



Historic Trappe



Special Exhibition on David Ellinger

Opening this fall at the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies is a new special exhibition on David Ellinger (1913–2003), a self-taught artist and antiques dealer who lived and worked in the Trappe area. Ellinger’s colorful depictions of Amish farms, bank barns, quilts, and country auctions helped to popularize Pennsylvania German culture during the mid-1900s. The exhibit will open to coincide with our Tavern Night on September 28 and remain on view until summer 2024. There will also be a companion publication available for purchase in our museum store.



David Ellinger, Spatter Pitcher Still Life. Collection of Dr. David Bronstein; photo, Michael E. Myers



Speaker's House kitchen, photo by Michael E. Myers

Farm Stand Update

by Jenna Detweiler, Farm Stand Manager

We are excited for our 2023 farm stand season! The farm stand is now open every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm at the Speaker's House and features heirloom vegetables, herbs, and fresh-cut flowers grown in our Pennsylvania German kitchen garden. Highlights include Danvers half-long carrots, red beets, Swiss chard, kale, snow peas, lettuce, spinach, French breakfast radishes, and Alpine strawberries. Herbs include mint, lemon balm, feverfew, lavender, oregano, parsley, thyme, dill, and lovage plus dried herbs for decoration and lavender sachets. We also have potted perennials for sale, including black-eyed Susan, campion rose, daylily, feverfew, lamb's ear, love-in-a-mist, salvia, sedum, spearmint, spiderwort, tansy, tiger lily, and yarrow.

Later in the summer we will have leeks, cucumbers, Hinkelhatz peppers (an old Pennsylvania German variety), tomatoes including Riesentraube (a German heirloom red grape tomato), and much more. We also have homemade plum jelly, and I will be making gooseberry mint jam and ground cherry pies once those are ripe. Lastly, we are experimenting by growing flax for the first time this year and are exploring our madder, Baptisia (false indigo), and other plants for their natural dye capabilities. Make sure to sign up on our website for our weekly e-newsletter which includes a Harvest Highlights report on what is available each week at the farm stand.



New to the Collection by Lisa Minardi, with photos by Michael E. Myers

Historic Trappe’s collections are growing by leaps and bounds, with many important new acquisitions over the past year. The following are just a few highlights, including recent donations as well as several objects for which we are still fundraising to complete the purchase. Please contact Lisa Minardi at lisa@historictrappe.org if you would like to help fund a specific acquisition or conservation project. General donations to the collections restricted fund are also always welcome to help with future acquisitions.



Title page from a fraktur book signed by Samuel Musselman, Bucks County, dated 1816. Museum purchase with funds provided by Debra and Ron Pook, Elizabeth and Irwin Warren, Susan and Steve Babinsky, Kathy and Robert Booth, Jane and Gerald Katcher, Austin T. Miller, Eileen M. Smiles and David A. Schorsch, Carl Henry, Tom Musselman, Brett Robbins, Nancy Kollisch and Jeff Pressman, and Dianne and Earl Cram

This extraordinary book, seventeen pages in all, is an incredibly rare glimpse of a fraktur artist’s work behind-the-scenes. It contains samples of various bookplates and other types of fraktur, likely as both a memory aid for the artist and to show prospective customers. Because of the book’s fragile nature, it was completely photographed and a digital flipbook version can now be viewed on our website’s collections highlights section. The book was sold at Sotheby’s in January for \$10,710 including the buyer’s premium; we need to raise an additional \$1,010 to complete the purchase.



Silhouettes of Peter and Hanna Muhlenberg, Philadelphia, c. 1795. Museum purchase with funds provided by Miller, Turetsky, Rule & McLennan, Ed and Mary Ann Dixon, Carl Henry, Jeffrey Herb, and Carol Royce

Likely made in Philadelphia about 1795, this pair of silhouettes depicting Peter and Hanna Muhlenberg would surely have hung in their house in Trappe until 1802 when they moved closer to the city. The silhouette of Hanna was illustrated in the *Muhlenberg Album*, a 1910 publication of family heirlooms, but the one of Peter was previously unknown. The pair surfaced at a Pook & Pook auction last fall and sold for \$3,780. We need to raise an additional \$1,730 to complete this acquisition and \$750 to fund conservation treatment and re-framing of the silhouettes with appropriate archival materials and UV-filtering glass.



Household utensils and accessories. Gift of Murrell F. Dobbins, IV 2023.007

These are highlights from more than forty objects generously donated by Dr. Murrell F. Dobbins IV to help fill out the furnishings of the Muhlenberg House, including a brass chocolate pot, candlesticks and snuffers, copper ladle, pipe tongs, fireplace tools, and much more. Dr. Dobbins also donated nearly 100 books on American furniture and antiques to our research library.



