

Conococheague Pioneer Times

The Newsletter of the Conococheague Institute for the Study of Cultural Heritage

2nd Quarter 2023



Volume 29 Issue 2

Good Day to you...From the Executive Director ...How do I squeeze the busiest Spring into 10 pages...

With each newsletter this becomes increasingly difficult, as the Conococheague Institute continues to flourish with more projects, volunteers, education bookings and yes some more awards. While our social medias and emails continue to update more regularly, for some of our dedicated members this will be their first update since March! You are in for an exciting read!



So yes, CI was proud to accept a **Tuscarora Area Chamber of Commerce** award for Nonprofit of the Year, and a **PA Museums** State level award for Institutional achievement for our 'Can you Live 18th Century' program.

We would not be in this incredible position without our community supporters, so we thank you and congratulate you on your part in these awards too!



Our free Saturday programs have continued to be a great success with both new visitors and returning members stopping by to see what activities are on offer. We've featured baking and hearth cooking, nature conservation, brewing lectures, birding walks, and our increasingly popular arrowheads and archery. This latter has proven so popular that we're considering getting some proper archery butts for future sessions.

Our Saturday programs don't require a RSVP, and run from 10am to 5pm every Saturday. Stop by and see what's happening, follow our social media, or give us a call and we'll let you know what is coming up next.

We were honored to be a guest speaker at the **Washington County Historical Society** 'Culture and Cocktails' lecture that was sold out on May 12th, and we've also hosted the **DAR** for tours, senior groups, and presented at local **Kiwanis** and **Rotary** clubs. As word continues to spread about the rich heritage preserved at the Conococheague Institute we will just continue to grow.

During the **United Way** May of Caring, 23 Franklin County employees volunteered on a wide range of tasks, from assembling picnic tables, laying out our playground, tending garden beds, mulching trees and painting our outbuildings. The work was made easier by the new tractor that was part of our Franklin County IMPACT! Grant too!



If you haven't visited recently, you'll find the Conococheague Institute transformed. Our grounds and trails are open daily from dawn to dusk, are pet friendly, and have something for everyone.

Plan to visit during any Saturday when our exhibits and buildings are open to the public with free historic programs from 10am to 5pm.



One date to plan for would be Saturday July 8th, when we'll be having a historic games and entertainment featured day. **It will include a new sponsored (by M&T Bank) Colonial Puppet show that we have developed for Kindergarten age future bookings but we'll be putting on the full performance for the public at 1pm on that date!** As always if you have questions contact us for more info.

Cheers!

Spring Contributions

We'd like to thank the following people for their recent (March 15th to June 13th) donations and memberships. We launched our Spring Giving on the heels of our award announcements and that period has brought in an incredible **\$48,496.53** in donations, **\$1640.00** in memberships, **\$56,500.00** in grants, and an astounding **\$6,575.00** from education bookings! We still aim to find support for a substantial endowment to ensure we can continue long into the future, and contributions from our community are the reason we are able to keep on in our mission to preserve the past and educate the next generation of historians and naturalists. No matter the amount we are grateful for your help. Thank you!



