

The Chronicle

A Publication of The Historical Society

Spring 2009

of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley, Inc.

Volume XXXVIII No. 2

Society Prepares for Textile Exhibit

Our *Board of Directors* has finalized our busy *Summer* schedule. Both the Dewees Museum and Henry Muhlenberg House will be open on Sunday afternoons (1:30 to 4:00pm) from May 31st through September 13th (with the exception of July 5th and September 6th). We also hope to have both sites open for *Heritage Day* on September 19th. While we do provide tours throughout the year, Summer is that special time when we can welcome visitors to share our rich historic legacy.

Ruth Daller of the *Museum Committee* is overseeing the preparation of our special *Summer Exhibit* in the *Dewees Museum* which will showcase our large textile collection consisting of coverlets, quilts, and fabrics of various types. Said Daller, "It is such a pleasure to have the opportunity to display these wonderful, mostly 18th century pieces, that have been donated over the years."

Don't let the Summer pass without a visit to this exhibit. Call to arrange a group tour (610-489-7560). Give us a call also if you have any items you might want to place on loan for this exhibit. ❖

Spring Work Days



With winter now safely behind us, it's time to do our "*Spring Cleaning*." Two *Saturday Work Days* have been scheduled: *May 2nd and 9th, from 9 A.M. to ???* Helpers are encouraged to bring along their favorite indoor and outdoor clean-up tools since there's something calling for attention almost everywhere you look.

Larry DiPiano, Properties Chair, has suggested that if someone brings a long ladder, we can inspect the rain gutters at the front of Dewees—and a long snake would help in case we need to clean out the downspouts.

Call in advance if possible so we have some idea of the number of people we can count on—otherwise, just drop in at the last minute. You are very important to the success of this effort. ❖

Volunteers Needed!

(Tour Guides and Members)

Be Part of the Team

HERITAGE DAY

Saturday, September 19, 2009

11:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Help with . . .

Collecting Admissions

Membership Recruitment

House Tours

Gift Shop Sales

Children's Activities

Set-up 9/18 beginning 5:00PM

and 9/19 at 9:30AM

Breakdown 9/19 beginning 4:00PM

. . . and more, so save the date!

Call Pat at 610-489-7560 to let her know your 1st and 2nd choices

From Our President . . .

Some weeks ago a passerby sent an e-mail commenting that Muhlenberg House and Dewees Tavern seemed devoid of activity. Well, it was winter, so we didn't have much outside activity but, I assured her, behind those walls there was a lot of life going on. There is always the regular business we carry on through our Administrative Secretary on Tuesdays and Thursdays and the opportunity those open times afford to visitors seeking genealogical and historical information. Some come from quite a distance and always go away so pleased with what we can offer them.

This past winter we had several groups tour Muhlenberg House. In February we welcomed current and future Tour Guides with an orientation meeting in preparation for their formal training on April 25th. Then there are the ongoing activities of our busy volunteers working in the *Gift Shoppe* which always seems to be changing in appearance. The *Museum Committee* always has more to do than time or people to do it as that faithful cadre tackles everything from keeping ahead of the cobwebs to assuring that our increasing collection of artifacts is properly received and cared for. *Anna Maria* re-enactor, Linda Wiernusz, has presented her program to Muhlenberg house visitors as well as community groups. Maintaining two 18th-early 19th century buildings should have a professional overseer instead of our Property Committee that makes sure all is in good repair. And behind it all is our faithful Board of Directors convening monthly and by e-mail and telephone to manage the *Society's* business.

Thanks to generous donors, we were finally able to replace the outmoded commode in the Dewees restroom. As we gathered for our March Board Meeting at *Dewees* we discovered that Sunpower Builders had undertaken the much overdue restoration of the Horse Shed. Planning has been going on since last fall's event to assure that *Heritage Day 2009* will be even better than the last great success. Your Board feels we have much to offer visitors and decided to expand the time our houses will be open this summer. We're getting ready to do some "*Spring Cleaning*" while in the midst of organizing our summer *Textile Exhibit* and planning for our *Flag Day* Dinner.

These are some of the reasons I am proud to be counted among the membership of our *Society* and, for a brief moment in its rich and long history, to be privileged to serve as your President. We are an association of volunteers who combine our talents and our resources to safeguard and maintain our historic legacy that dates back to the establishment of our communities and even before. To be sure, we do attach tangible benefits to being a member but, when you get right down to it, the pride that comes with knowing that you and I make it all happen *is priceless!*

A little box in each Chronicle urges readers to consider joining the *Society*. This is the time of year we ask you to consider renewing your membership and maybe even to go a step further. If you believe that the *Society* is important to the life of our community, please invite a friend or neighbor to join in that support. If you are a **Life Member**, consider making an additional donation this year to help us meet our increasing operating costs. Most importantly, consider the ways you can stretch the benefit of your contribution by *volunteering* some of your time and talent.

