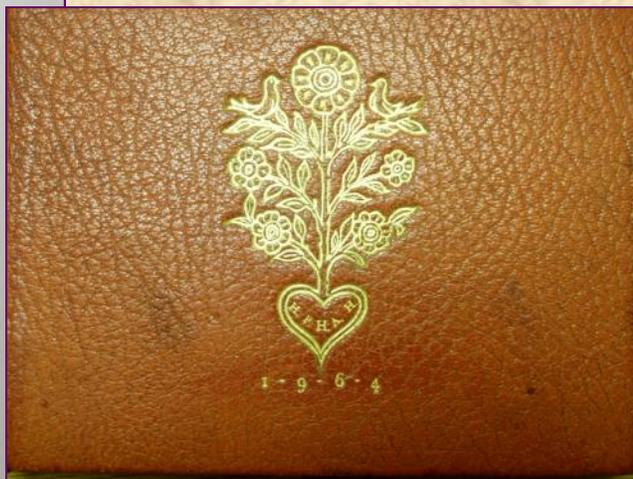


MHEP Quarterly

Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania

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The exhibit "*Calligraphy and Bookbinding: Twentieth Century Artists, Fritz and Trudi Eberhardt*" will open on November 28, 2015 and features the fine artwork of these two Montgomery County artists. Thank you to the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation for their generous support for the exhibit.

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Perspective



“Sunrise Plowing” by Abner Zook, 1984. *Image Credit: Jim and Nancy Binsberger*

The *Pennsylvania Dutch Dioramas of Abner & Aaron Zook* exhibit is visually fascinating because of the artists’ ability to portray complex farm scenes with a sense of distance. The Zook Brothers, who did not have formal art training, used perspective to great effect in these large three dimensional works. Be sure to visit and see these dioramas that will be on display until November 7. Thank you to Jim and Nancy Binsberger for loaning these works from their private collection.

While the Zook exhibit features artistic perspective, many of our exhibits focus on a historical perspective. Our intern Monica Roth’s article on Dielman Kolb grew out of her preliminary research for a 2017 exhibit on early eighteenth century Mennonite migration from the Palatine area of Europe to Pennsylvania. Collections manager Joel Alderfer and staff are working to bring this story in an exhibit and programs for our members and the wider community. As Monica wrote for a grant application narrative: *“The story of the Mennonite immigration of 1717 is a shared story of opportunity and global community. This group of men and women trusted each other and those who went before to journey to a new world that would give them a better life than the one they had in Europe. The issue of immigration is poignant in this high-tension time, and this story can reflect on a shared migration history and can reveal the humanity in the issue.”*

Thank you to Monica for her good work and many contributions here this summer. Thank you, too, to the individual donors and Blooming Glen Mennonite Church for their generous sponsorship of Monica’s internship.

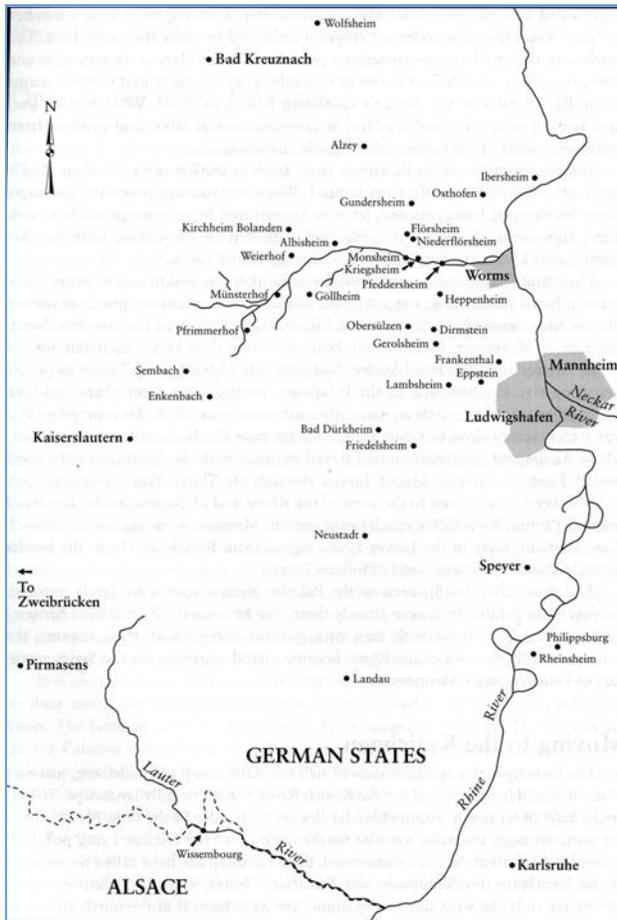
I am pleased to announce that Tim Kennel is joining the staff as Volunteer Coordinator. He is a teacher and sports coach (he was a referee at the Whack & Roll tournament this year) and is currently working with international students. Tim is a member at Blooming Glen Mennonite Church, is married to Kathy Kennel, also a teacher, and they have three teen age children.

