

Wentz Post

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

Land Acquisition for the Farmstead *By Dianne Cram*

Montgomery County, through the Open Space Plan, has purchased nearly 5 ½ acres belonging to Alvin K. Rothenberger, Jr. The property is adjacent to the previously existing boundary of the Farmstead with 3.36 acres situated along old Schultz Road directly across from the Schultz Road entrance to the Farmstead's parking lot and approximately 2.9 acres on the south side of Zacharias Creek. The property includes a circa 1960 house built by Alvin Rothenberger and an adjacent hot house flower conservatory, a three bay garage, a vehicle bridge and two large workshop buildings across the creek

This is a tremendously important acquisition for the Farmstead. Not only is this land part of the original 300 acres first owned by Peter Wentz, it is also within visual sight of, and a short walk to, the historic Wentz house. The property has been lovingly cared for through the years by Alvin and his late wife Jean. Alvin is continuing to live there leasing the house from the County. Plans for the future include the feasibility of renovating the house to be a visitor welcome center and administrative offices for the site. For the time being the property will remain closed to the public.



Home of Alvin K. Rothenberger
purchased by Montgomery County
in March 2010

PWF Display at Wissahickon Library *By Morgan McMillan*

The Peter Wentz Farmstead was given the opportunity for the month of August to use the display case at the Wissahickon Public Library in Blue Bell, PA. We installed an exhibit of photographs of the Farmstead, reproductions from our hands-on collection, and items from the gift shop. We hope it will encourage library patrons to visit the Farmstead. It also gave us the opportunity to make connections with library staff. Thanks to PWFS volunteer June Morse for getting the ball rolling on this project. If you have thoughts about other locations that might host a small exhibit about the Peter Wentz Farmstead, please contact Site Administrator Dianne Cram by email at dcram@montcopa.org or by phone at the Farmstead 610-584-5104.



Wissahickon Public Library display case

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Board of Directors Officers

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IT.....	Jim Karcher
Membership.....	June Morse
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New Structures.....	Dick Clauser
Nominating.....	Ruth Guimond
Scholarship.....	Christine L'Ecuyer
Trip Planning.....	Frank Luther
Wentz Post.....	Albert Fritz Richard L'Ecuyer

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.

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.

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Wentz Post

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Editor Albert Fritz
 Richard L'Ecuyer

Photography Morgan McMillan
 John Schilling

Advisor Anne Condon
 Dianne Cram

All correspondence should be sent to:
 Peter Wentz Farmstead Society
 P.O. Box 679
 Worcester, PA 19490-0679

Phone: 610-584-5104
 Fax: 610-584-6860
 E-mail: mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org
 Web site: www.PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org



President's Report *By Anne Condon*

Although the heat was extreme, the Society Picnic once again took place on July 21, a steamy mid-summer evening. Approximately fifty Society members attended the event at The Old Mill House in Central Perkiomen Valley Park. Director Carol Allen assisted by Directors Chris L'Ecuyer, Dini Vigliano, Sandy White and Bill Condon provided a delicious meal of fried chicken, hot dogs, baked beans, pasta salad, tomato salad, deviled eggs and all the trimmings with brownies, cheese cake, cupcakes and texas sheet cake for dessert. Pleasant chatter and a myriad of games with prizes for the winners topped off the evening. We are already looking forward to next year's event.

A big thank you to the following businesses who contributed to the picnic's success: Allen's Country Store, All Positive Dog Training, Bergey's Lincoln Mercury, Bravo Pizza (Worcester), Center Point Pond, Floral & Hardy of Skippack, Fuzion Restaurant, Hill Co., Lederach Tea Room, Mermaid Lake, Perk Valley Pet Eatery, Robert's Hairstyling (Skippack), The Grand Fromage (Skippack), Williams' Jewelers and Zacharias Creekside Café.