Sampler by Margareta Crawford, Trappe area, Montgomery County, 1797. Museum purchase in memory of Philip W. Bradley with funds donated by John and Jean Renshaw, 2022.028.0001

This needlework was made by Margareta Crawford in 1797. It relates closely to one made by Elisabeth Schrack of Trappe in 1804, also in our collection. Margareta was born in Lower Providence Township; her father, Joseph Crawford, was Scots-Irish. She married a local German boy, Abram Brower, and is buried at the Lower Providence Presbyterian Church in Eagleville.



Portrait of Catharine Elizabeth Hiester, probably Reading, Berks County, c. 1830. Museum purchase with funds provided by an anonymous donor, 2022.028.0001

Catharine Elizabeth Hiester (1810–1885) was the daughter of John S. Hiester and Mary Catharine Muhlenberg. Her paternal grandfather, Joseph Hiester, was governor of Pennsylvania from 1820-23. Her maternal grandfather was Frederick Muhlenberg, first Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. She married John Pringle Jones (1812–1874).

Gardens and Properties Update

by Mike Myers, Property Committee Co-Chair

Greetings from the garden! Our four properties are bustling with activity. This year will see significant changes and improvements to the Speaker’s House property. The stonemasons have masterfully restored the foundations of the side porch, smoke house, and privy. This work gives us the opportunity to regrade and clean up the side yard. The kitchen garden has responded well to soil amendments and the use of tanbark (mulch) on the paths has been a tremendous success as it allows access to the garden in rainy weather and also keeps the weeds down. The outer beds are being reworked to provide room for new perennials and annuals. The bees will be happy! Extra perennials have been potted up for sale at our farm stand. We are off to a good start with our vegetables and expect a bountiful harvest of radishes, carrots, beets, spinach, lettuce, tomatoes, and much more. We introduced three different types of historic trellising: a tepee style with long poles, a woven table style for cucumbers, and a simple stick style with cuttings of Red Osier dogwood taken from the parsonage property. Return visitors to the garden may notice that the strawberries and top onions have moved as we implement crop rotation. This should improve soil conditions and crop yields.



Mike Myers holds a basket of heirloom strawberries in the kitchen garden at the Speaker’s House.

At the Muhlenberg House, we created a small expansion garden to add additional cutting flowers and a flax patch to experiment with linen in the future. We also received a TreeVitalize grant for the Muhlenberg Parsonage property, with the help of volunteer Amy Walker and Jessie Kemper, director of conservation at the Perkiomen Watershed Conservancy. This will fund the planting of 50 native trees of varying size and species to help establish a healthier natural area around the old ice pond. Being situated at the top of a tributary within the Perkiomen watershed, we have a unique opportunity to set good examples of environmental stewardship. The actual planting of the trees will take place in the fall so stay tuned for more information. An initial effort has been made to mow down heavy brush and make the area more accessible for the project.

Much of what we do at Historic Trappe is dependent upon volunteers and in-kind donations. Volunteers are always needed to help with general care of the gardens and property cleanup projects. We also need donations of certain garden supplies, including plastic pots (1-2 gallon and smaller) and garden tools in good shape and with wooden handles. Potting soil is always welcomed. Contact us at info@historictrappe.org if you’d like to volunteer or donate supplies for the garden. Thank you for your continued support and please stop in at the gardens and see what’s growing—you won’t leave empty handed!

The Latest Buzz from our Beehives

by Jim Kelly, Beekeeper



Historic Trappe now has three beehives that produce the honey we sell in our farm stand and gift shops. The hives are very healthy and did well over the winter. In late April, one of the hives swarmed, landing in a small tree in the backyard of the Speaker’s House. We captured that swarm and put it in a new beehive, increasing our hives from two to three. Two days later, the second hive also swarmed! That swarm was also captured and turned over to a member of the Montgomery County Beekeepers, who will place it in a vacant beehive in the county. Now that the colonies have their living arrangements settled, it’s back to work doing what they like to do best—producing honey!



New beehive at the Muhlenberg House after the swarms in April.

Your first reaction to a swarm of bees might be "RUN!!!" But honeybee swarms are rarely aggressive—just the opposite. The swarm is on a journey to new living quarters. Bee colonies can have tens of thousands of worker bees (all female), but only one queen. When a hive gets too crowded, the colony will split in two. Part of the colony will leave (swarm) to find a new home with the original queen. Before they leave the old hive, the bees gorge themselves on honey. So, if you see a swarm of honeybees in a tree, or on the side of a building, know that those bees are far from angry—they are fat and happy! The remaining part of the colony will produce a new queen and get back to work.

