

Wentz Post

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

McNeil Wentz House *By Morgan McMillan*

Wentz descendent Ginny Sinn recently shared with the Farmstead staff some photographs and information about an early 19th century house in Whitemarsh. The house now belongs to the McNeil Corporation, but formerly had been the home and farm of Jacob and Ella Wentz, Ginny's grandparents. Jacob's great-great-grandparents were Peter and Rosanna Wentz who built the house at the Farmstead. We are pleased to learn more about the Wentz descendents and the places they lived in Montgomery County.



Jacob Wentz House - c1920



Jacob Wentz Family



Jacob Wentz House - 2008

Scholarship Information *By Christine L'Ecuyer*

The Society is currently looking for qualified candidates for our 2009 scholarship program. During the last six years the Society has awarded scholarships to qualified high school and college students.

The Albert T. & Elizabeth Gamon Scholarship will be awarded to a student currently enrolled in college and pursuing a degree in Pennsylvania German History, Cultural Studies or Decorative Arts and or/related Museum Studies. The Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Scholarship will be awarded to graduating high school seniors who have served as apprentices at the Farmstead and who are Farmstead Society members as of June 1, 2008.

Both scholarships will be based on the applicant's academic record, activities, leadership qualities and essay content. In addition, applicants for both scholarships must submit letters of recommendation from individuals with whom they have worked such as professors, coaches, or employers with one being a staff member at the Farmstead for those applying for the Society Scholarship.

Copies of both scholarship applications can be picked up at the Farmstead office. The Albert T. & Elizabeth Gamon Scholarship application can also be downloaded from the Society's web site at www.peterwentzfarmsteadsociety.org. The deadline for both scholarship applications is March 1, 2009.

If there are any questions, please contact:

Christine L'Ecuyer
Scholarship Chairman
610-584-8087

**Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Board of Directors
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 Finance.....Anne Condon
 Garden.....Donna Armstrong
 IT.....Jim Karcher
 Membership.....Sally Graybill
 Museum Shop.....Phyllis Yergey
 Charlotte Herman
 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.

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.

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Wentz Post

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 mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org

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 www.PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org



President's Report By Anne Condon

The ice house project is finally complete. This was one of the bigger "Wish List" projects done at the Farmstead and funded by the Society. Wesley Sessa's 18th Century Restorations, Inc. did a fine job and saved the Society a good deal of money in the process. Again, many thanks to Dick Clauser and the New Structures Committee for bringing this to fruition.

Welcome to Jim Hern, newest addition to the Board of Directors. Jim has accepted the position of Assistant Treasurer. Also, special thanks to Janet Riemer who has been Garden Committee Chair for a lot of years and will be stepping down from that position. Great job Janet!

Thanks to Donna Armstrong who has stepped up to Chair the Garden Committee and a special "Thank You, Donna" for her many years as Chair of the Membership Committee. Thanks to Sally Graybill for agreeing to Chair the Membership Committee.

The Society's Spring Meeting will be held April 15, 2009 when scholarships will once again be awarded. Plans are being made for another Society social to be held on July 15, 2009 at the Millhouse. This will be an informal event where Society members can relax and enjoy each other's company. Mark these dates on your calendar, more details will be coming.

PETER WENTZ FARMSTEAD SOCIETY

2009 BOARD MEETING CALENDAR

March	18	Board Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
April	15	Spring Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
May	20	Board Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
July	15	Membership Picnic	5:00 pm	The Mill House
September	16	Board Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
October	21	Fall Meeting	6:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church
November	18	Board Meeting	7:00 pm	Central Schwenkfelder Church

The artwork of professional artist Davis G. Phelps, Jr. is currently on exhibit at the Farmstead Visitor's Center. The ten watercolors and photographs all depict scenes of the Farmstead throughout the seasons. Davis, an award-winning local artist and resident of Flourtown, has been using the Farmstead as the subject for paintings and photographs for many years. His works have appeared in national publications and have been exhibited along the east coast and in travelling shows across the United States.



