

Conococheague Pioneer Times

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

Volume 31 Issue 3



3rd Quarter 2025

Good Day to you...From the Executive Director



It's finally Fall! We hope you enjoyed the Summer, it was a hot one, but we've had a very productive few months, largely in part to the incredible interns (*pages 4-5*).

Thank you to everyone who has given their support, especially during the **"Matthew's Birthday Suit Fundraiser"** where \$791 was raised for a new outfit (*it arrives this week*). A special thanks to **Gay Buchanan** for her kindness and gifts, we're so lucky to have such caring members.

We also were able to receive visits from many special guests. **Our founding Stauffer family** spent the summer with us and have been both impressed and supportive (\$50k Matching Campaign launched, *page 2*) with CI's growth. We've noted more visitors travel more than an hour to visit CI, proving it to be a major destination, and we even welcomed **PA State Representative Chad Reichard** and his team for a tour.



We've been fortunate in having some amazing volunteer participation this summer. Welcome new living history educators **Lee Davis, Rick Burkett** and **Noelle Ianno**; they've been doing phenomenal. **Large volunteer groups** from **M&T Bank** and **Grand Point Church** both brought scores of hands to help with weeding roses, harvesting hops, oiling the cabin, and more. Now school is in session we're also aided by 20+ **Mercersburg Academy** students each week. Apple harvesting, paint fencing, and soon a native garden planting, their energy and enthusiasm for CI is inspiring.



We have lots for you to read in this newsletter, but **don't delay!** Some of the articles contain TIME SENSITIVE news like our **October 11th Members Meeting**. I'd love for all our members to be present to share in our accomplishments and help shape the future.

Please contact me if you ever have any questions or suggestions for the Conococheague Institute. We are here because of the generosity of our community, and I love to serve you. mwedd@cimlg.org - 717-328-2800

Cheers! Matthew Wedd
Executive Director



1775 Fundraiser Raffle

Purchase 1 of 100 tickets, \$17.75 each in celebration of our 1775 event series! This is your chance to join in the excitement and support our mission to preserve local history at the Conococheague Institute. With such limited availability, tickets won't last long! Grab yours today and be part of something historic!



Be a part of our 1775 Anniversary celebrations, and help support your favorite historic site!

Ticket is 1 of 100 and will be drawn at the December 13th Colonial Christmas event, or sooner if all tickets are sold.

Prize contains:

- 3 night stay for up to four guests at The Tenant House at Shady Spring Farm. Value \$560.00
- Two Free Workshops at CI - Archery and 18th century Baking lesson. Value \$300 each
- Local gifts and delights from our regional partners to make your stay a full experience

Contact info@cimlg.org for more details

Support CI
for a
chance to
win! Order
tickets via
mail, in
person, or
scan this
code



2025 Summer Contributions

Thanks to increased support for our Lucas Lapole Memorial Intern Fund, this summer has been an incredibly productive season for CI. Your generosity not only strengthens careers in conservation and historic preservation, but also helps us protect the past, inspire future stewards, and care for our beautiful site, open to all in the community.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed between June 7th and September 22nd, and to those who continue to support our 2025 programs, operations, educational visits, and preservation work. Every gift truly makes a lasting impact.

Proud CI Contributors

John C. Stauffer, Kay Boward, Trey McCarty, Chris Connolly, Lynne and Dean Wigfield, Diane Reed, Sue Alto, Mike Reed, Betsey Lillard, Kami Evarts, American Legion Wesley Yeager Post 606, Allen & Angie Piper, Bob and Kathe Shinham, Vince Newell, Lee Davis, William Nitterhouse, Ann Allen, Robert Henkell, Mark Niemeyer, Elizabeth Mummert, Robert Stransky, Barb Onorato, Keith & Angela Taber, George White, Shelly Coonrod, Rick Burkett, Andrew Chesnut, Mike and Mary Ellen South, Coral Wedd, Robert Stransky, Christina Painter, Casey Faith, Derek Nesbitt, Gay Buchanan, George McClellan, Keith and College Walo, David Ditto, Ed and Victoria Whetstone, Lynda Thomason, Franklin County Employees, Mary Sanders, the Estate of Joan McKean, Diane Chamberlin, Glenn and Adeline Vanderver, Chuck Holland, Sherly Nickol, Julie Ianno, Jef Savage, Trump and Darlene Vanderau, Michael Owens, Emily Parsons, Betty Martin-Ewing, Sage Woodal, Selena Feng, Dan Swain, Dennis Kubicki, and Charles Lankford ...and many contributions in our donation boxes during programs and events. Thank you! Since January 1st, our donations have totaled \$40,200. and our memberships have totaled \$4,667. Our End of Year Giving is our busiest season for membership renewals & donations, and that starts now!



