

THE FANLIGHT

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Winter 2026

The resilience of history

By Amy Leiser
Executive Director

Happy New Year! It's exciting to think about what the next 365 days will bring: 2026 will be an exhilarating year for the Monroe County Historical Association!

As you probably read in the Year-End Appeal letter sent last month, the target date to reopen the Stroud Mansion Museum and Library is April 1, 2026, a significant date because it is the 190th anniversary of the founding of Monroe County. Spring seems like the perfect season to reopen our doors, as it signals rebirth and renewal, and that's precisely what the Historical Association will experience as we return to our mission of preserving and sharing Monroe County's history.

Did you know that archaeologists credit the Shang dynasty, which began around 1600 BC, with creating the first written horoscope of 12 animals? According to the Chinese Zodiac, we are in the Year of the Snake, the sixth animal of the zodiac cycle. The Year of the Snake began on January 29, 2025, and continues through February 16, 2026. Revered in Asian culture, snakes are resilient animals that can survive long periods without food (some up to two years!) and shed their skin as needed. The snake symbolizes longevity and regeneration.

The ideas of resilience and regeneration have resonated with me as I have worked to lead this organization through our massive construction project. When the Board of Directors embarked on this incredibly needed and ambitious expansion project, I had no idea what I was truly in for! I have learned so much from this experience, and while at times the effort has been challenging, the end result is nothing short of amazing.

The Monroe County Historical Association exemplifies resilience. In 2026, the Stroud Mansion will celebrate its 231st birthday, and the organization will boast its 105th anniversary. That's a lot of resilience, a lot of history, in one place. From the time when the first artifact was donated to the museum to the thousands of artifacts in our collection today, the organization has thrived here for over a century.

The new year is also a time of regeneration. The addition of the Heritage Center has enabled us to expand museum



The rear entrance to the Stroud Mansion invites museum guests to "step into history" through a door from the new Heritage Center.

and library space, increase our educational outreach services, offer accessibility via an elevator, and implement climate control, enhanced security, and electrical upgrades.

At our core, we are the same small-but-mighty local nonprofit organization that we were a century ago, but now, we are even stronger and more determined in our mission. There will be challenges and growing pains; those are to be expected. But with our new skin, the Historical Association will learn from those challenges, build on our past successes, embrace inevitable change, and move forward into the next exciting chapter.

I can't wait to welcome you back this Spring!



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2026 Meetings

The MCHA Board of Directors meets the fourth Tuesday of most months at 6 p.m.

January 27
February 22 –
Annual Meeting and Luncheon
March 24
April 28
May 26
June 23
July – No meeting
August 25
September 22
October 27
November 24
December – No meeting

The Monroe County Historical Association is a cultural and learning center that assists our diverse community of residents and visitors in connecting the county's past with the present.

Brick by brick, paver by paver

Engraving begins at Kinsley Family Courtyard

The Kinsley Family Courtyard at the new Heritage Center has been installed, and the brick and paver engraving has begun. The Historical Association has been working with an area monument engraver and Primrose Landscaping to start personalizing individual bricks and pavers for the new space. The work will take place over the slow, cold winter months and be ready for unveiling this Spring.

The response has been spectacular. While brick sponsorship remains available, we are nearing capacity for pavers. It's not too late!

Bricks and a handful of pavers are available for sponsorship. Whether honoring a loved one, memorializing an ancestor, celebrating a family member, commemorating your

business, or remembering a cherished pet, these engraved pieces serve as a beautiful tribute to the personal legacies and treasured connections that shape Monroe County's rich heritage.

These personalized additions to the courtyard will not only enhance the historic beauty of the Stroud Mansion but will also create a sense of belonging and connection to our local history.

Don't miss your opportunity to have your name go down in history! *Use the form on the next page to submit your order.*

Let's pave the way for a bright future together, filled with joy, celebration, and a deep appreciation for our community's heritage!

Annual Meeting set for February 22

Franklin and the Revolution

A presentation on "Benjamin Franklin and the Revolution at Home" will highlight the Monroe County Historical Association's 104th Annual Meeting and Luncheon, to be held **February 22** at Terraview, Stroudsmoor Country Inn.

