died quite young and he never remarried, his house was kept by a maiden cousin, Barbara Newcomer.

His shop was a small two story building. The round parts of his chairs were made on a lathe turned by a treadle, unless he could inveigle some neighborhood boy to turn the lathe by hand, he seldom secured the same boy twice; being very particular as to speed, etc. The "splits" forming the seats of the chairs, he split with his pen-knife from oak strips. The posts and rockers of the chairs were usually made of green maple lumber

while the rungs were made of dry hickory, thereby insuring a tight fit, but he would use any lumber a customer supplied. He made a large armchair for my father from the wood of a large peach tree.

His prices were from one dollar to three dollars and fifty cents, according to size and whether "straight" chairs or rockers. He always used the same style split seats and slat backs.

Mr. Slagenhaupt was a gentle kindly little man, short and rather stout, bald head with a fringe of gray hair. He had a bad case of what he called "tisc" and had frequently to stop work and smoke a vegetable mixture to get relief.

He was lovingly known by the neighborhood youngsters as "Uncle Johnnie," and many happy hours were spent playing under his work bench and collecting the many queer shaped "blocks" they found there.

He with other members of his family were members of the Reformed Church, holding their membership with the church that years ago stood in the little cemetery at the top of "lazy" hill, Uniontown. In this cemetery he and quite a number of his family are buried. He died March 24th, 1890, in his sixty ninth year.

Some years after his death his old shop was used by another person, and chairs, of the same style as the Slagenhaupt chairs, were turned out. They were a very good imitation and would easily pass as the genuine thing by any one not familiar with the Slagenhaupt chair, however, they lacked the careful attention to detail and the symmetry

of design shown in Mr. Slagenhaupt's work.

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