

## Peter Wentz Farmstead Calendar of Events

### Bird Walk

Tuesday, October 28 at 8:30 am

Join environmental educator Rebecca Blacketter for a morning bird walk at the Farmstead. Come observe some of the amazing birds who call our area home. Bring binoculars if you have them. Wear sturdy shoes for hiking.

All ages; Free

### Harvest Festival

Saturday, November 8

10:00 am to 4:00 pm

For a colonial farm family like the Wentz's, the fall harvest was the most important time of year. Join the Peter Wentz Farmstead for our third annual Harvest Festival. Meet our farm animals, watch demonstrations of typical fall farm chores, and put your family to work with hands-on activities.

All ages; Free.

### Candlelight

Saturday, December 6

4:00 pm to 8:00pm

Come spend a lovely winter's eve with us here at the Farmstead! The soft glow of candles will light your way as you explore this historic property. Celebrate the beginning of the holiday season with this picturesque look at a quiet winter's night in colonial Pennsylvania. Watch a cooking demonstration, enjoy holiday entertainment, and find out if the Belsnickel has deemed you naughty or nice!

All ages; Free.

**Peter Wentz Farmstead Society**

**PO Box 679**

**Worcester, PA 19490-0679**

# Wentz Post

*A Publication of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society*

*Vol. XLII, No. 3*

*Winter 2025*

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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 SOCIETY

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Membership - Amy Dinkel, Wendy Aughe, Joe Hanrahan, and Melissa Jay  
Museum Shop - Carla Beckworth, Joy Dolan, and Amy Dinkel  
Special Events - David Carhart  
Wentz Post - Amy Dinkel

### Wentz Post

Volume XLII, No. 3 Winter 2025

Published as a benefit of membership in the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society  
Historic Site Director - Meg Bleecker Blades  
Editor - Amy Dinkel  
Layout - Shawna Shaw  
Contributors - Lori Curtis, Amy Dinkel, Joy Dolan, Melissa Jay, Robert Johnston, Linda Snyder, and PWF Staff  
Photos - Lori Curtis, Amy Dinkel, Joy Dolan, and PWF Staff

All correspondence should be sent to:

**Peter Wentz Farmstead Society**  
PO Box 679  
Worcester, PA 19490-0679

#### Peter Wentz Farmstead is open!

The Farmstead is open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM; Sunday hours are from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM.

Tours are given each hour, beginning at 10:00 AM, and the last tour begins at 3:00 PM.

Reservations are requested for groups larger than six people.

To make a reservation, or for additional information, please call the Farmstead office at 610-584-5104.

The articles and advertisements contained in the WENTZ POST express the views of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society (PWFS). The PWFS makes every effort to ensure articles and advertisements are factual; however, our statements do not express the views of the County-owned and operated Peter Wentz Farmstead (PWF), or its management or staff. The PWFS is an independent, non-profit organization that was established "to preserve and interpret an 18th-century Pennsylvania German farmstead, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, by stimulating public interest and support of the site's heritage through educational programs and public events focusing on the architecture, crafts, customs and furnishings of the period." The PWFS does not operate the PWF and is not affiliated with PWF management other than as an independent organization.

### Wentz Post



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**Thanks to the businesses who advertise in the WENTZ POST; our expenses for mailings are being supported without any cost to the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society.**

### PWFS Life Member Lives to be 100

By: Linda Snyder

Lauralou Courtney Bates passed away February 3, 2025 at the age of 100. Born in Philadelphia on July 9, 1924 to Francis Engard Courtney and Hannabelle Arnold, Lauralou was one of four children. Her two sisters, a brother, and her husband, James E. Bates predeceased her.

Lauralou (Lolly) graduated from Germantown High School, and she also held Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Drexel University.

Lolly and Dr. Bates had four children, and Lolly is also survived by four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Lolly started her own company—Carriage Trade Fashions—operating out of a carriage house at her home in Germantown. She made custom women's dresses, and two of her famous clients were Mamie Eisenhower and Barbara Streisand.

Before starting her own company, Lolly worked as an industrial designer, helped produce the paper dress, designed festive vestments for the 300th anniversary of Christ Church in Philadelphia, and also taught at the Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Atwater Kent Museum have hats she designed in their collections. Before retirement, she ventured into glass and wearable art.