Chuck Holland, Kay Boward, Mary Sanders, Jack and Barbara Demuth, F&M Trust Bank, Tracy Moseby, Jean Woods, Michele Wade, Cheryl Hartman, Kim Spanos-Telsing, Gregory Pierce, John and Betty Seburn, JeanMarie Jr Walz, Ted Mills, Phyllis Cherry, Phyllis Wertime, Joanne Klasse, Sheryl Snider, Cecil F & Anna Snyder, Ed and Victoria Whetstone, Kay Boward, Joseph and Donna Thornton, Middletown Valley Bank, Graeme Beaton, James Failor, PHMC, Gay Buchanan, George White, Sheila and Tyrone Snider, Sarah Campbell, Burnley and Trowbridge, Jane Hershey, Jamie Fahnestock, Jacob Shaffer, Cameron Buchanan, Katie Buchanan, Conner Buchanan, Kiefer Buchanan, Kim Witman, Rural King, Jim Finegan, Sue Alto, Chris Howlett, Christina Jarvis, Lynda Thomason, M & T Bank Charitable Foundation, Dick and Susan Bell, Joyce Horst, Carol Zehosky, Sally Haver, Mari Kaplan, Vince Newell, Patricia Novack, Toni Zimmerman, Mary Poscover, Susan Marie Gemeny, Carol Mellott, Ronald Baer Jr, Doris Goldman Armstrong, Claudia C Mooij, Ed Leisinger, Robert Kurtz Jr, Alva Lynch, MaryRuth Reis, Jerome K Harness, Robert Weir, Pam Anderson, Mary Sanders, Brent and Jody Smith (Liberty Auto and Tire), Larry Williams, James and Rebecca Rogers Sr, Visit Hagerstown Washington County Visitors Bureau, James Rogers, Barbara Fore, Karen Miller, Andy Everetts, Kathleen Wolfinger, Linda Ries, Donald Fishel, Deb Corcoran, James Strutz, Lois Steichen, Robert Lee Miller, Oliver Goetz, Judith Ditto and Andrew Abel.

Every contribution is important and we're so grateful!

Giving for others

With the Spring Giving we asked people to give in memory or honor of those who impacted our shared history of the region.

Donations were made in memory of **Chris Ecton, Mrs Ruth Miller, Ester Hawbaker, Earl E Jones, JR Mellott, Mike and Margaret Grosky, Dorothy Royer Seibert, Don Boward, Edna A Goetz and the ancestors of Mr Strutz.**

A special donation was made in memory of **John Robin Loach** of Suffolk, UK. He had been a long time member of CI from afar, and in his memory new grape vines were planted at the Negley Cabin. Our students planted them along trellises they had built and they will be enjoyed for years to come.

We also had a donation made in **honor of Betsey Lillard**, which we wholeheartedly agree with! President Lillard has been a rock of CI for many years now and is always willing to lend a hand whether it's in historic programs, leading meetings or deep in the weeds.



Help us take the next step

Our annual budget ensures we continue in our mission, but there are different ways to give. Funded projects, Memorial Funds or endowments each have different benefits.

We have received very generous grants and funded project donations recently, **but your contributions to our annual fund ensure we can operate the essentials:** staffing, utilities and upkeep are important to allowing our educational programs and preservation to continue.

The next step for CI, is securing a solid foundational endowment fund, so we can reach for larger annual grants.

If you can give \$5,000 to \$100,000 towards our endowment please consider giving to the future of the frontier.

All donations are tax deductible.

In-Kind Donations

There are more ways to give than just financially.

We've received some wonderful donations of interpretive items, original artifacts, books and collections recently.



Some highlights include:

- A Pennsylvaniaian game rack (circa 1800) from **Virginia Schaefer**. It now hangs proudly in our Negley cabin (though we currently have herbs on it rather than game).
- **Gloria Bastian** of Hagerstown chose us to be the home for her handmade Bicentennial silk gown. As well as giving us an item for future fancy celebrations, this is also a great example of some more recent history. Our nation celebrated widely in 1976 for the Independence of the United States, and similar events are being planned for 2026 for the Semiquincentennial 'America 250'!
- Local author **Tim Ware** donated autographed copies of his book "*Maryland in the French and Indian War*" which we now carry in our gift shop.

You can donate items, artifacts, or even supplies that help us in our day to day operations (from vacuums to chainsaws). **If you are a business you can even donate services which are tax-deductible!**

CI Impact Grant: Complete!

If you have visited recently, you'll have noticed some major changes to our outdoor spaces.

We have brand new picnic tables, the entire site has been mulched (thanks to our new tractor), there are bike racks at the Visitor Center, and down at the woodline is a new children's play area!

