

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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TOMBSTONE TALES

The annual "Tombstone Tales" event took place on October 25th at the Augustus Lutheran Church. Guests toured the cemetery while various resurrected residents told of fascinating experiences during their lifetimes.

The event also included a skit put together by Tom Kochenderfer, Mary Schlichter, and Debbie Augustine, depicting a visit to Pastor and Mrs. Muhlenberg by Mrs. Andrew Miller who had to get out of house because her husband was drinking and becoming unpleasant. It attempted to portray local concern about troops and battles in the region during the Revolutionary War and the challenges facing Germans who arrived penniless to these shores.

Also Included this year were representatives of various local historical societies, including The Historical Society of Trappe, Collegeville, Perkiomen Valley,



Inc. Members Joyce Haas and Ruth Dahler distributed our literature to receptive visitors and tried on some military helmets at the World War II military display prepared by Ursinus College student, Emily Immel.



A good time was had by all.

Submitted by The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As we prepare for our annual meeting and a visit from Eleanor Roosevelt, I am amazed at how fast this year has gone by.

Many volunteers have contributed hours helping to complete our goals.

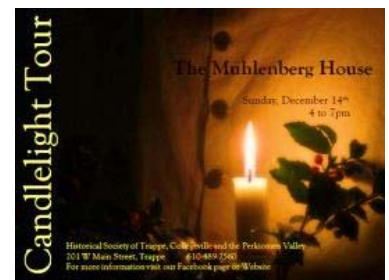
A recent highlight was an invitation to participate in Tombstone Tales at Augustus Lutheran Church. We presented a World War Two exhibit and were blessed to have Ursinus College student, Emily Immel organize and prepare that for us. She arranged a great collection of newspapers and artifacts from our military archives. Joyce Haas and I had the pleasure of spending the day at the event. If you have never been to the cemetery at Augustus Church, you should plan to do so. It is amazing and the guides told wonderful stories about the veterans who are buried there.

An added benefit for us was to meet with other historical societies and to share ideas. So thank you Richard and Sara Clapper for inviting us and for the chance to meet and work with all of you.

Be sure to circle December 14th on your calendar and come to our Candlelight tour at Muhlenberg House. The house will be grand and you will get to hear "Twas the Night Before Christmas" in old German read by Pastor Kochenderfer and recorded by Kimberton School student, C.J. Fudala.

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving and remember to volunteer in the new year.

Sincerely,
Ruth Daller,
President



We Mourn the Loss of Members . . .

Thomas Hartenbauer, Loretta Zvarick, Raymond Spaid, Margery Tait, Brian Fegely, Roy Gaugler, and Virginia Weicheld, who passed away during 2014. The Society is truly diminished by their loss, and we extend our condolences to their families and friends.

**From The Journals of
Henry Melchior Muhlenberg
1742**

December 11, Saturday. Quit my lodgings at the Englishman's and, besides other expenditures, had to pay dearly enough. Rode out of Philadelphia about nine o'clock with Mr. Kraft and arrived first at Germantown, where Mr. Kraft took me to several houses and introduced me to the people. While we were in Germantown a drunken, so-called Lutheran who had come to this country with Valentin Kraft came up to us. He grasped the bridles of our horses, stopped us, and asked Kraft to stand godfather to [his] child, jeered at him, and said that he ought to be the godfather because he had been on the ship with his wife and he was the father. In the afternoon we had heavy, steady rain, were wet through and through and had to ford the two swollen streams in the darkness of night. The one deacon of Providence, who lived not far from the streams, went ahead of us through the murky night and guided us through the water. The gracious God helped us safely through and we put up at the home of the senior deacon who refreshed us again.

December 12, Sunday. I preached for the first time at Providence in the senior deacon's barn, since the poor folk there have no church as yet. After the sermon Mr. Kraft read to the congregation my letter from the Rev. Court Preacher. The congregation appeared to be pleased. In the congregation there are many members from the province of Darmstadt who must have had good instruction in their youth. In the evening some of the members were present with us and we engaged in edifying conversation and closed with prayer.

December 13, Monday. Mr. Kraft took a horse and rode ahead to New Hannover, and towards evening I was fetched and brought to New Hannover. Mr. Kraft had put up at a deacon's house and had sought out the advice of the matron of the house as to whether I should take as wife a girl from the city or a farmer's maiden from the country. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Arrived safely in New Hannover in the evening and lodged with the deacon with whom Mr. Kraft was also staying. There was also present a drunken barber who had been summoned by a Reformed man to speak to a ghost which made frequent appearances and disturbed the minds of people. We had a discourse on this hocus-pocus. Afterwards a stranger, a so-called Lutheran, asked me what the sin against the Holy Ghost was. I explained it to them.

Submitted by The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer

THE HISTORIAN'S CORNER

Continuing with our consideration of what Dewees Tavern might have looked like and what a typical stage coach trip might have felt like, I'd like to turn to the Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and his account of what was involved in a trip from Philadelphia to Reading in 1773. On September 18, 1773, while he was still living and serving the church in Philadelphia, he recorded in his journal:

"In September I received a letter from Benjamin Weiser, Esq., stating that I absolutely must go to Reading with my wife because the Weiser heirs were assembled and desired to execute the documents pertaining to some land. We arranged with Mr. Coleman for his stage coach at 15s. a day and free provisions for the driver and the horses."

"September 20, Monday. Drove away early in the morning with my wife and daughter Polly and had a little breakfast at Mr. Coleman's in Germantown. Drove fifteen miles farther to Bruner's Tavern, where we ate our midday meal. From there we continued until evening when we arrived at Mr. Doeringer's Tavern, thirty-three miles from Philadelphia. We put up for the night there, but had little rest on account of disorderly guests. Expenses 10s."

