

The Chronicle

A Publication of The Historical Society
of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley, Inc.

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The Henry Muhlenberg House
201 W. Main Street, Trappe
(across from St. Luke's UCC)



The Dewees Museum
301 W. Main Street, Trappe
(corner Main Street/Rt 113)

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www.trappehistoricalsociety.org

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Introducing Our New Logo . . .



We are pleased to introduce our new logo, thanks to the research and skills of Board Member Anne Grasberger. She explains, "The design for the logo was inspired by the birds frequently found on items decorated by the Pennsylvania Germans such as pottery, furniture, and fraktur. The logo will be a rich deep indigo which is seen in locally dyed fabrics as well as stoneware and fraktur." She adds, "Soon we will be replacing the signs in front of Dewees and the Henry Muhlenberg House—the blue will contrast nicely against the stone buildings so the new signs will be more noticeable and the bird will welcome many new visitors to our museums."

Rev. Tom Kochenderfer, the Society's Chaplain, noted his admiration of the new logo: "This is what I see when I look at the logo: The bird reminds us of our German heritage, but none of the traditional colors of fraktur have been used in our logo. The color blue is not a primary blue; it is an indigo used in the past and in the present. Our heritage is still there, but we are no longer German—we have been woven into a new community represented by the logo."

If you love history . . .

Visit !

Join !!

Volunteer !!!

Dear Friends of the Society . . .

This year will be a year of transition for the Historical Society in many ways. On December 31, 2015, long time Membership Chairman and bookkeeper, Richard Holcombe retired from his duties with the Society. The tasks he performed are now divided between our new Membership Chairperson, Sara Clapper, and Caroline Supplee, our new bookkeeper. New financial procedures have been approved by the Board to handle all receipts and payments by the Finance Committee. Thanks to Richard and his employee, Sandy, for their many years of service to the Society.

The New Year also saw long time Board Members, Rev. Robert Meschke, Rev. Judith Meier, and Joyce Haas leave their positions. A sincere thank you goes to each for all of their contributions to the Historical Society for many years. In 2016 we welcome to the Board three new members: Joshua Macel, Lorraine Campman, and Debbie Vassalluzzo. Each brings enthusiasm and many new ideas to the Board.

In *The Chronicle* you will find our calendar of events for this year. We have many exciting things planned for 2016 and are sure you will find several of interest to you. We look forward to greeting you there.

The geothermal heating system in the Muhlenberg House is starting to show its age. One unit has already failed and we are not sure how long the other three will last. Our Facilities Committee, led by Jon Costanza and Eric Hundertmark, has developed plans for replacement of the aging units with new geothermal units. Replacing these units over the next couple of years will be costly. We have received gifts from Trappe Borough and Phoenixville Federal Bank and Trust as well as gifts from several members that will be used for this project. We are pursuing a variety of avenues for funding this project and welcome any gifts for the maintenance of the Muhlenberg House.

In 2017, Trappe Borough will be celebrating its 300th anniversary. The Historical Society is an active participant in the planning for this celebration. We anticipate a number of special events in 2017 as part of this celebration. Details on these will be available later in the year.

I look forward to meeting all of you at an event this year and to working together for the good of the Society and the community.

Sincerely,
Tom Biggar, President

Historian's Quiz – by Lorraine Campman

True or False? Answers are below.

The Cressman/Kressman family has been associated with Trappe through some of the following personages:

- Daniel Cressman was a hatter that lived in Henry M. Muhlenberg's cottage and helped him by mending fences and cutting firewood. True or False.
- George Kressman was a life-long native of Trappe who helped found the Trappe Historical Society. True or False.
- Henry Melchior Muhlenberg bought land from Johan Nicholas Cressman when he first came to Trappe in 1745. He may have preached his first sermon in Cressman's barn. True or False.
- Johan Nicholas Cressman was part of the group that first called Muhlenberg to Trappe, and was influential in the building of Augustus Lutheran Church. The Latin version of his name, J N Cressmano, appears on the date stone over the south entrance. True or False.
- The Kressman library on the second floor of the Dewees Tavern Museum is named after Dr. John H. Kressman, educator, genealogist, and Society endowment donor. True or False.

Answers: a - T, b - F, c - T, d - T, e - T

Hiester-Ruth-Muhlenberg Bible

..... by Lorraine Campman, Historian

This Bible is in the collection of the Trappe Historical Society and is an important part of their Muhlenberg collection. Printed in German, it was published by Emanuel Thurneysen, Basel, Switzerland, 1778.

