

Historic Trappe

Historical Society | Center for Pennsylvania German Studies | House Museums

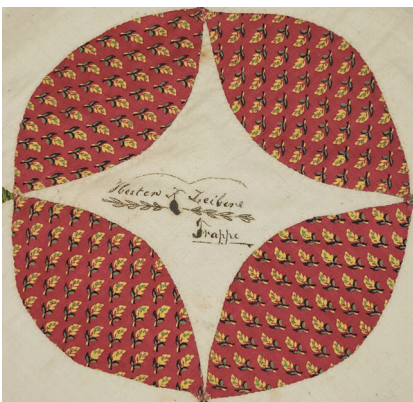


HOT STUFF! Dewees Tavern Reopening with New Special Exhibition

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19 and repairs needed to the Dewees Tavern after a car hit the front of the building in a traffic accident, we are beyond thrilled to announce the opening of our latest special exhibition, *Hot Stuff! Recent Additions to Historic Trappe's Collection*. The exhibit includes a stunning group of Pennsylvania German fraktur, needlework, and a painted chest made in the New Hanover area of Montgomery County—the gift of an anonymous donor—and a large collection of spatterware pottery donated by Jane and Gerald Katcher. Other highlights include Muhlenberg family artifacts that have been purchased, donated, bequeathed, or made promised gifts to the collection. A redware plate, signed by potter Georg Hubener and dated 1792, will be exhibited that was recently purchased with funds donated to the Philip W. Bradley Memorial Fund. Selections from the Pennsylvania German manuscript collection donated in memory of Dennis and Linda Moyer and of the large postcard collection donated by Donald Lutz will also be included. And last but not least, we will be featuring objects from the local community, including a hairwork picture from the Wismer family donated by Ralph W. Zollers and a signature quilt made in Trappe in 1847.



Portrait of Mary Muhlenberg Swaine, Pennsylvania, c. 1790. Gift of a Muhlenberg descendant, 2014.003.0001



Detail of Trappe quilt made in 1847. Museum purchase, 2022.016.0001



Redware plate with sgraffito decoration, signed by potter Georg Hubener and dated 1792. Museum purchase with funds donated in memory of Philip W. Bradley, 2022.005.0009



Painted chest made for Susanna Wittmer, New Hanover area, Montgomery County, 1799. Anonymous donation, 2020.016.0003

Furniture Exhibit at Henry Muhlenberg House

Historic Trappe is delighted to announce the opening of a new special exhibition in the second-floor gallery of the Henry Muhlenberg House, curated by intern Tom Stokes. Entitled *All Sorts of Chairs and Joiner's Work: Pennsylvania Furniture from the Dietrich American Foundation*, the exhibit features a dozen chairs and six case pieces. Highlights include a rush-seat chair retaining the original label of renowned Philadelphia maker William Savery and a rare child-size Windsor armchair branded by Thomas Gilpin. There is also a range of Queen Anne and Chippendale chairs with ornate carving, as well

as an early Philadelphia chest-on-chest and a Chester County desk with line-and-berry inlay. Visitors to the Henry Muhlenberg House will be able to compare this furniture with other examples owned by the Muhlenberg family, which are on view throughout the house. We are grateful to the Dietrich American Foundation for this wonderful opportunity and to the Concordia Trust for a grant to support the exhibition. Please contact info@historictrappe.org to schedule a guided tour of the house and exhibit. Tours are free for members and \$5/person for non-members.



Side chair labeled by William Savery, Philadelphia, 1765–80. Collection of the Dietrich American Foundation, 8.1.2.1297



Detail of the carving on a Philadelphia side chair, 1750–70. Collection of the Dietrich American Foundation, 8.1.2.145

Windsor armchair branded by Thomas Gilpin, Philadelphia, 1755–60. Collection of the Dietrich American Foundation, 8.1.4.HRD.534



Collections Database Goes Online

Our collections team is proud to announce the official launch of our online collections database! You may now browse our collections from anywhere at the following link (also on our website): **historictrappe.pastperfectonline.com**. There are separate tabs to explore our archives, photos, library, and objects. If you are looking for something specific, you can click on the "keyword search" or "advanced search" tabs and type in what you are looking for. For example, a search for "Muhlenberg" generates 98 results including books about the Muhlenbergs as well as family portraits, silver, furniture, and more. To browse the collection or view images that are currently available online, select the "random images" tab. More photos will be added regularly to the database as additional objects are cataloged. Thus far, nearly 2,000 books from our reference library are available online, together with 358 objects and an assortment of photos and archival items. The database also includes 60 long-term loans from the Dietrich American Foundation. This launch has been a longtime coming and special thanks are due to Jeanne Harper and Sheila Joy for their help in navigating the ins and outs of the PastPerfect database.