Lolly was an overcomer, celebrating more than 37 years of sobriety. A Memorial Service was held at Christ Church in Center City.

Lolly was a Life Member of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society and a beautiful artist and achiever.



Circa 1960 Hat  
Creator: Lauralou Courtney Bates  
Found in Collection / Atwater Kent  
Collection at Drexel

### Family Fun & Education

#### Colonial Era Children:

#### What did they do for fun?

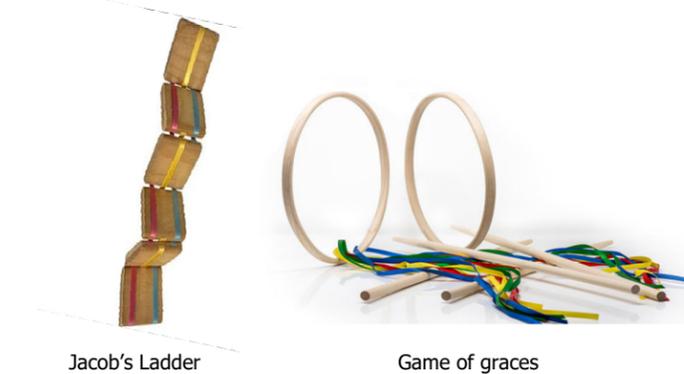
By : Melissa Jay

There was not a lot of down time and recreation for children in the Colonial era. They were taught that hard work was good for them. They had designated chores, and their work was essential to the farm and household. By the age of six or seven, girls would help with the cooking, baking, wool processing, sewing, butter churning, harvesting herbs and vegetables, and cleaning. At the same age, boys helped their fathers plow, plan, hoe and harvest crops, chop firewood, do woodworking, and, if old enough, learn to use a musket to hunt small game. Young children would also help with feeding the chickens and livestock and gathering eggs. The children enjoyed their work and took satisfaction in doing it well. Even though the children worked extremely hard, they did find time to have some fun.

What do they do to have fun? Well, they had outdoor fun, like swimming, fishing, hopscotch, hoop rolling, quoits (ring toss), and flying kites.

Most colonial children had to make do with what they had. Toys had to be created from what one found in nature or in the house; their toys were handmade and rarely store-bought. They made dolls from corn husks and rags. Wood and string were used to make spinning tops. Hoops from barrels could be used in races and in a variety of games.

You may be familiar with some colonial games and toys. Have you ever played tag, hide-and-seek, hopscotch, yo-yo, puzzles, dominoes, marbles, pick-up sticks, jump rope, spinning tops, leapfrog, card games, and dolls? All of these games and toys were used by children for fun during colonial times. The games' appearance and rules may have changed a bit, but believe it or not, your playtime has history behind it.



**FOLLOW THE PWF ON-LINE** For regular updates about activities at the Farmstead, you can find timely information on our website: <https://www.montgomerycountypa.gov/929/Peter-WentzFarmstead>; The Farmstead's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com>; or to our Instagram posts: <https://www.instagram.com/peterwentzfarmstead>

### President's Message

By: Joy A. Dolan

As Friends of Peter Wentz Farmstead, our involvement can take us in many directions. Our primary mission is to assist the PWF professional staff in support of the preservation of the site's heritage. One way we do this is through our management of the museum shop. Those of us who volunteer in the shop enjoy the opportunities to promote PWF, recruit members, and meet many wonderful people. Following is an article written by one of our newest members and supporters, Bob Johnston and his wife, Su. I hope you will join with me in welcoming the Johnstons and extend our deepest appreciation for their generosity.

#### 18th-Century Tape Loom

By: Robert Johnston

I've been an amateur woodworker for over 50 years, with an interest in colonial furniture. I've built Windsor chairs, blanket chests, trestle tables, desks, and dulcimers.

In 1990 our family visited the Hershey Museum of American Life. The museum had hundreds of artifacts, but the one that caught my eye was an 18th-century tape loom. It was rustic, but at the same time had some sophisticated elements. No fancy dovetail joints, the box was constructed with simple lap joints and held together with handmade rosehead nails. I decided to build a reproduction, and the museum curator kindly sent me a photo and some measurements.

