



The Governor's Gossip

May 2024
v. 42, no. 2

**Newsletter of the Governor Wolf Historical Society,
Owner of the Wolf Academy Historic Site, East Allen Township**

Summer Institute Of Colonial Arts Learn New Skills on June 7 & 8

By Carol Bear

The Wolf Academy Historic Site is the heart of education in Pennsylvania. It is here that George Wolf attended school and later taught. He became the seventh governor of Pennsylvania and the state's "Father of Public Education."

With this heritage in mind, the Governor Wolf Historical Society is offering "make it and take it" hands-on classes of 18th and 19th century colonial arts. Classes will be held in the GWHS historic buildings and on our grounds. Lunch will be "bring your own brown bag." Coffee and water will be provided at no cost.

New this year is an adult/child team class. Class sizes are limited. Registration must be submitted by May 25. Classes not having three students will be cancelled and money will be refunded. You will be notified if the class is cancelled.

Cost for the full day class is \$75 for members, \$90 for non-members. Half day classes are \$40 for members, \$48 for non-members. Materials fees are paid directly to the instructor the day of the class.

See page 5 for the registration form.

Market Day Basket Friday, June 7 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.



Instructor Jane Moyer, weaving since 1996, has taken many professional classes. Students will weave an entire market basket (10" x 7" x 6") and take home a finished product. Some weaving experience is helpful. Students should bring, if possible, towel, sharp scissors, patience, and nimble fingers. Materials fee \$20. Maximum 6 students.

Decorated Letter (Fraktur) Friday, June 7 8:30 a.m. - noon

Instructor Phyllis Facchiano is a well-known Lehigh Valley watercolor and fraktur artist. We will share our love for art through planning, designing, and decorating an alphabet letter of the student's choice. Upon class completion, the student will have a beautiful and treasured piece of art. Wear a smock, if desired. Students may bring several well-sharpened pencils, soft eraser, scissors, ruler, and paper towels. Materials fee \$28. Maximum 6 students.



Blacksmithing Basics Friday, June 7 8:30 a.m. - noon (rain date Saturday June 8)

Instructor Dave Mowen learned blacksmithing at Landis Valley. He will be assisted by other Society members.

Shaping steel with heat and a hammer is fascinating, like one would push around putty or clay. Iron starts out very hard, and with a bit of heat, it becomes plastic, to be flattened or stretched, twisted and bent into something needed. To make the blacksmith's created form useful, just let it cool back down - and you have a very strong tool or utensil. What we'd like to practice in this introduction is to each try the various processes the blacksmith uses to make things, and then go home with a practical and useful creation. Learn how to make a meat hook, a rat-tail, and maybe a twist on a portable forge, teaching the basic "pushing metal around" and perhaps - even "welding." Students are advised to wear a long sleeve shirt, jeans and shoes. Materials fee \$20. Maximum 10 students.



(List of classes and registration form continued on page 4 & 5)

Our events are funded in part with funding from the Hotel Tax Grant Program through the County of Northampton Department of Community & Economic Development.



Governor Wolf Historical Society

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This newsletter is published four times a year (February, May, August and November) as a service to its members and the public by the Governor Wolf Historical Society. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the editor before the 1st of the publication month. However the Society reserves the right to select and edit all content.

Open House Tours

**May 18 and August 17
1 to 3 p.m.**

**Free guided tours of the Society's
3 historic buildings and museum
No reservations needed**

Notice:

**The June Open House
Has Been Cancelled**

Monthly Meetings

The Society holds monthly meetings at 6:30 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month in the Monocacy School, located at our historic site, 6600 Jacksonville Road, Bath, PA 18014. All members and interested individuals are invited to attend.

Membership

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is an all volunteer organization dedicated to preserving local history. If you are not a member, we invite you to become a member and support our activities. A membership form is enclosed with the newsletter or join online at the Society's web page www.govwolf.org

We Need Your Email Address!

Our full color electronic newsletter is available in your inbox before the printed black and white version is mailed. Updates about our events and activities are emailed between newsletters. To be added to our email distribution list, please send your email address to Kathy Wilhelm at gwhs1958@gmail.com. If you supplied the Society with your email, and you are not getting emails about upcoming activities and events, contact Kathy at the same email.

Free Historic Site Tours

The Society offers free tours of our three historic buildings, grounds and new museum on the third Saturday of each month, April through November, from 1-3 p.m. No reservations are needed.

Knowledgeable guides will discuss the history of each building, Gov. George Wolf, and provide details about items in the museum.

