



The Historical Society of Trappe

Pennsylvania

VOLUME I

NUMBER II

November 1974 Newsletter

Dear Members & Friends,

PRESIDENT' MESSAGE

The year 1974 is fast coming to a close, before we know it, the new year will be here. The question is asked how did the Historical Society do? What will we do in 1975? First let me answer the first part as I see it.

1. The Bi-Centennial Committee was formed and has been meeting monthly, they have a very energetic program planned for 1976-77, and I hope all members will support them by your attendance, labor and finances as it is needed.
2. The Historical Society signed a 99 year lease with St. Lukes U.C.C. for DeWees Tavern. This is a tremendous step forward, and we hope to restore the exterior and interior to original conditions.
3. The Society's Library is being moved to the 2nd floor of our headquarters. I wish to thank the Boy Scouts, Troop # Judy Ribble, Benny Sauer and Frank Eld for all the work they have done on this project.
4. Trappe Days. This annual event was a huge success. The President, thanks Betsy Ross and her committee for the many hours they spent in making our Antiques Show and Sale a success. This is a big job for Betsy and her committee, but is well worth it.
5. The Directors meet on different occasions and handled the business affairs of the society with dedication and Loyalty and good judgement.
6. A rare piece was purchased for our Living Museum, which is a Candle Dipper.
7. The Society's semi-annual dinner meetings were held and proved interesting and entertaining.

Now what about 1975?

1. I hope we can really go forward with our DeWees Tavern Restoration program.
2. I hope we can sponsor bus tours to Historical places.
3. Maybe we can have more social activities for our members.
4. That the Antiques Show & Sale will be held again.
5. That the Headquarters can be open on Saturday Afternoons during the summer.
6. That our membership will increase.
7. That all members will attend our activities.

NOVEMBER 11, 1974
6:45 P.M. GRANGE HALL
TRAPPE

Semi Annual Dinner & Program

By vote of the Board of Directors, the Keystone Grange Hall, Trappe was chosen as the place for the November 11th Dinner Meeting of the Society. A Roast Beef Dinner served family style will begin at 6:45 P.M., followed by the Program featuring Mr. Frantz, noted Pottstown Architect, who also is helping us to restore the Dewees Tavern.

Cost of the Dinner is \$4.50, make reservations now. Contact Mr. Norman Holcombe at 21 Main Street, Trappe, Pa. 19426 or call 489-7266 by November 7, 1974.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...
Trappe Once Had Serious Food Problems

Aid for destitute families when "hard times" came, in the 19th century, included establishments of "soup houses," "soup kitchens," and "soup societies," in Philadelphia.

Food Problems are described in the Journals of the Rev. Henry M. Muhlenberg while he lived in Trappe at the time of the American Revolution. He had retired from his Philadelphia pastorate and was living in a house opposite the Reformed Church. There was such a shortage of clergy that he frequently had to conduct services at Augustus Church, Trappe, and also in New Hanover, where the church was without a pastor for several years.

In addition to that, he was called upon by travelers or soldiers returning from the army, who sought food and a night's lodging. He tried to meet these demands, but often noted that he could not give food because he had none.

Members of the parish and others realized this situation and the Journal praises them for their efforts to help him, though they had no money to pay the usual church fees. If they obtained food, they would bring a share to him. Such gifts were likely to include kettles of soup just cooked in the households. Soup was desirable for the aged people who were toothless.

Muhlenberg also had to serve as family doctor in those days because the former physicians of the region had gone in the army or moved away because of insufficient income. Muhlenberg sought to have on hand a supply of medicines sent from Halle, Germany, for the new settlements in America, with instructions for their use. But the war cut off this supply.

The journal noted that he could not seek help from the taverns for the hungry travelers. While there were three taverns in the place, their trade was mainly in the barroom and usually no meal was procurable.

Later, in time of peace, when Trappe usually continued to have three taverns, there was one, called the Duke of Cumberland, which was famous for its meals and its cleanliness. This was the tavern of the Dewees family, managed by "Mother Dewees." It was a stopping place for stage coaches, which was an indication of its good reputation. The coaches' rule was to stop at the best tavern available for meals.

"Mother Dewees" had a husband named David, but he seems to have been a silent partner in the tavern business. They had 12 children, some of whom became prominent in mature life. The family came to Trappe in 1783 and kept tavern there until the 1840's.

While George Washington was President, he stayed over-night at one of the Trappe taverns. This fact was noted in his diary for Sept. 30, 1794. He was on his way to the western part of the state to join the army in suppressing the Whisky Rebellion.

Washington's diary entry is suggestive of the lack of good food at the Trappe taverns. It says he did not remain for breakfast, but went for that meal to Pottstown.