In early Spring of this year, Membership Committee Chair, June Morse suggested the Society put a display in the Wissahickon Library, Blue Bell, in an effort to promote interest in the site and gather new members for the Society. We contacted the library director who indicated August was the first free month and the display creation began. Kudos to Morgan McMillan and Dianne Cram for the great Peter Wentz Farmstead site exhibit developed by them. These ladies, with the help of Tori Nichols, installed this display in the library. Through Frank Luther, I contacted Marianne Hooper of the Upper Merion Library to ascertain when we might be able to place the display in that library. The Farmstead already has had two new site volunteers due to this exhibit. I am in the process of developing a letter which will be sent to all other libraries in Montgomery County requesting a month's display time. This was a great idea by June Morse and nicely executed by the Farmstead Staff. Way to go Ladies!!

Families of the Farmstead: Wentz, Schultz, Kriebel, & Rothenberger *By Morgan McMillan*

What did the people who lived in this house look like? We don't have any portraits of Peter and Rosanna Wentz or Melchior and Salome Schultz, but we do have photographs of some of their descendents. If you look at your own family photos, you will notice that particular traits show up from one generation to the next – grandma's eyes or dad's chin. We may never know what the 18th century residents of this farm looked like, but it is fascinating to look at their children and grandchildren and search for common traits.

Old photographs also provide a fascinating glimpse into the way people lived. Sometimes the details in the background show us something about the housing, transportation, work, or leisure life of the subjects. Photographs of the Farmstead a hundred years ago provide information about how the landscape and the architecture of the site have changed over time.

The Farmstead has a lovely collection of photographs of various descendents of the Wentz and Schultz families from the 19th and early 20th centuries. Some of them include bits of this site in the background. These photos will be on exhibit in the Visitor's Center at the Farmstead this coming fall and winter. If you are a descendent of Peter and Rosanna Wentz or Melchior and Salome Schultz, and you have photographs of your ancestors, we would love to see them. Please contact curator Morgan McMillan by email mmcmilla@montcopa.org or by phone at the Farmstead 610-584-5104.

J. Harlan Wentz and his dog c. 1920s



Funding Needed To Restore The Pumpstock By Dianne Cram

The Farmstead's unique wood pump, or *die bump* in Pennsylvania German, sits alongside the summer kitchen on a wood platform directly above the well that provided water to the Wentz household. This hand pump was constructed in the 1970s as part of the restoration of the Farmstead and replicates a typical hand pump of an early Pennsylvania German farm. These wood pumps varied somewhat in design but were all basically hollowed out of large logs, usually oak, and often topped with a conical shaped cap. The pump handle and bracket that holds the spout and a bucket hook were made of wrought iron.

The craftsmen that built these pumps were highly skilled and specialized in the use of the augers needed to bore and ream out the center of the logs with dead-on accuracy. Tapered ends allowed the upper, middle and lower sections of the pump to fit together. A foot valve or a rod valve, also called "buckets" were fashioned of hard wood such as sassafras or dogwood were cylindrical wood blocks with a hole bored through to allow for the passage of water. Over the top of the hole was a piece of flexible leather to form a flapper that would prevent water from flowing back down through the hole in the cylinder.

Our present pumpstock was never enabled to actually pump water from the well but it has been a focal point of the exterior of the Wentz house and provides a wonderful visual means of interpreting the lifestyle of the farm. Now, nearly 35 years later, the pumpstock and the well platform it sits on has deteriorated. To reconstruct the pump will cost approximately \$3000 for materials and the labor of a skilled restoration craftsman. The Peter Wentz Farmstead is seeking your help to fund this project. Any contribution that you can make would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Dianne Cram at 610-584-5104.

The body of the pumpstock, the cap, the spout and the platform covering the well have all deteriorated to the point of needing replacement.



WILLKUMM ! Baby Emma Ruth

We are delighted to announce the birth of Emma Ruth Ryan on July 26, 2010. Assistant Farm Manager Jay Ryan and his wife Robin are the proud parents of a beautiful girl. Plans are already underway for Emma Ruth to be our youngest volunteer!



