

The Chronicle

A Publication of The Historical Society
of Trappe, Collegetown, 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)

The Historical Society of Trappe, Collegetown, Perkiomen Valley, Inc., is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, a 501(c)(3), exempt organization under the U.S. Internal Revenue Code, and is registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Charitable Organizations. Official registration and financial information may be obtained by calling 1-800-732-0999 toll-free (within Pennsylvania). Registration does not imply endorsement. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Henry Clay, the Great Compromiser

Former congressman, senator, and Speaker of the House, Henry Clay brokered the Missouri Compromise in 1820, prevented South Carolina from seceding from the Union in 1833 and in 1850 negotiated an agreement for California to not be a slave state, oversaw the settlement of the Texas boundary line, and implemented the fugitive slave act and the abolition of the slave trade in the nation's Capitol.

"Hurray, Hurray, the Country's Risin', Vote for Clay and Frelinghuysen!" was the rallying cry of Clay's presidential campaign in 1844.

Judge Joseph Royer's eldest son Frank organized the Clay Club No. 1 of Montgomery County. The young ladies of Trappe created a beautiful gilt-trimmed banner which made its debut in procession beginning at the Duke of Cumberland tavern, and then the Clay Club set off for the Whig Convention and banner competition in Baltimore in Anthony Vanderslice's new canal boat. The boat didn't make it through the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal, and the Trappe contingent straggled into Baltimore tired and hungry and too late for the competition. Young Frank Royer died suddenly in Philadelphia a year and a half later.

Henry Clay's portrait hung in Judge Royer's parlor for many years. Now, thanks to the gracious gift of Augustus Lutheran Church, Speaker Clay now presides over our private dining alcove in the Dewees Tavern.

For more information about the portrait and the story surrounding it, see the Historian's Corner on our website. ❖

Welcome New Board Members . . .

We are pleased to welcome several new members to the Board (see listing of Board members top, left-hand column), all of whom have a love of history and an interest in preserving the heritage of the area.

We thank them for their interest and we look forward to working together in 2014. We hope you will have a chance to meet them throughout the coming year at our events. ❖

Dear Friends of the Society . . .

This year is the 50th anniversary of the formation of our Historical Society and establishing our headquarters at 301 W. Main Street in Trappe, better known as the Dewees Tavern. The church council of St. Luke's United Church of Christ offered a ninety-nine-year lease to the Society for the use of this fine building in 1964.

To list all who were a part of making this happen would be hazardous should we overlook someone who was vital to the project, but we all remember that early on Dr. John Shetler had a passion for preserving the history of this Perkiomen Valley and developing a leadership base to promote that history. The restoration of the Muhlenberg House at 201 W. Main Street expanded our responsibilities and our opportunity to tell the Trappe/Muhlenberg family story.

Today, fifty years later, we still follow the mission statement set before us and work diligently with 100% volunteer staff. This has left a board of directors, members, and volunteers with a very large responsibility that we renew every year with committee formation, educational programs, interaction with students, and research opportunities.

None of this can happen without you, the members. Please participate in our annual membership drive opening now, and if you are a life member please consider a donation to support the work of the Society. Remember, there are many ways to give—time, talents, and donations.

I look forward to meeting all of you and working together for the good of the Society and the community.

Sincerely,
Ruth Daller,
President

Muhlenberg arrives in Trappe and presents his credentials to church deacons

From The Journals of
Henry Melchior Muhlenberg

1742

November 29, Monday. Today three of the elders traveled with me to Providence to confer with the deacons there. We stopped in at the home of the widow of a former deacon and had the oldest deacon summoned to come there. I showed him the letter from the Rev. Court Preacher Zigenhagen. He recognized the Rev. Court Preacher's signature and said that he was glad I had come, that they had lost hope and no longer expected anyone from the Rev. Court Preacher. Since they had received no answer to their last letter of 1739, they had petitioned the Darmstadt Consistory the year before for a preacher. Thereupon an old preacher, Valentin Kraft, had arrived a few weeks ago and said that he had been sent by the Consistory, though Mr. Kraft had brought no testimonials and had arrived in a destitute and wretched state. He pretended, however, that his letter and testimonials would still come. Moreover, there were many people here who had known him as a pastor in Germany. It was the opinion of this old deacon, too, that I should have an understanding with Mr. Kraft and either remain with the two lower places or the two upper places. I let the matter rest for the present.