In-Kind Donations

Many of our interpretive items and exhibits have been generously donated by Dr. Lee Davis. This summer, we thank him for contributing a gathering basket, a display case for our exhibits, a copy of Neumann’s Collector’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of the American Revolution, and a set of pipe tongs. Mervin Frey of Greencastle donated several excellent hay forks for our animal husbandry program, along with baking pans from the Faus family. Chuck Holland contributed an entire collection of men’s and women’s reenactment clothing—an invaluable resource for our new volunteers. Blackjacket Munitions donated a Percussion Cap French Model Pistol, which will be featured in an upcoming fundraiser. 3Rivers Archery also made a generous donation, including a drinks thermos, baseball cap, and other merchandise. Sam Cathey provided a reproduction blanket coat and a pocket writing set for use by our living historians. Finally, David Ditto kindly donated a truckload of wide-sawn lumber, which will be used for additions to our animal pasture. The goats and sheep are especially grateful!





2025 Stauffer Founders Challenge!

\$50,000 Matching Campaign for CI's End of Year Giving Season





2025 End of Year Giving

For 31 years, since its founding by Dr. John C. Stauffer, the Conococheague Institute has been fulfilling its mission to to develop and foster awareness, understanding, and stewardship of the cultural and natural history of the Appalachian frontier of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

In recent years of growth, that has been enabled by matching campaigns where the Stauffers pledge to match your contributions and support. Last year you beat the \$50,000 goal, resulting in \$100,000 towards our annual budget. Let’s continue the trend and make this year a winner!

Maintaining our grounds and trails year-round, offering free weekend programming, and supporting the professional staff who plan and run our educational programs - all of this wouldn’t be possible without contributions from people like you. Every donation is appreciated and wisely stewarded to ensure that the Conococheague Institute can continue its mission.

During this matching campaign, we’re adding another challenge: Tell us how you want to see CI grow! Our paper readers have had a survey sent to them, and our digital supporters will have received an email. Please fill out this survey with your contribution to the campaign so we can continue to be YOUR Conococheague Institute.

Scan this link to make a tax deductible contribution and have it matched directly through Square!

Endowment contribution will be matched too! You can give by donating stocks & securities directly. Just use this information: DTCC Number: 0141 Conococheague Institute Acct#6672-9564

Summer Highlights

The hottest months of the year may see our students leave for summer break, but in their place we welcome travelers on vacation, local families enjoying time together, new volunteers, and participants in our annual summer camp. Thanks to support from the **Americana Corner Preserving America Partners** Program, we were also able to expand our Revolutionary Homestead programs to both Saturdays and Sundays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Here is just a sampling of the activities we enjoyed this summer.

Conococheague Summer Camp

What a fantastic week we had at our Conococheague Summer Camp! From 18th-century hearth cooking and colonial games to stream studies, animal encounters, archery, and even pizza making in the bake oven, our campers dove into every experience with excitement and joy. These photos capture just a glimpse of the laughter, learning, and fun that filled each day. Thank you to all the families who made this camp so special, we loved having your children explore history, nature, and creativity with us!

This year’s camps also supported our 2025 Paid Internships, one of our most important fundraising initiatives. Our team had a great time with these future historians and naturalists!.



