

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY-NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC

Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens (Frank A. Seiberling House)

AND/OR COMMON

same

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

714 North Portage Path

\_\_\_NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Akron

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

14 - John Seiberling, Jr.

STATE

Ohio

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

CODE

039

COUNTY

Summit

CODE

153

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

OWNERSHIP

STATUS

PRESENT USE

\_\_\_DISTRICT

\_\_\_PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

\_\_\_AGRICULTURE

\_\_\_MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

\_\_\_UNOCCUPIED

\_\_\_COMMERCIAL

\_\_\_PARK

\_\_\_STRUCTURE

\_\_\_BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

\_\_\_PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_\_SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

\_\_\_RELIGIOUS

\_\_\_OBJECT

\_\_\_IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

\_\_\_GOVERNMENT

\_\_\_SCIENTIFIC

\_\_\_BEING CONSIDERED

\_\_\_YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_\_INDUSTRIAL

\_\_\_TRANSPORTATION

\_\_\_NO

\_\_\_MILITARY

\_\_\_OTHER:

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Stan Hywet Hall Foundation, Inc.

STREET & NUMBER

714 North Portage Path

CITY, TOWN

Akron

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Ohio

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Summit County Courthouse - Recorder's Office

STREET & NUMBER

72 South High Street

CITY, TOWN

Akron

STATE

Ohio

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

National Register of Historic Preservation

DATE

1974

FEDERAL \_\_\_STATE \_\_\_COUNTY \_\_\_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

<b>CONDITION</b>		<b>CHECK ONE</b>	<b>CHECK ONE</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

### Summary

Stan Hywet Hall, the Frank A. Seiberling House, is a Tudor-Stuart Revival style mansion. Constructed between 1911 and 1915 of reddish sandstone brick, it is highly asymmetrical in form. The main block, with its arched entrance way and three story tower, is rectangular. On the south end a 1 1/2 story wing projects out at an angle from the main block. On the north a 2 1/2 story wings also projects out at an angle. The roofs, that contain numerous dormer windows in both east and west facades, are very steep. Fenestration is very irregular and there are numerous bays. There are also numerous multi-designed chimneys, said to be a prominent feature of Tudor style architecture. The grounds, that are surrounded by a stone fence, contain on the west a formal English garden and a Japanese garden with teahouses. A large flower garden is to the north. Most of the 70 acre property on the east, south, and north is laid out in carefully landscaped lawns, walkways, terraces, trees, shrubs, and small flower gardens.

No significant changes have been made to the house since its construction. Stan Hywet Hall possesses a high degree of integrity of form, material, and setting. Today a house museum, it retains completely the physical features, fabric, location, surroundings, floor plan, and furnishings of the Frank A. Seiberling period. (National Historic Landmarks Program Criterion 4-a,c,d).

Mr. Robert L. Dimit, ex-Executive Director of the Stan Hywet Hall Foundation, gave the following description of the house's history at the time the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

"Haddon Hall, Compton-Wynyates, and Ockwells Manor, all famous English manors, were the chief inspirations for the original designs of Stan Hywet Hall. The architects traveled to England with Mr. and Mrs. F. A. Seiberling, the owners, in search of suitable designs and ideas for the mansion.

The interior of the mansion was designed to reveal the evolutionary manor house which one can see even today in England. As the manor houses were handed down from generation to generation, various improvements additions, and modernization occurred. Although Stan Hywet Hall was built between 1911 and 1915, it appears to have been constructed over the years from 1400 to 1750.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1911-1955

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Stan Hywet Hall was the home of Frank A. Seiberling from 1915 until his death in 1955. Called the the "Little Napoleon" because of his short stature and driving ambition, Seiberling founded the Goodyear Tire Rubber Company in 1898 and directed its fortunes until 1921. During this period he built Goodyear into a vertically integrated corporation that by 1921 had become the leading American rubber products manufacturer. It was thanks to Seiberling's leadership during this period that Goodyear, in the words of a company historian, "passed all its rivals, because it visioned more clearly than the others the possibilities of automobile transport and because it had proceeded with more dash and drive and daring to capitalize on those possibilities." Seiberling left Goodyear in 1921 and founded the Seiberling Rubber Company. He lead this company until 1950. As one of the fathers of the American rubber industry, Seiberling had a pivotal impact on the development of the American rubber industry and as such is a leading individual in the history of American commerce and industry.

(National Historic Landmarks Program Criterion 1-a.)

