

Renfrew MUSEUM & PARK



Fall 2023

“Cultivate Inspiration”

der Wetterbahn

The Weathervane: News & Updates from the Farm

Rooted firmly
in Renfrew’s past,
we will cultivate
inspiration for
today, harvesting
a shared history
for tomorrow.

Simple Joys: Harvesting A Handmade Holiday

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 - #GivingTuesday, Shop Early at Renfrew,
 - Treasures from the Collection—and more!

Visit us at www.RenfrewMuseum.org

Renfrew MUSEUM & PARK



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Waynesboro, PA 17268

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Renfrew Museum and Park



@renfrewmuseumpark

HOURS OF OPERATION
Summer (Mid-April—Mid-October)
Wed.-Fri. 9am—4pm; Sat. 1pm—4pm
Farmstead Tours: 1:00, 2:00, & 3:00pm
Winter (Mid-October—Mid-April)
Tue.-Fri. 9am—4pm
Park Grounds Open Daily, Dawn to Dusk

Our Mission

Renfrew Committee, Inc. supports the Borough of Waynesboro in its stewardship of Renfrew Museum and Park by preserving, interpreting, and educating others about its historic Pennsylvania German farmsteads, Early American decorative arts collection, built environment, and cultural landscapes. Creating lasting connections to Renfrew’s distinctive character and dynamic heritage through unique experiences, we foster a meaningful sense of place for visitors of all ages.

Our Vision

Rooted firmly in Renfrew’s past, we will cultivate inspiration for today, harvesting a shared history for tomorrow.

Our Values

- Integrity:** With honesty and truth, we will adhere to the highest moral and ethical standards in all our endeavors.
- Authenticity:** We will interpret with historical accuracy all of our exhibits, collections, programs, and events.
- Excellence:** We will strive to be exceptional in everything we do.
- People:** We are committed to being a memorable and welcoming destination where everyone can cultivate inspiration and be recognized for their inherent worth.



RENFREW COMMITTEE, INC.

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Patti McLaughlin, Treasurer
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Grounds
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Buildings and Grounds
Representative

A Message from our Executive Director:



Fall is my favorite! There's nothing that quickens my little autumn-loving heart more than that first flush of color on the trees or a moody, overcast sky. Simple joys like these herald the coming of cooler weather, cozy gatherings, and lots to do as we savor the season with friends, fests, and feasts (pumpkin pie, anyone?).

If you're like me, fall at Renfrew comes with great anticipation. As the farmstead and its wild inhabitants slowly prepare themselves for winter slumber, our institutional calendar ramps up the pace during these last few months of the year. While the tour season winds down (last day for 2023 General Farmstead Tours is Friday October 13th) we're just getting started with distinctive year-end offerings to help you "Cultivate Inspiration" and make the most of your autumn days.

In this issue, "Simple Joys: Harvesting a Handmade Holiday", we celebrate all that fall brings to Renfrew along with highlights from our upcoming 2023 holiday schedule. Reaching the end of another growing season, we are pleased to present Part 3 in our series "Preserving the Bounty of the Harvest at Renfrew" (page 2) where we share the historic tradition of making "leather britches" from green beans. What do garden veggies have to do with trousers? Read on to find out!

An update on Renfrew's new mill (page 3) provides an exciting glimpse into construction and we celebrate the life of late Renfrew volunteer Virginia Rahn (page 4), remembering her many years of dedicated service to our organization with a reprint of her Volunteer Spotlight feature from 2017. This fall also takes us away from the farmstead with #RenfrewOnTheRoad (page 4) appearances at two street festivals: Pippinfest in Fairfield on September 24th and Market Day in downtown Waynesboro on October 7th. Stop by our booth and say hello!

We'll explore the handcrafted decorative arts in Renfrew's museum collection with this issue's Artifact Spotlight featuring a wonderful toleware coffee pot and even more goodies at our members-only Treasures from the Collection event on October 12th (page 10).

It's truly a handmade holiday as we offer not one, but TWO workshops to get your traditional craft fix. Kick off Renfrew's holiday season with an evening German Goose Feather Tree Workshop on November 16th (page 7) and the return of our popular Historic Wreath-Making Workshop on December 9th (page 8).

Finally, you won't want to miss our capstone signature event, Renfrew's beloved Christmas on the Farm on December 1 & 2 from 3:00-8:00pm (pages 5 & 6). This two-day only celebration takes you on an unforgettable journey through over 200 years of tradition with a variety of holiday activities and experiences. Along with old favorites like horse-drawn wagon rides, live violin music, Christkindlmarkt and more, we're delighted to introduce several new historic vignettes this year, including a very special opportunity to visit with Santa Claus!