Revolutionary Homestead

Celebrate the American Revolution at the Conococheague Institute near Mercersburg, Pennsylvania...not on the battlefield, but on a Welsh frontier farm, with our weekly Revolutionary Homestead programs

Every weekend, we focus on 18th-century living history, often with a few unique twists. This summer, we hosted a “Great Conococheague Bake Off,” where interns and visitors learned to make meat pies. We also featured demonstrations that explored natural dyeing with indigo, cochineal, and logwood; held leatherworking workshops; and much more.

Visit us any Saturday, year-round, for rich, educational, and engaging experiences for all ages. No RSVP required, open from 10 AM to 4 PM.



Summer Internships: A Snapshot

Joslyn Loss, Penn State Mont Alto - Natural Conservation and Gardens/Forestry Internship

We were thrilled to receive a \$3,500 Tree Care Grant this year from the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation's K10M Project**, which allowed us to advertise for a forestry intern. With 30 acres, over 600 new native plantings, and our older heritage fruit trees, we definitely needed the extra help!

Much of the forestry work was behind the scenes (and the trees), so if you missed her, meet **Joslyn Loss**, a **Penn State Mont Alto** student and our very first Forestry Intern. Joslyn set an incredibly high bar with her dedicated work ethic and genuine passion for forestry. Join us in congratulating Joslyn, and thank you to the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation** for making this special position possible



Alex Tomlinson, Shippensburg University - Applied History Internship

Alex tried a bit of everything this summer in his Applied History role, from animal care, historic programs, increasing his hands-on history skills (from leather working to gardening), and greeting visitors. He also had the chance to learn about Past Perfect (the primary museum software) and how we organize our collection, and take a leading role in developing a new exhibit in the visitor center using some of our culinary items for a Fall harvest theme. He also created a video to welcome new and old visitors alike. We always recommend starting any visit to CI in our Welsh Barrens Visitor Center, where our team will be happy to greet you, show you around the exhibits, and share what exciting programming is happening that week.



Ellen Hake, Iowa State University - Natural Conservation and Wetlands Ecology Internship

Each intern this summer was assigned a special project, and Ellen's was to assess and improve our wetlands pond and develop a long-term sustainability plan. With her academic focus in Agricultural Studies (emphasizing sustainability, ecology, and rural policy) Ellen was well-suited for this role. She quickly identified several key issues: high sedimentation and bank erosion in the pond's feeder stream, blocked culverts, and dense algae growth. Throughout the summer, Ellen led CI's efforts to address these problems. She helped install riprap (a protective layer of rock that prevents stream bank erosion), removed invasive plant species, and most importantly developed a detailed scientific plan for future improvements. We'll be using Ellen's research as the foundation for a \$10,000 grant application this fall. The proposed improvements will help prevent algae blooms, increase water clarity, and support greater biodiversity...especially more herons! And the best part? Ellen's name will be on the proposal. That's exactly the kind of real-world experience and résumé-building we're proud to support at CI.



BUILDING UP THE NEXT GENERATION



SUPPORTING PAID
INTERNSHIPS IN MUSEUMS
& CONSERVATION



Scan this link to make a tax deductible contribution to our intern fund directly through Square! We offer paid internships year round starting at \$15 per hour.

Summer Internships: A Snapshot

Mikaela Mummert, Greencastle Antrim HS/Penn State Mont Alto - Visitor Experience & Forestry Intern

And last but not least, Mikaela returned as an intern from our 2024 program. Since then, she graduated from high school and enrolled in the forestry program at Penn State Mont Alto. She also completed her Eagle Scout project right here at CI, creating an incredible archery range. We were thrilled when she reapplied for 2025. Mikaela has been an indispensable part of the team all summer: leading educational programs, learning new historic crafts, running archery days, mentoring our younger volunteers, and beginning to explore her new path in forestry. No matter the task, Mikaela was quick to lend a hand, and we could visualise her running the Conococheague Institute a decade from now! We're excited to keep Mikaela on as a long-term intern, it would be a real loss to miss out on her many talents.