These all formed part of the Franklin County IMPACT! Grant program, and we are pleased to say it is completed entirely.

This \$70,000 grant was a reimbursement style grant. We suggest a project plan, and when it is approved we are reimbursed as we complete each project phase. April and May were a strange month for our treasurer to be seeing \$70,000 in expenditures, but it was balanced by the same in reimbursement, and now we have new additions to our site for the whole community to enjoy.

We are very grateful to the County Commissioners who approved the grant request, and the Franklin County staff who lent us support. Funded projects allow growth at CI and we are always looking for new contributors.

Let us know if you would like to fund a specific project, or of course make a donation to support our annual operating costs, without which we could not continue in our mission!



THIS PROJECT SUPPORTED BY



IMPACT!
GRANT PROGRAM

Welcome to our new full time staff member!

Hello everyone! My name is Kori Taber and I have had a busy past couple months after assuming my role as the Visitor Experience Facilitator here at CI. I wanted to let you know a little bit more about me and what I've been up to around the site.

Last spring, I finished my Master's Degree in Recreation and Parks Management from Frostburg State University. Before that, I studied my undergraduate degree at St. Mary's College of Maryland, with a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology and course work for a minor in Museum Studies and Theater. I also have Certifications for teaching infants and toddlers. My background is both in parks and recreation, as well as early childhood education.

While I might be a new face to the staff team here, I am not new to CI! I have been a volunteer at CI since the Fall of 2020, helping out wherever needed.

Jumping in during the middle of our heavy spring booking season was a test, but I have loved seeing the learners of all ages coming through the site to learn about the history and nature of the area!

A large passion of mine is making museum spaces more accessible for our youngest learners. Earlier this month, we had an Early Childhood Activity Day at the site. There were activities all around the site, and it was wonderful to see families spending their whole day here using all the amenities the site has to offer.



Thoughts from our Founder Dr John Stauffer

With the 30th anniversary of the site coming up next year, Visitor Experience Facilitator Kori Taber sat down with founder and President Emeritus Dr. John Stauffer to ask him some questions about the site. Below is a small example of the conversation, more will be featured next year for the 30th anniversary.

Q: What is your earliest memory of Rock Hill Farm?

A: I spent my summers here starting when I was six years old with my grandparents who lived in Greencastle, while I lived in Hagerstown. My grandfather had six or seven farms that he rented or used so we went out to them regularly. We didn't get up here to Rock Hill Farm every week I don't think, but I did visit often.

Q: Where would you like to see the Conococheague Institute in 10 years?

A: I'd like to see it to continue to represent the colonial era, and particularly focused on the frontier lifestyle. Much of William Penn's colony of Pennsylvania was civitized like in Europe, but the Conococheague and its people were out in the wilds and country, and required people to adapt. Most importantly we'd like to ensure we continue to educate people about what people went through in their daily lives throughout history.

Q: What would you say is your favorite place or aspect of the site?

A: There's so many interesting things it's hard to choose just one. The nice thing is whatever someone is interested in there is something just right for them.



Supporting the Conococheague Institute: 30th Anniversary next year!

What memories do you have of Rock Hill Farm and the Conococheague Institute? What has been your best and proudest moment as a member? What new growth and activities would you like to see us begin?

Write to us and we'll include them in future newsletters, come see us in person for an oral interview, or give us a call. We'll be compiling lots more recollections for our 30th Anniversary celebrations in 2024

If we could enrich our endowment to \$300,000 for our 30th Anniversary next year that would be a perfect foundation for the long term sustainability of CI.

Give us your input, join our committees, and support CI with a generous endowment and also by including us in your Estate Plans.

By doing so you ensure the Future of the Frontier for generations to come.

Spring Activities: A Snapshot

Education Bookings!