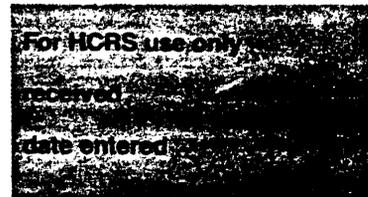
### History

Frank A. Seiberling, was one of America's leading early 20th century industrialists. With B. F. Goodrich and Harvey Firestone he has been called one of the fathers of the American Rubber industry. However, unlike other industrialists, such as Firestone, Henry Ford, or John D. Rockefeller, Seiberling has attracted little attention from business historians or biographers. The few histories of the American rubber industry do note his contributions to Goodyear. Goodyear's "in house" accounts of the company's past record his role. However, survey texts dealing with the growth and development of American industry mention him only in passing. Seiberling has also attracted no biographer. His extensive papers are available at



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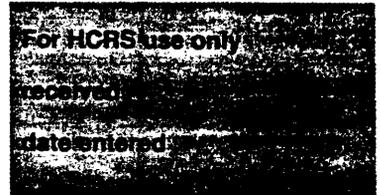
The Great Hall and Gothic bedroom are late Gothic. The master bedroom, reception room, breakfast room, billiard room and blue bedroom are Tudor. The music room, dining room, library and grand staircase are Jacobian. Other bedrooms have interior designs from the Adam, William & Mary, Cromwellian and Georgian periods.

Hand carved oak, walnut, sandalwood, and chestnut were used lavishly in various rooms and provide in this building one of the finest examples of the wood carver's craft in this country. Elaborate molded plaster ceilings in Tudor and Jacobian designs are in many rooms."

In its design, floor plan, motifs, and furnishings, Stan Hywet Hall is a reflection of the taste of the industrial elite in the first decades of this century.

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the Ohio Historical Society, but no serious study of his varied activities has been written (a family authorized "official" biography is reported to have been prepared, but it has never been published). There is no history of the Seiberling Rubber Company, a company he founded and lead during the last 34 years of his life. There are, then, few sources which detail Seiberling's life and work. Nevertheless, based on the little information we do have about him, it is clear that Seiberling's contributions to the establishment of the American rubber industry make him a significant figure in American industrial history.

His Life

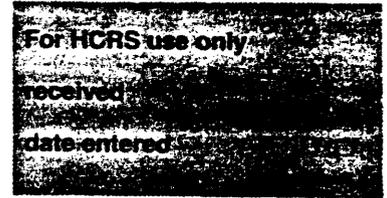
Frank. A. Seiberling was born October 9, 1859 on an Ohio farm. In 1865 his father, John F. Seiberling, gave up farming and moved to Akron to manufacture agricultural implements, some of which he invented himself. After attending public schools in Akron, Seiberling entered Heidelberg College in Tiffin, Ohio. In 1877 school authorities expelled him for playing a student prank. Seiberling returned to Akron and entered his father's business. When in 1884 his father's firm, The Empire Mower Company, was reorganized as the J. F. Seiberling, Frank A. Became its secretary-treasurer. For the next ten years he worked for his father and at the same time took an interest in a vareity of businesses, among them a railroad company that was the first electric interurban railway in the country. During thie time he also married. His wife, the former Gertrude F. Penfield, was the daughter of a wealthy Willoughby, Ohio clay products manufacturer. The happy marriage was blessed by six children.

Seiberling appeared headed for a comfortable life as the head of a small midwest manufacturing company when the 1890s depression, cutthroat competition, and labor unrest lead to the collapse of his father's business. The family misfortune forced Seiberling to look around for new business opportunities. The result was Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company.

In 1898 while in Chicago collecting some unpaid accounts, Seiberling learned that an abandoned plant in East Akron could be purchased at a low price. Although at this time he had no idea as to how he would use the buildings, Seiberling bought the property. Returning to Akron Seiberling discussed the prevailing market trends with his family, especially his brother, and decided that manufacturing rubber bicycle tires promised an immediate market and that the just emerging automobile industry held growth potential for the future. He also might have been told that a man named Harvey Firestone had similar thoughts and that he was thinking about moving to Akron to manufacture tires. In any case in 1898 Seiberling organized his company and named it after Charles Goodyear, who in 1839 had invented vulcanized rubber.

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The formative years were difficult. Seiberling faced a myriad of legal and financial problems. A turning point came in 1902 when a court held that Goodyear had not infringed on an existing tire patent. This decision combined with Seiberling's business acumen and a steadily increasing market demand for carriage and automobile tires placed the company on a sound footing. By 1905 Goodyear was the nation's largest manufacturer of carriage tires and by 1915 the company had become the world's largest manufacturer of automobile tires, a position it has never relinquished.

The decade from 1910 to 1920 was a period of very rapid growth for Goodyear. Seiberling was the company's driving force. During this same period his interest in railroads also returned. He acquired control of the Akron, Canton and Youngstown Railroad and upgraded it to provide better service to his Akron plants.

