

Historic Trappe

Historical Society | Center for Pennsylvania German Studies | House Museums



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We have been taking on the challenges of a global pandemic through the power of one. As you will recall, Historic Trappe was formed last fall when the boards and membership of both the Historic Society of Trappe and the Speaker's House unanimously agreed to merge.

In January, the new board of trustees for Historic Trappe got to work building a new dynamic and strong organization. Despite the immense challenges brought on by a global pandemic, our new, stronger organization has been able to successfully initiate several projects to further protect our valuable historic properties and expand our collections. As a larger, unified organization, we have proven that we will be able to take on any challenge in preserving the unique historic legacy in Trappe.

Michael Stokes
President, Historic Trappe



Pennsylvania German Kitchen Garden

by Jenna Detweiler

We are in our fifth year of having a farm stand at The Speaker's House!

Over the years, we have enjoyed learning about and experimenting with a variety of herbs, fruits, vegetables, and edible flowers. This season is different for several reasons. Of course, due to the global health crisis, we were unable to hold typical events such as our annual Garden Party. The Speaker's House is no longer open for tours during farm stand hours, and all garden-related interactions are from a masked distance.

In past years, we purchased nearly all of our annual heirloom plants in Lancaster at the Landis Valley plant sale. The sale was online only this year, and they sold out in a matter of minutes. We were happy for their success, but had to find many of our heirloom plants elsewhere.

Although this year presented us with challenges, we are excited to be open again! This year, for the first time, we



Henry Muhlenberg House
with new roof 2020

are growing non-GMO corn, which will likely be ready for harvest in late August or September. Also, we are now selling our own dried flower bouquets. We experimented some more with our red currants, making mini vegan pies and jam with them, as well as making a new batch of horseradish spread using our horseradish root. We love hearing about the unique ways that visitors use our produce, such as making currant creme using our red currants, our mini onions in scrambled eggs, and our radish seed pods salted as a side dish. We are currently selling tomatoes, red currant jam, small onions and onion greens, herbs, cut and dried flowers, and surplus plants. In the coming weeks, we look forward to having carrots and leeks ready for sale.

Thank you to everyone who has supported our farm stand over the past five years!

A "New" Library for Historic Trappe

by Dianne Cram

We are fortunate that, over the years, volunteers of the Trappe Historical Society diligently collected a great amount of printed material and laid the foundation for a promising research library with emphasis on Muhlenberg family history, local/regional history, Pennsylvania German studies, Lutheran and German Reformed religion studies, furnishings and decorative arts, and other related topics. Although much was collected, not all was organized and many boxes of materials were stored waiting for a time to be sorted and cataloged.

Well that time has arrived! Volunteers and college interns are being kept busy with sorting, culling, re-organizing and cataloging, shelving and filing. The project seemed to be a rather daunting task at the start, but our library is finally beginning to take shape and will soon be well organized and user-friendly.

There is a large amount of documents pertaining to Trappe Historical Society as an organization spanning the years from its beginning and evolving into Historic Trappe. These records as an administrative archive will tell a concise story of our organization and its dedication to preserving history!



Bridget Gautieri working in the Library

New shelving units and filing cabinets are being brought in to centralize our library materials and create a convenient research/study area. Catalog information and search aides will eventually be available through an online database making our library easily accessible for users.

The library collection is basically divided into five categories of materials:

Rare and historic books and other printed material – This category includes bibles, histories, newspapers, deeds, wills and other documents that require special

Contemporary books and periodicals – The book collection will be "hands-on" and shelved for easy access.

archival storage and sensitive handling.

Administrative archives of the Trappe Historical Society – Includes Board of Directors meeting minutes, financial records, correspondence, committee records, events/activities of THS, and records of the preservation and restoration of Dewees Tavern, Henry Muhlenberg House and the Speaker's House

Research files – This group consists of research papers, pamphlets, news articles, documents, photographs, taped and digital records, etc. to be stored in file cabinets.

Biographical and family histories – These files include genealogy research, family documents and related ephemera.