"September 21, Tuesday. Set out early, put eleven miles behind us, ate breakfast at New Store, and paid 5s. for ourselves, the driver, and the horses. It was eleven more miles from there to Reading, where we arrived after one o'clock in the afternoon."

The visit in Reading was chaotic and almost disastrous. The lawyer had left town, the original copy of the legal document had to be copied on seven individual parchments and signed by all the parties; Muhlenberg was sick, partly from the wagon ride; the clerks weren't able to finish the documents in a timely manner, causing Muhlenberg to plead for assistance from the prothonotary. All week Muhlenberg worried about whether he would be back in Philadelphia in time for the Sunday Holy Communion and the quarterly collection. The clerks arrived with the documents at 12 noon Friday, and the business was finally concluded at 3.

Muhlenberg wrote in his journal:

"At three o'clock I set out with my wife on the stagecoach after paying £1. 20s. for the driver's and the horses' expenses. We drove into the night and put twenty-two miles behind us."

"September 25, Saturday: We set out early and, under God's protection, arrived safely in Germantown in the afternoon. There we ate our midday meal and reached Philadelphia at five o'clock. Paid £ 4. 10s. for six days' carriage charges."

He made it to the church on time.

The Rev. Judith A. Meier, Historian

Christmas Wish List . . .

In an effort to preserve the precious historical items inside the Muhlenberg House, The Society is currently in the process of installing UV filters on the interior storm windows. The cost per window is approximately \$240.00 each. The Society would be most grateful to receive the support of the community in covering some of the costs of installing these filters. If you are interested, please give us a call at 610-489-7560.

. . . Thank you for your help!

FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

The Fundraising Committee is actively involved with The Speaker's House and The Historical Society of Montgomery County in preparing an application to History Matters, an organization created by author Steve Berry to support historical preservation. If our application is accepted, the three organizations would be hosting events with Steve Berry in 2016. He appears at events at his own expense in order to help organizations raise funds for preservation projects. Look for more information about this next year.

We continue to pursue grants with a variety of sources including First Niagara Bank, which has provided a grant for the past several years, Thrivent Choice, a program of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and several other local and national organizations both private and public.

We have established a page on the internet fundraising site Crowdrise. Donations may be made at <https://www.crowdrise.com/thehistoricalsociety2> information about this site may be shared with friends and family. If you are a Facebook user, you may also share it via Facebook.

Our fundraising projects at this time are building improvements at the Muhlenberg House and preservation of the Collegeville Independent Newspapers as well as ongoing activities.

We invite anyone with an interest in fundraising to join our committee.

Tom Biggar

Looking Ahead To 2017

It will be here before we know it so your Museum Committee has already begun to plan for our participation in the *Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of Trappe*. Up the street a few blocks the folks at Augustus Church will probably also be busy commemorating the *500th Anniversary of the Reformation*. Both are important events to your *Historical Society* since it was 225 years after the Reformation that *Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg* came to Providence and discovered that if he didn't call it "*Trappe*" no one would know what he was referring to. It is to his reference in his *Journals* that we turn if we want to get the full story of how our little borough got its name.

Since our beginning in 1964 we have become the beneficiaries of thousands of artifacts; each of them with a story to tell of our rich history. Many were displayed when our borough held its last celebration in 1992. Thanks to the generosity of our friends, many more have been added to our collection to assure that future generations might have a glimpse of our history. Our task will be to sort through our attic and come up with items of interest. We are asking you to do the same. We would be appreciative of receiving on loan any artifacts, pictures, and family histories, you may have as a way of broadening our displays and enabling you to be an important part of the celebration. Please contact us if you would like to help in this way. We also invite anyone with an interest in local history to join with our cadre of volunteers to help tell the *Trappe Story*.

We will also be focusing on two very important historical areas to tell our story. Over the years we have been able to archive the genealogies of many of the families who shaped our community. If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to share your "*roots*" with us along with any family photographs and memorabilia. Two of our volunteers will be reaching out to longtime residents for their oral history project. We are also very interested in the history of the home you live in. Our *Historic Site Project* has not gotten much attention lately but we would still like to help you document the history of your historic structure and award you a plaque for your effort.

I hope this helps you see why we've already started planning for 2017. There's much to do in the next two years to plan for that event while still keeping up with our day-to-day activities of supporting historical and genealogical research, preserving our artifacts and informing our many visitors, through special programs, tours and open houses, of our history.

Rev. Bob Meschke, Museum Committee Chair

Visit our website:

www.trappehistoricalsociety.org

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

A Preview of 2015 Events

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| February | PV Student Fair |
| March | Tea at the Tavern |
| April | Spring Cleanup-Volunteers |
| Welcome | |
| May | Tour Guide Training at Dewees Museum |
| June | Grange Fair, Flag Day |
| July | Community Parade |
| August | Tea at the Tavern |
| 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 and Research Library Hours:
Thursdays 9:00 a.m. to 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!

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

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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
Collegeville, PA 19426-0708

... and encourage your friends and neighbors to visit our historical sites!

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November 2014 NEWSLETTER

Timely Information — Please Do Not Delay!

Don't miss our Annual Candlelight Tour on December 14, 2014 from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Muhlenberg House featuring this 19th century bob-sleigh graciously donated by the Zavarick family.



This sleigh was from the former Rittenhouse Farm (where the PV High School Complex now sits) and thanks to the research performed by Ursinus student, Emily Immel, we know its type was known as the workhorse of sleighs. It is sturdy, built to carry heavy loads and has a removable back seat for hauling extra items. Also called a “bob-runner,” these sleighs were used for many different chores around a farm, such as hauling hay, milk cans, buckets, bushels or crates of goods. The running gear itself is similar to that of a wagon. Rather than one continuous runner, this sleigh type has two sets, making it easier to turn.

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!



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