It was once owned by Joseph Hiester (1752-1832) who served in the American Revolution and later became the fifth governor of Pennsylvania. He was a native of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania. His grandniece was to marry a Muhlenberg and he passed it on to her after the death of her mother.



This note, in pencil, is found on one of the blank pages at the front of the book, probably written by a former owner. It reads:

[Hiester-Ruth-Muhlenberg Bible, with inscription signed + dated by Joseph Hiester, Revolutionary War officer + Penna governor from Berks County.]

The following is assumed to be in the handwriting of Joseph Hiester with his signature. It reads:

From The Journals of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg

1745

December 12 Mr. Brunnholtz and I at first administered the Lord's Supper together in Germantown. During the examination at confession I had, in a spirit of love and meekness, admonished some of the deacons with reference to certain offenses which were so open and public that even the children in the streets knew about them. This enraged these men, and so they began to work against me in every way. Yet, when I stated to the congregation that I would erase my name from the call and withdraw to see if they would show more respect to my colleague, Mr. Brunnholtz, the congregation rose at once against these disorderly deacons and moved to excommunicate them. But the matter was compromised and peace was restored. On that same occasion I requested another man to tarry a few moments as I wished to speak with him in private. This man did remain, and I spoke with him alone concerning his wife, who often became intoxicated and led an unchaste life. He thereupon became so enraged that it was with difficulty that I escaped his cane. Afterwards he even threatened to require me to give proof of this charge before the law. This man was excommunicated. He has a houseful of children, most of whom I have instructed and confirmed. The children lead a fairly upright and Christian life, and they also attend church. There is still a considerable number of such rough branches, and if we come too close home to their consciences, they let loose and cry out, "What right has the parson over me? Of course I pay him by the year, but if his preaching does not please my taste, I'll go to another church where I can get it for nothing."

Submitted by The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer, Chaplain

"Catherine Hiester was born on the 16th day of September, . . . A.D. 1750.

Intermarried with John Ruth on the 9th of April, 1770.

John Ruth was born on the (space) day of September, 1765.

John Ruth departed this life on the 12th day of October 1812.

This Bible was the property of my Sister Catherine Ruth and fell to my share in the Division of her property. And now this 28th Day of September A.D. 1831 I make a present of it to my Grand Daughter Mary Eliz. Hiester Muhlenberg.

Jos. Hiester"

Do you Know . . .

. . . that our two largest artifacts—*Miller-Deweese Museum* and *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg House*—are open on the second and fourth Sundays from April through October and always available for tours?

We can be justly proud of these two gems that adorn Main Street in Trappe and bring a smile to your face each time you pass them by and realize it is only through the efforts and resources of our members and friends that these landmarks of history continue to stand as historical markers of our community's rich history. By this time next year our small *Borough of Trappe* will be celebrating its *300th Birthday*. This is no small achievement and is sure to draw visitors from far and near to experience our history.

We can be justly proud, not only of what we have achieved in preserving our local history and making it available to all who come to us, but also that all of our efforts over more than a half century have been the result of a dedicated cadre of volunteers and supporting members. Last year, for example, numerous people have sought us out for research ranging from genealogy to deed searches. Groups have toured our sites and have responded to what they experienced with praise and support of special projects such as the recent installation of "*Innerglass*" windows in our Muhlenberg House. *Thanks to all who made this possible!*

I have been part of the *Society's* life for over fifteen years. As I became more and more involved through the mentorship of folks like the *Shetlers* and *Hesses* and *Zieglers*, and so many others, I have been continually enriched by our development to today where I can be *justly proud* of what we have accomplished in telling the *Trappe Story* in our *Miller-Deweese Museum* and turning a restored 1755 house into a depiction of the final home of the *Henry Muhlenberg Family*.

My purpose in sharing a bit of my life journey with you lies in the hope that I have touched some of the same feelings you may have about the *Society*. Volunteering is not for everyone, to be sure, but for those of us who took the plunge it has its special rewards that make all the effort worthwhile. Are you *justly proud* of what we have accomplished together? Perhaps you'd like to help tell our stories as a *Tour Guide* to those who visit us. Your time commitment is minimal and is designed to fit into your schedule. It took me a while to be convinced I could do this, but with some good background information and patient mentors to help me *learn on the job* I soon found myself feeling more and more like our houses are my second home.

