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Piecing Together Tradition: African American and Amish Mennonite Quilting Fest
November 3, 10:30 AM to 3 PM
MCC Material Resource Center
Registration required
Experience the 1719 Herr House & Museum grounds by candlelight during Christmas Candlelight Tours on December 6, 7, and 8. This year, the tours will focus on the written word, and especially how it was printed.

As they move from site to site on the grounds, guests will learn how the printing press and production of books impacted cultural and religious life from the 1400s to the present. Examples of print material from the 1500s onward will be on display, including a 1529 Froschauer Bible that is part of the museum’s collection.

Gutenberg’s invention of moveable type that allowed for mass production of print material paved the way for the Reformation in the 1500s. The ideas of early Anabaptists spread with the help of the printing press, establishing a faith community that would eventually be transplanted to Pennsylvania in the early 1700s. Here, Anabaptists continued to produce Bibles, hymnals, and other religious works that many families treasured enough to preserve and pass down for centuries.

In the Native American Longhouse, guests will learn about the topic of printed language as it relates to American Indians in the Lancaster area. Presenters will cover topics including the petroglyphs along the Susquehanna River and attempts by local Europeans to transcribe Native words, which survive today in Lancaster as names of rivers and towns.

Tours conclude with a gathering in the stube, the main room of the Herr House, heated by the wood-fired stove and lit by candles, with the Christmas story from Luke 2 read in German.

Tickets for this event go on sale Monday, October 15 on the Herr House website (www.hansherr.org) or by calling 717-464-4438. Tickets, which reserve a specific evening and time, must be purchased in advance to attend.

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**Study of Anabaptist Book Bindings**

Steve Ness, Librarian and Archivist

Are we able to identify Anabaptist books by looking at their bindings? In May I was privileged to share the LMHS Rare Book Collection with three visitors who are traveling around the country, studying “Anabaptist” book bindings—Consuela Metzger from the Library Conservation Center at UCLA, Erin Hammeke from Duke University Libraries, and Alexander Ames from the University of Delaware.

The three are examining binding characteristics of pre-twentieth century books that appear to be uniquely Anabaptist, such as leather straps over the head and tail of the spine and brass ornament on the covers of the books. Indeed, the books with these characteristics in our Rare Book Collection all were either typical Anabaptist publications, such as the Ausbund, or were owned by Anabaptist families.

Very little research has been conducted regarding these “Anabaptist bindings,” sometimes called “Jura bindings,” so the work being done by this trio is fascinating while also raising more questions. Why would Anabaptists—with a reputation for frugal pragmatism—have added ornamentation to their bindings? How were sixteenth to eighteenth-century bindings of Anabaptist books in the Jura region of Switzerland similar to or different from non-Anabaptist books? Are these binding characteristics distinctly Swiss-German or are they found among other Mennonite communities as well?

Hopefully some of these questions will be addressed (if not completely answered) in an upcoming essay by Metzger, Hammeke, and Ames. It is scheduled to be published in volume 6 of the journal, *Suave Mechanicals*, which is expected to be released in late 2019 or early 2020.

If you would like to examine the rare book collection or take advantage of any of our other resources, visit the library Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Use of the library is free for members, students; there is a $7 fee for nonmembers.

**Did you know . . .**

- LMHS has more than 34,000 books in the library. The oldest dates to 1522!
- The Leasa database, available online to members, includes genealogies of some Egyptian pharaohs.
- Our genealogical card file contains approximately 750,000 names.
**Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale**

Pennsylvania German folk art has been noted for its craftsmanship, whimsy, and vibrance. While often thought of as antiques, the artistry and craft remain a living tradition. One can find contemporary works for holiday gift giving during the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society’s Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale, beginning with its opening reception from 6 to 8:30 pm on Friday, November 16.

“What is folk art? It is a term rooted in the tradition of art made for a purpose: a painted wooden chest, or a redware bowl,” says Emily Smucker Beidler, fraktur artist. “All of these things have a useful, practical purpose but show a sensitive attention to beauty as well.”

During the opening reception, there will be a chance to peruse the traditional ceramics, including redware and slipware, as well as contemporary approaches to the tools and materials we have available today,” says Beidler.

Artists will sell traditional ceramics, including redware and slipware, as well as various fiber arts, woodwork, ornaments, and other handwork. There will also be works of fraktur, the iconic decorative broken lettering distinctive of Pennsylvania German art, as well as Scherenschnitte, intricately cut paperwork.