November 30, Tuesday. The oldest deacon of Providence journeyed with me to the younger deacons and then to Philadelphia where we arrived about nine o'clock in the evening, fatigued. I had to stop off again at an English inn on account of the horse I had hired. The innkeeper took me into a room where were sitting a number of Englishmen, who put on airs of being men of *condition*. As soon as I came in, they asked me whether I was a *Moravian*, a *Lutherien*, a *Calvinist*, or a *Churchman*. I gave them a reprimand and said they must learn better manners and not welcome strangers with such questions. They apologized. Afterwards went to my rented room.

Submitted by The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer

Visit our website: www.trappehistoricalsociety.org

Sponsors: TR Insurance Group, Inc. and Holcombe Funeral Home, Inc.

THE HISTORIAN'S CORNER

By the Rev. Judith A. Meier, Historian

The Trappe Historical Society is widely-known for its Dewees Tavern and the Henry Melchior Muhlenberg House, but how many know that it is a valuable place to conduct research? The Cressman Room on the second floor of the tavern houses a small reference library open to the public on Thursday mornings from 9:00 to noon. It's always a good idea to call the Society at 610-489-7560 to make sure the building will be open and staffed for your assistance. Included in the collection are a complete run of the *Sketches* and *Bulletins* of the Historical Society of Montgomery County, issues of the *Pennsylvania Magazine*, *Pennsylvania Folklife*, *The Pennsylvania German* magazine, and many other books and journals. County histories and family histories are also available as well as books on the decorative arts and old houses.

The rarer books in our collection are housed in the Ross Library, which is not open to the public. Records of Augustus Lutheran Church and St. Luke's Reformed Church (United Church of Christ) are kept in the Ross Room, as are books devoted to the Muhlenberg family and a collection of books concerned with the Mercersburg theological and liturgical movement of the Reformed Church. There are funeral home records, photographs, Ursinus College memorabilia and histories, and information about Collegeville, Trappe, and surrounding municipalities. File cabinets are full of family histories and folders filled with all kinds of interesting subjects peculiar to the Perkiomen Valley. A staff person can bring these sourcebooks out for you to use in the Cressman Room.

A run of the *Collegeville Independent* is located on the third floor of the Dewees Tavern and may be consulted under certain conditions.

If you cannot spend time in our library yourself, you may wish to have our Historian do your research for you. We ask that you put your request in writing (e-mail or snail-mail), briefly describing what you already know about the subject or family and clearly stating what you want to know. We charge \$15.00 for the first hour and \$12.00 for each successive hour. Photocopies are 25 cents a page. The Historian will exhaust the sources at the Dewees Tavern library and will also search her own vast private collection. Checks should be written out to the Society with a note on the memo line that this is for research. ❖

We Mourn the Loss of Board Members . . .

In the brief span of a few months we have lost three members of our board, one a past member and two current: **Charlotte Witmer**, 92, who served as Recording Secretary before moving to New England in 2006; **Jennifer Moyer-Damiani**, 34, who served as Historian until her untimely passing; and **Raymond Spaid**, 83, who served in many capacities over his long association with the Society.

The Society is truly diminished by their loss, and we extend our condolences to their families and friends. ❖

You Make It Happen . . .

Jen hasn't finished adding up all the numbers yet but, based on our results of 2012, it's reasonable to say that in 2013 we have again probably logged over 1,200 hours of volunteer time donated by more than fifty volunteers. And that doesn't always count the time many of us spend working on Society related matters "off-site." From our very earliest days we have been a volunteer supported organization that uses all of our resources to further our mission to preserve the rich historic legacy of our communities for the edification of present and future generations.

During 2013 Amanda and Bridgie faithfully provided open "office hours" every Thursday for persons doing research or just dropping by to see what's new in our ongoing Book Sale. Anne has undertaken the monumental task of organizing our various archaeological collections and Tom and Jon have seen to it that our largest artifacts are maintained. An extensive schedule of open days for our two sites plus our special events would not be possible without our faithful tour guides. You have read the results of the research of our Historian and the excerpts from the Muhlenberg Journals provided by our Chaplain. This, like all the other editions of our Chronicle, was compiled by Myrna who also assures that you receive timely information about our events.

I could go on and on, putting a name or two with everything we do from acquisitions, to refreshing our exhibits, to website management, but I think you get where I'm going with this. First, it's my entre to saying thanks to all my partners in this massive effort to keep our history alive. Second, and this is the really important part, is to challenge you to add some of your uniqueness into the mix of volunteers that make our time together so enriching for everyone.

