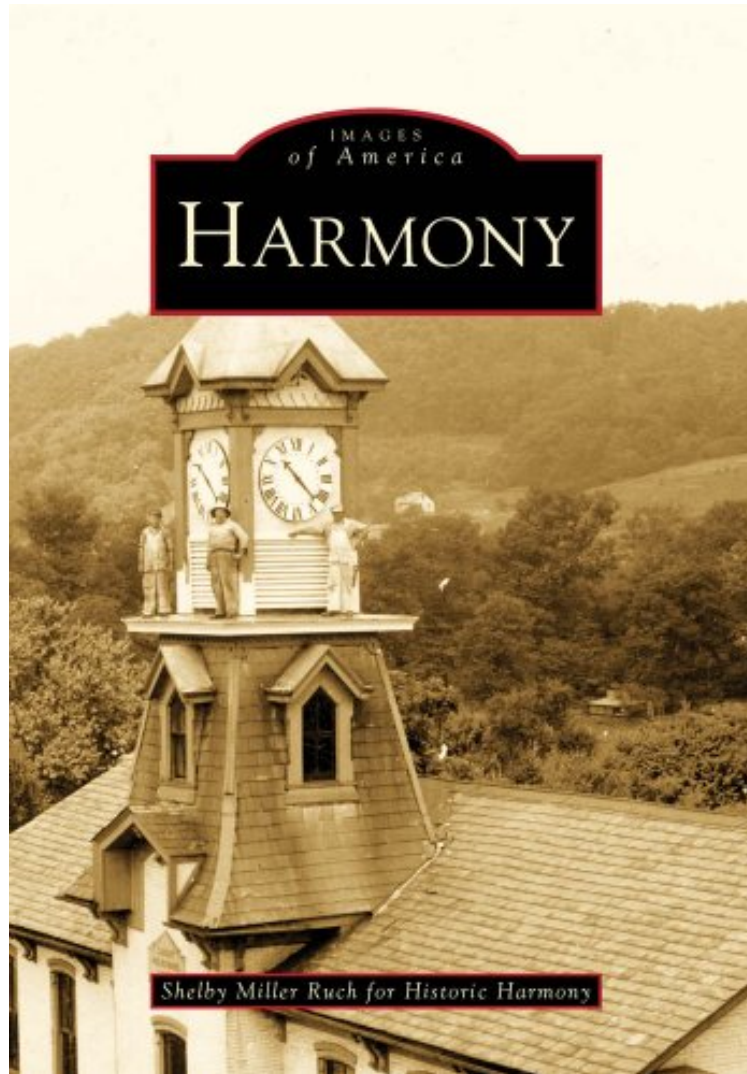


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## Harmony (PA) (Images of America)

*Shelby Miller Ruch, Historic Harmony*  
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**Shelby Miller Ruch, Historic Harmony : Harmony (PA) (Images of America)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Harmony (PA) (Images of America):

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The remarkable architecture in the Harmony National Historic Landmark District reflects the town's German roots. In the early 1800s, German Lutheran separatists, led by Johann Georg Rapp, purchased depreciated lands from a German nobleman and founded Harmony. They organized as the communal Harmony Society in 1805, pledging to live as a family until Christ's return. The industrious Harmonists prospered, traveled to Washington to confer with Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and gained international fame for their lifestyle and economic success. By 1811, they owned 9,000 acres and had constructed 130 buildings. Their main street was on the direct route from Pittsburgh to Erie during the War of 1812. Harmony's colorful past includes the Mennonite, oil boom, and electric interurban train eras. Maj. George Washington slept near here in 1753 and narrowly escaped being shot by a native guide. Among notable residents were songwriter Stephen Foster, professional baseball pitcher George Rube Waddell, and gunsmith Charles Flowers.

Title: Book Nook: 'Harmony' by Shelby Miller Ruch  
Author: Patricia Lowry  
Publisher: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
Date: 7/18/09  
"Harmony" By Shelby Miller Ruch  
Arcadia Publishing, \$21.99  
With historic photographs drawn from archives and residents, Ruch documents the Harmony Society's first home in America, established by German Lutheran separatist George Rapp in 1804. Honoring the architecture that reflects the Butler County town's German heritage, the book also celebrates its small-town pleasures, many centered on Harmony's history.  
Book Nook highlights the latest books on architecture and design, homes and gardens.  
Book Nook is a feature highlighting the latest books on architecture and design, homes and gardens.  
Title: Photos capture past  
Author: Jared Stonesifer  
Publisher: The Cranberry Eagle  
Date: 5/16/09  
Shelby Ruch compared writing a book about Harmony's history to an archeological excavation: rich with layers of colorful people and stories from the past 250 years. In her new book "Harmony," Ruch chronicles the small borough's history with the help of more than 200 photographs. The book features photographs of more than 130 buildings, some as old as the 1805 Society Barn Museum and the 1809 Harmony Museum. Ruch, who compiled the photographs and wrote an additional 15 pages of accompanying text in less than 22 months, borrowed photographs from the Harmony Museum, the Butler Eagle and an assortment of private collections. "I think people will really, really enjoy looking at what life was like back then before television and a lot of other distractions that we have now," she said. "It's really interesting to see how they made their own entertainment." The photographs in the book focus mainly on architecture in the borough but also include snippets of street scenes that give the reader a sense of what life was like in the 1800s. Ruch relied heavily on the historical collections of Dr. Arthur Stewart, a physician who moved to Harmony in 1906 and developed a passion for the region's history. Stewart compiled historical texts and photographs all his life, most of which are now stored in the Harmony Museum. Ruch, who has lived in the area since 1969, said sometimes it takes the perspective of an outsider like Stewart to put the borough's detailed history in perspective. "A lot of people who live here, and have lived here their entire lives, don't know all of the area's rich history," she said. Ruth Werner, a former president of Historic Harmony and an old friend of Stewart's, gave Ruch several photographs she used in the book. Werner said Stewart gave her three albums full of historic images before he died, images that played a large role in helping Ruch complete the book. Werner also said, however, there are many photographs in the book she hasn't seen herself despite years of presiding over Historic Harmony. Ruch said the process was a learning experience for her, too. She said she uncovered several fascinating stories about Harmony. The most interesting story involved neighboring Zelienople and the lack of travel between the two municipalities in the mid-1880s. According to Ruch, a steep hill separated the towns, making travel difficult. Workers eventually lowered the hillside and constructed a road to facilitate easier travel, a road now known as Route 68. The hillside, however, provided an obstacle that led the two boroughs to go down very different historical paths. "Harmony and Zelienople are joined at --Pittsburgh Post-Gazette  
About the Author  
Freelance writer Shelby Miller Ruch is a former wire service and newspaper reporter. A member of Historic Harmony, she authored this project in conjunction with the historical society. Images have come from the Harmony Museum and Butler Eagle archives, photographer Ray Thompson, and community residents.