The first step in building the loom was to acquire the necessary materials. A good friend provided a wide, weather-beaten, worm holed board that was perfect for the back and sides. I had scrap wood for all the smaller parts. The most difficult thing was finding a source for rosehead nails. After searching, I located the Tremont Nail Company in Wareham, MA, which had been making nails since 1819. My goal was to build the loom using only hand tools. While reviewing all the individual parts that I needed to make, it soon became apparent that the original builder had access to a pretty complete set of tools. Possibly, he was a country cabinet maker or carpenter by trade.

I began the building process by cutting the board into proper lengths for the heddle, sides, back, and bottom using my cross-cut saw. Next, the parts were cut to the correct width with a rip saw. I used a compass to draw a half circle on the heddle and cut it out with a coping saw. I then smoothed it with a rasp and mill file. The heddle slot positions were marked and then scribed in with a marking gauge.

There are several ways to cut the warp slots in the heddle. My method consisted of using the tip of a backsaw to scratch back and forth in the middle of a scribed line until breaking through the board, forming a slot large enough to allow the tip of a keyhole saw to go through and using that to finish the slot in both directions. The warp holes were then drilled in the center of each bar between the slots. The original builder probably used a gimlet to drill these small holes, but I didn't own one, so I cheated and used my "egg beater" drill and a small bit. I finished the heddle by carving my wife's initials SLJ into the top with a carving gouge and maul.

The warp beam and take-up roller were made by turning square stock on the lathe. Tenons were left on both ends of each of these parts to fit into the sides of the box and to provide a shaft for the ratchet gears. These gears were made by cutting circles out of walnut and cutting teeth with a coping saw. The small warp beam columns were turned on the lathe, and all remaining parts were cut out with the coping saw. A brace and bit drilled holes for the take-up roller in the box sides. Backsaw, chisel, and mallet were used to cut dados in the box side to hold the warp beam uprights.

To assemble to loom, the box was nailed together with the take-up roller in place. The warp beam uprights were glued into the dados and clamped while drying; then, the assembled warp beam was dropped in place and pinned with nails. The ratchet gears were glued onto the roller tenons, and a crank-type handle was added to the warp beam roller. Ratchet pawls were loosely nailed into place to finish the job.

This loom has been in our home for 35 years, but we decided to donate it to the Peter Wentz Farmstead after talking with Joy Dolan. We know it will have a good home at this wonderful historical site.



Reproduction of 18th-century tape loom



18th-century tape loom in Hershey Museum of American Life

### A Successful Project Pawpaw!

By: LeAnne Sykes and Alan Schulze

On Saturday, September 20, the Farmstead held its first Project Pawpaw event, and it was a resounding success. The pawpaw, a native fruit to our region, has made a return to the natural species we plant and to the foods we eat. The pawpaw trees on the Farmstead's grounds were planted as part of the long-term project to return the banks of the Zacharias Creek to a natural state. They serve as a crucial food source for the zebra swallowtail butterfly as well as countless other pollinators and, thus, are an important part of a healthy forest.

According to Farmstead farmer and "Chief Pawpaw Guru" A.J. Kissinger, pawpaws are communal trees that often spread through shoots sent out underground. Since they are closely related to bananas and other tropical fruits, the trees have an almost out of place look in the Pennsylvanian forest, despite being native. The fruits provided food for massive prehistoric animals such as ground sloths and mammoths, native peoples as far back as 640 B.C., and European colonists. Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew pawpaws on their plantations in Virginia.

The event celebrated this special fruit with an information table, walks on our nature trail led by A.J. Kissinger to see the pawpaw trees, as well as crafts for the kids. Attendees returned home with a pawpaw seed and instructions for planting their own tree; they could also purchase seedlings in the museum shop. The event drew about 150 attendees, who had a wonderful time. The Farmstead plans to repeat the event again next year!



A pawpaw sapling

### Kitchen Garden Update

By: Lori Curtis

As another gardening season comes to an end, I want to acknowledge and thank all the Wentz Weeders – the 15 volunteers who come weekly to plant, tend, and harvest the crops. The Kitchen Garden has been wonderfully productive this year. The patty pan squash and various winter squash varieties thrived, and we still had tomatoes, peppers, beans, leaf cabbage, lettuce, and chard growing through September. We were able to donate over 725 pounds of produce to local food pantries, up from 450 pounds last year.