The program by Penn State professor Carla J. Mulford recognizes the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, and will examine Franklin's role during the American Revolution and the resulting revolution in the Franklin home.

Franklin's very public stance on the necessity of revolution against Britain covered a private family drama: his son, William, the royally appointed governor of New Jersey, remained devoted to Britain.

"The Franklin family's rupture signals the fragility of freedom and the poignancy of the difficult decisions made by the revolutionary generation," Mulford says.

The luncheon will feature Chicken Gerard, Roasted Sirloin of Beef, and Salmon Dolce Forte, and will be preceded by a silent auction.

Tickets for this much-anticipated annual fundraising event are now available — \$45 for MCHA members, and \$55 for nonmembers.

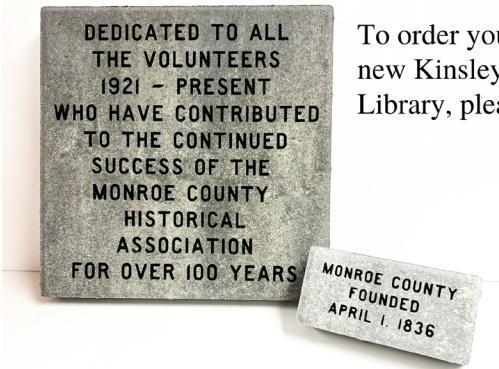
Reservations will be accepted until February 13.

Purchase your tickets online or download a form to mail in with your check at the MCHA website:

monroehistorical.org/annualmtg.html



PERSONALIZED ENGRAVED PAVERS AND BRICKS



To order your personalized engraved paver or brick that will become a lasting part of the new Kinsley Family Courtyard at the Heritage Center at the Stroud Mansion Museum and Library, please complete the attached order form and return with payment to:

**Monroe County Historical Association
900 Main Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360**

Please print clearly. Engraving is limited to text only (no images, logos, or iconography).* Use additional pages for orders of multiple pavers or bricks. Payments may be combined.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____ Phone _____

16" x 16" Paver 8" x 4" Brick Additional Donation \$ _____

Total amount enclosed \$ _____ **Payment Method** **Cash** **Check** **Credit Card**

Credit Card Number _____

Expiration Date _____ Zip Code _____ CSC Number _____

16" X 16" PAVER (\$1,200 DONATION)

8" X 4" BRICK (\$250 DONATION)



For more information or to order online, please scan the QR code or visit monroehistorical.org/heritagectr.html.

*The Monroe County Historical Association reserves the right to cancel any order that includes offensive or inappropriate text.

“Stars and Stitches Forever” Quilt Challenge

Hosted by the Monroe County Historical Association to honor the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

Throughout our country’s history, quilts have been made to keep people warm and to feed the soul as artistic expressions. Now it’s time to honor this momentous anniversary with quilts unique to Monroe County. Working within the challenge parameters, quilters are invited to interpret their journey (or their family’s journey) of migration or immigration to America and/or the area now known as Monroe County. This is a way to reflect on the past, honor the contributions of all people to Monroe County, and look ahead to a shared future.



Quilts are due by Friday, February 27, 2026.

Challenge quilts will be exhibited in the Monroe County Historical Association’s Hughes Community Room in the new Heritage Center from April 1 through July 31, 2026.



Visit monroehistorical.org/250pa.html or scan the QR code for complete instructions and an entry form.

For more information, please contact the Monroe County Historical Association
900 Main Street, Stroudsburg, PA 18360
570-421-7703 admin@monroehistorical.org

Margot W. Vagliardo was a dear volunteer, Board member, and longtime friend to the Monroe County Historical Association. In 2015, Margot took over writing the informative Monroe Mouse articles for The Fanlight, a job she relished. She enjoyed researching a range of topics and working with artist Joan Groff to create an image to accompany her articles.

This Monroe Mouse article is dedicated in her memory.



Musings from the Mansion

Reporter in Residence, Monroe Mouse

As told to
Julia Burns

Illustrated by Joan B. Groff

Monroe Mouse's patchwork path of quilting history

Now that the Heritage Center has been built, I have a lot more room for scurrying! The other day, while mouse-ing around our new Hughes Community Room, I heard there would be an exciting new exhibit on display there soon, because we are hosting a quilting challenge!