Your partner in preservation and education,


Rev. Bob Meschke, President

The English Candidate: The Rev. Mr. John Wade

Submitted by The Rev. Judith A. Meier, Historian of The Historical Society of Trappe, Collegetown, Perkiomen Valley

Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, by virtue of his prominence in the early Lutheran Church in America, was often called upon to settle disputes in the congregations he established or oversaw. Occasionally he was also consulted in ecclesiastical controversies among members and clergy of the German Reformed Church. His journals reveal that he was drawn into the middle of English Episcopal matters as well.

On August 5, 1779, Messrs. Paul Custer and Bean came knocking on Muhlenberg's door with a request on behalf of St. James' Episcopal Church, across the Perkiomen, and a young man, John Wade, English born but here for six years, brought up in the High Church, a little over thirty and single. Mr. Wade had been serving several small English congregations in the Blue Mountains but unfortunately was not ordained. Let Father Muhlenberg tell you himself:

"They asked me to examine him. I spoke with him concerning infant baptism and the Lord's Supper, and he gave good answers from Holy Scripture. I had him read some Latin, which he read fairly well according to the English pronunciation, but which I could not understand according to my pronunciation; he said, however, that he had not had much practice in speaking. I then had him read and explain the first verse of the third chapter of John in the Greek Testament, which went only moderately well. With regard to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Episcopal Church, he declared that he accepted them all in so far as they were in accord with the Word of God, excepting the seventeenth article concerning predestination, which he could not accept because it was contrary to God's Word. For the rest, he spoke well on the subject of practical Christianity. His and the men's request was whether he could not be ordained by our Lutheran Ministerium for service in the English Church. When he preached the last time in the Perkiomen church, the people had brought nine children for baptism, whom he had declined to baptize because he was not ordained. They requested that I send a written statement of the matter to the English congregation. I promised to do this during the next week, God willing. It is a dubious matter, however. (a) The English Episcopal congregations are now, as it were, destitute of human aid. Their missionaries can expect nothing from their Society [The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts]. (b) The congregations cannot obtain preachers ordained by bishops, unless they should be papistical. (c) Hence they do not know where to turn, and must either give up their form of government or be scattered or go over to other denominations or make use of ministers without episcopal ordination, though with the latter they can retain and propagate their *Common Prayer Book* or liturgy."

St. James' last pastor, loyalist William Currie, had resigned from his congregations in 1776, necessitating a reliance on occasional supply preachers, including Wade, who preached every fourth Sunday.

Moved by the seriousness of their plight and yet wanting to be correct, Muhlenberg looked to scripture, sought guidance in prayer, and weighed the options. His assessment of the situation reveals his theology of ordination as well as his concern for all the sheep.

"It is therefore my humble Opinion without the least pretence of prescription viz (1) that in the present Emergency a vacant Congregation might venture to accept such a Candidate if both parties please, first for probation and let him preach the Gospel, baptize their Children and instruct the neglected Youth in the principles of Religion, which is most necessary, otherwise a Congregation will dwindle to Nothing and the Lord require the blood at the hand of the parents and Rulers. But if the necessary Means of Grace and Salvation are offered and used by Preaching, Baptizing the Children and Instructing Youth, the Flock may be increased by the blessing of God. 2) If the aforesaid chief Points are settled, so that no variance and Division arise, and a good

harmony subsists between the Minister and Congregation, the further Examination and Ordination may be easily obtained, if not by a Bishop, yet by a regular Protestant Ministry, which is the nearest related to your episcopal Church. For it is my humble Opinion, that in the present critical Junctures an Examination and Ordination of a regular Protestant Ministry may do as an episcopal one. And since there is at yet no Episcopal Jurisdiction established by Law in the independent States of North America, why should Congregations be left destitute of the necessary Means of Salvation, be neglected and destroyed, only for Want of an Episcopal Ordination which is but a piece of pious Ceremony, a form of Godliness empty of Power, and may be of Service where it is established by Law, tho it does not appertain to the essential parts of the holy Function itself. In the primitive Christian Church the Ambassadors and Ministers of Christ could impart extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost unto believing Candidates, by prayers and laying their hands upon them, but this Prerogative is not continued and we may controvert for ever about apostolical and Episcopal Succession, Experience shows too plain, that neither Episcopal, nor Ministerial or Presbyterian Ordination doth infuse any natural and supernatural Gifts or Qualities, otherwise we should not find so many counterfeited Ministers, refined Hypocrites, and grievous Wolves in the Christian Church on Earth, instead of true and faithful Shepherds. All Christian Protestant Congregations, which enjoy the blessed Liberty of Conscience, should be cautious and careful in chusing and calling Ministers, and follow the Rule of the holy Apostle Paul in his 1 Ep: to Timoth: 3:1-13—especially the 10 v . . . [and] Math: 9,36, 38 . . . [Aug. 10, 1779].