If you'd like to risk a little and possibly gain a lot of satisfaction in telling our story to others why not contact our *Museum Committee* at our office (610-489-7560). You won't fully realize the unique value of what we have built on Main Street until you

Report on Volunteer Hours by Jennifer Cianci

The calculations of volunteer hours for the year 2015 are finished, with 1045 overall hours. Dewees Museum saw 865 of those hours, with the Muhlenberg House bringing in 181 total hours. This is typical, as the Dewees Museum is more suited to offer proper space for the committees to meet and for other various ongoing projects throughout the year, wherein the use for the Muhlenberg House is mainly for tours and walk-throughs during the open house season. These 2015 hours are relatively static compared to the 1047 hours in 2014; however, compared to 2013, we see a significant jump in volunteer time from 748 that year.

With the many new faces who joined the society in 2015 and with Trappe itself turning 300 years old in 2017, the anticipation is that volunteer hours for 2016 can dynamically reach even higher calculations. As the year progresses and sees the society busying itself in getting prepared for the numerous events yet to take place not just within the society, but also in the community as a whole, it is anticipated that more folks will be stopping by the society to lend a hand in the ongoing preparations for this momentous occasion.

We hope we are correct in this anticipated calculation and are optimistic to see you repeatedly in each of the buildings, joining in the various ongoing activities we offer, lending a hand, offering information and advice, lending support, pitching in supplies, etc., as we build events.

There is much to do and we hope to see you embrace whatever part moves you as we begin the countdown to the big birthday year ahead. ❖

About Our Gift Shop . . .

We are excited to tell you about the artisans who offer their beautiful gift items for sale at our Gift Shop.

Lifelong Trappe resident **Ralph Zollers** has been working with wood for well over 50 years. He owned a tree service, sold firewood, operated a sawmill and for the last 15 years has been turning it on his lathe. He uses local wood much of it from Northern Star Farm where he grew up. His bowls are finished with a food safe beeswax.

Jo Ann Palmer, Silver Wolf Productions, has always had a love for gemstones and silver jewelry. She has an art degree from Seton Hall College and was apprenticed to Jennifer Gourley of Earth Dance Jewelry. Since starting her business, she has embraced the idea of jewelry as wearable art. Her pieces are inspired by nature and her sense of whimsy.

Richard Clapper, long time Society member, has a wood crafting hobby that has made its way to our gift shop. He makes reproduction wooden boxes and containers inspired by antique pieces. He crafts beautiful peg strips for hanging jackets that can be seen in our Dewees Tavern.

Stop by during your next tour to see these beautiful items, as well as many others—all appropriate for gift-giving or home decor. We are located at the Visitor's Center behind the Henry Muhlenberg House. We are not staffed on a daily basis, but we will make arrangements to be available for you—with no obligation to purchase! Just call 610.489.7560.



The Gift Shop

at the

Henry Muhlenberg House

201 West Main Street in Trappe

The Historical Society

of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley, Inc.

P.O. Box 26708 Collegeville PA 19426-0708

www.trappehistoricalsociety.org

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Our Wish List . . .

We are in great need of a scanner. Please let us know if you can provide one or donate an amount for us to purchase one. It will be very much appreciated! *Thank you!*

Membership Information

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Student | \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Family | \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Supporting | \$100.00 - \$249.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Patron | \$250.00 - \$499.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sustaining | \$500.00 - \$999.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Benefactor | \$1000.00 and up |

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The Historical Society

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Mail to: Membership

The Historical Society

P.O. Box 26708

Collegeville, PA 19426-0708

Your membership is valued!

Upcoming 2016 Programs

Programs for 2016 are being considered and discussed. Plans are tentative and will be confirmed as they are finalized. The schedule will be updated in our next newsletter as well as on our Website and Facebook page:

trappehistoricalsociety.org

facebook.com/trappehistoricalsociety

- | | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| March | Antique Roadshow | TBD |
| April 9 | Spring Cleanup Day at Dewees | |
| May 7 | Spring Cleanup Day at Henry Muhlenberg House | |
| May 30 | Annual Memorial Day Parade | |
| June 15 | Garden Party Covered Dish and Speaker at St Lukes Church co-hosted with Speaker's House | |
| July 4 | Cemetery Decorations and Flags | |
| August | Speaker: The History of Bee Keeping with David Silk | TBD |
| Sept 10 | Trappe Community Day | |
| October | Halloween Event | TBD |
| Nov | Tombstone Tales participation at Augustus Lutheran Church | |
| Nov | Veterans Day Annual Meeting with Speaker | TBD |
| Dec | Candlelight Tour at Henry Muhlenberg House | TBD |

We look forward to welcoming you!