

Wentz Post

A periodic publication of The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society in conjunction with The Farmstead Staff featuring news, views and activities.....

New Kitchen Garden Brochure

A new brochure is now available for visitors interested in learning more about our 18th century kitchen garden. The pamphlet describes some of the ways the plants in the kitchen garden would have been used by an 18th century housewife. Thanks to Kim Barabas, Donna Armstrong, Janet Reimer and Morgan McMullan for their work on putting it together. Stop by to pick up a copy, it is a great reference for any gardener.

The "Wentz Weeders" kitchen gardeners, (left to right) Fred Bookheimer, Mary Bookheimer, Melanie Kilgannon, Kim Barabas, Janet Reimer, Donna Armstrong and Paul Menard.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

**If you enjoy history, antiques, historic houses and people –
We need you!**

The Farmstead is recruiting any and all interested in becoming historic house guides – no prior experience necessary.

We will train you!

We have morning and afternoon time slots, both weekdays and weekends available for anyone who wants to help with guiding our visitors through the Farmstead.

Choose the time that best suits you.

Please contact Dianne or Kim at 610-584-5104

This is an opportunity for you to learn and enjoy while helping others appreciate the specialness of the Farmstead.

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Board of Directors Officers

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Mission Statement

The mission of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society is to preserve and interpret the 18th century Pennsylvania German farmstead established by the Wentz and Schultz families, which is now on the National Register of Historic Places. The Society's goal is to stimulate public interest and support the site's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on the architecture, crafts, customs, and furnishings of the period.

Peter Wentz Farmstead Hours of Operation

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM
 Sunday 1:00-4:00 PM
 Last Tour 3:30 PM

Closed Mondays and holidays.

- New Year's Eve
- New Year's Day
- President's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Sunday
- Memorial Day
- Flag Day
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Election Day
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas

Reservations required for group tours.
 Admission: FREE!

The Farmstead is located on Shearer Road in Worcester, PA, near the intersection of Routes 73 and 363 in Montgomery County.

Wentz Post

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Welcome New Members

By Donna Armstrong

- Patrick Byrne Family
- Roseann Civera Family
- Chuck Pellegrini Family
- Steve Sandy Family
- William Sclafani Family
- Allan Woolford Family

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New to the Collection

by Morgan McMillan

The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society recently received the donation of a log cabin patchwork comforter. Although made from pieced together patches like a quilt, this bed covering has only two layers and is knot tied rather than quilted. The log cabin pattern uses rectangular pieces of fabric to create square blocks. Light and dark colored pieces are arranged in this patchwork to create an over-all diamond pattern when looking at the whole piece. The fabrics in the patchwork suggest that the bedspread was made sometime in the last quarter of the 19th century. Thank you to Margaret Schweitzer for her generous contribution.



President's Report

by Sally Graybill

A very special thank you is in order for all of those who contributed to the production of our new garden brochure. Kim Barabas worked many hours researching the project and, with input from Janet Riemer and Donna Armstrong, and the computer expertise of Morgan McMillan, we now have this useful reference. We wish the best for Kim and Mark Barabas in their move to Orchard Park, NY and we are hoping they will return to the area occasionally and have time to visit the Farmstead.

The "faithful seven" garden volunteers have struggled most Wednesday evenings through the long hot summer to keep the garden growing and looking nice. Many thanks to this group who spend untold hours on the garden.

The Society's Annual Fall Meeting and Covered Dish Dinner will be held October 17th at 6 PM in the Fellowship Hall of the Central Schwenkfelder Church. Please get out your recipes and casserole and come out for a pleasant evening. Our guest speaker will be author and storyteller, Robin Moore. Several years ago Robin provided memorable entertainment for the Colonial Campers with his stories of pioneering life in Pennsylvania. He has provided countless programs in area schools and libraries and is always a popular guest.

The New Structures Committee, Dick Clauser, Carol Allen, and Rich L'Ecuyer have done serious work on the icehouse reconstruction and the Society is hoping to see this project get off the ground shortly.

Once again, thanks to the Farmstead Staff and all those who volunteer their time and talent for the Farmstead. Come out and enjoy some of the events planned for the upcoming season.....Sally



Music in the Barnyard

On July 13, visitors and staff enjoyed a beautiful evening of music from the threshing floor of the barn. The Coyotes put on a program of old-time music that had some people dancing in the grass while others relaxed in the sun. Look for another summertime concert next year!