The Welcome Mat By Donna Armstrong

The Farmstead Society extends a warm welcome to our newest members

Joyce Heuer
The John and Marsha Maher family

Trip Planning Committee - 2009 By Frank Luther

On Thursday, January 15, the members of the Trip Planning Committee met to lay out the plans for trips for 2009. We have scheduled four one-day trips.

Our first trip will be on Tuesday, April 21. The theme is EXPERIENCE CHESTER COUNTY. Our first stop of the day will be at the Hibernia County Park. Here, we will have a guided tour of the Hibernia Mansion. Hibernia Mansion is a restored 19th century mansion. The mansion, as you see it today, reflects the changes of lifestyle and social status of its various owners for over two hundred years. Long the home of Ironmasters, it expanded with their increased prosperity. After we tour the house, we will have a guided motor coach tour of the nine hundred plus acres of the park.

Then, it will be off to the Stottsville Inn in Pomeroy for lunch. The Stottsville Inn was originally built in the early 1740's and rebuilt in 1858. The first floor houses an elegant dining room and The Busy Bee Pub. Originally, the inn was a simple log cabin built in the 1740's by one of Chester County's first settlers - Thomas Trueman. By the 1790's the cabin had become a favorite rest-stop for weary travelers arriving by horseback, stagecoach, wagon, or on foot from Strasburg Road, then a major trade route between Philadelphia and Lancaster. Presidents Grover Cleveland and Benjamin Harrison were guests at the Inn.

After a soup or salad we will have a choice of beef tips stroganoff, chicken crepes, or penne pasta with vegetables. Dessert will be mini-pastries.

From the Stottsville Inn, we will travel to Honeybrook to the September Farm, a family-owned and operated cheese-making operation. Following the tour, we will have time to make some purchases in their shop.

We hope that you can join us for this unique Chester County experience.

Our second trip for 2009 will be on Tuesday, June 30 to Kutztown. In the morning, we will tour the Pennsylvania German Center. Our two scholarship winners have promised to serve as guides. Then, it will be off to the Kutztown Festival for lunch and a tour of the grounds.

The committee has selected Tuesday, October 6 to visit the new Reception Center at Gettysburg, have a buffet lunch at the historic Dobbins House, then enjoy a tour of the battlefield by motor coach.

Our holiday trip for 2009 will be Tuesday, December 8 with a tour of Glencairn, a buffet lunch at the Olympia Café, and an afternoon tour of Bryn Athyn Cathedral.

Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

If you have any suggestions for one-day trips for 2010, please let us know. The members of the committee are already looking that far ahead.

Garden Update By Donna Armstrong

Janet Riemer is retiring from chairing the Peter Wentz garden after 33 years of faithful service. She took over the helm of the project after the Norristown Garden Club researched and formed the garden when the Farmstead opened to the public in 1976. Kudos Janet, for all of your dedication.

Janet is passing the baton, er...garden shovel, to Donna Armstrong who, along with the other Wentz Weeders, will strive to maintain this important part of the Farmstead's education.

If you would be interested in joining this group, please contact Donna at 610-584-4115.

Please Help Us Save Paper and Postage

Farmstead Society members wishing to receive future editions of the Wentz Post via email may do so by sending an email to mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org

As an added bonus, email recipients of the newsletter see the newsletter in color. The paper version is reproduced in black and white for reasons of economy.

Administrator's Letter By Dianne M. Cram

January 20, 2009

On this historic day in American history the site staff pulled the antiquated TV out from the corner of the office, dusted it off, adjusted rabbit ears and we had the opportunity to watch as our 44th President took the oath of office. (There have been only a few other historic events that we've dusted that TV off for... a horrible day as we watched in shock the events of September 11th, 2001 and, most recently, as we celebrated with the Phillies' World Series victory parade.) So, here we are, in the midst of a farm that figured into our Nation's early history, watching as another chapter in American history begins. History certainly is not only about the past, it is happening each day, and we are much a part of it. Here at the Farmstead, our goal has always been to inspire enthusiasm for history, especially with our young visitors. We are so proud that many of the children, who have been connected over the years with the Farmstead, have either pursued careers, or developed a deep personal interest, in the field of historic preservation. Perhaps in the next generation one of our youngsters will be working at the "Barrack Obama Birthplace National Historic Site"!