We hope you join us this fall and take full advantage of the simple joys of our historic Pennsylvania German farmstead. Make Renfrew a part of your plans this autumn and, believe me, it'll "leaf" you wanting more. Happy Fall, y'all!



Preserving the Bounty of the Harvest at Renfrew: Part 3

As we approach our 48th Fall season here at Renfrew we once again present our installment of "Preserving the Bounty of the Harvest at Renfrew." In this edition we highlight the storied tradition of harvesting and preserving beans into what has become traditionally known as "leather britches."



Example of "leather britches" drying in the Renfrew Summer Kitchen, August 2023.

Sourcing both Pennsylvania German family recipes and traditions along with other well established cookbooks of the early 19th century, for instance Amelia Simmons' *American Cookery* (1796) and the *New London Family Cook* by Duncan MacDonald published in 1808, families such as the Royers and Fahnestocks would invariably seek out a variety of methods to preserve their yearly harvest of vegetables and fruits. MacDonald instructed a common method associated with crock preserving. Illustrating that putting a "layer of salt at the bottom of a stone jar, than one of beans, then salt, then beans, and so on, till the jar is full; cover with salt, tie a coarse cloth over, put on a board, and then a weight" assured that air would be kept out and proper preservation would take place while being set in a dry cellar or storage location. To prepare and serve as a side dish it was instructed that the best way was to boil the beans in water with "white heart of a small cabbage, then drain them, chop the cabbage, and put both into a saucepan, with butter rolled in flour; shake a little pepper, put in some good gravy, [and] let them stew ten minutes."

So what, you may ask, are "leather britches"? And how exactly does one produce and preserve such an item? Simply stated, leather britches is the name associated with the stringing and air drying of green beans rather than alternative processes of canning or other means of preservation. This method has become widely associated with both Southern and old Appalachian cookery. Often "fodder beans" or "shuck beans", beans that have been left within their outer casing or "shuck," are left to

dry upon the string and reconstituted over the winter months to provide a vegetable side dish during a season without fresh produce. An early reference to this method of preservation can be found in the *French Domestic Cookery* (1825) published in London by "An English Physician":

"To dry French beans, prepare any quantity you please like the former, and, when boiled and drained, string them upon a thread with a needle, and hang them in a dry place; they will keep a long time in this manner. When you wish to use any, soak them in lukewarm water, till they have regained their former colour, and cook them in the same manner as those fresh gathered. When preserved in brine, the preparation for dressing them is the same."

Similarly, the United States Department of Agriculture's June 1917, Farmer's Bulletin #841 titled *Drying Fruits and Vegetables in the Home with Recipes for Cooking*, draws upon what lengths both early 20th century farmers and many American domestic households would have taken to process and preserve their fruits and vegetables throughout the seasons. With regard to string beans, the bulletin directs that: "All varieties of string beans can be dried, but only beans in ideal condition for table use should be selected for this purpose." Highlighting the possibilities of how tenant farmers, such as the Minnick and Beaver families, may have preserved portions of their bean harvest while occupying the Renfrew property during the first half of the century, the bulletin stipulates: "...thread them on coarse, strong thread, making long "necklaces" of them, and hang them above the stove or out of doors until dry. An old-fashioned recipe calls for boiling the pods until nearly cooked through before drying." Beans, due to their high nutritional value and easiness to grow, continue to be a staple of the American diet today.



Runner beans, Album Benary / Lithograph

Reconstructed Royer Mill: An Update



Preparations for the Renfrew Mill, a full-scale working interpretive structure to be located adjacent to the original site of the historic Royer Mill, are continuing to be made on the farmstead. Read on to learn more about the project.

Foundation Excavation:

Since our April 15th Ground Breaking Ceremony, contractors dug trenches for poured concrete footers and removed truckloads of soil from the property (see left). They encountered large deposits of *fragipan*, a highly dense subsurface of soil layers, and jackhammered through. Careful adjustments had to be made to ensure nearby archeological resources, including the 1855 Miller's House foundation were protected from loss or damage from potential landslides.

Foundation Work Completed, Blocking Installed:

Over the last few months, our general contractor, GRC General Contracting, Inc. of Zullinger and its subs dug, formed, and poured concrete footers for the mill building, waterwheel pit, and restroom/pump house building (see right). With much of the work occurring underground, not a lot was visible to passersby. However, as summer continued, the concrete walls started to peek over the surface and the masons installed concrete blocks to which natural fieldstone veneer will be applied.