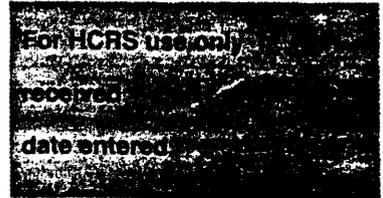
He also acquired seventy mile grain hauling shortline in North Dakota. He organized the Fairlawn Heights Company, a model community real estate development aimed at providing housing for him employees. (According to Seiberling, "If a man owns his own home, he is a better worker.")

The recession that followed WWI brought the end of Seiberling's association with Goodyear. His greatest interest always lay with the production side of the company. As a result he neglected other aspects of management such as inventory size and cash reserves. After a decade of spectacular growth, he was simply unprepared psychologically and otherwise for contraction. When bills came due for labor and materials, but with no cash in the bank, and when tires stacked up on company loading docks, but with no buyers, Goodyear faced bankruptcy. Alarmed investors turned to the eastern capital markets seeking a bail out. Dillon, Reed, and Company, then as now a pillar of Wall Street investment banking, agreed to put together a rescue package. One of their conditions for injecting needed new capital into the company was Seiberling's resignation as president and chief managing officer. Seiberling resigned, but retained a sizeable block of Goodyear stock. Although in 1927, when the company was again reorganized during the depths of the depression, Seiberling played a behind scenes role, he never again was directly involved with the company he founded.

Undaunted by his loss of control at Goodyear, Seiberling immediately launched a new tire company, the Seiberling Rubber Company. The company never rivaled its giant sisters, Goodyear, Firestone, and B. F. Goodrich, but it did carve out a place for itself in the tire market. Seiberling remained active in the rubber industry until February 1950, when he retired as chairman of the board and director of the company that bears his name.

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A joiner and organizer, Seiberling, a conservative Republican in his politics, participated in the business organizations related to his business interests and in the civic affairs of his community. He supported the Lincoln Highway Association in its efforts to improve the quality and safety of the nation's highways. He was a founder of the Better Business Bureau and an active member of the Rubber Manufacturer's Association. In the Akron area his philanthropic interests included the creation of the Akron Institute for the Blind, the establishment of the Akron Settlement Association, the building of the "People's Hospital, and the organization of a Metropolitan Park Board.

Standing five feet, three inches Seiberling was long known as the "Little Napoleon" of the rubber industry. H. Roger Grant, his "Dictionary of American Biography" biographer, summed up his life by saying, "Seiberling enjoyed being a businessman. His philosophy was simple: work hard and take risks. He was bright and articulate, and a man of great vision, although it would seem that at times he could not foresee financial danger." Frank A. Seiberling died August 11, 1955.<sup>1</sup>

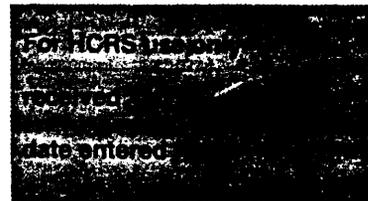
#### His Work

Frank A. Seiberling acquired the nickname "Little Napoleon" not only because of his short height, but also because of an entrepreneurial talent that was coupled with driving ambition. The timing of Seiberling's entry into the rubber industry was opportune. The market for automobile tires was about "to take off." Like Henry Ford in automobiles and John D. Rockefeller in oil, Seiberling could not have possibly known how big the market for his company's product would eventually become. However, as the market developed, it was his business talent and judgment that allowed him to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the horseless carriage. Creative and innovative leadership, especially his attention to upgrading constantly the company's leadership in technological innovation, was Seiberling's indispensable contribution to Goodyear's success.

In the beginning carriage and bicycle tire patent restrictions braked Seiberling's ambitious plans. But when in 1902 a court ruled that Goodyear's standard tire did not infringe on an existing tire patent, Seiberling was free to enter the market. At the first the company concentrated on carriage tires and by 1905 was the industry leader. Seiberling, however, had earlier recognized that a much larger market was developing for automobile tires. Goodyear brought out its first auto tire in 1899, but its durability was inferior to those of the competition. In 1901 the company introduced the first straight-side tire, but it too suffered from limited sales. Seiberling himself continued

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to work in the plant on the straight-side tire seeking qualitative improvements and in 1905 his work bore fruit. In that year Goodyear introduced the first quickly detachable straight-side tire. Because it could be quickly removed from the hub and was durable, the tire soon became the industry standard. According to Howard and Ralph Wolk, historians of the rubber industry, "this tire made Goodyear the worlds largest tire manufacturer."<sup>2</sup> Goodyear's significant technological contributions to the rubber industry between 1900 and 1920, all of which Seiberling personally worked on, included: the first tubless tire (1903), the Seiberling-Stevens tire-building machine (1904), the All-Weather diamond tread tire (1908), the State-Seiberling tire building (1909), and the American cord tire (1913).