Animal Husbandry on the Frontier

Breeding season has arrived for our sheep and goats (**we have a BIG ram visiting, and Carmella has taken a ‘romantic’ holiday to a billy goat farm**), and lately we've been hearing the same question over and over: **"Can they breed together?"**

The short answer is no. Although goats and sheep are closely related, they are completely different species with some key differences. Both animals belong to the same family, *Bovidae*, which also includes antelopes, cattle, and bison. They're part of the same subfamily, *Caprinae*, and the same tribe, *Caprini*. But they split at the genus level. Goats are part of the genus *Capra*, while sheep belong to *Ovis*.

On a genetic level, goats have 60 chromosomes, and sheep have 54. Because of this difference, successful hybridization is almost impossible. In incredibly rare cases, there have been reports of goat-sheep hybrids (often nicknamed a "geep" or "shoat," depending on whether the mother was a goat or a sheep). These hybrids are typically sterile and don't live long, making them more of a curiosity than a possibility.

So, no, our Nigerian Dwarf goats and Black Welsh Mountain sheep are not having any cross-species babies. They may share snacks, naps, snuggles, and side-eyes, but genetically, they're each staying in their own lane. Next time you visit, feel free to say hello to our goats and sheep, both incredible animals in their own unique way!

The animals are also proving fan favorites with students, staff and donors. **They've received over \$17,000 in donations since spring, thank you for your support!**



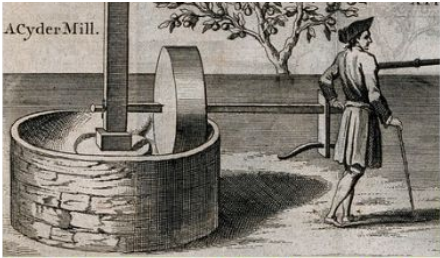
Lawn to Prairie Update

Our Lawn to Prairie conversion project continues to amaze! It's hard to believe that just one year ago, this vibrant, flowering meadow was 3,000 square feet of plain lawn. As the weather cools, we invite you to enjoy a fall sunset walk around our grounds this week. This project wouldn't have been possible without a \$5,600 grant from the **Thomas G. & Nancy H. Burkey Fund (TFEC)**, our dedicated team and volunteers who handled the planting, and **Native Niche** for supplying locally grown plants.

Feeling inspired? Maybe it's time to plan your own lawn-to-prairie transformation. **Contact us, we'll be happy to share the steps to get started!**

Funded Projects

During the \$50,000 Matching Campaign, all contributions will be matched, whether donations, memberships, sponsorships or our special funded projects. Here are some great giving areas.



Reproduction Cider Mill: Goal = \$10,000

We'd prepared this project for a grant earlier in the year, and now we're opening up to our donors for support. CI is blessed with wonderful apple orchards, and we do cider pressing on a small scale for educational programs. A large cider mill would be an amazing legacy monument for the donor, would make the farmstead feel like a more authentic working farm, and be an incredible asset for our large field trips. ...imagine young students working together to turn the mill! Millstones alone can cost \$5,000 so this project may need many hands to fund it!

Wetlands Pond Restoration: Goal = \$10,000

Thanks to Ellen's research, we now have a vital CI wetland restoration project to combat agricultural runoff, algal blooms, and declining water quality. A solar-powered aerator (\$2,500) will improve oxygen levels and water clarity, supported by filtration systems, plant buffers and fish stocking. Local student volunteers and our paid interns will monitor and maintain the system, gaining hands-on conservation experience. Your donation directly supports this effort. help us fund the aerator and invest in both a healthier ecosystem and the next generation of environmental stewards.



Education and Field Trips: Goal = \$15,000

We've never been busier in educational bookings, and are proud of the interest in our heritage from local students. All those bookings take a professional team of educators, interpretive supplies, and for our large bookings from Title 1 schools we like to be able to offer group discounts thanks to community support.

Patriot Federal Credit Union and **M&T Bank Charitable Trust** both contributed \$3,000 each this Spring, and any support is gratefully appreciated in providing a safe and engaging educational experience.