Timberframing Begins:

The structure is really starting to take shape! Back on August 16th, we finally began framing and, as of the writing of this newsletter, sheathing and vapor wrap has been installed! Mid-Atlantic Timberframes of Paradise, Pennsylvania, began installation with the south gable end of the Renfrew Mill building (see left) which will house our main entrance, located directly across from the historic Royer Mill ruins. The structure is now fully framed and ready for masonry with installation of custom wood windows and doors.

Built in traditional style with mortise and tenon joinery, the heavy timber walls of the Renfrew Mill were hoisted into place using a crane. Visitors watched as the framing and roof trusses were tied together into a sturdy skeleton, along with other exterior building components over the course of about a week and a half. Special thanks to everyone on the design team and building trades!



Check out our other updates about the Renfrew Mill below and follow our progress at:

www.RenfrewMuseum.org/Mill

Remembering Virginia Rahn, Renfrew Volunteer & Docent

February 2, 1931

August 17, 2023

Renfrew Museum and Park is saddened to hear of the recent passing of Virginia Rahn, a long-time volunteer and former Renfrew Executive Committee member. We celebrate Virginia's life and service to Renfrew with this look back at her August 2017 newsletter *Volunteer Spotlight*.

Volunteer Spotlight: Virginia Rahn



Virginia Rahn was born and raised in Mercerville, NJ and moved to Waynesboro, PA in 1975 with her husband, Willard, and their four children. One day while driving past Renfrew her second son said, "why can't we

buy that house?" Virginia laughed and said, "because it's not for sale."

The following year Virginia and Willard began volunteering at Renfrew. An active volunteer for over 40 years, Virginia remembers sitting at a small desk inside the front door collecting quarters as the admission fee for the tour. One of her first volunteer assignments was to work with two other ladies to sew curtains for one of the upstairs bedrooms.

Virginia was one of the first teachers at the Renfrew Institute. She currently assists with the Institute's Royer legacy program for elementary

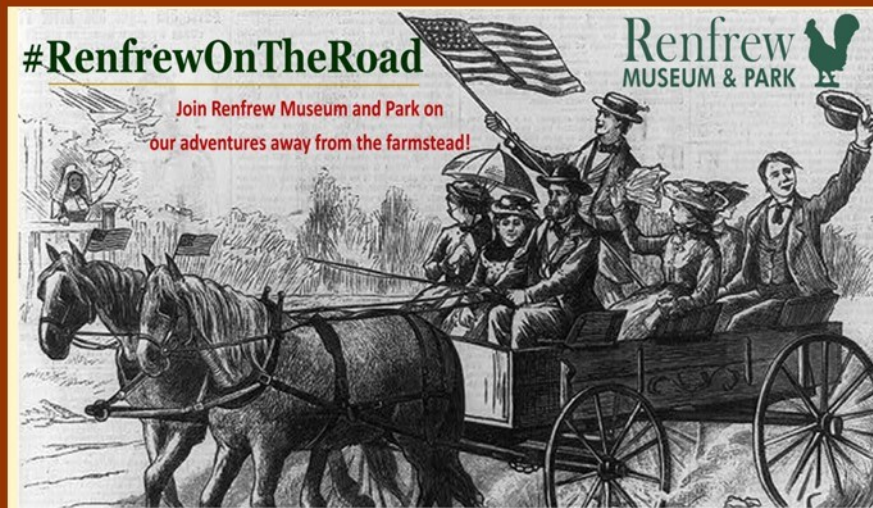
school children. She remembers when her Girl Scout troop was asked to make Mrs. Sun for an educational program teaching about leaves and photosynthesis.

Virginia assists with the Traveling Trunk program which takes Renfrew on the road to those physically unable to visit the park. She enjoys sharing the Renfrew history with others.

Virginia serves on the Renfrew Executive Committee and the amount of growth she has witnessed has been phenomenal. "The grounds are beautiful and the family events that are offered are an asset to the community."

#RenfrewOnTheRoad

Join Renfrew Museum and Park on our adventures away from the farmstead!



www.RenfrewMuseum.org/RenfrewOnTheRoad

Pippinfest Fairfield, PA
September 24, 2023 9am - 4pm

Mainstreet Waynesboro Market Day
October 7, 2023 9am - 4pm

Look for our booth this fall at these wonderful yearly gatherings of local artisans and merchants. Renfrew will offer handmade items along with other selections from the museum gift shop including pottery, folk art, jewelry, décor items, and more! Each purchase supports our mission of preservation and stewardship of our 107-acre farmstead.

