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Life membership establishes a permanent memorial, which, never expiring, always bears interest for the benefit of the Historical Society. Life membership is split between general funds and our endowment. It is a perpetual living membership. If you prefer, you can visit <https://luzernehistory.org/membership/personal-and-family-memberships/> to join online.



DISCOVER ^{LC}_{HS}

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF LUZERNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



**FEBRUARY IS
BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH**

**RARE POWDER HORN
ILLUMINATES LOCAL BLACK
SOLDIERS' STORIES FROM THE
REVOLUTIONARY WAR.**

2021: A YEAR IN REVIEW
From Anthracite Mining Heritage month to Bishop Memorial Library, we are highlighting all of 2021's memorable moments.

LUZERNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
49 South Franklin Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701



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PRESIDENT'S AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The year 2021 presented quite a few challenges, as well as quite a few opportunities for the LCHS. We tried to be creative in the ways we hosted tours, exhibitions, lectures, and other events.

- The Board of Directors and its Committees conducted the business of the Society with Zoom.
- Visit our website for information about upcoming events and resources www.luzernehistory.org. Find the links for YouTube, Omeka, Facebook, Instagram, or sign up for our email updates. You can also join or renew your membership, request research, visit our gift shop, or make a donation.
- Follow us on Facebook. There is updated information about our events, blogs, and podcasts. **Luzerne County Historical Society | Facebook** and on Instagram at **Luzerne County Historical Soc. (@luzernecountyhistoricalsociety)**
- Videos of lectures, exhibitions, and tours are on our YouTube Channel: **Luzerne County Historical Society - YouTube**
- The Omeka page has over 200 photos of items in our collection. We will be frequently adding more items. Omeka is an online platform for museums and libraries that allows them to share their collections worldwide online. <https://luzernehistory.omeka.net/collections/browse>
- There is also a series of podcasts "Fireside History" presented by Luzerne County Historical Society. Topics include "Plagues and Pandemics, Oh My!", and "Swetland Family Values." Our podcast will be available on demand wherever you get your podcasts. Thank you to all those who helped us along the way, and to all those who continue to support us. We are wishing you a healthy, safe, and happy summer.

Although we all hope that we can return to our in-person events soon, we will continue to expand our digital programming.



Molly Hinkin
President



Mary Walsh
Interim Executive Director

RARE POWDER HORN ILLUMINATES LITTLE-KNOWN STORY OF GERSHOM PRINCE AND OTHER BLACK SOLDIERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

**Prince died in the Wyoming
Massacre of 1778 in
Pennsylvania, one of the
Bloodiest Battles of the War.**



The elaborately carved powder horn of Gershom Prince, a black soldier who served and died in the Revolutionary War, is on display at the Museum of the American Revolution, Philadelphia. The powder horn – a cow's horn that was used to store gunpowder – sheds light on the little-known stories of black soldiers, both free and enslaved, who fought during the American Revolution.

"Very few powder horns of black Revolutionary War soldiers survive," said **Dr. Philip Mead**, Chief Historian and Director of Curatorial Affairs at the Museum of the American Revolution (MAR). "This one is probably the only surviving powder horn of a black soldier who was killed in action. It is a moving testament to the contributions of African Americans to the freedom of this nation at its inception."

The horn is carved with Prince's name, as well as exquisite artwork including detailed images of trees, forts, and scenes from everyday life, giving a unique glimpse into his experiences.

The horn was donated to the Luzerne County Historical Society in the 1950's by Prince's family. It is currently on loan to the MAR.

Gershom Prince was born in Connecticut in 1733 and settled in the Wyoming Valley in what is now northeastern Pennsylvania. He carried the powder horn in two wars: the French and Indian War and, 17 years later, the Revolutionary War. During both wars, he served as a (likely free) aide to Captain Durkee of the 4th Connecticut Regiment. During the Revolutionary War, Prince

survived the battles of Germantown and Brandywine, as well as the winter encampment at Valley Forge. On July 3, 1778, a combined force of Iroquois and Loyalists attacked the Wyoming Valley, killing most of the outnumbered American soldiers there. Prince was among those killed. The powder horn was taken from his body after the attack and preserved.

On the Centennial of the Battle of Wyoming, a monument was erected on the site of the battlefield for those who lost their lives and are buried there. Inscribed on the monument is a list of names by rank. The last name listed under the rank "Privates" is "Gershom Prince, colored."

Historian and author **Denise Dennis**, a descendant of Prince's family, is the founding president of The Dennis Farm Charitable Land Trust, which preserves the 153-acre Dennis Farm in Pennsylvania's Susquehanna County. The farm was settled in the 1790s by Dennis' great-great-great-grandfather, Prince Perkins (1750 – 1839), who served in the Revolutionary War and was freed for his service.

"Knowing stories like those of Gershom Prince and other African American Revolutionary War patriots benefits all Americans by reminding us of our shared heritage," said Dennis. "Their stories tell Americans that even during a time when most black people were held in slavery, there were African American sons of liberty who fought for the nation's independence, as well as for their own freedom and that of their enslaved brethren."