IF IT'S HOT, IT MUST BE TIME FOR CAMPS By Kimberly Boice

Each summer an excited and enthusiastic group of children register to attend the two summer camp programs offered at the Farmstead. *Colonial Camp* taught students entering fourth through sixth grade about many of the everyday tasks of the era. *Wentz Wonder Kids Camp* allowed those ages four and five to experience the more general activities typical of the 18th century. These two camps are among the most popular programs we offer and therefore worth highlighting each end-of-summer season.

As in recent years, *Colonial Camp* has the kids rotating through four to six activities every day. This year we tried a few new activities, such as colonial music, 18th century medicines, sewing a pincushion and a visit with General Washington. Of course, favorites such as open-hearth cooking, redware pottery (did you pick up your projects, yet?), dancing, scherenschnitte, paper making and wooden stools also helped to keep everyone busy during the fun-filled week. If you know someone currently in third through fifth grade who might like to attend next year, keep this camp in mind as you think about activities for next summer.

Wentz Wonder Kids Camp was moved to the first

week in August and we hosted a full roster again this year. The kids learned about the many aspects of the historic Farmstead while walking along the nature trail looking for bugs, creating clay bowls, and visiting with the animals. They also planted some seeds to take home with them and created a memory box to fill with treasures made during the week.

Dates have not yet been set for either of these programs for 2011. We ran into some unexpected scheduling issues with some of the local school districts this year, so keep your eye out for the 2011 calendar of events later this year for more details.

I am eternally grateful to all of the volunteers, craftspeople, and staff that make all of the programs we offer at the Farmstead possible, especially the summer camps. As some of you may have known, I came down with a sinus infection directly before *Colonial Camp* this year and therefore appreciated even more all of the extra bits of work everyone did as I recovered at home.

Leni-Lanape interpreter Darius Puff explains native American culture.



Help Wanted

Time to Revise Our History

Here at the Farmstead we pride ourselves on presenting only the most accurate information to our visitors, and our skilled volunteers and staff are exceptionally knowledgeable in the history of the Farmstead. Through ongoing research we have gained far greater insight about the Farmstead and the families who lived here than was initially interpreted from the 1970s to 1990s. It is, once again, time to update our interpreter's manual used to train new staff and volunteers. **WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP?** We are forming a committee to work on this project and welcome input from all of our volunteers. If you would like to participate, please contact Dianne or Kim and we will schedule times for discussion meetings.

Trip Planning *by Frank Luther*

CHARMING FORGE

Thursday, June 24, 2010 was a very special day for the Society's members and guests who traveled to Charming Forge, PA for our recent trip. Traveling up to Berks County and the area around Charming Forge, our trekkers traveled back in time through the beautiful country side until arriving at the magnificent mansion atop the hill, Charming Forge. Built of indigenous fieldstone, Charming Forge is one of the finest examples of Colonial-era Georgian architecture in the U.S. Owner, Chip Henderson, warmly welcomed us and spent almost two hours with us, moving from room to room throughout the house. Those on the trip will remember Chip standing on the staircase giving us an introduction and a detailed history of Charming Forge and his personal commitment to preserving this treasure.

Charming Forge is up for sale so our visit was a bittersweet one. We were to be the last tour, on a Thursday, before the furnishings were removed by the auctioneer on the following Monday for a sale in October.

After a delightful and scrumptious lunch at the Stouch Tavern (George Washington really did dine and stay here!) in historic Wolmelsdorf, we traveled to the Millbach Mansion, a work in progress that Chip was laboring on. Dottie Hern even found a trunk that belonged to one of her ancestors! This was a most rewarding day, despite the travel on the turnpike after the storm!