Holiday Farmstead Taste & Tour Farm-to-Table Dining Experience



www.RenfrewMuseum.org/TasteandTour

Renfrew
MUSEUM & PARK



Programs & Events



Rediscover the **simple joys** of Christmas past at Renfrew Museum and Park this holiday season! "Cultivate Inspiration" through over 200 years of celebration at our annual **Christmas on the Farm** event. Follow the soft glow of flickering lanterns and the fiery blaze of torches to the beautifully decorated Museum House where you'll encounter how **treasured holiday traditions** in America evolved over the centuries.

Explore some of our historic outbuildings where period-attired interpreters will share even more **holiday cheer!** Enjoy a cozy warming circle while you wait to take a horse-drawn wagon ride down Fahnestock Lane or enjoy a goodie or warm beverage from one of our vendors. Step out of the chill into the **festive atmosphere** inside our Visitors Center where even more family fun awaits. Peruse our gallery, then browse Renfrew's museum shop and **Christkindlmarkt** for that special gift. Your ticket also includes live music, crafts, and more!

We invite you to join us at Renfrew this December for an unforgettable holiday experience and **make memories** that will last a lifetime at Christmas on the Farm.



First Floor Tours
of the
Decorated
c. 1812
Royer House



Live Holiday Music
Food Vendors



Christmas on the Farm



2023

Friday, December 1

3:00pm to 8:00pm

Saturday, December 2

3:00pm to 8:00pm

\$15 Per Person, \$10 for Children, Age 3-12,

Free for Kids 2 & Under

Free for Renfrew Members

Pre-purchase tickets online at:
RenfrewMuseum.org/Christmas

Event Highlights

New For
2023!

Visit
with
Santa
Claus



's Neijohr a'
winscha
un a' schiessa
or the "Wishing
-in and Shoot-
ing-in of the
New Year."
A Pennsylvania
German tradition!



1940's
Tenant
Farmers
Prepare for
Winter:
Corn
shelling
& milling demonstrations



Horse-drawn Wagon
Rides Up and Down
Fahnestock Lane by
Lantern Light



Christkindlmarkt

Make & Take/Take &
Make Holiday Crafts

Handmade Historic
Gift Demonstrations



Visits from
the
German
Belsnickel
"Nicolas
in Furs"

Historic Hearth
Cooking & Baking

Mark Your Calendar!

- ♦ **Final Day of Regularly Scheduled Tours for the Season**
Friday, October 13, 2023
at 1:00, 2:00, & 3:00pm
- ♦ **Winter Hours**
(Unless Otherwise Posted)
Visitor Center Open
Tuesday-Friday
Beginning Tuesday,
October 17, 2023 from
9:00am- 4:00pm
- ♦ **#GivingTuesday**
Tuesday, November 28,
2023
- ♦ **Farmstead decorated and illuminated for the holiday season.**
Begins Wednesday,
November 22, 2023
- ♦ **Closed for Thanksgiving**
Thursday, November 23
& Friday, November 24,
2023
- ♦ **Closed Until the New Year**
Friday, December 22,
2023 thru Monday,
January 1, 2024



German Goose Feather Christmas Tree Workshop

Thursday, November 16th
6pm - 9pm

In-Person at Renfrew Visitors Center
(Limit 12 participants)
\$75 per person / \$60 for Friends of
Renfrew Members
Pre-registration is required.



Join Renfrew as we kick off the holiday season with a very special evening workshop learning how to make a traditional Pennsylvania German goose feather Christmas tree!

Often considered to be the earliest form of artificial Christmas tree, the goose feather tree has its origins in Germany due to the resulting deforestation of pine trees. By the mid to late 19th century it was frowned upon to harvest either the whole or just the tops of the trees. As a result, the tradition of crafting artificial trees by using dyed goose feathers became a fashionable alternative and the tradition was brought into American households by the Pennsylvania German community. Reaching its height of popularity around 1900, many families still trim feather trees to this day.

Participants will be provided with a complete kit and all the materials needed to create an authentic 12" goose feather tree inspired by the German heritage of our historic farmstead. Enjoy a warm, festive atmosphere

complete with hot cider, light refreshments, and recorded period music as instructors walk you through the entire process

Workshop takes place in the Wagon Shed Room of the Visitors Center.
This adult workshop is designed for individuals 18 and older.

Register online at: RenfrewMuseum.org/presentationsandworkshops
or register by phone to (717)762-4723



HISTORIC WREATH-MAKING WORKSHOP

Saturday,
December 9th
9am - 12pm

In-Person at Renfrew
(Limit 12 participants)
\$50 per person /
\$40 for Friends of
Renfrew Members
Pre-registration is required.