Letter from the Administrator *By Dianne Cram*

In a wink of the eye the warm summer days have flown past. Two highlights of the summer months were the Colonial Camp for 3rd-5th graders and our Apprentices and the first Wentz Wonder Kids camp for nursery school age children. It sure looked to me as if every child was having a great time here, but the proof was in hearing so many say on the last day of camp how much they want to return next summer. WOW! I hope those children will someday be bringing their children to enjoy the heritage of this Farmstead.

And our heritage is moving forward to a later era, one of farming during the late 19th and into the 20th centuries, as we begin to take on the care and interpretation of the Rothenberger Farm. Although not yet open to the public, the vast potential of this site to tell the story of generations of Pennsylvania German farm families and the community is exciting to just begin thinking about. The staff is looking forward for the planning process to begin that will direct us towards how the Rothenberger farm will eventually be presented.

And to further present the heritage of the Farmstead... I am pleased to announce that the County of Montgomery, the Farmstead staff and the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society are working towards reconstructing the historic ice house that once was an integral part of this farm. We are at the very start of this exciting project, but perhaps before long we will be able to present yet another important part of the story. Stay tuned for more to come, or better still, come out to see what is happening.

Wishing you all the best of the last days of summer!

Dianne



Doug Bender of the 6th PA Regiment
training new recruits during
Colonial Camp 2007



Education in Montgomery County: Part I by Morgan McMillan

The following article is part one in a series summarizing the work of Allison Edgren. Allison was a summer intern at the Farmstead this past summer. She completed a research project on education in Montgomery County. If you would like to read the original paper, please contact Morgan or Kim at the Peter Wentz Farmstead. Thanks to Allison for her excellent work!

In 1742, Henry Muhlenberg arrived in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania as a Lutheran minister, but upon discovering the poor state of education in the county, he began teaching as well. The problems with education were not a result of a lack of effort, or a lack of emphasis on the importance of education on the part of the inhabitants of the county, but were rather a consequence of the realities of living in a rural colonial area. These problems included the difficulty in paying for a school and a teacher, obtaining and retaining a qualified schoolmaster, balancing school time against the need for children's labor on the farm, weather, and the distances that needed to be traveled to school. Despite all these obstacles, the inhabitants of the county continually tried to provide decent schools for their children.

Their perseverance was based on their belief in the great importance of education. When Dr. Benjamin Rush wrote his proposal for the es-

tablishment of public schools in Pennsylvania, he described what he saw as the six main benefits of education. "It is friendly to religion...It is favorable to liberty...It promotes just ideas of laws and government...It is friendly to manners...It promotes agriculture, the great basis of national wealth and happiness...Manufactures of all kinds owe their perfection, chiefly to learning." Covering religious, political, and economic motivations, this mix of idealism and pragmatism was often present in schooling in the colonial period.

The influence of the Protestant Reformation upon schooling could be seen amongst the many immigrants who came to Pennsylvania as religious refugees. Protestant groups placed importance on the literacy of the individual because it would enable him or her to read the Bible. Individual study of the Scripture was particularly important amongst groups like the Mennonites and Schwenkfelders who drew their religious leaders from amongst the members of the local congregations rather than having seminary trained men appointed by a church hierarchy.

Just as today, education was an important part of everyday life in early Montgomery County. Parents like David Schultze recorded the day their children started school in their journals. Families considered the educational oppor-

tunities available in the area when moving; an advertisement for a house for sale in Hatboro, run in the Poulson Daily Advertiser on July 28, 1820, notes the location of an "excellent" school nearby. Unlike today, however, parents often had to take an active role in building school buildings and hiring schoolmasters. While they strove to provide a decent education for their children the obstacles they faced meant their efforts often met with only limited success. This did not stop them however from resisting foreign and governmental intervention in their schooling practices on both religious and practical grounds. The determined and independent efforts of the citizens of Montgomery County to provide the kind of schooling they thought their children should have were remarkable, and a testament to their staunch belief in the importance of education.

Future articles in this series will discuss school buildings, teachers, and teaching methods in Montgomery County prior to the Public School Movement of 1834.