The Rev. Mr. John Wade became a frequent visitor at the patriarch's home, sometimes for friendly conversation, sometimes to relate news or to deliver petitions from the congregations desiring his services and begging for his ordination.

Finally, in the spring of 1781, Muhlenberg sought the advice of Pastors Christopher Kunze and Henry Helmuth, who were much more familiar with the English church, and urged Wade to meet with them in Philadelphia. As spring turned to summer, Wade's visits and anxiety increased, for he longed for a quick decision from the Lutheran pastors. Muhlenberg sent this message to the English candidate on June 8, 1781:

With Compliment to Mr. Wade I am to acquaint him, that no Answer is come from Philad. It seems to me, the Revd Gentlemen of our Ministry in Town, are afraid to comply with your Request concerning Ordination, and to interfere with Objects, belonging to the established Episcopal Church, because of the present critical Times and Situation of political Affairs. Therefore you need not come to Town, but leave the Matter in Suspence, and permit me to be and remain your humble and well-wishing Servant H: Mb.

Muhlenberg conferred with his Lutheran colleagues and Rector (not yet Bishop) White of the Episcopal Church but could only counsel patience until the united Lutheran Ministry could meet with Wade after its conference—next year. In the meantime, Wade would do well to provide the Ministerium with a written Vocation or Call from the congregations wanting him as well as a certificate that he had taken the oath of allegiance to the united independent States of America - and he should undergo a thorough examination according to the Lutheran practice.

In late August 1782 Wade approached Muhlenberg with a *bona fide* call from a church in the State of Delaware. The old man wrote out a sample call letter for him to take back. By the spring of 1783 Wade was also serving three English churches in Chester County. The need for ordination was all the more urgent!

... continued on page 3

At long last, in the summer of 1783, four years after he first knocked on the door of the venerable house in Trappe, Wade was examined by the Ministerium at the close of its annual synodical meeting in Yorktown. Muhlenberg recorded in his journal on August 16, 1783, "Mr. Wade also stopped in and desired me to sign my name with the others on his ordination certificate, which I did. After preaching on 1 Peter 5:10, 11, he was ordained in St. Michael's Church by the reverend committee acting upon the authority of a resolution of the reverend synod, namely, the Rev. Messrs. Kuntze, Helmuth, Schmid, and Streight."

Practical pastor, authentic Lutheran, nascent ecumenist, Muhlenberg trusted in God that the appropriate action had finally been taken. Thoughts written in his journal the summer before speak to the condition of the diasporic Church then and now."

"The visible church is divided into various parts. Every party has hedged in its part with regulations and rules and keeps within its own limits. For example, the Roman Catholic, the English Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Independent, the Baptist, the Evangelical Lutheran, the Calvinistic, the Moravian, the Anabaptist, etc. Each part has its articles of faith, regulations, rules, and organization and considers them to be better or the best. How, then, could it be proper for a Lutheran or a Presbyterian minister to examine and ordain a candidate for an English Episcopal congregation? Supposing that the candidate agreed in every particular with the Unaltered Augsburg Confession or with the Presbyterian confession and rules, the Episcopal part would protest against this. But if he did not agree with the doctrine of the said ministers, then they could not declare the candidate orthodox and they would be acting contrary to their own rules, which do not permit one alone to ordain a man. This matter probably can never be solved until the church of Christ on earth again becomes one flock with one shepherd. Meanwhile it is to be regretted that various Episcopal congregations are left so deserted and wounded. The priest and the Levite go unconcernedly by until, perhaps, the good Samaritan may come and care for them." Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was that Good Samaritan.

Visit "The Historian's Corner" at our website: www.trappehistoricalsociety.org

Of Special Note . . . Welcome to *Mrs. Anne Lachenmayer* who was elected by our **Board of Directors** to fill the vacancy of **Hospitality Chairperson**. Anne also continues to be one of our dedicated Tour Guides.

A generous gift from *Mrs. Catherine Minardi* has made it possible to finally replace our outmoded commode in the Dewees Museum restroom and to add some additional monies to our **Weatherization and Painting fund**. *Mr. Ron Riker* of R&M Construction in Oaks, PA, donated the installation. A big thank you to both for your generous support of our work together!

Planning is underway for our annual **Heritage Day** celebration on September 19th. Our thanks to *Mrs. Janice McDermott* for her contribution to help us underwrite the costs of the craftspeople and the puppet shows that were such a big hit last year. It's not too early to let Dona McDermott know you will be available to help make this day possible. ❖

ONE NIGHT ONLY . . . WE NEED YOU!!!!