And thank you to all who purchased food in our Frolic Food Take-Out event. Although we canceled much of our traditional Apple Butter Frolic, we had a good day with people enjoying our exhibits and delicious Pennsylvania German foods.

Sarah Heffner
Director

The Life and Migration of Dielman Kolb

By Monica Roth



Map of the Palatinate
Credit: *The Earth is the Lord's*

The year 2017 will mark the 300th anniversary of a major Mennonite migration from the German Palatinate to the Pennsylvania region around Skippack Township, as well as to the Lancaster area. Between 1,536 to 4,200 Mennonites arrived in America before 1776¹, and the 1717 migration supplemented this number with three ships of Palatine Mennonites. Over the next year, the Mennonite Heritage Center will be preparing an exhibit to showcase this journey and to exemplify why and how early Mennonites decided to cross the Atlantic and brave a “New World.” One migrant story, that of Dielman Kolb, gives a taste of Mennonite lives before, during, and after immigration.

Dielman Kolb grew up during a time of rebuilding after the devastation of the Thirty Years War, which ended in 1648. The destruction compelled the German nobles to draw immigrants from other regions to revitalize the farmland, including persecuted Swiss Mennonites. Many were exiled from their homes and sent up the Rhine for their beliefs, where they found new livelihoods working the fields of Germany.

While there were years of some success renewing the fertile land, the political and economic situation became unstable. French troops, under the command of Louis XIV, continued to invade German soil. During the War of the Spanish Succession in 1707, French Marshal General Claude Louis Hector de Villars plundered the Palatinate, attempting to advance eastward.² A letter from six Palatine leaders in Mannheim to Mennonites in Amsterdam also indicates that French soldiers were pilfering the harvest as late as 1714.³ In addition to foreign conflict, there were also skirmishes between neighboring German princes, often over matters of religion.⁴

The region claimed acceptance of religious diversity, but at most this was limited to Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed Christians, who most frequently held positions of power in the country. The whole populace complained of high taxes, but Mennonites and other religious minorities were taxed for their worship meetings. The Palatinate was also subject to the whims of changing leadership. Each successive government needed to confirm the rights and laws of the previous, and some rulers heavily taxed religious minorities out of fear that they posed a threat to the realm.⁵ The Catholic elector who came to power in 1716 compared religious minorities to a “plague.” He raised their taxes and would not allow young Mennonites to enter trades.⁶ The next year, Dielman Kolb and other Mennonites embarked on their transatlantic voyage.