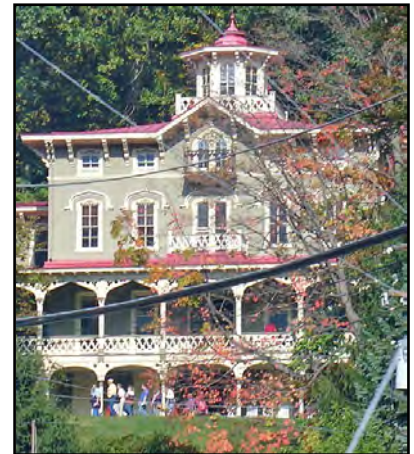


Charming Forge, an 18th Century Georgian home

JIM THORPE

The Society is hosting a trip to Jim Thorpe on Tuesday, October 5. The cost of this trip is \$65.00 with the discounted cost of \$55.00 for Society members. The highlight of this trip will be the tour of the Asa Packer Mansion.

Asa Parker Mansion,
Jim Thorpe, PA



NEMOURS MANSION

On December 12, the Trip Planning Committee will be hosting its holiday trip---this year to Delaware. In the morning, we will visit the Nemours Mansion and Gardens in Wilmington.

Our afternoon visit will be to the Historic Houses of Odessa. Please save the date and plan to join us. Complete details for this trip will be sent in October.



Nemours Mansion and
Gardens in Wilmington

WINTERTHUR

Next spring, we plan to visit Winterthur for a special tour with Lisa Minardi on an exceptional exhibit that she had been instrumental in preparing.

NEW TO THE STAFF

We are pleased to welcome RICHARD POOLE to the Farmstead staff. The County Commissioners have approved the appointment of Rich in a part-time Landscape Assistant I position. Rich is not new to the Farmstead, he has been a volunteer for many years actively helping out at nearly all special events, helping around the farm, and coordinating many of the more recent archaeological projects here. Rich has a strong love for history and a true dedication to the site. Rich will be working along with our Farmers Jim and Jay with all aspects of the farm and site maintenance.



AN INVITATION

General George Washington requests your presence at the Wentz Farm in Worcester on Saturday, 16 Oct. He will receive guests from 10 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon and invites you to also visit with some fine examples of the Continental Army's military manpower located here. GW will also have some members of his military family with him, should you require Hannah's guidance on cooking for such an esteem'd personage. A learn'd gentleman from New Jersey will offer a school in the skills of the spies - a spy code class will occur at 1 o'clock with a more formal presentation on the subject at half past two.

George Washington

IN MEMORIAM WARREN BACKENSTOE

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Warren Backenstoe on March 23, 2010. Warren and his lovely wife, Ronnie, were married for 66 years. They were Farmstead volunteers since 1976 and, along with Albert and Elizabeth Gamon, established the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society in the late 1970s. Warren was a Board Member and Treasurer and then served as the Financial Director until 2002. Warren was an Eagle Scout, hometown baseball player, a sailor on a Navy Destroyer-Escort in WWII. He was an accountant, a golfer, a bowler and a gardener. His dedication and service to Peter Wentz Farmstead and to the Society will forever be remembered.

Peter Wentz Farmstead
CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2010
 September-December
-PROGRAMS-

Saturday, September 11th from 1:00-3:00pm

Laerenswaert Series: Colonial Gardens

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

Take a tour of the reconstructed kitchen garden to learn more about the herbs and vegetables grown there. *The WentzWeeders*, the volunteers who plant and maintain the garden, will be here to provide information about their research and answer your questions.

All ages. FREE

Saturday, September 25th from 10:00am-3:00pm

Food Series: Fall Harvest

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

Learn about the seasonal activities typical at an 18th century farm, including cider pressing and preserving of fruits and vegetables.

All ages. \$2 per person suggested donation.

Saturday, October 2nd at 10:00am & 1:00pm

Secrets of the Farmstead Tours

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

Take a behind-the-scenes tour of the historic Farmstead, from attic to basement, to gain a better understanding of a late Georgian style home. Also learn about the restoration of the structure and more recently reconstructed outbuildings.