Between March and June we've had an incredible education spree. From small homeschool groups, to entire elementary school grades, our site has been host to engaging learning experiences for students of all ages. We've had students from all across the tri-state learning about 'Colonial Life on the Frontier', 'Women's Roles in Early America', our ever popular '18th Century Medicine and Surgery' and an increasing number of 'Birding and Botany' bookings. Education is definitely what we do best at the Conococheague Institute, and we love to see the students enjoy the history and beauty of the region.



Environmental Conservation!

Another Spring, another round of trees planted in partnership with the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation**. This year's plantings included Arrowwood, Spicebush, White Pine, Meadowsweet and Hazelnut. Plantings occurred during our Get to Know Nature event with volunteers from **Middletown Valley Bank**, and with our weekly **Mercersburg Academy** volunteers.

Tree health means healthier streams, and that is apparent in the sheer amount of wildlife we've witnessed this Spring, from nesting herons, to hatching turtles.



Amazing Volunteers!

We are so grateful for the consistency of volunteers this Spring. Every other Tuesday **Ezra's Garden** and the **Gettels** (2 of our homeschool families) volunteer to keep the garden planted, weeded and watered, and it's never looked better. Every Wednesday our **Mercersburg Academy** Community Engagement volunteers were on site to help with everything from tree plantings, to event preparation, and every Thursday **James Buchanan Middle School** volunteers would be lending a hand. With all these students helping out, the site looks great...which explains one reason early Americans had such large families!



Get to Know Nature Event Summary

Our April 15th event to celebrate nature was a huge success. Sponsored by **F&M Trust** we had 'Wonderfully Wild' lead an animal program that drew in a full house in the Visitor Center, and 'Miller's Wildlife' had birds of prey for lectures and meet and greets (though it was too wet to fly them).

There were also crafts, **Scout troop 103** food vendors, the **Franklin County Bookmobile**, **Stone House History**, **Middletown Valley Bank** for tree plantings and more. This was a great example of a new event that focused on a different niche; the amazing environment around us and our need to protect it! Without the sponsorship we couldn't have had the guest presenters, and they were a huge reason for the success. **Would you like to see another animal program or falconry display at our Fall events? Contact us about sponsoring! Adding falconry to our November 4th Bonfire Night would be a lot of fun!**



Funding for the Wonderfully Wild & Miller's Wildlife part of the event was generously provided by F&M Trust Bank. Thank you!



Historic Preservation and Maintenance: Volunteer Appreciation

We appreciate all our volunteers who lend their time and expertise to bring colonial history to life during our programs, plant trees with us, or tend the garden.

One area we have the least volunteer help is in the skilled construction and maintenance tasks that managing several historic structures requires, and of course it's not something we can delegate to our Middle and High School student volunteers!

So we were especially grateful to **Todd Mielke** from Washington DC for making a very generous offer to spend an entire week at CI in May to tackle as many tasks that could be done. A skilled carpenter, Todd learnt about CI when his daughter Sophia attended our programs, and wanted to support our mission. Working tirelessly from dawn to dusk he installed our new firelock exhibit, neatly pieced repairs into the Negley porch, restored the gazebo deck, completely replaced our garden borders, led the construction of the playground, fixed broken doors and much much more!

We are already planning another preservation and maintenance week for the Fall. With so many fixes checked off, perhaps the next project will be a well head restoration or a cider press! Thanks Todd!



Can you Live 18th Century? These students proved they can!

We're pleased to report that this year's 'Full on Frontier: Can you Live 18th Century?' program that was endowed by Robert Kurtz Jr was a wonderful success. We ended up with 11 students for the 2 week program as part of the Mercersburg Academy 'Intensive' week, and 2 faculty (Emily Parsons and Rich Heffron), working with Matthew Wedd our Executive Director.

We learnt a lot this year with the expanded program (longer days, more hearth cooking), and we'll continue to improve it every year to come. Though many of the students had the historic costumes as a primary reason for signing up for the program, they all enjoyed some casual dress days this year for activities focused around Indigenous culture and discussions on racial history.