Lucas Lapole Memorial Interns: Goal = \$32,000

Our internships are preparing students for a career in the humanities while allowing us to continue focusing on engaging hands-on programs for students, creating a healthy outdoor space for visitors, and expanding our reach with outreach events. By increasing our Internships in 2025/26 we will have the needed hands for the increased activity on the site that recent growth has stimulated, and also provide a unique opportunity to the students through year round programs. We are deeply grateful to the **PHMC Cultural and Historical Support Grant**, **Ann Allen**, the **Stauffer family**, and **Lee Davis in memory of his beloved wife Jan** for their generous contributions to our intern fund.



In Memory of Janet Davis. Born August 9, 1931 – Passed June 24, 2025

Jan was a lifelong educator who loved sharing her knowledge and experiences with children.

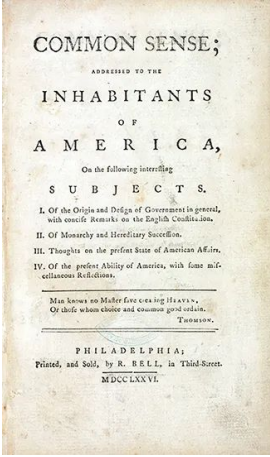
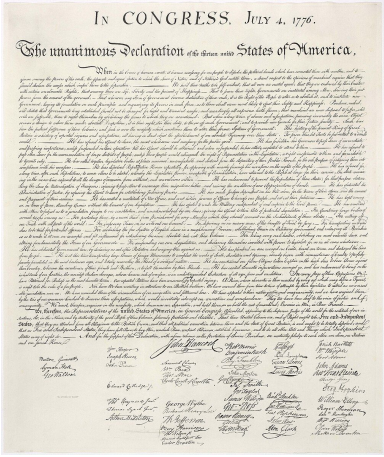
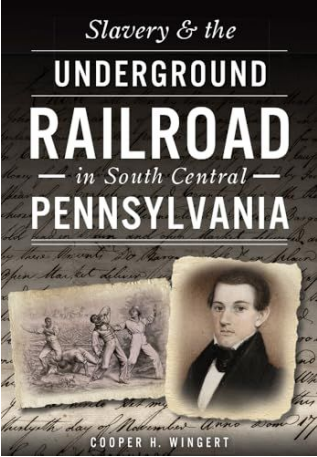
Jan and Lee have been generous supporters of CI's exhibits and internship programs. She will be deeply missed by our community.

Please consider a donation to our intern fund. Include 'Intern' on any donation and it will go towards this initiative.

The Welsh Barrens Visitor Center: Open every Saturday 10am to 5pm

Whenever you begin your visit, we encourage you to stop by the Visitor Center first. Greet our team, learn about the history of Rock Hill Farm, explore the exhibits, and make a purchase in the gift shop (or become a member to support our mission). We're always updating the exhibits, and there really is something for everyone.

Throughout the week, our staff are always on-site working, so give us a call or knock when you visit.



Conococheague Book Club: Third Thursday at 1pm

October 16th: Slavery & the Underground Railroad in South Central Pennsylvania (2016) by Cooper H. Wingert

November 20th: The Founding American Documents - The Declaration, Constitution, Bill of Rights and Common Sense

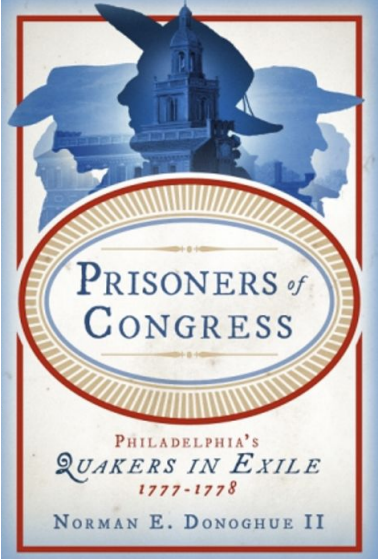
All are welcome, join us for invigorating conversation on key historic topics.

Pre- Members Meeting Author Lecture: Saturday, October 11th, 12pm-1pm

Norman E. “Ned” Donoghue II is a former practicing lawyer, former international charity fundraiser and now a full-time historian and author and speaker. He is a graduate of Henderson High School (West Chester, Pennsylvania), Williams College (History major, honors) and Duke University School of Law. He is the author of **Prisoners of Congress, Philadelphia’s Quakers in Exile, 1777-1778** (Penn State University Press, 2023), the first comprehensive scholarly monograph on the Quaker Exile from Philadelphia, a chronicle of the untold story of the men who became among the nation’s first political prisoners.