Ages: 10 and up. \$2 per person suggested donation; registration required.

Saturday, October 16th from 10:00am-3:00pm

Washington's Headquarters at Wentz's

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

Visit with General Washington, his personal cook Hannah Till, and other military personnel to learn more about the General's use of the Wentz home as his headquarters during October 1777.

Join us at 1pm for a lecture highlighting the Continental Army during the autumn of 1777.

All ages. \$2 per person suggested donation.

Saturday, November 13th from 10:00am-3:00pm

Food Series: Meat for the Season

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

Local foodways historian Karen Dougherty will use historical recipes to recreate mincemeat, a dish commonly prepared to preserve meat through the winter season.

All ages. \$2 per person suggested donation.

Saturday, December 4th from 2:00-8:00pm

Candlelight Tours

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104

The soft glow of candlelight will light the path to the decorated Farmstead for tours showcasing period music, seasonal decorations, and a visit from *Belsnickel*, or St. Nicholas in furs.

Last tour of the house will begin at 7:30 pm.

All ages. \$2 per person suggested donation.

-EXHIBITS-**September 2009-January 2011*****Families of the Farmstead: Wentz, Schultz, Kriebel, & Rothenberger***

Peter Wentz Farmstead · (610)584-5104.

Many people have lived and worked on the parcel of land that originally belonged to Peter Wentz. Through family photographs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, see the faces of the Wentzes, Schultzes, Kriebels, and Rothenbergers associated with this farm.

Wentz Post Garden Update *By Donna Armstrong*

The extreme weather conditions this summer were a challenge to all of us gardeners, but thanks to some much needed rain, most of our plantings survived.

In mid-july we hosted a group of gardeners from historic gardens in the Philadelphia area. Our four-square German Kitchen Garden is unique and we enjoyed sharing it. Light refreshments of sweets and savories were made from herbs and fruits from the garden accompanied by refreshing iced mint tea. Our guests also participated in a tour of the house and grounds of the Farmstead.

On Saturday, September 11th from 1-3 pm we will again be in the garden talking to visitors about the various plants and their uses. Please plan to join us for our Fall "Garden Party".

Wentz Weeders *By Anne Condon*

A heartfelt thanks to the unsung heroes of the Kitchen Garden. Despite record heat, this band of wonderful weeders did an outstanding job and even managed to coax the ground cherries into producing an abundant crop this year. Therefore, we applaud Donna Armstrong and her faithful Wentz Weeders...Janet Riemer, Paul Menard, Melanie Kilgannon, Laura Rothman-Croke and their newest member John Payne. Without this team, the garden would be a giant weed patch. Thanks folks!

Membership Matters

The Society warmly welcomes all our newest members. We also extend our thanks for the loyalty of our ongoing membership. And ask all of you to spread the word about the Farmstead and joining the Society. We need to bolster our rolls so we need you to tell your family, friends and coworkers about the Farmstead and ask them to drop by and visit.

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society
2010 Meeting Calendar

October	21	Fall Meeting	5:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
November	17	Board Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church

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 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:

Date _____

Name _____ Phone _____

(Company, if applicable)

Address _____ E-mail _____

(Street)

(Town and State)

(Zip)

Check if: Wentz descendant Schultz descendant

Check one: New member Please renew my membership

Check one:

Student\$10.00

Individual\$20.00

Senior Family (both over 65)..\$25.00

Family Membership\$30.00

Life Member \$500.00

Business Sponsorship.....Contact us for details

Additional donation:..... _____

Total amount enclosed:..... _____

Please contact me concerning volunteer activities

Mail to:
Peter Wentz Farmstead Society
P.O. Box 679
Worcester, Pa. 19490-0679

610-584-5104

WENTZ POST

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society

Route 73 and Shearer Road

P.O. Box 679

Worcester, Pa. 19490-0679