With 2009 stretched out before us, the staff is just getting started with a full calendar of events designed to reach even more visitors. We will be offering not only our traditional events but many new topics as well. We look forward to working with our volunteers whose efforts make these events possible. We are so grateful for that support from faithful volunteers, and always welcome any new volunteers. So, come out to visit the Farmstead this year – we promise you will enjoy our version of history – both old and new.

? INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW ?

QUESTION: Montgomery County recently purchased the "Rothenberger Farm" immediately adjacent to the Peter Wentz Farmstead. How will this acquisition affect the Farmstead?

ANSWER: Acquisition of the Rothenberger Farm assures that this fine example of a 19th/20th century farm will be preserved from development and will assure the continued rural nature of the area surrounding the Peter Wentz Farmstead. This property, of nearly 20 acres, was historically part of the original 1744 Peter Wentz farm. In 1818, Melchior Schultz deeded that tract to his daughter Roseanne and her husband Melchior Kriebel. The farm represents the history of Pennsylvania German farming in this region for over 265 years. Further planning by Montgomery County will determine if the property will ultimately be interpreted for its historical context.

Do you have a question about the Farmstead or some aspect of local Pennsylvania German history? If so, send an email to mail@PeterWentzFarmsteadSociety.org and we'll put the experts to work!

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 unique history of the Farmstead.

Peter Wentz Farmstead
2009 EXHIBITS

October 2008 – June 2009:

Cider and Other Home Brews: Homemade Beverages of the 18th Century
An exhibit highlighting methods of early home brewing.

June 2009– December 2009:

Not Just for Pretty: Plain & Fancy Needlework from the Collection
A brief overview of the variety of stitches & tools used to produce both decorative and functional textiles.

Scholarship Winner Is Hex Sign Expert By Rich L'Ecuyer

Patrick Donmoyer, a senior at Kutztown University and winner of the Peter Wentz Farmstead Society Gamon scholarship, was featured this past Fall in an article first published in the Reading Eagle and subsequently reprinted in the Lansdale Reporter. The article describes a project whereby Patrick has undertaken the impressive task of documenting and photographing every hex sign (also known as “barn stars”) located in Berks County. He is creating a database of hex signs that will be accessible to the public at Kutztown University’s Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center. Following that Patrick hopes to create an online interactive map.

Nice job, Patrick!

Cider and Other Home Brews By Morgan McMillan

Eighteenth century residents of Pennsylvania commonly drank cider and beer produced at home, or at least locally. Mildly alcoholic beverages were considered very healthful, and probably were better than most of the water available at the time. According to Peter Kalm who travelled through Pennsylvania in the 1740s, orchards were abundant. Pressing and fermenting the juice was one way to preserve the product of apple, peach, and pear trees.

Just about any fruit could be turned into wine. Most grape wine being consumed in the colonies was imported, as grapes native to North America were considered inferior for wine production. Homemade fruit wines made from berries, quince, and other fruit were a less expensive alternative.

Hard cider, beer and fruit wine could be turned into additional products like harder liquor and vinegar. Those who owned stills could produce whiskey and brandy. Vinegar could be made without specialized equipment. Cider vinegar was used in pickling and preserving vegetables, which was an important part of providing food for a family year round.

The current exhibit in the Peter Wentz Farmstead Visitors’ Center explores the production and use of cider, beer, and fruit wine in the eighteenth century. Be sure to take a look when you come to visit the Farmstead to learn about the different beverages that were common in the Wentzes’ time.



