



# Historic Trappe



## Special Exhibition on Valley Culture

Opening this fall at the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies, which is celebrating its fifth anniversary, is a new special exhibition on *Valley Culture: Constructing Identity Along the Great Wagon Road*. This exhibit, which will be on view from September 28, 2024, until mid-August 2025, explores how German settlers transformed fraktur, painted furniture, and other artifacts of daily life as they moved west along the historic Great Wagon Road. Distinctive styles of decoration emerged that were often unique to a specific valley, ranging from the Perkiomen Valley in southeastern Pennsylvania to the Mahantongo Valley of central Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.

Drawn primarily from private collections, this loan exhibition will feature exemplary works of American folk art, including the iconic "leaping stag" cupboard by Johannes Spitler of Shenandoah (now Page) County, Virginia; exuberantly painted boxes by John Drissell of Bucks County and the Compass Artist of Lancaster County. Other highlights include an Adam and Eve fraktur by Durs Rudy of Montgomery County and portraits by Jacob Maentel.



Hanging cupboard, attributed to Johannes Spitler, Shenandoah (now Page) County, Virginia, c. 1800.  
Collection of Jane and Gerald Katcher



Adam and Eve, attributed to Durs Rudy, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, c. 1805.  
Collection of Jane and Gerald Katcher



Slide-lid box, possibly Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, c. 1800.  
Collection of Jane and Gerald Katcher

The Center for Pennsylvania German Studies is celebrating its

5 Year Anniversary

**Pook & Pook Inc.**  
Auctioneers and Appraisers

Lead support for the Valley Culture exhibition provided by Pook & Pook, Inc.



# Speaker's House Restoration Update

by Eric Hundertmark, Buildings Committee Chair

Restoration of the Speaker's House is advancing at warp speed! We are on schedule to complete the restoration of the kitchen wing this fall—including flooring, plumbing, electrical, plastering, finish carpentry, and painting. Heating and air conditioning will be installed soon, so these rooms will be ready for use by winter.

The kitchen is furnished to c. 1800 and will be used for hearth cooking and baking demonstrations and classes. Appropriate furniture is already being obtained to finish the kitchen, including a large work table based on one at Monticello (made by the author, with wood donated by Richard Allen) and a painted hutch donated by Rodney and Jessica Vanscavish. We also have a large assortment of cooking equipment donated by Karen Dougherty and additional pieces acquired from Deb Peterson. The center room will feature rotating displays of archaeological artifacts and other items. Upstairs, there is a collections workroom for the study of architectural parts and pieces from the original house, to guide the restoration. The rear room is our new archaeology lab and has been named in honor of longtime archaeology volunteer Pete Townsend. This room is equipped with tables and chairs, shelving, a utility sink, and reference materials on ceramics, glass, and other artifacts.

With the imminent completion of the kitchen wing, our focus will shift exclusively to restoration of the front (and oldest) section of the house, which we will restore as faithfully as possible to its original appearance when Frederick Muhlenberg and his family lived there. Our goal is to complete this work by early 2026 so that the house can be fully open for public tours as part of the America 250 celebration. We are already in the process of procuring appropriate floorboards, hand wrought nails, and other materials needed to begin this work. To stay on schedule, we will maintain a rapid pace of restoration over the next eighteen months, so watch for progress reports in our weekly e-newsletter and on social media. We will also open the house for tours, to the extent possible, by appointment and during our upcoming hearth cooking classes and Christmas programs.