His father, Dielman Kolb Sr., was born in 1648, at the end of the Thirty Years War and the beginning of the political and economic fluctuations that would lead almost all of his children to leave the continent. Dielman Sr.’s father-in-law Peter Schumacher immigrated to America, but Dielman Sr. never left Germany.⁷ His youngest son, named for his father, was born on November 10, 1691. This date, and the time of his birth, 1pm, is written in the flyleaf of a book Dielman Jr. received years later from his son-in-law Jacob Schnebli. The flyleaf also dates his marriage and emigration.⁸

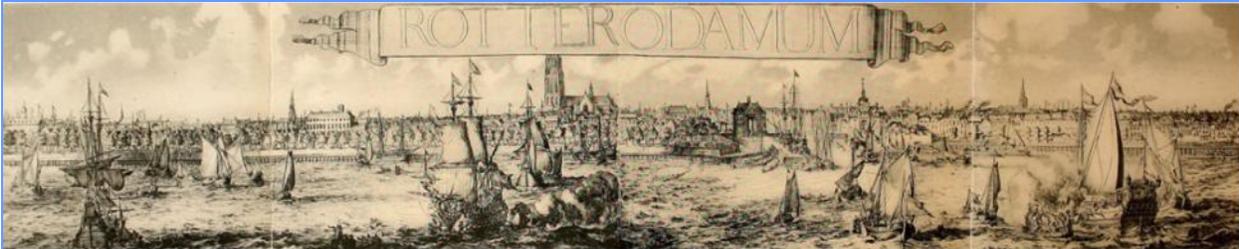
Three of Kolb's brothers immigrated to America in 1707: Martin, Jacob, and Johannes. A fourth brother, Henry, emigrated soon after in 1709, following a particularly harsh winter in 1708. Dielman Jr. was only eighteen when Henry left.

In his youth, Kolb was apparently well educated. He was chosen to be a minister, as were three of his brothers. Before leaving the Palatinate, he took care of "persecuted fellow believers," according to a letter from 1710.⁹ In 1714 he married Elizabeth Schnebli, a widow with several children from a previous marriage. The date of their wedding is recorded in Kolb's book, beneath the record of his birth.

There is no record of Kolb's motivation for leaving his home. Four of his older brothers had followed his grandfather across the ocean, and his father had died in 1712, so most of his living family was in America. He was also subject to the political and economic climate of the Palatinate, meaning he was likely undergoing hardships at home. Like most emigrants from that era, he left before his personal situation became too dire, in the hopes of a better life.¹⁰

One reason for this hope was the prolific advertising of land agents. These "newlanders" strove to convince anyone they could settle in America. Over time, the Palatinate and the surrounding areas became inundated with land advertisements. Disreputable newlanders sullied the reputations of the rest, even though communication with their previous victims soon put them out of business. Often, interested emigrants were dissuaded from using newlanders in their voyages. Their presence was still felt, though, and these salesmen disseminated pamphlets and newspaper articles to attract people to a new land. They also enlisted support from local governments to aid or allow their citizens to leave the country, which often served that government's interests.¹¹

Newlanders were most successful when their quarry had extensive support systems. One vital component in their trade was correspondence between past and potential migrants that favorably portrayed the New World and encouraged others to join them. Kolb and other Palatine Mennonites ignored land offers particularly from the King of Prussia and from a land agent named Johann Rudolph Ochs, who offered them land further west in Pennsylvania and Virginia¹². What may have convinced the large crowd was one of their own, Martin Kendig. Kendig had emigrated in 1710, but was sent back to recruit more settlers in 1715 or 1716¹³. In his eyes, America was a flawless land, having fertile soil, religious freedom, and no population limits like the restrictive Palatinate.¹⁴



Engraving of Rotterdam, 1742

Credit: *Strassburger Family and Allied Families of Pennsylvania*, 1922.

Another key component in encouraging migration was sufficient funding for the trip. Dielman Kolb kept up communication with Amsterdam's Committee for Foreign Needs who provided his support even after he landed in America.¹⁵ The Committee was established by prosperous Dutch Mennonites to aid persecuted believers in other regions. Kolb and others of the 1717 emigrants relied on the Committee to assist them in their journey, a situation which ultimately exasperated the Dutch Mennonites.