The evening is free and open to the public. The Pennsylvania German Folk Art Sale continues through December 29 during normal Society operating hours: Tuesday through Saturday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

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**Auction Features an Immigrant’s Schoolbook and an Account of Mennonite Persecution**

Our November 9 book auction will feature several unique items, including an 1824 schoolbook published in Germany and inscribed in 1833 with the name of immigrant Peter Nafziger. A rare booklet will be available about an incident of persecution of Mennonites titled *Pro Copia Instrumentum Publicum: Concerning That Which Was Considered in Fact, by the Lord Commissioners of the Palatine Electoral Prince in Reference to the Protestant Mennonites at Reijdt in the Year 1694*, and *What Transpired in Facti, by the Lord Commissioners of the Anabaptists and Witches in Reformation Europe, 1525-1600*.

Items of interest to family historians include: volumes 1-5 of *Let These Stones Speak: A Genealogical Guide to Lancaster County’s Families Based on Cemetery Research on 10 CDs*; books on the Pennsylvania Soldiers’ Orphans Schools including listings of residents’ names, 1870s-1890s; and *Pennsylvania German Pioneers: A Publication of the Original Lists of Arrivals in the Port of Philadelphia, from 1727 to 1808*.

If you imagine an organization as a person, the head, heart, hands, and feet are staff and volunteers. They think creatively, strategize, and get things done. The money needed to accomplish the organization’s mission is its life blood.

Without healthy blood flow, a person can’t do much, much less all that she has set out to accomplish! Likewise, a community benefit organization can only serve the community with the generous, ongoing financial support of partners who care about its impact and invest.
A Family Trait

Jean Kilheffer Hess

As a kid Lynette (Leaman) Brenneman sometimes joined her grandmother, Ethel (Herr) Landis, during her weekly volunteer stint at the 1719 Herr House. Ethel loved meeting new people and answering visitors’ questions about early Mennonite newcomers to Lancaster.

When her grandmother died, Lynette, just 16, honored Ethel’s life and her passion for people by stepping into the volunteer role and guiding tours. As summer vacation wound down, Lynette’s mother, Carol Leaman, decided to fill the slot while Lynette returned to classes.

These days one of Lynette’s young daughters sometimes joins her as she guides visitors through the Herr House and the Native American Longhouse. Carol continues as a tour guide too – one that’s received shout outs on social media for her excellent tours!

Lynette remains inspired by her grandmother, Carol fondly remembers a ninth grade school project she did on the Herr House when she volunteers, and the girls say it’s just plain fun to be there. That’s four generations of caring connection and warm storytelling. What a gift.

I could tell you about other volunteers like Carol, whose research masterpiece will update the count of Anabaptists and groups, Edith, who is an important link in properly cataloging donated items, Romaine, who seems to be able to do just about anything we ask, and Ivan, who expertly staffs our library and provides research services on a weekly basis. Our volunteers make it possible for Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society to impact the world in so many wonderful ways.

We are actively seeking additional volunteers. Opportunities range from providing customer service in the Historical Society bookstore to helping with special events or tour guiding at the 1719 Herr House & Museum. You might enjoy data work or assisting with mailings, doing fall clean up on the grounds or painting and basic property maintenance. Maybe you’d get excited about digitizing a document collection to make it accessible online? Reach out to Michael Bodner at mbodner@lmhs.org at 717-393-9745 to apply as a volunteer. We’re looking forward to meeting you!

Herr House Features Mennonite History in Early America

The 1719 Hans Herr House, the oldest surviving building in Lancaster County and oldest extant Mennonite meetinghouse in America, is an important component of Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society’s role of demonstrating early Lancaster County Mennonite history. Located just outside the town of Willow Street, it was purchased by LMHS in 1969 and underwent restoration in the early 1970s before opening to the public.

The original owner, Christian Herr, was a member of the first group of European immigrants to arrive in what is now Lancaster County in 1710. The house never underwent significant structural changes, making it a well-preserved example of a medieval Germanic farmhouse, emblematic of Mennonites’ transition from Europe to America. It also serves as a historical focal point for Herr descendants, which now number in the hundreds of thousands across America.

Today, guests can go on a 45-minute guided tour of the house to learn about the people, faith, and culture associated with the historic structure. The grounds feature numerous self-guided exhibits, many housed in historic outbuildings from when the property was a working farm, where visitors can explore at their leisure artifacts related to faith, agriculture, and domestic life from the 1700s onward.

Special events at the Herr House include the Maize and Snitz Fest each fall and Christmas Candlelight Tours each December. These days include unique presentations that are fun for the whole family. Folk art classes, such as blacksmithing, hearth cooking, and bookbinding, are featured periodically so that visitors can learn unique historic skills. The grounds are a great destination for school groups, from preschool-aged to college.

The museum is open from 9 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Saturday, April 1 to November 30. Visit www.hansherr.org or call 717-464-4438 for details.