Donations to help with the Speaker's House restoration are always welcome. Although we have obtained grants to help us complete this work, more funds are needed to finish the job. **Visit [HistoricTrappe.org/restoration-fund](https://HistoricTrappe.org/restoration-fund) to give today.**



Restored kitchen and work table, based on one at Monticello and built by Eric Hundertmark



Side porch restoration in progress



Side porch restoration after completion

## Over \$500,000 in Grants Awarded for Speaker's House Restoration

Historic Trappe has recently been awarded several major grants to help complete the Speaker's House restoration. Last year we announced a challenge grant of \$150,000 from Ross and Beth Myers. This was matched by a \$150,000 grant from the Arcadia Foundation, providing essential support to keep restoration work going over the winter. The kitchen wing restoration also received a \$10,000 Historic Preservation Grant from the Daughters of the American Revolution, supported by the Valley Forge Chapter, and a \$7,500 grant from Americana Corner. Most recently, with support from Trappe Borough, we successfully applied for a \$250,000 grant from Montgomery County's Montco 2040 Implementation Grant program. These grants provide a tremendous boost to help us complete the restoration, but will not cover all of the anticipated costs. We estimate that another \$250,000 will be needed to completely finish the restoration. If you would like to make a donation to help, please contact Lisa Minardi at [lisa@historictrappe.org](mailto:lisa@historictrappe.org) for more details; donations of any size are always welcome!





Eric Hundertmark stands beside the kitchen fireplace mantel which he built and installed.



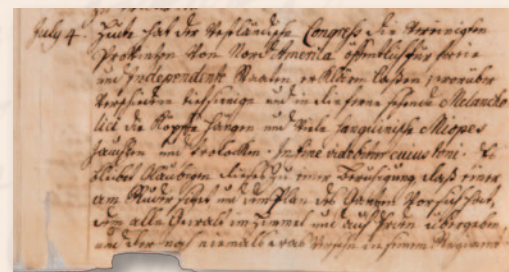
The Speaker's House, 2024

## Looking Ahead to the America 250 in 2026

by Emily Sneff, Consulting Curator

2026 will be an exciting year at Historic Trappe—and the planning has already begun! We will host a landmark exhibition at the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies, from spring 2026 through early 2028, on the experiences of Pennsylvania Germans during the American Revolution. This exhibit will focus on local stories, including the wartime experiences of first- and second-generation German Americans.

Highlights of the exhibit include documents handwritten and printed in German, family bibles, firearms, fraktur, redware, and other artifacts of domestic life. I am particularly excited that Henry Muhlenberg's journals will be on loan from the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia for the exhibition. These journals, written in German, are an incredible resource for understanding what it was like to live in this area during the American Revolution, including in the fall of 1777, when the war came dangerously close to Trappe.



Muhlenberg's journal entry on July 4, 1776. Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia



2026 will also mark the 250th anniversary of Henry and Mary Muhlenberg moving into their house on Main Street, now one of our restored museums.

At Historic Trappe, we have a unique opportunity to commemorate the U.S. Semiquincentennial. 2026 is the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States. It is also the 250th anniversary of when Henry and Mary Muhlenberg moved into their house on Main Street. Here, the Muhlenberg family managed pregnancies and health crises, protected valuable belongings from the British, and anxiously watched soldiers and refugees marching down the street. We will bring these stories off the pages of Henry's journal and into the tours of the Muhlenberg House. To help us get ready for 2026, we will launch a new group tour experience this fall and continue our exhibition planning. Follow us on social media and sign up for our weekly e-newsletter for the latest updates.



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

Historic Trappe’s collection is continually expanding, thanks to 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](mailto:lisa@historictrappe.org) if you would like to help fund a specific acquisition or conservation project. General donations to the collections fund are also always welcome.



David Ellinger, *Tobacco Barn or Yellow Barn*, oil on canvas, c. 1945. Museum purchase with funds provided by Steve and Susan Babinsky and in memory of Robert L. Brant Jr. 2024.045.0001

One of David Ellinger’s largest and most impressive works, this painting dates sometime prior to 1951 when it was offered for sale at the on-site auction held for Ellinger at his home in Trappe. We are thrilled to have acquired this for the permanent collection.



Bible with family record for Christian Meyer and Maria Landes, attributed to Johann Adam Eyer, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1784. Promised gift of John and Jean Renshaw in memory of Philip W. Bradley

This family record was made for Christian Meyer and Maria Landes and documents the births of their twelve children. It remains in the original bible, printed by Christopher Saur II in Germantown in 1776. Accused of being a Loyalist, Saur’s press was seized and many unbound pages of this bible edition were supposedly used as cartridge paper during the Battle of Germantown—leading to its nickname as the “Gunwad bible.” This object will be a highlight of our special exhibition in 2026–27 focusing on Pennsylvania Germans’ experiences during the American Revolution.