The Society is always willing to provide tours to individuals, families, school classes, youth groups, and social organizations at other times. To schedule a tour, call 610-837-9015 or email gwhs1958@gmail.com

Historic Site Rentals

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is fully open and ready to rent out our buildings and 3 1/2 acre grounds to host your next birthday party, baby shower, meeting, or even a small wedding. We currently rent out the historic Wolf Academy and Monocacy School and the beautiful surrounding gardens. There is plenty of parking in the adjacent grassy meadow. For more information about rental opportunities, please contact Abby Spencer at spencerabby@yahoo.com or 610-428-3975.

**Lehigh Valley Passport to History Month
Promotes Local History**

Visit us on July 20

July is Passport to History Month! This event, which began in 2019 as a one-day activity, has proved very popular. Participating groups open their doors throughout the month for tours, programs, and activities suitable for all ages; a complete schedule is on the Passport website www.lvhistory.org.

Gov. Wolf Historical Society will participate on Saturday, July 20, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Society will offer "hands-on to take home" activities, demonstrations, and tours. The event is free.

Local History Partnership

Lehigh Valley Passport to History is a partnership of more than 50 historic sites and resources in and around Lehigh and Northampton counties. Passport's website highlights year round historical activities, events, tours, and exhibitions throughout the Valley. Website visitors can sign up for Passport's email newsletter covering upcoming events, and view a selection of educational and virtual history videos.





From Our President

Spring Greetings friends,

In this newsletter you will read about our upcoming events and recaps of our recent events. I hope you were able to attend one of these popular events. In June we continue our Summer Institute classes, where you can sign up for historic crafts classes. Class descriptions and a registration form is included. Our annual dinner will take place on May 17. Distinguished author and historian, Martha Capwell Fox, will present a program on the silk industry in the Lehigh Valley.

Many of you are aware that in 2016 we started a project to restore the kitchen wing of the Ralston-McKeen House. After a few years hiatus, we are back to working on this project. We have almost completed the job of improving the inadequate electrical system in this building. When finished, we will have more outlets in the building and the addition of a few electric lights – in the form of historically accurate restoration lighting. Next will be replicating and replacing missing millwork in this room.

Your membership and donations will help us to continue our work to preserve our little corner of the Lehigh Valley. We hope to see you at one of upcoming events.

Kathy

Last Three Months At GWHS



April Tea

Our “April Showers Bring May Flowers” tea was a total sell out! Guests enjoyed our amazing dessert table and flower arranging demonstration. Photo by Barb Wiemann.



Colonial Dinner Theatre

Our three presentations of John Adams' and Thomas Paine's lively discussion about how "this new government should be structured" were met with resounding applause. Blazing fireplaces, candlelight, costumed servers, fabulous plated dinners served on antique china on linen covered tables in the 1795 Ralston-McKeen House set the mood for

the realistic presentation by the amazing Bachman Players. It was an evening to remember! Photo by Linda Kortz.



Antiques Show

Almost 450 visitors, attracted by quality antiques dealers, filled our historic site for the 15th annual Antiques Show on March 2-3. Photo by Barb Wiemann

Thank You!!

- To **Jovita Heist** for donating several old books and an early lady's purse
- To **Norma and Wayne Lopresti** for donating several articles, including a small school desk of the type used in one room schools
- To **Carolyn Rohn and Dolores Kresge** for a monetary donation in memory of **Joyce Wunderler**, to be used for new site signage

Museum Acquires Wolf Letter

The Society has purchased a letter penned by George Wolf while he served in the U.S. Congress in 1825. Wolf wrote that he was so honored to serve on the committee to develop a memorial to George Washington. We know this memorial as The Washington Monument. Wolf goes on to caution his recipient about mentioning anything about the Isthmus in Panama and the U.S. interest there. He wrote "Our Ambassadors are there building confidence in the US and how stable we are financially. Besides, Ferdinand and France are in terrible shape with their costly wars. They will give up on their plans in this hemisphere soon." As it happened, the U.S. did finally receive the nod to proceed and built the Panama Canal — 75 years later.

The letter is on display in the Society's Museum.

Summer Institute Classes ... (continued from page 1)

Stencil & Stitch Embroidery Friday, June 7 1 – 4:30 p.m.

Instructor Jo Evans has embroidered since she was a young child and has over 20 years of teaching experience. She has completed various embroidery stitches on multiple pieces. The history of embroidery will be reviewed. Embroidery books will be displayed. Students will be shown how to stencil designs and choose colored floss to blend. Tea towels will be provided to learn stitches. Jo teaches embroidery as a fun, relaxing art. Materials fee \$10. Maximum 5 students.



