



# The Historical Society of Trappe Pennsylvania

For the preservation of the history, ancient buildings and land marks  
of the Trappe area.

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Volume X, Number 4

THE TRAP CHRONICLE

October, 1982  
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## ARMISTICE DAY DINNER MEETING

Date - Thursday, November 11th, 1982

Time - 6:45 p.m.

Place - Keystone Grange, Main Street, Trappe

Cost - \$8.00 per person

From the President -

The semi-annual meeting of the Historical Society of Trappe will be held at Keystone Grange #2, on Thursday, November 11th, 1982 at 6:45 p.m. The Grange will serve a full course family style dinner, cost per person is \$8.00. Please make reservations by calling Norman Holcombe, 489-7266 before Monday, November 8th.

Mrs. Marge Krug has planned a very interesting and enjoyable program for us. The speaker, Mrs. Pauline Keller of Phoenixville, will entertain us with "My Name Is Sarah" which is also educational. There will be slides, songs and audience participation.

Hope to see you there.

I also wish to thank Mrs. Kathleen and Mrs. Betsy Ross for the splendid job they did on planning our Trap Day Celebration. We started with a church service at St. Luke's United Church of Christ in Trappe, lunch at the Lamb Hotel, then journeyed to the Morgan House near Lansdale which was very interesting, then back to the Headquarters for light refreshments. Everything worked out very well and to top it off, we had a beautiful day weather wise. Thank you again for a job well done.

Elmer Funk, President

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Membership -

The Society now has a total paid membership of 168, including 26 Life Members, 7 Schrack and 1 Dewees Membership. I am still accepting dues, even though late in the year. New members are Mary Cline, Mr. & Mrs. George Shenkle, Russell L. Remig, Lee Fryer, Mrs. Jesse L. Vaughn, Shirley Eaton, Betty Leininger, William E. Ech, Margaret Rakus.

Please make check for membership payable to Historical Society of Trappe, and mail to Mrs. Charlotte Rosser, 347 Main Street, Trappe, Pa. 19426

From The Tavern -

It doesn't seem possible that just three short years ago we were about to take a major step in our lives and move into the Tavern.

When we came to inspect the place prior to moving in, it all seemed so overwhelming, so cold and uninviting. We had remembered the fun and good time we had shared with the Elds and wanted so very much to make the Tavern a place of joy and fun once more. Well, three years and two children later, we feel that we have really made it our home and a place anyone can come and visit and feel comfortable.

There's a great many people we can thank for helping us fit in but the person who really exemplifies what friendship is all about has to be Walt Sauer. Rarely did a day go by that first few months that Walt wasn't around asking if we could help in one way or another. Thanks, Walt. We really appreciated it.

Well, space and time are short, so we'll be saying bye for now and we hope to see you all at the Christmas Open House.

Regards,

The Bullards

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Gift Shop News -

As that season of Christmas rapidly approaches, it is time to let you know that our Gift Shop is taking orders on all Wilton products at a 25% reduction off the retail price. What better gift than one which reflects the warmth and nostalgic ear of a time gone by.

We also have a complete selection in stock of hand-dipped candles just waiting to brighten up a room full of holiday cheer.

There are various other gifts worth note but seeing is much better than reading - Give me a call at 489-1797 if you'd like to place an order or come and see what we've got to order.

By the way - if you haven't heard yet - we're going to carry the ideal gift: American Flags. What better way to show off your home than with an American Flag waving proudly from your front porch or yard.

Mark Bullard

## Historian's Report -

The last Wednesday in September, we had a visit from three fifth grade classes from the Middle School on First Avenue, Trappe. The students walked from the school to the Tavern and back in a staggered schedule. Walter Sauer manned the cave, Rev. L. Eugene Moyer the graveyard, and I took care of the museum. We all had a ball! Each class first heard a short talk about our building and artifacts in the museum, and then they were split into groups of seven to visit the cave. We had candles burning in the deeper cave and the children loved the spookiness - which Walt certainly helped along! Next each group went over to the graveyard where Rev. Moyer showed them the oldest headstone still extant, that of Ludwig Evalt, who died on March 6, 1760. (He was the father of Mary Miller who married Andrew Miller, the earliest known owner of the building.) We received many letters from the students in thanks, all of which will be filed in the library. Most decided that the cave was the best!