Sgraffito plate, signed by Johannes Neis, Upper Salford Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, 1812. Museum purchase with funds provided by John and Jean Renshaw, Steve and Jenifer Smith, Steve and Susan Babinsky, Robert and Kathy Booth, 2024.008.0001

As one of the only signed examples of this important potter’s work, this plate is the benchmark for attributing dozens of other examples to Neis. It will be prominently featured in our forthcoming redware exhibition opening in fall 2025.



Bookcase, Philadelphia, mahogany, c. 1790–1800.

A rare and impressive example of a Federal bookcase, we are raising funds to acquire this piece to help furnish Frederick Muhlenberg’s office in the Speaker’s House. It would be an exceptional addition to the collection. \$5,000 is needed to complete this acquisition.

## Introducing Christopher Malone, Curator



Historic Trappe is pleased to introduce you to our new curator, Christopher Malone, who will oversee exhibitions and collections at Historic Trappe and the Center for Pennsylvania German Studies. He will also assist in the furnishing and interpretation of our four historic sites. A native of Pennsylvania, Christopher is the author of a forthcoming article on noted almshouse painter Charles C. Hofmann, to be featured in *Americana Insights* 2024. He will give a lecture on this topic and sign books on November 19 as part of Historic Trappe's fall lecture series.

Christopher will give a talk on **November 19** on almshouse painter Charles C. Hofmann as part of our fall lecture series.

Christopher is also the Curator and Digital Marketing Manager for the Lutheran Archives Center at Philadelphia. He holds a Masters in Architecture from Syracuse University and a Masters from the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture at the University of Delaware. His MA thesis centered on the ways that outsider visitation changed Moravian material culture in the community's first 100 years in Pennsylvania. Christopher is also a columnist for *Maine Antique Digest*. In his spare time, he publishes and edits *The Daily Antiquarian*, a Facebook/Instagram blog focusing on the history, architecture, and material culture of the Mid-Atlantic.

## Introducing Haley Wrye, Assistant Curator

Hello! My name is Haley Wrye and I graduated this year from the University of Central Florida with dual bachelor degrees in Hospitality Management and Early American History. My undergrad thesis focused on Dutch explorations to the New World and examined the economic trade and sociocultural characteristics of the patroon of Rensselaerwyck. Last summer, I was Historic Trappe's first ever Bridgie Daller intern, which inspired me to pursue a career in the museum field, specifically in museum collections and curation. I returned to Trappe last December to participate with the Candlelight Tours and again in May before attending Historic Deerfield's Summer Fellowship Program in History and Material Culture, where I researched the life and legacy of Revolutionary War General Elisha Porter. Thanks to my experience working with Historic Trappe, I have a special interest in studying the material culture of Colonial and Revolutionary America, particularly the Muhlenberg family and Pennsylvania German culture. I am excited to be working for Historic Trappe again and immensely grateful to the Daller family for making this incredible opportunity possible. I look forward to helping develop a historic foodways program at the Speaker's House and assisting with upcoming exhibitions and the Christmas tours. This opportunity is one that I will cherish forever as it will help prepare me for graduate school and further my museum experience.



Please consider making a donation to the

### Bridgie Daller Memorial Fund

to offer paid internships for students like Haley to gain experience in the museum field. Learn more at [HistoricTrappe.org/donate](https://HistoricTrappe.org/donate) and help us make a difference!

All donations will be matched up to \$10,000.



# Library and Archives Update

by Sheila Joy, Archivist

It has been a very productive year in the library and archives! High school student **Amanda Conrad** helped process and create finding aids for six collections, including the Augustus Community Camera Club (active 1964–78) and papers from the Furhman, Johnson, Kline, and Moyer families. Ursinus student **Kevin Melton** also worked on processing the Walebe Dairy Farm deeds collection and the Wetherill Macombe Gumbes papers.