On **Tuesday May 12, 2009, Iron Hill Brewery** in Phoenixville will join with The Historical Society in a fundraising event. Present your coupon for dinner **between 5:00pm and 10:00pm** and the Society will receive **20%** of your food bill. A fun night out for you, and we earn some much needed money—**A WIN-WIN FOR ALL!!**

Share the enclosed coupons with your family and friends and enjoy dinner at the Iron Hill Brewery!

**It's Time to Renew your Membership!
Invite and encourage friends and neighbors to join also!**

G Student	\$10.00
G Individual	\$25.00
G Family	\$50.00
G Supporting	\$100.00 - \$249.00
G Patron	\$250.00 - \$499.00
G Sustaining	\$500.00 - \$999.00
G Benefactor	\$1000.00 and up

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel No. _____ e-mail address: _____

Checks Payable to: The Historical Society

Mail to: Richard Holcombe
The Historical Society
P.O. Box 26708
Collegeville, PA 19426-0708

The Horse Shed at Dewees . . . has been a part of our landscape for over three decades. In an historical note, Dr. John Shetler described it as "a rare example of the kind of sheds that stood behind churches, hotels and other types of buildings more that 100 years ago." This shed formerly served the **Perkiomen Brethren in Christ, Graterford River Brethren**. Alan Keyser, Historian of Plain Churches, told Dr. Shetler that this shed is the only remaining example of the unique architecture of a 19th century Montgomery County structure of this type.

We are extremely grateful to *Jon Costanza* of Sunpower Builders in Collegeville for rescuing our shed from further deterioration and possible collapse. In recalling his long association with Dr. Shetler during the work they shared at the **Muhlenberg House**, Mr. Costanza has **donated** this restoration of the shed **In Memory of Dr. John C. Shetler**, our former Society Historian. ❖

Much Needed Improvements at Dewees . . . We are counting on your generosity to enable us to paint and weatherize the windows and doors at Dewees. Please complete the Certificate of Gift below and return it with your tax-deductible donation.

. . . thank you for your help!

CERTIFICATE OF GIFT

**for Painting and Energy Saving Weatherizing
of Windows and Doors at Dewees**

Enclosed is a check made payable to The Historical Society . . .

Designated for: _____

In the Name of: _____

In Memory of: _____

_____ Street _____

City State Zip Tel.

G \$25 G \$50 G \$100 G \$500 G \$1,000 G Other

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Mark Your Calendar!

- ✓ 5/2 and 5/9 Spring Cleaning
- ✓ 5/12 Iron Hill Brewery Fundraiser
- ✓ 5/31 Opening of Summer Sundays
- ✓ 6/14 Flag Day Dinner

SPRING 2009 NEWSLETTER

Timely Information — Please, Do Not Delay!



FLAG DAY DINNER

Sunday, June 14, 2009

Bay Pony Inn

508 Old Skippack Road, Lederach

4:30 PM Social Hour (Cash Bar) 5:30 PM
Dinner

John Roushey—Presents a Portrayal of Harry S. Truman

Fresh Fruit Supreme Fresh Garden Salad

Dinner Choice (select below)

Cheesecake Coffee/Tea

Children's Menu: Chicken Tenders and Soda
(including appetizer, salad, and dessert)

Clip and mail to: Richard Holcombe
P.O. Box 26708
Trappe, PA 19426-0708

Checks Payable to: The Historic Society

----- Reservation Form -----

Name: _____ Tel: _____

Address: _____

Members: \$33.00 per person Non-Members: \$35.00 per person Children: \$15.00 per child

Please select entrée: Chicken Piccata with Caper Lemon Butter # _____ \$ _____
 Herbed Pork Tenderloin # _____ \$ _____
 Seafood Ragout in Puff Pastry # _____ \$ _____
 Children's Menu # _____ \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Bring a Friend!

Tour Guides . . . are the critical element in showcasing our two sites. As we look forward to our Summer Sundays, we are in the midst of encouraging members and friends to help. If you missed our Tour Guide training session that was conducted by Dona McDermott on April 25th, please contact us (610-489-7560) and we will gladly show you how you can support this effort.

Wish List . . . If you can provide any of the following, The Historical Society would be most grateful!

- Two programmable thermostats for proper climate control in *Dewees Tavern*. Also, insulation materials to reduce heat loss in our ductwork and some volunteer help to get this job done ASAP.
- Tour Guides for Dewees Tavern and the Henry Muhlenberg House
- Committee Members: Fund Raising/Gift Shop, Property, Museum, Heritage Day, Hospitality
- Painting and energy saving weatherization of windows and doors at Dewees (*see page 3*)

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

If you would like to sponsor a project or purchase an item listed above, we will research the cost and advise you. . . . **Thank you for your help!**