Painted Birdhouse Gourd Friday, June 7 1 – 4:30 p.m.



Instructor Linda Kortz taught art for 10 years and then designed historical craft lines for Classic Works, Better Homes & Gardens, Michaels and more. Pick a gourd, and learn painting tricks and good design. All brushes and paints are furnished by the instructor. Students bring a 8-9 inch bowl to hold the gourd while painting. Materials fee \$10. Maximum 18 students.

Surface Embroidered Initial Saturday, June 8 8:30 a.m. - noon

Instructor Nena Asquith is president of the LV Chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild of America. Other members may be assisting. Create your own surface embroidered initial suitable for use on a pocket – a colonial pocket or a pocket to put on your favorite tote bag. Stitches can include stem, lazy daisy, French knot, and woven spider, etc. Supplies will be provided. Students should bring, if possible, scissors for thread, openness, and a smile. Materials fee \$10. Maximum 10 students.



Colonial Table Basket Saturday, June 8 8:30 a.m. -noon



Instructor Jane Moyer, weaving since 1996, has taken many classes and taught all age groups. Students will weave an entire basket (14" x 3" x 3"). Some weaving experience helpful. Students should bring, if possible, towel, nimble fingers, and patience. Materials fee \$12. Maximum 8 students.

Blackwork Bookmark Saturday, June 8 1 – 4:30 p.m.

Instructor Nena Asquith is president of the LV Chapter of the Embroiderers' Guild of America. Other members may be assisting. Learn counted embroidery on evenweave linen ground fabric by stitching a blackwork bookmark using the double running stitch (Holbein stitch). The finished design is the same on both sides. Students bring scissors for thread, openness, and a smile. Materials fee \$10. Maximum 10 students.



Annual Dinner and Program

The Gov. Wolf annual dinner and program will be held on May 17 in the historic Wolf Academy. The catered dinner at 6 p.m. will be followed by an illustrated talk about the silk industry by Martha Capwell Fox.

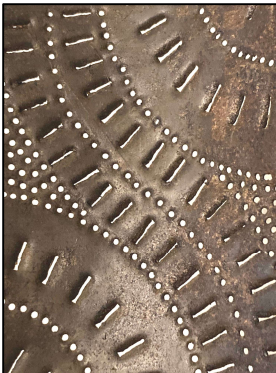
The dinner will again be provided by Just Fed Catering and will include flank steak, BBQ chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, roasted vegetables, salad, dessert, coffee and tea. Guests may bring other beverages.

Martha Capwell Fox, historian with the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor and author of several local history books, will share her knowledge of the silk industry in the Lehigh Valley between the 1880s and 1980s.

Silk was a leading industry in Lehigh and Northampton Counties, where more than 200 mills were established. The silk industry peaked in the late 1920s and was Allentown's largest employer during that time. In 1928, the peak production year, 106 mills operated simultaneously in the Lehigh Valley. The industry was notable because it offered employment to women at a time when opportunities for women were limited.

New Offering — Adult and Child Team Craft

Punched Tin Wind Chime Saturday, June 8 1 – 4:30 p.m.



Instructor Linda Kortz taught art for 10 years and then designed historical craft lines for Classic Works, Better Homes & Gardens, Michaels and more. Learn the folk art of punched tin as you work in teams of two. Parents or grandparents may bring a child (age 6 or older) and make a finished product you can enjoy in your back yard. Experience not necessary. Materials fee \$5. Maximum 18 teams.

Franks Corner

Recently, a lady living in Colorado called the Society to request information about Franks Corner and her childhood home at the corner of Nor-Bath Boulevard and Airport Road. I sent her the Franks Corner information from James and Linda Wright's *Place Names of Northampton County*, which says that the name is from the large white house at the northeast corner of Airport Road and Rt. 329, built by Fred Frantz, superintendent of Bath Portland Cement Company; Frantz was corrupted to Franks and the name dates from the c1930s. Wright cited the East Allen Township handbook as his source.

Frantz and Franks

I then decided to find some biographical information about Frederick J. Frantz, since he was named as a previous occupant of her home. However, census and draft records, as well as his obituary, proved that Frantz was a store keeper, retail merchant, and Bethlehem Steel carpenter, not a cement company superintendent.

A search of the Morning Call archives and various cement histories revealed that the cement superintendent and resident of the large home was Frederick Benjamin Franks, usually known as Fred.

Fred B. Franks

Over the course of his long life, Franks organized and built five cement companies in Northampton County. He was recognized as an expert in the cement industry. A 1928 article in *Rock Products: Cement and Engineering News* described Franks' recently opened Keystone Portland Cement Company plant in East Allen Township and noted his reputation for building fine cement plants and building each one better than the last one.