For over 245 years, historians have ignored the incidents that pitted the Patriots against the leaders of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Some publicly accused the Quaker leaders of being traitors to their country; they maintained they were merely following the principal tenets of their religious faith. The Patriots had no legal grounds to arrest them, but they did anyway. Rectifying this historical oversight is Norman E. “Ned” Donoghue’s new book, Prisoners of Congress: Philadelphia’s Quakers in Exile, 1777-1778, the untold story of the men who became among the nation’s first political prisoners, published by the Pennsylvania State University Press.

Ned will be talking about his book as well as doing book signings in the Visitor Center between 12pm-1pm. RSVP for seating is recommended.



RSVP Now!

We need your help to shape the future of the Conococheague Institute. ***Please join us in the Visitor Center on October 11th at 2pm.***

Light refreshments will be served and seating is available.

Can’t attend in person but still want to provide input? Contact us with your comments or log-in and attend the meeting via Zoom using the following link.

Topic: CI 2025 Annual Members Meeting
Time: Oct 11, 2025 02:00 PM Eastern Time

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/71301655520?pwd=SFOgWeHW7LptvLJ9hwUwi6W9P0iILG.1>

Meeting ID: 713 0165 5520
Passcode: 9ZMgq3



You're invited! Saturday October 11th 2pm



Members Meeting Agenda 2pm-3pm

- Call to Order and Introductions - *President, Betsey Lillard*
- 2024 Members Meeting Minutes - *Secretary, Bob Schwartz*
- Annual Financials - *Treasurer, Selena Feng*
- Annual Report - *Executive Director, Matthew Wedd*
- Strategic Plan Update - *Open Discussion with members*
- Introduction and Vote on New Board Members
- Open Forum - *Question and Answer Session*

Come and be a part of the discussion! Don't miss the chance to be part of our story.

1775: Harvest on the Homestead

Saturday, October 18th, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.



Proudly Supported by



Event Features

- Hearth Cooking
- Cider Pressing
- Beer Brewing
- Grape Stomping
- Algonkian Traditions
- Evening Bonfire



1775: A Colonial Christmas

Saturday, December 13th, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Event Features

- Wassail Walk
- Wreath Making
- Children's Games
- Gingerbread
- Christmas Feast
- Traditional Music
- Gift Shop Sale

Board of Directors
Elizabeth Lillard (*President*), Sam Cathey (*Vice-President*), Bob Schwartz (*Secretary*), Selena Feng (*Treasurer*), Ellen Kinzer, Will Sheppard, Bailey Roberts Long, Gina Vitale, Matt South, Will Slater, Derek Furry, Terri Scott.

Advisory Board
Dr. John C. Stauffer (*Founder & President Emeritus*), Avery Cook, Tom Finucane, Dr. Doris Armstrong-Goldman, Gay Buchanan, Martha E. Stauffer, Roger Swartz, David Stauffer, Chuck Holland, Carol Zehosky

Staff and Team
Matthew Wedd, *Executive Director*, mwedd@cimlg.org
Kori Taber, *Programs and Farmstead Manager*, visit@cimlg.org
Mikaela Mummert *Visitor Experience Team Member*, team@cimlg.org

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Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/conococheagueinstitute/> **Instagram:** [@conococheague_institute](https://www.instagram.com/conococheague_institute)
Youtube: [@coloniallivingattheconococheagueinstitute](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)



Be a part of our history: 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 Donation Form

Name: _____
Address: _____

Phone No: _____ Email: _____
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,
Mercersburg, PA, 17236
Thank you!

I support the Conococheague Institute because: _____

I have included CI in my Estate Plans (check here) ☐

I would like more information about Funded Projects and Sponsorships (check here) ☐

I would like to RSVP to the October 11th Prisoner of Congress talk (check here) ☐

I would like to RSVP to the October 11th Annual Members Meeting (check here) ☐