Speaker's House Restoration Update

by Eric Hundertmark, Buildings Committee Chair



Stonemason Nate Bailey (center) confers with volunteers Michael Baltozer (left) and Eric Hundertmark (right) on the Speaker's House exterior.

Restoration work is progressing at warp speed at the Speaker's House with the return of warm weather! The side porch foundation, including the cellar entrance, was restored by Morris & Bailey Stonework, using a beautiful gray flagstone for the porch floor. The masons also replaced two rotten wooden exterior door thresholds with stone. The stone well shaft was also consolidated and two-inch thick white oak planks installed on top; a non-functional well pump will be added later this year to complete the look.

Floor restoration in the center and rear sections of the house is nearing completion. This includes replacement of narrow, softwood floorboards dating from the early 1900s with wider, yellow pine floorboards more appropriate for the original date of these sections. We also reinforced or replaced rotten joists as needed. Next steps include plastering of the walls and ceilings, which will transform these spaces into presentable and usable rooms. We are looking forward to completing the kitchen wing restoration and being able to start offering cooking and baking demonstrations, classes, and workshops.

On the exterior, cleaning of the stone walls is underway to remove stucco residue. The walls will then be repointed as needed to fill any voids between the stones and match the original pointing using a traditional lime and sand mortar. We are also gearing up for the window restoration in the front section, which will replace the Victorian windows with ones that are appropriate in style for the Muhlenberg family's residency during the late 1700s. The window restoration will also greatly help to seal up the exterior of the building as well as to restore the exterior of the house to its original appearance.

Changes are happening fast, so if you haven't done so lately, make time to visit and see the significant progress that is being made to restore this historic structure. Guided tours are available by appointment or stop in during our farm stand hours on Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm.



\$150,000 Challenge Grant for Speaker's House Restoration

We are delighted to announce that the restoration of the Speaker's House received a major boost recently with a challenge grant of \$150,000 from Ross and Beth Myers. The purpose of this grant is to encourage other donors to step forward to help us meet our goal of completing this restoration by the America 250 celebrations in 2026. Every donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar up to \$150,000. Please help us maximize the full benefit of this extraordinary pledge with a generous gift to the Speaker's House restoration today! A donation envelope is included with this newsletter.



Speaker's House Restoration

Historic Trappe welcomes donations of any size to help us complete the Speaker's House restoration. Our goal is to conclude this work by 2026 so that the Speaker's House can be fully open for tours that year as part of the U.S. Semiquincentennial or "America 250" to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This will be a major heritage tourism boom, especially here in the Philadelphia and Valley Forge area, and we want to ensure that the Speaker's House is part of the celebrations. Below is a list of the major work needed to complete this restoration along with cost estimates, which we project to total about \$500,000. Please contact Lisa Minardi at lisa@historictrape.org to discuss any of these projects in more detail; partial funding is always welcome!

EXTERIOR

Clean and repoint masonry	\$50,000
Complete side porch restoration.....	\$10,000
Restore cellar bulkhead	\$3,000
Restore well cap and pump.....	\$3,000
Restore 12 windows	\$18,000 (\$1,500 each)
Restore plaster cove cornice.....	\$20,000
Restore three side doors.....	\$15,000 (\$5,000 each)
Paint exterior trim	\$20,000

\$139,000

INTERIOR

Restore plaster in the kitchen wing	\$20,000
Paint the kitchen wing	\$15,000
Restore kitchen pantry and shelves	\$10,000
Restroom upgrades	\$5,000
HVAC systems	\$50,000
Restore floorboards (three floors)	\$40,000
Restore main staircase	\$50,000
Restore wall partitions	\$25,000
Restore chair rail and baseboards	\$20,000
Restore four paneled chimneybreasts	\$20,000
Restore plaster walls and ceilings	\$60,000
Whitewash and paint	\$40,000

\$355,000



Speaker McCarthy Visits Trappe

Photos by Caleb Smith, Office of Speaker McCarthy

Historic Trappe recently hosted Speaker Kevin McCarthy for a tour of our museums. McCarthy, who is the 55th Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, approached us with a request to visit the Speaker's House to learn more about the very first Speaker, Frederick Muhlenberg. Led by our executive director, Lisa Minardi, and board president Keith McLennan, together with members of our restoration team, Speaker McCarthy explored the property inside and out. He learned about the ongoing restoration efforts and what is needed to complete this work by the Semiquincentennial in 2026. Speaker McCarthy also toured our Pennsylvania German kitchen garden, where he sampled a handful of peas straight from the vine and harvested carrots. He then visited the Henry Muhlenberg House to learn more about the Muhlenberg family and tour our special exhibition on Pennsylvania furniture. At the conclusion of the tour, we presented Speaker McCarthy with a special autographed copy of our book *Pastors & Patriots: The Muhlenberg Family of Pennsylvania*.