Join the Founders Club

by Jeanne Harper, Membership Chair

Have you heard of our Founders Club? To recognize everyone who joins or renews their membership in Historic Trappe anytime between January 1, 2020 (the date of the merger that formed Historic Trappe) to December 31, 2022, we have established a Founders Club. This dedicated group of founding members will forever have the distinction of being among the earliest supporters of Historic Trappe. As of September 30, there are 162 members in the Founders Club. With their help, we are able to collect, preserve, and interpret the Trappe area's rich and diverse heritage. If you are not a member of Historic Trappe or if you need to renew your membership, you can easily sign up at **historictrappe.org/join** or via the enclosed return envelope. If you are already a member and have not yet renewed this year, or if you are unsure what month your membership renews, please contact jeanne@historictrappe.org. Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to be one of Historic Trappe's founding members! All Founders Club members will be acknowledged in our annual report's honor roll of donors.

Muhlenberg Parsonage Update

by Eric Hundertmark, Buildings Chair



First-floor wall partition constructed in German Fachwerk or "half-timber" framing. An original door opening is in the middle, leading from the front room to the kitchen.

Architectural investigations of the Muhlenberg parsonage, built in 1745, are now well underway. Recent removal of modern interior plaster walls and ceilings has revealed many clues to the original structure. The most exciting discovery was the use of German *Fachwerk* or "half-timber" framing for the interior wall partitions. Instead of more typical board partitions with lath and plaster (as seen at the Speaker's House and Henry Muhlenberg House), the parsonage walls are made of hand-hewn timbers infilled with a woven lattice of wooden strips that was then packed with a mixture of mud, sand, and straw (also known as "wattle and daub"). A finish coat of lime plaster was then applied to the surface. This is an extremely rare survival of a once-common European construction technique, very few examples of which remain in Pennsylvania.

We also discovered the remains of a twelve-foot-wide kitchen fireplace in the rear corner of the first floor—heavy soot was evident all over the wall in this location. A window was later inserted in the back of the former fireplace;

**The most exciting discovery
was the use of German
Fachwerk or "half-timber"
framing for the interior wall
partitions.**

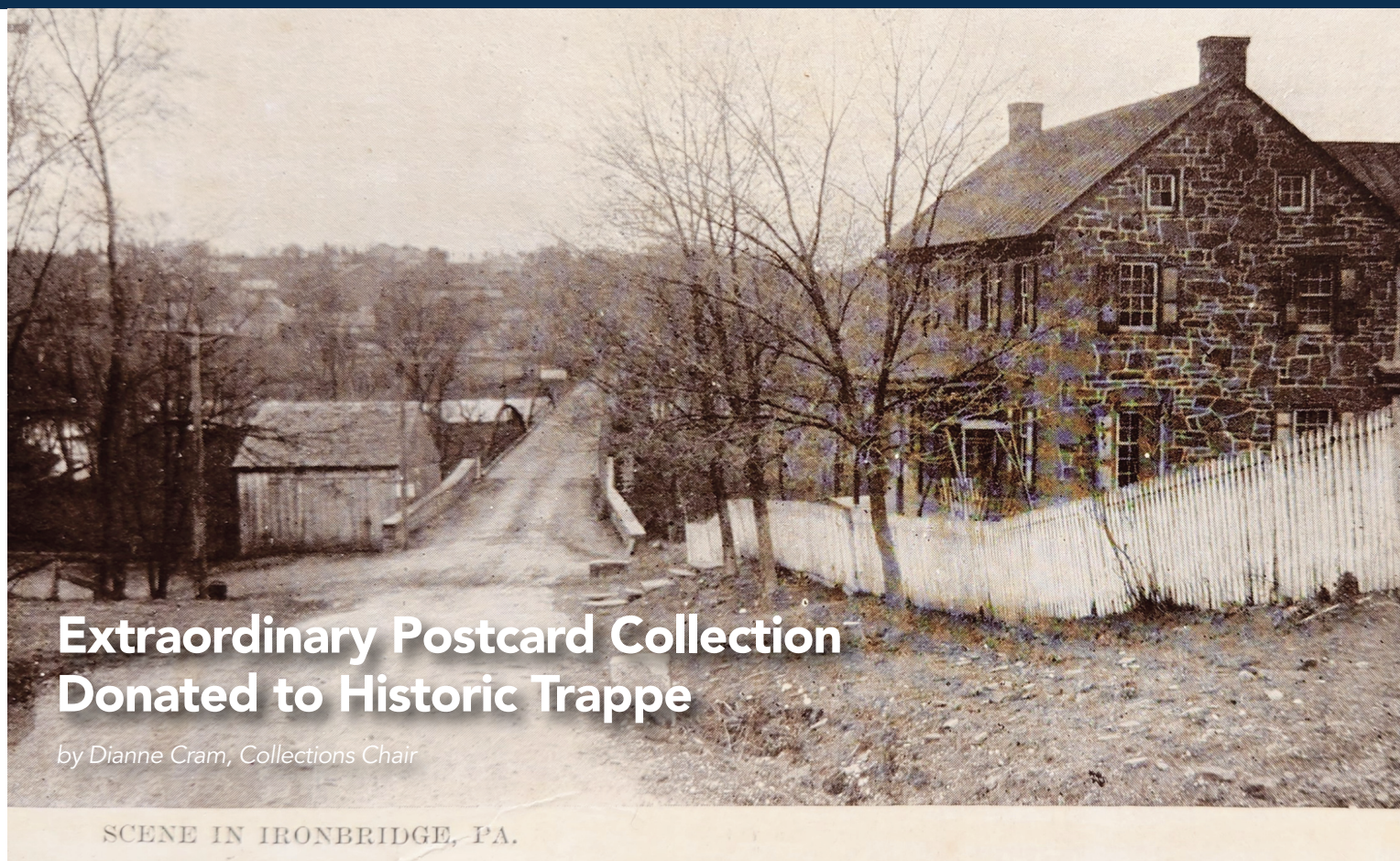
this has now been removed and the opening infilled with stone. Thanks to a generous donation by Pastor Tom Kochendorfer, the stucco covering the exterior of the parsonage was recently removed by Morris & Bailey Stonework. This helped confirm original window openings and revealed that the front and back doors had been partially infilled and repositioned several feet over from their original locations. The stonemasons were able to reestablish the original rear