Nature Trail Brochure by Kimberly Boice

After months of research and planning, the brochure for the Peter Wentz Farmstead Nature Trail is finally complete. I generated a draft of what the staff and I wished to include in the brochure and then worked with Anastasia Somers, Senior Graphics Designer with the County of Montgomery Planning Commission to make it colorful and attractive to visitors. These brochures will be placed at the trailhead kiosk and on the brochure rack in the visitors' center for all to use. Thanks to Russell Dorand and other members of BSA Troop #152 and Jim and Jay for establishing and maintaining the 1.25 mile trail that encircles the site. We invite you to grab a copy and bring your friends to stroll along the trail and enjoy the many wonders it has to offer.

Summer Camps, A Learning Experience For All by Kimberly Boice



As many of you know, the time and effort put into planning and implementing Colonial Camp often takes much of my work schedule during the so-called “quiet period” here at the Farmstead. This year proved no different as I planned a second camp for kids aged four through six years old. With the aid of all of my wonderful craftspeople, Apprentices, and staff, the site offered two exceptional programs for kids of various ages.

Colonial Camp again proved a success, despite the short heat wave during the middle of that week in June. The campers had a hands-on learning experience that included the production of paper bag marionettes, rag & paste papers, reverse painting on glass in a faux-grained frame, two clay projects, a wooden stool, German paper stars, and a spice ball. They also learned about apple butter making, how to write with a quill pen, the Leni Lenape culture, and Revolutionary War camp life. Let me not forget about the popular

activities of cooking in the open hearth, beekeeping, weaving, basic elements of the German language, dancing performed during the Colonial period, toys and games children played during that time, and the natural environment. With so much planned during a week-long day camp, the kids barely had time to complain about the excessive heat and humidity. Many of the children that attend this camp return the years they are eligible and some even decide to join the Apprentice program...a win, win situation for everyone.

The second camp, *Wentz Wonder Kids Camp*, also went very well as the ten little ones learned about some of the broader historical and natural aspects of the site. The kids enjoyed the walk along the nature trail where we found a small garden snake and spotted various areas with poison ivy. We visited with the animals numerous times while learning about the source of foods and fabrics and had an enjoyable time learning how to make a clay bowl with Mr.

& Mrs. Belac, the potters. The kids also wove their own foam placemat after reviewing the steps of processing wool and produced their own tow doll before playing with some of the other colonial toys and games. Overall, the week went very well and we plan to offer this program again next year.

The camps help me to instill a sense of history into these young adults and children during the short time I have them on-site. The hands-on approach allows for a more conducive learning experience for all of the kids. I believe the success of these types of camps are due to the non-traditional environment we can offer the campers and the volunteers and craftspeople who assist with making it so interesting.

Calendar of Events Fall 2007

Pretzels of the Colonial Period

Saturday, September 22nd from 10am-3pm
Try twisting your own pretzel as you learn more
about the long history of this delectable treat.

Laerenswaert

Saturday, October 20th from 10am-3:30pm
A hands-on colonial crafts fair with demonstrations of domestic and
agricultural skills 'worth learning.' Also includes house tours by costume
interpreters, military camp life, and open-hearth cooking.

Celebrating a Pennsylvania German Christmas

Guest Speaker: Nancy Roan

Thursday, November 8th at 7pm
The Pennsylvania Germans that lived and worked in this region
maintained much of their folk culture, especially at holidays.
Learn more about their Christmas traditions
from Nancy Roan, Goschenhoppen region historian.
Program held at the Farmer's Union Hall of the Worcester
Township Historical Society (Rt.363/Valley Forge Rd.).

Mincemeat for the Season

Saturday, November 10th from 10am-3pm
Visit the Summer Kitchen to learn about this period dish
that allowed for the use of meat throughout the winter season.

Candle Light Tour

Saturday, December 1st from 2-8pm
The Farmstead will be all aglow to offer the experience of a
traditional Pennsylvania German holiday celebration,
including a visit from *Belsnickel*, St. Nicholas in furs.



Membership in the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society

Our Society continues to grow, and if you are not already a member, please join us. There are two meetings a year which feature speakers and/or slides and movies on subjects of historical interest. Your membership fee entitles you to discounts on our day trips and overnight excursions to historical sites, discounts on selected museum shop purchases, and a subscription to our newsletter. Join us in the worthwhile project of preserving the 18th century way of life at the Farmstead. The PWFS is registered as a 501(c)(3), not for profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Please Print:

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(Street)

(Town and State)

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Check if: Wentz descendant Schultz descendant

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Additional donation: _____

Total amount enclosed:..... _____

Please contact me concerning volunteer activities

Mail to:
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Worcester, Pa. 19490-0679

610-584-5104

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