When not overseeing our volunteers and interns, I work on my own archival projects. A major step this year was reorganizing our vertical file collection and creating an updated inventory list, available on our website. This is a collection of loose materials organized by topic into folders, on everything from local churches and businesses to Pennsylvania German history and culture. Each folder may contain a range of newspaper clippings, photographs, programs, articles, brochures, maps, and other ephemera about a specific subject. The inventory list will now make this collection more accessible for researchers.



Books with new spine labels in our reference library

We've also added over 50 new books to our reference library, thanks to the help of volunteer **Susan Makowiak**. Susan helped look up call numbers for the books and entered the catalog information into a spreadsheet. I then created spine labels and shelved the books in our library. These are all added to our PastPerfect online database, which is searchable via our website. As we wind down the year, I'm looking forward to getting more processing work done in order to continue making our collections more accessible to the public.

# Naked Bed Project Nearing Completion



Carol Spacht installing the bed curtains, assisted by Jim Reynolds, and smoothing the counterpane of the bed

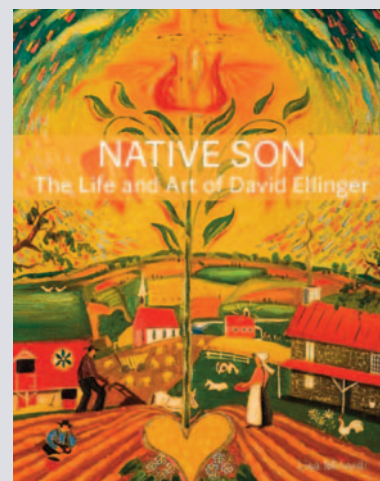
Photos by Michael E. Myers

In spring 2024, we launched a project to design and install an entirely new set of bedding on a tall-post bed in the Muhlenberg House. Dubbed the “Naked Bed Project,” as we stripped the bed down to the frame and then dressed it layer by layer, this initiative was funded by the Dietrich American Foundation. Led by Carol Spacht, an experienced maker of historic upholstery, the project unfolded over the past eight months and included weekly social media posts featuring each aspect of the bed—sacking bottom, hair mattress, feather tick, bolsters, curtains, and fringe. The gorgeous red chintz fabric was imported from the Netherlands and is a style that was highly fashionable in Philadelphia in the late 1700s—just the kind of furnishings that Peter and Hanna Muhlenberg would have chosen! The bed is almost done and will make its debut during our upcoming Christmas tours starting November 30.

Thank you to the  
Dietrich American  
Foundation for  
their support of  
this project!

# New to the Museum Store by Christina Allmer, Retail and Marketing Manager

Our museum store at the Dewees Tavern is brimming with handcrafted and local items this year. We have beautiful redware plates by Selinda Kennedy of Muncy, PA, featuring fraktur motifs inspired by historical examples in our collection. Punched tin lanterns and sconces made by Tin Man Roy are another new item in the shop. If you are looking for art, Lisa Short's fraktur makes a great gift. We also carry mini redware plates from River Rat Pottery of Conestoga, PA. You can satisfy your thirst for knowledge with our book offerings, on topics from Pennsylvania German folk art to gardens to clocks and furniture. The full-color catalog from our recent David Ellinger exhibition remains available, along with a variety of notecards. We also offer a variety of gift items, including beverage glasses, stoneware mugs, tea, and our own local honey. Looking ahead to the Christmas season, we will be stocking up on popular items such as cookies and ornaments from The Springerle House, and cinnamon-scented beeswax figurines and ornaments from Cinnamon Treasures. Stop by any weekend during our regular hours to visit the museum store or contact us to make an appointment.