Dielman Kolb, his family, and a large group of Mennonites gathered at Ibersheim and left on March 21, 1717. They traveled to Rotterdam, the most popular port for European emigrants, having sent word ahead that there would be 100 people arriving. A total of 360 travelers showed up¹⁶. The Dutch Mennonites were overwhelmed by the migrants, especially because the Committee for Foreign Needs had informed the emigrants that, because those in the Palatinate were not technically "persecuted," the Committee would not be able to provide aid to the travelers.¹⁷ Despite this warning, Kolb and the other Mennonites were resolved to make their way to the New World.

Although the Palatines arrived confidently in Rotterdam, the Dutch Mennonites stood firm in their resolution to deny official support. Four families lacked the funds to make it across the ocean. Unofficially, the committee members determined that “as far as concerns our committee, the friends are to be helped as much as possible.” A private collection from Dutch businessmen furnished the needed funds.¹⁸

There are no records of the actual journey on the Atlantic. The 1717 migrants arranged ships by April 6th to head to England. Britain had strict Navigation Acts in place which required migrants to pass through England on their way to British territories¹⁹. While this created an extra step in the migration process, England was favorable to non-Catholic Christians, and there are no reports of issues during this layover. The transatlantic trip from England took anywhere from four weeks to over three months, dependent on winds.²⁰ It is not clear when the Mennonites left England, but Dielman Kolb reports they arrived in Philadelphia on August 10, 1717²¹, meaning it took just over five months to get from Ibersheim to their new home. All Kolb says of the journey is that they “arrived safely.”

The newly-instated lieutenant-governor William Keith was disgruntled by the swarm of Palatines that landed in his port. Ship captains reported 363 travelers, all of whom had arrived without licenses, certificates of origin, or applications to British officials for their immigration. He required the Mennonites to make an oath of loyalty, but understanding that Mennonites could not in good conscience swear, he asked that they make “equivalent assurances.”²²



The Dielman Kolb house today.
Photo Credit: Sandra Highhouse

After settling with the local government, Kolb and the other Mennonites began to make a home in America. Some headed towards Martin Kendig and the Pequea settlement in what is now Lancaster County, while others settled in the Skippack area.²³ The first tract of land Kolb purchased was 150 acres in the Skippack area, but he continued to expand. Over time, Kolb bought land from Claus Johnson, Gerret Clemens, Derrick and Margaretha Johnson, Nicolas and Abigail Scull, and John and Catharine Nagalee.²⁴ After selling a small tract to Gally Heffelfinger, he is recorded as owning a substantial plot of 560 acres. In 1733, he sold 250 acres to his stepson Jacob, who had likely just arrived from Mannheim.²⁵

Kolb and his compatriots took on ownership of their new country. In 1728, Kolb and other Mennonites in the area signed a petition asking for aid against the raiding “Ingians”²⁶. Three of his brothers’ names appear on the petition as well. He and his brothers became British citizens in 1731.²⁷

Kolb also remained a minister in the New World, as well as a farmer and weaver, and his faith remained central to him in the foreign land. He was “noted for his religious zeal”²⁸. He formed a lasting friendship with fellow minister and bishop Henry Funk, and together they established a new congregation at Salford before 1738. In that year, Henry and Modlena Ruth entrusted ten acres of land to a group which included both Kolb and Funk, as well as some of Kolb’s brothers. The trust allowed the land to be used for a “house and place of religious meetings to and for the people called Baptists or Mennonites within the said township of Salford,” and as a burial ground still used today.²⁹

With the help of Henry Funk, Kolb also took up an endeavor with a broader scope. Rising tensions between France and England in the mid-eighteenth century caused some of the older generation to worry about the youth in the event of war. Thieleman J. van Braght’s compendium of stories, the *Martyrs’ Mirror*, was written to provide a record of the suffering of past Anabaptists, but all of the copies coming into the New World were written in Dutch.³⁰ Kolb and Funk feared that the youth would forget their pacifist roots as war loomed.³¹