Franks was born in Philadelphia on Dec. 31, 1869, and began his 80 year business career as a machinist. By the time he was 33 years

old, he had built and sold his first cement company at Martins Creek. Fred immediately began work on his second plant, the Bath Portland Cement Company (BPCC) in East Allen Township, in 1903. He remained associated with this company until it was sold to the Lehigh Portland Cement Company in 1925. He served as vice president of the company and plant superintendent.

The Company House

As superintendent, Fred and his family lived in a home located on company property at Airport Road and Rt. 329. He had married Florence Gish, also a Philadelphia native, in 1894. Their only child, Frederick B Franks Jr., was born in 1899. While the large house was their home, it was also used to entertain company visitors. When an overheated stove fire damaged the house in February, 1916, the Morning Call described the house as "magnificent, one of the finest in the Lehigh Valley" and noted the considerable loss of pictures, bric-a-brac, and art objects.

The Franks moved to Allentown before the BPCC was sold to the Lehigh Portland Cement Company. LPCC acquired the house as part of their purchase. In 1942, LPCC sold the house and almost four acres to Ted and Lola Drummond, and in 1950 the Drummonds sold the home to Earl White, the father of the lady who called the Society.

After BPCC

After BPCC, Franks built the Keystone Portland Cement Company in East Allen, sold his controlling interest, and then built the National Portland Cement Company, retiring in 1943. In 1934 he and a partner acquired the Horlacher Brewing Company and he was a vice president of the company when he died in 1968 at age 98.



Fred B. Franks

GWHS Summer Institute Registration

Name _____ GWHS Member ___Y___N

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Classes:	Date	Time	Title of Class	Price

Make checks to: GWHS, Summer Institute TOTAL: _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp Date _____

Security Code (on back) _____ Zip Code of Billing Address _____ Signature _____

Mail to: GWHS Summer Institute, c/o Carol Bear, 207 W. Northampton St., Bath PA 18014

Questions? Contact Carol at 610-390-0555 or ckbh@ptd.net www.govwolf.org

Membership in the Governor Wolf Historical Society is by the calendar year! We are an all volunteer Society and need your support. Use this form or join online at www.gov.wolf.org

**GOVERNOR WOLF HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

You can help preserve our community's rich cultural heritage. Become a member of the Governor Wolf Historical Society! Return this form with a check payable to Governor Wolf Historical Society. If family, please include all names. Mail to: Governor Wolf Historical Society, P.O. Box 134, Bath PA 18014.

Individual \$25.00; Family \$40.00; Student \$10.00
Restoration \$75.00; Monocacy \$100.00
Governor's Guild \$200.00
Individual Lifetime \$500.00
Senior Lifetime (62+years) \$250.00

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

E-MAIL _____

Upcoming Events

****Annual Dinner and Lecture — May 17 — see page 4**

Open House — May 18 — see page 2

****Bus Trip to Harrisburg — May 19 — see page 6 below**

****Summer Institute of Colonial Arts — June 7 & 8 — see page 1, 4, and 5**

Passport to History — July 20 — see page 2

****Reservations required; space is limited, sign up now**

Spring Bus Trip to Harrisburg on May 19

by Kathy Silfies

The Governor Wolf Historical Society is sponsoring a bus trip to Harrisburg on Sunday, May 19, 2024. The first stop will be the State



Pennsylvania Senate Chamber

Capitol, where we will enjoy a 45-minute tour. The tour includes the Rotunda, Senate, House of Representatives and the State Supreme Court Room. Pennsylvania's Capitol, completed in 1906, is a Beaux Arts style building known for its murals, stained

glass windows and sculptures, most of which have a Pennsylvania theme. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2006.

After the tour, we will journey to beautiful, historic Lititz. There you can select a lunch option, and spend an enjoyable afternoon choosing from varied tours and shops, such as Wilbur Chocolates and Sturgis Pretzel Factory.

Our 30 seat tour bus will leave from Palmerton at 9 a.m. sharp; everyone should arrive by 8:30 a.m. to check in. The bus is equipped with a restroom. Reservations are made on a first come basis and are non-refundable. Cost of \$40 includes bus transportation and Capitol Tour.

GWHS Harrisburg Bus Trip Reservation Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Number of persons _____ x \$40 per person = \$ _____

Mail reservation form and check to:

**Kathy Silfies
3740 Filbert Drive
Danielsville, PA 18038**

Make checks payable to Kathy Silfies. Reservations are first come and are non-refundable.