## Fall Lecture Series

After the success of our spring lecture series, we have a terrific lineup of speakers planned for the fall series. Talks are held on Tuesday evenings at St. Luke's, 200 W. Main Street in Trappe; they are free and open to the public, followed by refreshments. Mark your calendar for the following dates:

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### SEPTEMBER 17, "Pennsylvania Germans and Independence in 1776, With a Preview of 2026"

Historic Trappe's consulting curator, Dr. Emily Sneff, will discuss how news of independence spread in 1776, how the Declaration was translated, and how people reacted to it. She will also preview our special exhibition planned for 2026-27 about Pennsylvania Germans' experiences during the American Revolution.

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### SEPTEMBER 24, "How German Federalism Inspired the US Constitution"

Dr. Jürgen Overhoff, professor of history at the University of Münster, will explore how the early modern German Empire played an important role in American constitutional discussions, especially when Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson toured Germany in the late 1700s.

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### OCTOBER 22, "Fancy Fraktur: Brocade Paper in Pennsylvania German Folk Art"

Trevor Brandt will examine the global implications of Pennsylvania German fraktur made by Friedrich Krebs, a former Hessian soldier who embellished many of his fraktur with embossed and gilt cutouts from elaborate brocade paper imported from Germany.



Friedrich Krebs, birth and baptismal certificate with brocade paper cutouts. Collection of Historic Trappe, gift of Lisa Minardi 2022.033.0077

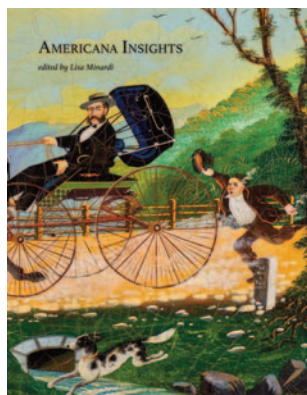
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### NOVEMBER 19, "Charles C. Hofmann's Paintings Along the Schuylkill River"

Christopher Malone, curator at Historic Trappe, will reveal the troubled but vibrant world of German immigrant and itinerant painter Charles C. Hofmann, a frequent inmate at the almshouses in Montgomery, Berks, and Schuylkill counties.



Charles C. Hofmann, Montgomery County Alms House, 1874. On loan from the Dietrich American Foundation



## Americana Insights 2024

Historic Trappe is thrilled that a painting in our collection is featured on the front cover of the new volume of *Americana Insights*! The 2024 edition features numerous articles on Pennsylvania German topics, including essays by Trevor Brandt on fraktur and Christopher Malone on Charles C. Hofmann, who painted the horse-and-carriage scene shown on the cover. The book will be released on October 29 and our museum store will be stocking up on copies. We will also have books for sale at the November 19 lecture on Hofmann's work.

This painting was donated to the former Trappe Historical Society by longtime member Huberta Bishop. It is currently on view, along with paintings of the Montgomery and Berks County almshouses, at our Center for Pennsylvania German Studies.





# Historic Trappe

P.O. Box 26686  
Trappe, PA 19426

HistoricTrappe.org

**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.

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## Pennsylvania German Christmas

November 30, 2024 to January 5, 2025

HOLIDAY TOURS ★ EXHIBITS ★ SHOPPING

A Pennsylvania German Christmas in Historic Trappe  
at the Muhlenberg House and Dewees Tavern

Savor the sights, sounds, and smells of a Pennsylvania German Christmas in Historic Trappe. Visit the Dewees Tavern and Muhlenberg House to see special Christmas-theme displays and shop at our museum stores.



Open every weekend during regular museum hours and by appointment. Visit [HistoricTrappe.org/Christmas](https://HistoricTrappe.org/Christmas) for more information and extended holiday hours.

## UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

### Tavern Night

Thursday, September 26, 5-8 pm

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

Tickets on sale at [HistoricTrappe.org/tavern-night](https://HistoricTrappe.org/tavern-night)  
Lead support by Jeffrey S. Evans & Assoc.

### Volunteer Celebration and Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 17, 2-4 pm

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

### Trappe Tree Lighting

Wednesday, December 4, 6:30-7:30 pm

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

### Candlelight Tours

Saturday, December 7, 3- 9 pm

Sunday, December 8, 12-4 pm

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