In 1745, Kolb and Funk wrote to the Amsterdam Committee on Foreign Needs, asking for funds to translate the *Martyrs' Mirror* into German. The Committee never responded. By this point the Dutch Mennonites had limited the scope of their aid, and they were no longer assisting with any Palatine migration. Kolb and Funk did not wait long for a response, and through other means employed a cloister of Dunkards in Ephrata, Pennsylvania to translate and print the text. While they did not perform the translation themselves, Kolb and Funk pored over the text to check that the texts retained the same meanings in the new language. The job was complete in 1749, at which point the books were sold at around the cost of printing, without any substantial profit.³²

Kolb did not live much beyond this project, and he passed away on December 28, 1756. His wife Elizabeth outlived him, as well as his daughter, also named Elizabeth. In his will, Kolb left the bulk of his estate to his wife, including animals that their son-in-law Andrew Ziegler was to care for. His grandson Dilman and daughter Elizabeth also received some land, while his granddaughter Catharine received twenty pounds. His wife Elizabeth's children from her previous marriage did not factor heavily into Kolb's life, and his step-son Matthias received only five shillings. Kolb also left money to the Mennonite churches in Salford and Skipack³³.

Dielman Kolb is just one of the 363 Mennonites who, in 1717, abandoned life in Germany to try to create a new one in America. While he was perhaps wealthier and more educated than the majority of immigrants, Kolb's story exemplifies the reasons and methods by which many Mennonites and others made the journey. The 2017 exhibit will highlight other stories and provide tangibility to this part of Mennonite history.

1. According to estimates by Aaron Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys* (1996) 103. He also lists immigration estimates for other "Radical Pietists."
2. Walter Knittle, *Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration* (1965) 3.
3. John Ruth, *The Earth is the Lord's* (2001).
4. Knittle 3
5. Marianne Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers* (Park, 1999)
6. Ruth (2001) 194
7. Ralph Beaver Strassburger, *The Strassburger Family and Allied Families of Pennsylvania* (1922) 391.
8. The full text of the flyleaf appears in Strassburger 393.
9. Strassburger 394
10. Wokeck 2
11. Wokeck discusses many more details of newlander practices in her book.
12. Ruth (2001) 194
13. John Ruth, *Maintaining the Right Fellowship* (1984) 95
14. Ruth (2001) 194
15. D.M.C. "Dielman Kolb", *Gospel Herald* (1933-1934) 38
16. Ruth (2001) 194
17. J.G. De Hoop Scheffer, "Mennonite Emigration to Pennsylvania" (1878) 127
18. Ruth (2001) 195
19. Wokeck 60
20. Wokeck 115
21. Strassburger 193
22. Ruth (2001) 195-196
23. James Y. Heckler, *The History of Harleysville and Lower Salford Township* (1992)
24. Strassburger 398-400
25. Strassburger 401
26. Strassburger 398
27. Kauffman 38
28. Heckler 38
29. Heckler 104-105
30. Strassburger 408
31. Heckler 38
32. Strassburger 409
33. A copy of his will appears in Strassburger 410-413

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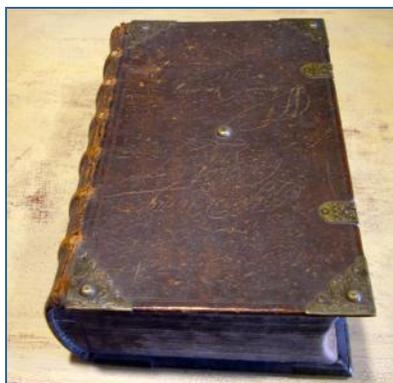
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A 1748 copy of the Martyr's Mirror printed at the Ephrata Cloister in the MHC collection.