Photo by Michael E. Myers



Stonemasons Kevin and Nate Bailey gave Speaker McCarthy a tutorial in lime mortar.



Lisa Minardi explains the artist's rendering by Julie Longacre of the Speaker's House as fully restored.



Lisa Minardi shows Speaker McCarthy the original maker's label on the underside of a chair in our special exhibit at the Muhlenberg House.

Photo by Michael E. Myers

Summer Interns



Kelly Smolik

Lots of work is getting done this summer thanks to our two summer interns! **Kelly Smolik** is from Gettysburg College and is interested in archival and library work. During her time with us, Kelly is cataloging books to add to our research library. This includes determining the Library of Congress call number and creation of a spine label for each book. She is also processing a large collection of Pennsylvania German manuscripts from the collection of the late Dennis and Linda Moyer. This includes deeds, journals, letters, land surveys, and much more. Everything is first organized by location, then a detailed finding aid is made which will go on our website once completed. The Moyer collection is also being rehoused in archival boxes.



Haley Wrye

Our second intern is **Haley Wrye** from the University of Central Florida, where she is pursuing her passion for American colonial and revolutionary history. Haley is especially interested in Pennsylvania German culture and is exploring a career in the historic preservation and museum field. She is our very first Bridgie Daller Summer Intern, a position created in memory of our beloved volunteer, Bridgie Daller, former president of the Trappe Historical Society. Bridgie was dedicated to helping students learn more about local history and museum work, and we are honored to carry on her legacy here at Historic Trappe. Haley is assisting our collections team with a major deaccessioning project to help cull the collection of objects unrelated to our mission. She is also organizing the research files of Patricia Herr, a renowned scholar of Pennsylvania German textiles. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Kelly and Haley this summer!

Progress in the Archives *by Sheila Joy, Archivist*

I cannot believe it has been more than a year since starting my position as Archivist at Historic Trappe! One of the first tasks I worked on was creating an archives project plan to identify what collections we have, and what needed to be processed. As an archivist, my goal is to make historical collections accessible to the public. This includes organizing the records and creating a finding aid, which is like a map to the collection for researchers. In August 2022 new volunteers joined us to assist with processing. As of June 2023, we have completed processing nine collections with full finding aids, including: Borough of Trappe; John H. Cressman Genealogy Research Files; Keystone Grange No. 2; Perkiomen Valley Sportsmen's Association; St. Luke's UCC; Trappe Fire Company No. 1; and the Donald Lutz Postcard Collection. More information on these collections and the finding aids are now available on our website and PastPerfect database. My current project is processing the research files of David Cressman, brother of Dr. John H. Cressman, which includes additional research information on the Cressman family line. Volunteer Susan Makowiak is processing a collection from the Grater Family, including photographs of four generations. Other volunteers have been putting photos and postcards into archival sleeves. Our summer interns are also helping with archives and library projects. It's a busy but very productive time in the archives!



Museum tour and store hours:

Saturdays, 10 am-4 pm
Sundays, 12-4 pm
or by appointment

Dewees Tavern, 301 W. Main Street
Muhlenberg House, 201 W. Main Street

Tours start at the Dewees Tavern.

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Tavern Night

Thursday, September 28, 5–8 pm

Join us for a lively evening at the Dewees Tavern with a German-themed buffet dinner.

Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 19, 2–4 pm

Celebrate our dedicated volunteers at a reception followed by the annual meeting.

Candlelight Tours

Saturday, December 2, 3–9 pm

Sunday, December 3, 12-4 pm

Explore the Muhlenberg House by candlelight and learn about Pennsylvania German Christmas traditions.

Trappe Tree Lighting

Wednesday, December 6, 6:30–7:30 pm

Enjoy a family-friendly evening with a community sing-a-long, visit from Santa, and festive tree lighting.

New to the Museum Stores



Our museum stores at the Dewees Tavern and Muhlenberg House are stocked with many new items! We are now carrying tea from Oliver Pluff & Co. in five different flavors: Earl Grey, lavender, ginger, peppermint, and Colonial Bohea. Packaged in colonial style tins, these are perfect for gift giving or treating yourself. We also have beautiful posters, tea towels, and tote bags with vintage images of vegetables, herbs, and flowers. Potholders and mini totes printed with a variety of images will look great in your kitchen, and are made right here in the USA. We have also just received a new shipment of mini redware plates decorated with fraktur-inspired designs, handmade by River Rat Pottery in Lancaster County. Stop by any weekend during our regular hours to visit the museum stores or contact us to make an appointment.