A highlight of this year was the first public tour of the Kitchen Garden. Over 40 people attended to learn about plants in an 18<sup>th</sup>-century Pennsylvania German garden and their culinary, medicinal, and/or ornamental value. We are thrilled that the Peter Wentz Farmstead is already planning another tour in 2026.

One of the less common plants in the kitchen garden to show visitors are ground cherries. Pennsylvania German gardens usually had them in one of the main beds, and they were a popular crop for a variety of culinary purposes. Ground cherries were used in jams, pies, sauces, and other dishes. The whole plant could be pulled up by the roots and hung upside down inside to be later used during the winter.

A member of the nightshade family, ground cherries are rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals, and they have anti-inflammatory properties. The fruit is enclosed in a papery husk that falls to the ground when ripe, which is when they are harvested. Ripe ground cherries are golden-yellow, and their flavor is probably as difficult to describe as a pawpaw fruit is! They're sweet and zesty, a bit nutty, with a hint of tomato, and they have even been characterized as a blend of pineapple and vanilla.

We are happy to announce that the audio tour for the Farmstead now includes a short description of the kitchen garden. We welcome visitors to explore the garden and to not let the closed gate discourage them. During the growing season we have all the crops identified, and brochures with additional information can be obtained in the Museum Shop.



Tour of the 18th-century garden held on July 26



Ground cherries

### A Pennsylvania German Staple: New Interpretation at the Peter Wentz Farmstead

By: Scott Houting, Curator, Peter Wentz Farmstead

*"A Mr. Gould arrived at our house . . . We were glad to take him in because he promised to be satisfied with our patriarchal [country] manner of living---That is with hard bread, milk, and water."*

- Reverend Henry Muhlenberg. July 25, 1777 (Journal 3:62).

Bread was a daily staple of the Pennsylvania German community. Starting with the morning breakfast, it was not unusual for German families to include bread in some form in every meal of the day. Among the German settlers of Montgomery County, rye and wheat were the two grains grown for baking bread, with rye being the primary grain for family consumption.

To meet this daily demand for bread, German families typically set aside one day a week for baking. Friday proved to be a popular day for families to bake, since the weekly chore would often run into Saturday. Generally speaking, the first day would be for kneading and preparing the unbaked dough, whereas the second day would be for firing the wood oven for baking. For a family the size of the Wentz family, it was common to bake 20 to 25 loaves on the selected day. Considering the fact that the Wentz family numbered possibly as high as thirteen individuals, including servants and hired farm laborers, the count of baked loaves may have been higher.

By the time this edition of the Wentz Post is released, the main kitchen of the Wentz house will have a new look as we focus the kitchen's interpretation on the family's weekly baking day. Visitors will learn about the German baking tradition through faux (fake) loaves of unbaked dough resting in ryegrass baskets awaiting the out-kitchen beehive oven. To accomplish the look of unbaked rye dough, farmstead staff shaped modeling clay into round loaves and sponged the white clay with acrylic brown paint to resemble the texture of unbaked rye bread. The center work table of the main kitchen will include a ball of dough being kneaded after removal from the kitchen's wood dough box placed on the floor near the table. As the interpretive story moves into the exterior out kitchen, visitors will see an iron oven peel holding a raised loaf of rye bread ready for the beehive oven. The out kitchen table will display a couple loaves of baked bread, giving the appearance of just leaving the bake oven.



### Museum Shop Events

The Shop is busy preparing for the upcoming special events and the shopping season.

**Join us at The Farmstead for Museum Shop Open House events planned for Saturday, November 15 and 22, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm.**

Discover unique history inspired gifts as well as handcrafted redware pottery, books, toys, and locally sourced products. Enjoy cookies and conversation while discovering a variety of items that reflect the charm and heritage of Peter Wentz Farmstead.

Members will receive a 15% discount on their purchases. Free house tours available on the hour with the last tour beginning at 3:00 pm.

Our Museum Shop is also open on weekends and of course on the Friday after Thanksgiving!

We look forward to seeing you.