Each student at the culmination of the program had a final project to reflect on their experience. Some students chose to develop hands on skills and presented the ability to fire start with flint and steel. Others chose a making project with wampum necklaces, a herb sachet, flower bouquet and even a new tavern sign. We also had some oral presentations, songs and music too!

Funded programs like this really expand what we can achieve as a site, and we look forward to other opportunities to grow the Conococheague Institute even further.

Though the experience of bringing early American history to life for these students is a key part, as an educator one of the most inspiring parts of this program is watching the students grow socially throughout the week. Many start the program not knowing their peers, but due to shared experiences they clearly leave it as a close friends.

Due to last years success with food, we expanded this year to include students cooking historic food every day. For each lunch a small group of students would cook for the whole group while the others got a break. We had bread and butter, soups, fresh salads, cakes and more!



Our 2023 Summer camps were launched on this award winning program model, and they look to be at full capacity! Contact us for more information on similar activities.

Passing the Baton: Visitor Experience Team Members at CI

We have some success stories to share about our most recent Intern graduates. **Erin Emerick** ended her Internship with us in April, to start a full time position at **Pennsbury Manor** in Morrisville, PA and winter Intern **Kasmira Zechman** received a position at the **National Canal Museum**.

This is exactly our wish with our Paid internship program; To provide talented students with the opportunity to shine and help them on their career ladder in public history.

With that in mind, we are pleased to announce that due to a generous donation to the intern fund by **Lee and Jan Davis**, and a \$4000 grant from the **Pennsylvania Historical Museum Commission** we have expanded our intern program this Summer to include two high school interns. **Nathalie Maurer** and **Selena Feng** will be joining **Amelia Craven** in paid positions, to learn more about working in the public tourism sector, as well as about historic presentations, and environmental conservation.

Both had already volunteered at the Conococheague Institute as students of the **Mercersburg Academy** Community Engagement program, and had fallen in love with CI's atmosphere. If this Summer goes well we hope to continue to expand our internship opportunities.

Make a donation today to the Lucas Lapole Memorial Fund, and directly support the new careers of these young talents.



Pennsylvania
Historical & Museum
Commission

Donate to the Lucas Lapole Memorial Fund to Support Interns

We are pleased to announce that all our current interns are PAID interns. Unpaid internships limit the opportunities a student can pursue, and severely disenfranchises minority and underrepresented students.

As such, CI hopes to provide a constant place where students can thrive in their educational career and has expanded it to include High School students too.

We maintain a fund created in memory of former CI Intern, Lucas Lapole, to which all donations made are tax deductible and ONLY benefit the students. **Donate today by including the note "Intern" on any donation to CI.**

With more support from you we are setting students on a successful career!

The Conococheague Book Club

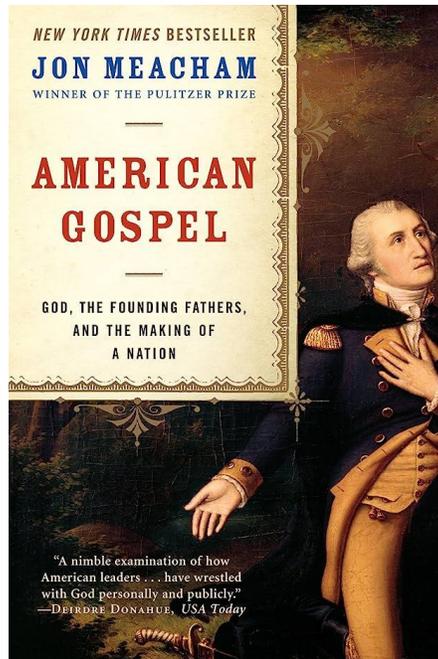
3rd Thursday of every Month at 1pm at the Welsh Barrens Visitor Center

Book club is taking a vacation for July, but will resume in August.