“
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CONTRIBUTIONS OF
AFRICAN AMERICANS
TO THE FREEDOM
OF THIS NATION AT
ITS INCEPTION.**”

-DR. PHILIP MEAD

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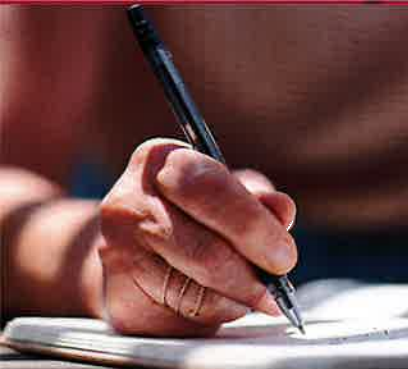
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DO WHAT WE DO
WITHOUT YOU.

YOUR GENEROSITY
IS APPRECIATED!





CONSIDER PLANNED GIVING

Making a bequest or leaving a legacy gift to the Historical Society is a most effective way to support the mission of the Society. Planned gifts make a meaningful difference in our ability to preserve and promote the history of Luzerne County.

There are numerous ways to make a lasting gift to LCHS. Consult your legal or financial advisor to determine which is best for you.

1. A gift in your will is one of simplest ways to provide for LCHS' future and allows you to retain your assets during your lifetime.

Tips & insight:

- This can be easily included when you write your will or may be added through a simple codicil or addition.
- You may wish to designate a specific dollar amount; a percentage of your residuary estate (what remains after debts, taxes and specific bequests have been made); or specific assets such as securities.

2. Beneficiary designations are another way to include the LCHS without adjusting your will.

Tips & insight:

- You can easily name the LCHS as a beneficiary on a retirement account, annuity or life insurance policy.
- Your insurance agent or retirement plan administrator can provide you with additional information.

Please let us know if you are naming us in your future plans so we can thank you!

We offer our members opportunities to engage with the past through thought-provoking programming, access to our library, and much more. Membership makes a great gift for the local history buff in your family or circle – gift memberships are also available!

- Free admission to all LCHS sites
- Discounted member rates on programs and events
- Admission to member-only events
- Discounts on research fees and photo reproduction fees
- Subscription to Forecast, the LCHS newsletter
- 10% discount at all LCHS gift shops
- Voting privileges at LCHS annual meeting

Sign up for a membership at www.luzernehistory.org/membership/personal-and-family-memberships/

Or use the form on the back page

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY



YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 as a year was both challenging and satisfying for the Historical Society. Challenging, because the year opened with numerous COVID-19 related restrictions in place and with the reality that things had not changed too much from 2020. Indeed, planning and executing events for the year and plotting through the ever-changing restrictions and recommendations required constant effort and attention. The fact that as an organization we were able to navigate this maze successfully is what made 2021 so satisfying. As you'll see, our 163rd year was a very good one, all things considered.

January saw us once again participating in Anthracite Mining Heritage Month, albeit a more subdued one than prior years. Operating on the Zoom platform, the LCHS held a lecture on the impact of the Anthracite Industry on the wives and children of miners. This lecture and slideshow were recorded and added to the Society's budding YouTube Channel. This was joined by a lecture from LCHS Board member and former NAACP President Constance Wynn for Black History Month, and a delayed lecture for Women's History Month by Tish McCarthy Last.

Once the weather warmed up, we were finally able to hold some in-person events outdoors again, and so the Society participated in the 150th Anniversary of the AIME event on Public Square and held a walking tour of the area's Revolutionary War forts for Mental Health Awareness Month. We rounded out the Summer by having another night out with the SWB Railriders, speaking to various senior centers and civic groups, and then by holding our annual Road Rally in the Valley in early August.



September and the dawn of Fall finally brought the closest thing we have had to normalcy in two years when we held our Annual Dinner and were able to have roughly 100 attendees. The following month saw



the return of our Fall Festival, this time at the newly renovated Swetland Homestead. The LCHS merged the Festival with a Revolutionary War encampment to create a new two-day event that drew over 125

attendees. Then came the big one: Dr. Lewis' Downtown Wilkes-Barre Ghost Walks, which over three nights drew well over 250 people who braved the terrible weather. Finally, the year ended with the return of Festive Traditions at the Swetland Homestead that was enjoyed by 89 individuals.

These major events were backed up by the Nathan Denison House being open for tours on a limited basis, and holding lecture days on 18th Century Music, Civil War Medicine, and the family's genealogy. The museum and Swetland House also saw visits from school groups as education returned to its former normalcy. The Society also made the online auction, last held in the Fall of 2020, a regular occurrence, holding two more during the year to clear out some room and give our members a chance at some great buys.

In March, in addition to recording several pieces for our YouTube Channel that gets over a thousand views a month, the



Society launched a podcast called "Fireside History". There are now 10 episodes released about various topics of Luzerne County History. The restoration of the Swetland Homestead finished in April, and over the Summer, the Hancock House property got a new coat of paint giving the grounds a clean, matching look.

And last, but certainly not least, the Bishop Memorial Library, the LCHS's own "Old Reliable", was open for researchers all year long on an appointment-only basis. Online research naturally increased this year, as more and more people switched to a virtual work style. These changes allowed the library to conduct service essentially unchanged, giving access to our archives to a couple of hundred people.

While yes it was a challenge, the Society was able to continue to fulfill its mission in 2021. By using similar ideas, tactics, and events, we look forward to fulfilling it again for a happier and healthier 2022. We hope to see you at an event this year!

Stay tuned!