The original masonry arch above the rear door opening was exposed during stucco removal.

door opening, which looks very impressive with the masonry arch above it.

Lastly, more evidence was found to confirm that the original roof was a heavy Germanic style of framing known as a *liegender Stuhl*. This system was much heavier than a typical common rafter system and may have been intended to support the weight of a clay tile roof. Further evidence of this is the discovery of several pieces of what appears to be original oak shingle lath, which have large rosehead nails where the lath was attached to the rafters but no other early nailing evidence for wooden shingles—indicating that the shingles were clay tiles, which hung on the lath from an integral clay knob. Future archaeology will hopefully find evidence of clay tile fragments to help confirm this theory. Research is ongoing to determine the original roof design, as the roof replacement will be one of the most critical steps in restoring the Muhlenberg parsonage. Stay tuned as we learn more about this fascinating building!



Extraordinary Postcard Collection Donated to Historic Trappe

by Dianne Cram, Collections Chair

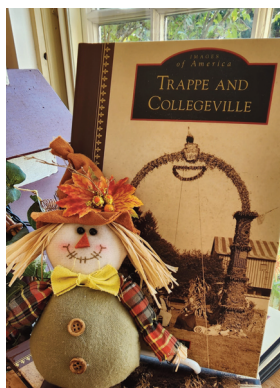
SCENE IN IRONBRIDGE, PA.

From the Donald Lutz collection, this postcard entitled "Scene in Ironbridge, PA," depicts a stone farmhouse and the locale's namesake iron bridge over the Perkiomen Creek in the background. This house was later remodeled as a restaurant known as the Eagle's Nest and later called the Gypsy Rose. Recently demolished, all that remains of it now are images like this postcard.

Historic Trappe is the lucky recipient of a large collection of early 20th century postcards donated by the family of local collector Donald Lutz. Mr. Lutz was an avid collector who pursued the "best of the best." He amassed thousands of postcards covering all sorts of topics: holidays, birthdays, comics, travel, military, transportation, advertising, and more. The largest group of postcards in the Lutz collection is from Pennsylvania, with a particular focus on the southeastern region. Every one of Pennsylvania's 67 counties is represented, making this one of the most comprehensive statewide postcard collections ever assembled. Approximately 90% of the Pennsylvania postcards pre-date 1930, providing an amazing glimpse of our towns and countryside depicting the landscape as we will never see it again. The images touch on just about every facet of these communities: churches, banks, schools, shops, train stations, factories, street scenes, bucolic rural scenes, farmsteads, and private

homes with families proudly posing, streams and mountains, mines and roadways. And if that isn't interesting enough, reading the handwritten notes on the back connects us to the lives of the people who sent these cards well over 100 years ago.