I generally say the same thing to each person inquiring about becoming a volunteer: *experience what we are striving to do and bring your special gifts to share in that effort.* That's how this non-historian type first got involved. Little did I realize back in 1999, when John Shetler asked if I could give him some help in getting out from under the backlog of things he was working on, that I would still be here in 2014, let alone even more excited about the ever emerging possibilities for telling our stories than I was a decade ago.

Bob Meschke

Our Wish List . . .

If you can provide any of the following items for the **Dewees Museum**, the Society would be most grateful!

- bathroom sink/faucet kitchen sink/faucet Office Supplies

Give us a call at 610-489-7560 to discuss any item(s) you may wish to donate to assure that it is an appropriate match for our needs.

. . . Thank you for your help!

Wanted!

. . . a person with a green thumb who loves to play in the dirt to help with the garden at the Henry Muhlenberg House. Plants and seeds will be provided.

. . . volunteers who know what a Swiffer is and enjoys the company of other Swiffers to dust two museums once a month—coffee, tea, cookies, and friendships provided.

. . . tour Guides who would like training and opportunities to work in our museums.

Call 610-489-7560 to discuss!

A Preview of 2014 Events

February	PV Student Fair
March	Tea at the Tavern—Readings from the Muhlenberg Journals
April	Spring Cleanup—Volunteers Welcome
May	Tour Guide Training at Dewees
June	Grange Fair, Flag Day
July	Community Parade
August	Tea at the Tavern—History of Knitting
September	Heritage Day
October	Halloween Event
November	Veterans Day Program
December	Candlelight Tour

Sunday Tours: Mid-April through October
Tours by prior arrangement all year round

Monthly Board Meetings
Monthly Museum Committee Meetings

Office Hours, Research Library Hours,
and Ongoing Used Book Sale:
Thursdays 9am to 12 noon
(or by appointment)

*Watch our Website (trappehistoricalsociety.org)
and e-mail blasts for firm dates, reminders, and
cancellations due to weather.*

Membership Information

If you have not yet renewed, please do so today!

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <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 |

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____

e-mail address* _____

*e-mail my newsletters and announcements

Checks Payable to: The Historical Society

Mail to: Richard Holcombe
The Historical Society
P.O. Box 26708
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*. . . and encourage your friends and neighbors
to visit our historical sites!*

The Historical Society

of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley, Inc.

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FEBRUARY 2014 NEWSLETTER

Timely Information — Please Do Not Delay!

From Your Museum Committee . . .

Think Spring! Before we know it the ravages of winter will be behind us and we will be heading full tilt into our Summer schedule of activities. Last year we tried a new schedule for opening our largest artifacts to the public and hope to do the same in 2014. The backbone of that effort is our faithful cadre of Tour Guide Volunteers who assure that the Muhlenberg home and our Dewees Tavern Museum are open on the second and fourth Sundays from mid-April through October. The only Sunday we will not open is during Memorial Day weekend. Your Museum Committee will be contacting you if you have helped in the past. If you'd like to give it a try please be in touch with Bob Meschke (610-935-2463) or call the office (610-489-7560). An e-mail to info@trappehistoricalsociety.org will work too.

Don't think you know enough to talk to others about our two largest artifacts, and the too-numerous-to-count smaller ones they contain? No one started out knowing everything or does anyone make that claim even after years of service. It's something we grow into and over time enjoy more and more. To be sure everyone has the right information to share with our visitors, we start every volunteer Tour Guide off slowly with a time of mentoring alongside someone familiar with our buildings and collections and, of course, an excellent Tour Guide Training Program to start things off. So, don't be shy, give it a try! You'll love the company and the people you'll meet.

Your Committee will be very busy this year telling the many stories that are *The Historical Society of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley* as we celebrate fifty years of service to our community. We are especially looking for any memorabilia and stories you may have of our life together this past half century. We are also in need of a few good "history detectives" to help search our various archives and artifacts for things to display that tell of our growth from our humble beginnings in the Grimison's dining room to the present. Our Committee meets the third Thursday morning of every month in Dewees. Why not stop by and get involved?

Bob Meschke, Museum Committee Chair


The Gift Shop
at the
Henry Muhlenberg House

*If you haven't visited
The Gift Shop recently,
you're in for a surprise!*

Unique items for your home?

A last-minute gift?

A memento of your visit?

We are not staffed on a daily basis, but we will make arrangements to be available for you—with no obligation to purchase!

201 West Main Street in Trappe
Call Linda at 610.489.8805