Jonathan Lukens operates cider press
at 2008 Laerenswaert

Farmstead Receives Grant By Morgan McMillan

The Peter Wentz Farmstead has been awarded a Preservation Assistance Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Preservation Assistance Grants help small and mid-sized museums improve their ability to preserve and care for humanities collections including books and manuscripts, decorative and fine arts, and historical objects. The Peter Wentz Farmstead Historic House Environmental Monitoring Project has been given a *We the People* designation for its efforts to strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history and culture.

The \$6,000 grant will fund the purchase of digital dataloggers that will record the temperature and relative humidity in various parts of the historic house. The funding will also cover the services of conservator Kory Berrett to install the dataloggers and evaluate the data for one year. Controlling the environment is an important part of preserving the collection and the house. We look forward to working with Mr. Berrett to preserve our collections so that they can be shared with many generations to come.

Peter Wentz Farmstead 2009 Calendar*Winter Tactical***Saturday, March 7th 10am-4pm**

Revolutionary War reenactors will conduct their drills and everyday camp life skills in preparation for spring battles elsewhere.

*Sheep Shearing Day***Saturday, April 25th 10am-3pm**

Watch the farmers shear our sheep, then stay to learn more from the craftspeople who are working to produce wool products.

Also, stop by the summer kitchen to experience open-hearth cooking.

The Beers & Breweries of Colonial Philadelphia

Guest Speaker: Richard Wagner

Tuesday, May 12th 7pm

Join us for an evening highlighting the early beers and breweries of colonial Philadelphia during this presentation by Pennsylvania Brewery Historian, Richard Wagner. He has been researching the Keystone state's brewing heritage since 1980 and conducting colonial brewing demonstrations since 1991. *New Location:* Worcester Community Hall, Rte. 363 (Valley Forge Rd.) Worcester.

*Colonial Treats with Martha Washington: Celebrating 278 Years***Saturday, June 6th 10am-3pm**

Enjoy learning about the preparation of colonial era foods and about the life of First Lady, Martha Washington, celebrating her 278th birthday.

*Colonial Day Camp***Monday-Friday, June 22nd-26th 9am-2pm**

Students entering fourth through sixth grade are invited to attend a week-long, hands-on camp to learn about childhood of the colonial period. **Pre-registration required & fee charged.**

The German Tradition of Pies

Guest Speaker: Nancy Roan

Saturday, July 11th 1pm

Learn about some of the 18th and 19th century pie making traditions of the PA German peoples that lived in this area. Presented by Nancy Roan, renowned Goshenhoppen region historian.

*Wentz Wonder Kids Camp***Monday-Friday, July 20th-24th****9:30-11:30am**

Geared towards kids 4-5 years old, this half-day camp will educate and entertain about topics related to the historic Farmstead. Snacks provided. **Pre-registration required & fee charged.**

Musik en der Scheierhof

(Music in the Barnyard)

Local music groups perform with the historic Farmstead as their backdrop during this outdoor concert series. Call for date/ times!

*Pretzels of the Colonial Period***Saturday, September 26th 10am-3pm**

Try twisting pretzel dough as you learn more about the long history of this delectable Pennsylvania German treat.

*Laerenswaert***Saturday, October 10th 10am-3:30pm**

A hands-on colonial crafts fair with demonstrations of early American domestic and agricultural skills "worth learning."

Also includes house tours by costumed interpreters, military camp life, and open-hearth cooking.

Guest Speaker: Wendy Weida

Tuesday, November 10th 7pm

Join us for an evening of discussion on the Christmas traditions of the Moravians, most notably the Moravian pointed star and the Christmas Putz. Weida is the director of the Moravian Historical Society in Nazareth, PA and will share with you some of the holiday traditions of this fascinating religious group. *New Location:* Worcester Community Hall on Rte. 363 (Valley Forge Rd.)

in Worcester, just before the intersection with Germantown Pike.

*Candlelight Tour***Saturday, December 5th 2-8pm**

The Farmstead will be all aglow and offer the experience of a traditional Pennsylvania German seasonal 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 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:
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P.O. Box 679
Worcester, Pa. 19490-0679

610-584-5104

WENTZ POST

Peter Wentz Farmstead Society

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