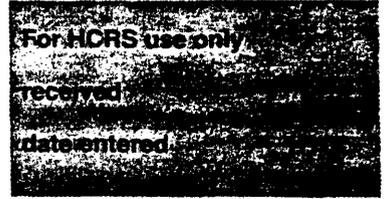
In 1913 Goodyear set up its first mechanical rubber goods department to manufacture a wide range of rubber goods. This new activity broadened the company's product line, but transportation related products continued to dominate its activities. Recognizing that truck transportation potentially constituted a significant new market for his tires, Seiberling in 1917 introduced a new pneumatic rubber truck tire to replace the prevailing solid rubber truck tire.

At the same time Seiberling set out to demonstrate the efficaciousness and potential of moving goods by truck. He founded a trucking company called the Wingfoot Express, that hauled goods between Akron and Boston. The line may have been the first long distance trucking company in the United States. If pneumatic tires were well suited for trucks, Seiberling reasoned, they would also work on buses. A good idea, but there was a **problem**. Few buses operated at the time, so Seiberling decided to create a market. In 1918 he founded in Akron one of the first urban bus systems in the United States. Seiberling also took an active interest in lighter-than-air transportation. In 1910 his Goodyear plant built the airship "Akron." Although lighter-than-air transportation never lived up to Seiberling's hopes (the 1937 Hindenburg crash writing the final obituary), the company built many famous blimps including the Goodyear blimp familiar to all football fans.

By 1920 Seiberling could look back on a decade of unprecedented growth and expansion. In 1910 Goodyear opened the industry's first foreign plant. In 1913 it was the first to acquire its own textile mill. The company established its own rubber and cotton plantations in 1917 and in the same year it acquired its own coal mines. In response to the growing market in the West, Goodyear in 1920 opened a plant on the west coast. By 1920 the company's position in the rubber industry seemed impregnable.

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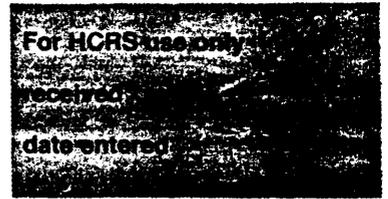
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Recessions are not a time for rapid industrial expansion. When the recession following WWI shrank the market for tires, Goodyear was caught in an intolerable cash reserve position. Seiberling was forced to resign. Goodyear survived, of course, and went on to become a diversified leader in the rubber industry and a multinational corporate giant. Seiberling was not with the company after 1921, but between 1898 and 1921 "Little Napoleon" laid the foundations on which today's Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company are built. "Goodyear passed all its rivals, many of them strongly entrenched," a company historian writes, "because it visioned more clearly than the others the possibilities of automobile transport and because it had proceeded with more dash and drive and daring to capitalize on those possibilities."<sup>3</sup>

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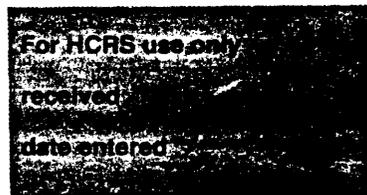
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Footnotes

1. H. Roger Grant, "Frank Augustus Seiberling," Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement 5, (New York, 1977), p. 618.
2. Howard and Ralph Wolf, Rubber: A Story of Glory and Greed, (New York, 1936), p. 431.
3. Hugh Allen, The House of Goodyear, (Akron, 1936), p. 43.

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Grant, H. Roger. "Frank Augustus Seiberling, "Dictionary of American Biography, Supplement Five, 1951-1955." (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1977).

A History of the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company: Through the Years with Goodyear, 1898-1977. (Akron: Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, n.d.).

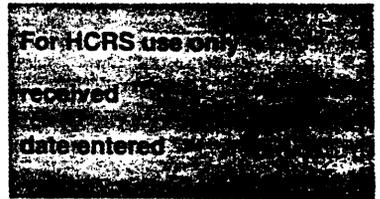
The Miricle of Rubber. (Akron: Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, n.d.)

The Story of the Tire. (Akron: Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, n.d.).

Wolf, Howard and Ralph Wolf. Rubber: A Story of Glory and Greed. (New York: Covici-Friedi, 1936).

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Boundary

Verbal Boundry Description

Beginning at the northwest curblin of the junction of Carman Road and Reynolds Avenue, proceed north to the property line of DeWitt Jenkin's Realty Company, than west to the right-a-way of the Akron, Canton Youngstown Railroad, than northwest along the right-a-way to North Portage Path Road, than west along Garman Road to the junction of Garman Road and Reynolds Avenue, the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

This boundary encloses the property known as Stan Hywet Hall, the estate of Frank A. Seiberling. The proposed National Historic Landmark Boundary is the same as the boundary of the property as listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The boundary encloses the main house, Stan Hywet Hall, as well as the grounds, gardens, and remaining attendant structures of the Seiberling period.