Volunteers are organizing the postcards first into counties and then by city/town or township. Each postcard is also placed in a protective sleeve. So far, we have filled sixteen archival boxes—five for Montgomery County alone—and we are far from finished. Eventually this collection will be digitized and made available for online research. It offers great opportunities for future exhibits and promises to bring much acclaim to Historic Trappe as the repository of such amazing historical images. A tiny sampling from the Lutz collection will be featured in our upcoming special exhibition on recent additions to Historic Trappe's collection.



Museum Stores Ready for Holiday Shopping

Historic Trappe's museum stores are ready for all of your holiday shopping. Our main gift shop, located behind the Henry Muhlenberg House, is brimming with a unique curated selection of seasonal and vintage decor, household goods, and handmade artisanal wares including redware pottery and handwoven textiles. We also stock many popular books on local history and Pennsylvania German art, including lots of rare and out-of-print books. Similar offerings are also available in our gift shop at the Dewees Tavern. Autumn and Halloween-themed items are currently available; Christmas and winter-themed goods will go on sale by November. Contact us at info@historictrappe.org to schedule a shopping appointment anytime or stop by during our regular weekend hours.



Volunteers helped dig fertilizer into the raised beds to replenish the soil.



Tanbark was added to the walking paths to control weeds.



Ursinus students helped repaint the garden fence.



A sampling of heirloom tomatoes, Swiss chard, and flowers grown in our kitchen garden.

Kitchen Garden Update

by Jenna Detweiler

Both of our gardens are going through some changes this year, but we are taking this opportunity to learn and grow! Our weekly farm stand was relocated to the Henry Muhlenberg House as we work to rejuvenate the soil in the Speaker's House kitchen garden. We are repairing and repainting the picket fence, with the help of Ursinus students. We also added tanbark to the walking paths as a historically accurate form of weed control. We added some new plants, including zinnias, marjoram, St. John's Wort, and madder (which produces a red dye). We made two types of jam—red currant and gooseberry mint—and used our lavender to make lavender lemon cookies and lavender simple syrup for the first time this year. We will have heirloom tomatoes, peppers, Swiss chard, and a variety of cut flowers and herbs available for the remainder of the farm stand season. Join us on Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm through October at the Henry Muhlenberg House. As an added bonus, house tours are available at the same time.

The Latest Buzz



Did you know that Historic Trappe makes and sells its own raw honey? We have two bee colonies at the Speaker's House, which help pollinate our kitchen garden and produce all of the honey. Our volunteer beekeeper, Jim Kelly, harvests the honey in mid-summer and bottles it up in 8 oz. size jars (\$5) and 16 oz. (\$10). We sell the honey at our weekly farm stand and in the museum store. If you are looking for truly local honey, try our Historic Trappe raw honey—it's delicious!



Historic Trappe's honey is available to purchase at our weekly farm stand and in our museum stores.



Beekeeper Jim Kelly tends one of our beehives.

Historic Trappe

P.O. Box 26686
Trappe, PA 19426

HistoricTrappe.org

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
POTTSTOWN, PA
PERMIT #1750

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Grand Reopening

**Saturday, October 22, 10 am–4 pm and
Sunday, October 23, 12–4 pm**

Dewees Tavern and Henry Muhlenberg House
Enjoy two new special exhibitions and guided tours
of the reopened museums. ADMISSION
(MEMBERS FREE)

Volunteer Celebration and Annual Meeting

**Sunday, November 20, 2–4 pm
Augustus Lutheran Church**

Celebrate our dedicated volunteers at a reception
followed by the annual meeting to learn about
Historic Trappe's ongoing projects. FREE

Candlelight Tours

**Saturday, December 3, 3–9 pm
Henry Muhlenberg House**

Savor the sights, sounds, and smells of a
Pennsylvania German Christmas. ADMISSION
(MEMBERS FREE)

Trappe Tree Lighting

**Wednesday, December 7, 6:30 pm
The Speaker's House**

Join in the community sing-a-long and bring the kids
for a visit from Santa. FREE

Library and Archives Update

Historic Trappe is home to an excellent research library focusing on Pennsylvania history, genealogy, and decorative arts. Most of these books have now been catalogued and added to our collections database. Work continues, led by Amanda Creek, to finish cataloging the most recent addition to our library—the research library of Americana collector William K. du Pont. We also have a small but rapidly growing archives focusing on local and Pennsylvania German history. Archivist Sheila Joy is overseeing the processing of this collection, which includes cataloging groups of like materials or individual collections, preparing finding aids, and entering this information into our collections database. We have many smaller projects that volunteers can assist with to help with this process. Contact us at info@historictrappe.org to find out more or to make an appointment to use the library. More information about our library and archives, including research guidelines and a fee schedule, are available on our website. Use of the library is free for Historic Trappe members.



Archivist Sheila Joy processes a manuscript collection while working in our research library.