Note: Restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have been both a hindrance and help in our organizing efforts. With the need to keep a safe social distance, volunteers have been accessing Dewees Tavern on a limited basis and the library will remain closed to the public for the time being. However, the limited use of the building has provided us with some much needed, uninterrupted time to tackle the project. We will let our members and the public know when the library will again be accessible.



Danielle Bosdell (foreground) and Bridget Gautieri



Reflections on Summer Internship

Greetings! Our names are Danielle Bosdell and Bridget Gautieri, and we are the summer interns for Historic Trappe.

We both just graduated this past May with our Master of Divinity degrees from the United Lutheran Seminary (ULS) in Philadelphia. Over the last year we worked for Lisa Minardi at the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia (LACAP), where we were primarily tasked with cataloging their research library. In the spring, Lisa graciously offered us summer intern positions here at Historic Trappe.

We moved to Trappe at the end of May and started working at Historic Trappe on June 1st. Over the past 8 weeks, we have been cataloging the books in the research library at Dewees Tavern Museum, reorganizing the books and layout of the research library, gardening for the Farm Stand, and screening dirt at the Speaker's House.

Our main project has been cataloging the research library, which consisted of digitally recording a vast amount of information about each of the 1500 books in the library and shelving them according to Library of Congress call numbers. The Historic Trappe Library catalog will soon be uploaded online through Past Perfect, a digital database that will make research inquiries for our patrons much more detailed and efficient. In our last few weeks at Dewees we will be cataloging the rare book collection, which contains more than 150 rare books.

We have truly enjoyed our time working with Historic Trappe. We are very thankful for this internship opportunity, which provided us with housing and an income during an unprecedented time. As soon-to-be Lutheran pastors in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we enjoyed living in historic Trappe and learning more about Henry Muhlenberg and the birth of the Lutheran Church in the U.S., especially since we unfortunately had little to no introduction to Henry Muhlenberg during our time at the seminary. It was quite shocking for us to learn that so much Muhlenberg history

was just 40 minutes down Germantown Pike all along! We were thrilled to learn more this summer and hope to build and see a stronger connection between ULS and Historic Trappe.

May peace be with you all during these perplexing times.



Pennsylvania German walnut cradle with sulfur inlay, dated 1753

Collections Update

by Jeanne Harper

Phase 1 of the collections inventory project which started in 2017 under the Historical Society of Trappe wrapped up in late 2019. Over 1,900 objects were identified, photographed, assigned temporary numbers and matched with paperwork where possible. There are over 700 objects that were not linked to existing paperwork. The next phase will attempt to reconcile these items with paperwork that was not linked to existing objects. Included in phase 1 was a complete reorganization of all storage areas as we made way for the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies in Dewees Tavern. A special thanks to the numerous volunteers who assisted with this massive undertaking.

With the merger of the Historical Society and The Speaker's House in January, work began on cataloging the Speaker's House collection of 175 objects into the PastPerfect Museum Software. The objects have been assigned accession numbers and logged into PastPerfect. Work is now in progress to add photographs in PastPerfect to these objects. The PastPerfect cataloging of the original Historical Society objects will follow.

Dear Friends of Historic Trappe,

It has been a trying summer for all of us as we adjust to new realities, new lifestyles, and a vastly different world than what we all had been expecting.

As a small history non-profit, Historic Trappe is, of course, struggling with the impacts that COVID-19 is having on our organization. Our in-person events and gatherings are greatly curtailed, and programming is more limited than in previous years. And, naturally, these events impact our financial well-being in countless ways.

Although our normal events are on hold, there are still a few ways that you can personally help Historic Trappe in these difficult times!

Donate to our annual operating fund! Make a tax-deductible gift to Historic Trappe today and help us fulfill our dual mission of preservation and education, online at HistoricTrappe.org/donate or by mail.

Renew your membership early or if you haven't, think about renewing now. If you can renew online at HistoricTrappe.org/join, that helps us process your membership more easily, and gives us needed money in the bank during this time when we cannot be open and running programs. If you prefer not to renew online, we can still process checks that come in the mail.

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Stay tuned for virtual events that we are hosting.

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