Our book club members always enjoy a lively discussion on books about our history and heritage in the air conditioned visitor center.

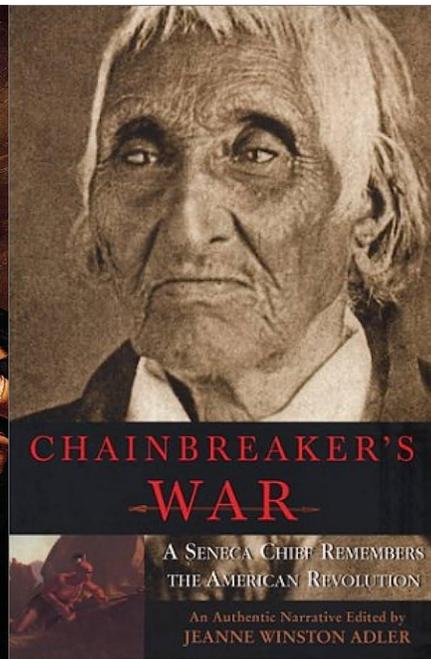
Bring a snack too and lunch beforehand!

All are welcome, no RSVP required.



August 17th at 1 PM

American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation" (2006)
by Jon Meacham



September 21st at 1 PM

Chainbreaker's War: A Seneca Chief Remembers the American Revolution" (2002)
edited by Jeanne Winston Adler

Our library has over 9000 titles on history, nature, and the local region. One of our membership perks is the ability to check books out to read at home. Schedule an appointment to check a book out or check out our online catalog

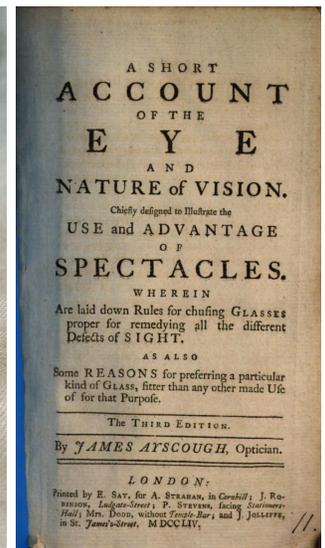
Archives and Artifacts: Looking into our Collection

Take a good look at our new artifact spotlight! This pair of tinted glasses dates back to the early 1800s. The oval lenses have a blue-green tint to them and there is a small loop at the end of each arm which would be used to attach a chain or cord to the glasses.

Eyeglasses had become fairly common in the 18th century, but green glass spectacles such as these were becoming increasingly popular. In the 1750s an English optician named James Aycough began applying blue and green tints to glasses, as he believed clear light was harmful to people's eyes. While these glasses were not intended to protect eyes from UV light, they were the modern precursor for sunglasses as we know them today.

These artifacts and many others help us preserve everyday life from our heritage. They are currently featured in our timeline exhibit in the Welsh Barrens Visitor Center.

If you have an artifact from the region or that pertains to the 18th Century that you'd like to donate, we'd love to hear from you! Perhaps your donation will be the next featured artifact!



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Youtube: [@coloniallivingattheconococheagueinstitute](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0n0n0n0n0n0n0n0n0n0n0n)



**Help Grow our Sustainability: Your Membership support allows us to continue in our mission!
CI Membership runs on a 'Valid through 12 month cycle', so whenever you renew you will receive a
full year of benefits**

Annual Membership and additional Donation Form

Name: _____

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Newsletter Format Preference, Email or Printed: _____

- Student: \$10
- Individual: \$25
- Family: \$35
- Patron: \$125
- Corporate: \$200
- Sustaining: \$300
- Life: \$1000

Membership Level: _____

Additional Donation: _____

Make Checks Payable to The Conococheague Institute, 12995 Bain Road,
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Thank you!

I support the Conococheague Institute because: _____

I have included CI in my Estate Plans

I would like more information about Funded Projects