Love the old-fashioned Christmas wreaths decorating the historic buildings at Renfrew? Learn how to make one yourself! Enjoy a warm, festive atmosphere complete with hot cider, light refreshments, and recorded period music as you build your wreath. Participants will be provided with a wire frame and all the materials needed to create a traditional holiday wreath inspired by the rustic simplicity of our historic Pennsylvania German farmstead.

Decorate with natural evergreen boughs, holly, pinecones, and greens harvested on site by Renfrew's staff. Make your own citrus and clove pomanders and finish it all off with a modest homespun bow. Participants should plan to bring their own pair of wire cutters, small pruners, and garden gloves. We also recommend bringing a portable seat cushion.

Workshop takes place in the Wagon Shed Room of the Visitors Center. *This adult workshop designed for individuals aged 18 and over.*

Register online at: RenfrewMuseum.org/presentationsandworkshops
or register by phone to (717)762-4723



Renfrew MUSEUM & PARK GIVING TUESDAY

#GivingTuesday is on November 28, 2023!

GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement unleashing the power of radical generosity. GivingTuesday was created in 2012 as a simple idea: a day that encourages people to do good. Since then, it has grown into a year-round global movement that inspires hundreds of millions of people to give, collaborate, and celebrate generosity.

As a nonprofit organization, Renfrew Museum and Park relies on the generosity of people like you to help us meet our mission and continue to deliver the wonderful experiences you've come to expect from this special place. Your tax-deductible gift of any amount is greatly appreciated.

Please Consider Donating On Giving Tuesday!

www.RenfrewMuseum.org/donate



**Visitor Center and Museum Shop
Winter Hours**

(Unless Otherwise Posted)

Beginning October 14

Open Tuesday—Friday

9:00am—4:00pm

Closed for Thanksgiving

Thursday, November 23th

& Friday, November 24th.

Closed for Christmas and New Year's

Friday, December 22, 2022 until

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

**GIFTS INSPIRED BY OUR
HISTORIC FARMSTEAD**

**Choose from handmade goods, pottery,
apparel, home décor, seasonal items,
& more!**

FOR CHRISTMAS GIFTS
RENFREW'S THE ANSWER!



**Toleware Painted Coffeepot, c. 1850
(Object #1976.073)**

Tapered side coffee pot with attached base, spout, handle and cover; brass knob on cover. Painted red with yellow sprig and sunburst on cover, yellow fern and pineapple on body, sprig on base, green fleur-de-lis beneath rim and leaf at base. Surface paint loss throughout.

Measures: 10 1/2" (26.7 cm) H x 9 1/2" (24.1 cm)
W x 6 1/4" (15.9 cm) D.

This form of decorating tin emphasizes the colors and folk-art design rather than the tinsmith who manufactured the coffeepot. Painted tole has its origins from the French word *tole*, or tinplate. Not to be confused with *Japanned Ware*, or varnish-like paint which, when applied to metal and kiln dried, simulated the finish of Oriental lacquer. Rather, this example, having been bequeathed through Renfrew's founder Emma Nicodemus, showcases the typical Pennsylvania Dutch motifs including stylized fruit, flowers, leaves and swags which are so often found on similar "toleware" items such as serving trays, canisters, cups, etc. This artifact may be viewed while visitors are on tour in the kitchen of the Museum House at Renfrew Museum and Park.

For further study of tinware and examples in Early American decorative arts see: Coffin, Margaret, *The History & Folklore of American Country Tinware 1700-1900* (New York: Galahad Books, 1968), and Smith, Elmer L. ed., *Tinware: Yesterday and Today* (Lebanon, PA: Applied Arts Publishers, 1975).

Learn more about the collections at Renfrew!

"Treasures From the Collection"

A Renfrew Members Only Event

Thursday, October 12, 2023

Reception: 6:30 pm, Program: 7:00 - 8:30pm



Visit: RenfrewMuseum.org/treasures

SPECIAL OFFER! Current Friends of Renfrew Museum and Park Members, and those who renew or join now through September 30, 2023, are eligible to attend this exclusive evening reception with Executive Director Becky LaBarre and Manager of Visitor Experiences Steve LaBarre. Enjoy light refreshments

in the Visitors Center gallery before gathering in the Wagon Shed Room where Becky and Steve share a special selection of artifacts from Renfrew's collection with you. Take turns viewing these treasures up close and personal then enjoy a presentation on the background of each object from the perspective of Renfrew's resident material culture historians. Don't wait - book now! Don't miss your chance for this unique opportunity to experience Renfrew's collections first-hand.

**Not a *Friends of Renfrew* member yet?
Join now or renew your membership online.**