The museum and the library have been open every Sunday June 1st to October 1st. We have had quite a few visitors. Several visitors have joined as new members. Sue Ellen Palmen has done a great job supplying hosts or hostesses (sometimes both) for the museum. Every Sunday a different person has filled the position, while either Linda Bullard or I have staffed the library. Many thanks to all of you.

During the Summer we had a visit from three persons who used to live in the tavern during the pre-depression days. They were Herbert and Clarence Hatfield and their sister, Betty Hatfield Leininger. We had a very interesting time, and later I hope to tell you all the information they were able to give us about the building. Mrs. Leininger has joined the Society.

In the Winter issue there will be a list of recent acquisitions for both the library and the museum, and also any addition to the Historic Plaque list.

Starting with this issue of the Chronicle, we are starting a regular publication effort of a separate article of historical significance. Since printing is so expensive, the Board of Directors has chosen this method of publishing new information or republishing previously published information with appropriate credits. Extra copies of these articles will be available for a short time at the library.

Esther Keller, Historian

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## The Quilters -

We will have some "goodies" for sale at our Dinner Meeting on November 11th. You may like them for Christmas gifts. Be sure to have a look at them.

Ann Schrack

BLACK ROCK COVERED BRIDGE

REMINISCENCES OF

VERNA BECHTEL JONES

My name is Verna Bechtel Jones. My father was Frank Detwiler Bechtel, son of Henry Bechtel and Mary Detwiler Bechtel, their farm was located on the western corner of Route 113 and Bechtel Road, Upper Providence Township. My mother was Elsie Ettinger Bechtel, daughter of Milton Ettinger, who was the son of John Michael Ettinger and Mary Catherine Liszt Ettinger. John Michael Ettinger and Mary Catherine Liszt were born in Germany and were married before emigrating to America in 1849.

My great grandfather, John Michael Ettinger, was for many years the Toll House of the Black Rock Bridge, and lived in a house at the end of the gridge. My grandfather, Milton Ettinger, was born in the Toll House. Sometime in the 1870's my grandfather built the Ettinger Homestead on Black Rock Road, between Route 113 and Route 29. My Mother and I were both born at this Homestead. The Homestead has been registered in the Archives of the Montgomery County Court House as a "Century Farm."

In addition to collecting tolls, my great grandfather made and repaired fishing nets and made shoes to add to his income. I do not recall the toll rates for crossing the bridge but I do know that it varied. It was so much for a pedestrian and so much for a one horse vehicle, etc., or a certain amount per head for loose animals. There was an uncovered walkway attached to the bridge, for the mules that pulled the Canal barges. The two path from Cromby to the Black Rock was on the Chester County side and changed over to the Montgomery County side at this point. Toll was collected by lowering a bucket, into which the coin was placed and then pulled up by a rope. Once a man on the barge placed a cud of tobacco in the bucket instead of money. This made Michael Ettinger so angry that he went down and cut the tow rope, which left the barge floating down the river.

I remember, as a young girl, we often used the bridge for parking purposes. (It is obvious why these covered bridges were called "Kissing Bridges.")

The covered bridge was constructed in 1860 and was destroyed by fire on a Sunday afternoon in June, 1926. It is fairly certain that the fire was caused by boys from Tunnel Hill who were playing with fire crackers, the sparks of which caused the dust to ignite. The Phoenixville Fire Department was called but the bridge was down by the time they arrived.

The bridge, evidently, was named for the black rock or rocks in the vicinity, but I do not know if there was any specific rock to which it referred. It would be interesting to know whether the bridge, the road leading to it, from Route 113, or the old colonial Hotel, on the Black Rock Road, a short distance from the bridge, was the first to be christened "Black Rock."

The Black Rock Hotel was no longer used as an Inn during my lifetime, but it was used as a country store for many years. During my youth, the property owned by Ellis Butt and in addition to the store, he also conducted monthly cattle sales. The cattle were shipped by rail to the Mont Clare Station, where they were put in

a stockyard until someone came for them. Mr. Butt would hire several young men and boys to drive them to his sales stables. Here they would be sold to the highest bidder. Wayne Pearson was the auctioneer. The same group of men would drive them to their final destination, possibly 4 or 5 miles away; here someone would meet them with a team and convey them back to the hotel. My brother Donald would often act as one of the drivers. They received about 50 cents per person for this service.

Donald recalls the last shipment of cattle was a herd of steers for the County Home. The whole herd stampeded but were finally recaptured - the last three being found in Zieglersville.

March, 1931