Photo Credit: Dylan High

Fine Craft Show & Sale December 5 -31, 2015



Featured Artists:

Baskets: Karen Wychock

Father Christmas and Dolls – Nancy Gibbs

Handcrafted books – Ramon Townsend

Carved Birds and Animals – Alan W. Kohr, Daniel G. Strawser, Sr., Pat Russo

Chalkware – Joan Mueller

Framed Works – Marilyn Diener, Teresa Hicks, Claudia Hopf, Louise Hutchings, Clifford Nevin, Lori Quinn, Lisa Short, Lori Yatron

Game Boards – Ridge Hollow Game Boards

Painted Glass – Cedar Grove Studio

Pottery – Clay Rat Studio, Royce Yoder, Denise Wilz, Zettlemyer Pottery

Textiles – Cynthia Baker, Rachel Blosser-Derstine, Ann Hermes, Rose Kramer,

Wood – Bradford Woodworking, Jack Stone



MHEP Quarterly

**BUYERS
PREVIEW
RECEPTION
Friday Evening,
December 4
6-9 pm
\$5 admission**

*You are invited to the Preview
Reception for the first
opportunity to purchase
work by your
favorite artists.*



Opening Weekend for the Fine Crafts Show & Sale

Christmas Market: Treasures and Traditions through Time

Saturday, December 5: 9:30 am - 4 pm and

Sunday, December 6: 12 to 4 pm

Enjoy this holiday tour that includes the Mennonite Heritage Center and our friends at: **The Goschenhoppen Historian's Museum,** Rt. 29, Green Lane

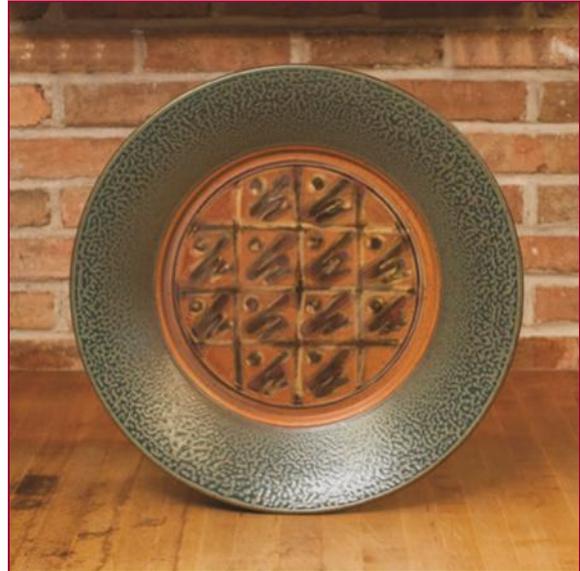
Information on their Christmas Market and exhibits: www.goschenhoppen.org

Schwenkfelder Library & Heritage Center

105 Seminary St., Pennsburg

Information on their Christmas Market and exhibits: www.schwenkfelder.com

This event is for December 5 and 6 only. The Craft Exhibit & Sale at the Mennonite Heritage Center runs through December 31. *



2015 Sale Hours

Opening Weekend: Saturday, December 5, 9:30

am to 4 pm, Sunday, December 6, 12 to 4 pm

Throughout December: Tuesday through Saturday:

10 am to 5 pm,

December 31 – 10 am to 2 pm

Closed Thursday, December 25 and Friday,

December 26

*Snow emergency cancellations – please check (215) 256-3020 or www.mhep.org





Notes from the Advancement Desk

Last year the Board of Trustees donated over \$24,000 to start a three-year campaign to fully fund the Heritage Center. This year, we are on the second leg of that effort—something we are calling “40 for 40”—an effort in our 40th year to increase our donor and membership base.

Eight generous sponsors have put up \$5000 each as matching pledges for each dollar we raise from a new or re-engaged donor (those who have not given in the past five years) up to a match total of \$40,000. This campaign not only will result in an \$80,000 boost in annual giving, but has the potential to expand our donor and membership base—engaging the next generation to ensure that we continue to grow and thrive for 40 more years! The total annual giving goal is \$140,000. This will fund 32% of our operating budget.

If you have been a recent donor or member, we hope that you will consider continuing or even increasing your support this year. Perhaps you can add \$40 to your gift. **If you have not been a donor in the past five years, your gift will be matched dollar for dollar.**

Our website offers a convenient way to give. At mhep.org, select the “Give and Join” tab. You can also set up monthly gifts there.

On November 19, John L. Ruth will give a talk in support of 40 for 40. I had a chance to hear John’s presentation in April. It is a fascinating talk for anyone who has an interest not just in how our ancestors came about this land, but in the land itself. It was a testimony to me of how the Mennonite Heritage Center holds the stories not just of local Mennonites, but of many who live in and love this land. In **“This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair”**, John will address the transfer of land from Lenape hunting woods to immigrant plantations, specifically in the Branch Creek watershed in Lower Salford.

I hope you can join us for this event, and thank you for your part in our first 40 years!

Steve Diehl
Director of Advancement



“This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair”

Presented by John Ruth

Date: Thursday, November 19, 7:30 p.m.

Place: Franconia Elementary School, 366 Harleysville Pike, Souderton, PA 18964

Admission: by Donation



“Barn on a Hill” oil painting by artist Dot Bunn, instructor for the MHC traditional oil painting workshops.

Image credit: Dot Bunn

December Art Exhibit & Sale

The Mennonite Heritage Center announces an art exhibit and sale for December 5-31, 2015. The December Art Show is open to members of the 2015 Traditional Oil Painting Workshops at the Mennonite Heritage Center, Perkiomen Valley Art Center (PVAC) and the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania (MHEP).

Work must be framed, wired and ready for hanging. Maximum size for work is 36” in either direction, including the frame. A maximum of two works may be submitted which must be available for purchase. Entries must be an original concept and work executed by the artist. Media may include pastel, oil, tempera, watercolor, acrylics, drawing, hand pulled prints, and photography.

Mennonite Heritage Center staff will handle the display and sales of the artwork. A 30% commission will be taken on work sold to benefit the heritage center. Label information for the artwork will be available when work is delivered or on the website: www.mhep.org. We will take all possible care in exhibiting your art but we will not be responsible for any damage or loss. Publicity for the event will include a press release, email, web and Facebook announcements.

Delivery of the work is from Tuesday, November 10 through Saturday, November 14, 2015. Delivered art must include the [entry form](#). Submission to the exhibit grants permission of your work for photography connected with publicity for the exhibit. There is no entry fee for submitting work. Heritage Center hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10 am to 5 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm. Pick up after the exhibit will be January 5 through January 16, 2016 during regular museum hours.

The preview reception for this exhibit and the annual *Fine Craft Exhibit & Sale* is Friday evening, December 4, 2015 from 6 to 9 pm. The reception is open to the public for a \$5 admission fee. You and a guest will receive two tickets for the event – we will have the tickets for you when you deliver your work.

MENNONITE HISTORIANS OF EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

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Museum & Library Hours

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Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm

The mission of the Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania is to collect, preserve, and interpret the Anabaptist-Mennonite heritage in order to educate, inspire, and witness to the church and broader community.



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Upcoming events

Saturday, October 24, 9 am to 3 pm. Papercutting Workshop led by Pam Hults.
Preregistration and fee - call 215-256-3020 or go to www.mhep.org.

Saturday, November 7, 9:30 am to 3 pm. Pa. German Feather Tree Workshop led by Pat Oxenford. Preregistration and fee - call 215-256-3020 or go to www.mhep.org.

Sunday, November 8, 4 to 6 pm. Singing the Mennonite Hymnal, #477-526l. No registration, admission by donation.

Thursday, November 19, 7:30 pm. *This Very Ground, This Crooked Affair* presentation by John L. Ruth. Franconia Elementary School, 366 Harleysville Pike, Souderton. Donations accepted at the door and will benefit the work of the heritage center.