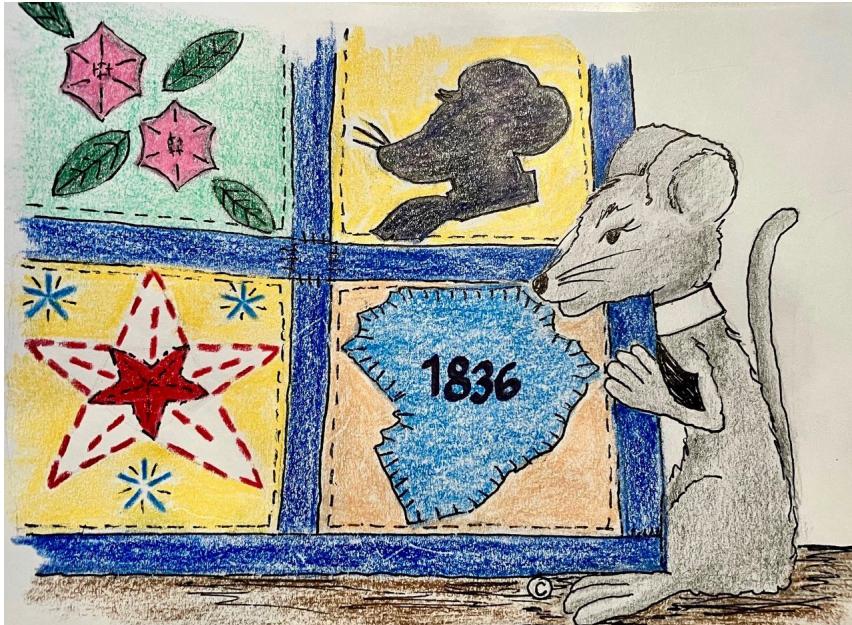
I've seen some impressive quilts in my day, but I didn't know how the practice of quilting started. You know I love history, so I hit the books.

Let's start at the beginning. What makes a quilt? A quilt is a method of sewing layers of material together through a wide variety of techniques.

Early examples of quilting have been found in China, the Middle East, North Africa, and colder parts of Europe, and were used in clothing construction to stay warm.

In 1903, an ivory carving from c. 3400 BC was uncovered in the Temple of Osiris at Abydos, Egypt, depicting a Pharaoh of the Egyptian First Dynasty in a diamond-patterned quilted garment. Again, this would have provided warmth to the wearer. This appears to be the earliest record of quilting!

Another early, surviving example of a quilt was made between the first century BC and the second century AD, found in 1924 in Mongolia, on the floor of a tomb. This piece had elaborate needlepoint design and was used for



both function and beauty, as it was placed on the floor to provide warmth and cleanliness.

Many historians next trace quilting advancements to the medieval times and the Crusades. Muslim soldiers wore tightly quilted garments, and Europeans followed suit. The clothing was lightweight but warm. Initially, it also served to protect the soldier against weaponry, but proved useless against

gunshots and fell out of use in the military.

Quilts soon became part of domestic life. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London, England, has the earliest known surviving bed quilt. Originating from Sicily, Italy, and estimated to be from 1360-1400, the quilt is known as "The Tristan Quilt." It depicts 14 scenes from the medieval legend of Tristan and Isolde – including lively depictions of battles, ships, and castles. This quilt displays exquisite craftsmanship, with woven, hand-spun fabric, and it was stuffed ("trapunto") and stitched in patterns with meticulous detail.

In 1540, Henry VIII's fifth wife, Katherine Howard, was presented with 23 silk quilts! In 17th century France, artfully designed quilted petticoats became so popular that dresses were sewn with the skirt cut away, so as to showcase the quilted linings, rather than hide them. In the 17th and 18th

Story continues, Page 6

Patchwork path of quilting history

Continued from Page 5

centuries, quilts were also an expected part of a bride's hope chest, with the most common number of quilts being "a baker's dozen."

The wealthy enjoyed luxury quilting techniques and materials, while those less fortunate used worn-out clothes, old blankets, feathers, straw, even leaves for materials. English orphanages and poorhouses made quilts by sewing paper into cotton bags. Many drafty and cold homes — both manors and cottages alike — had quilted wall hangings and bed covers to insulate the home. It was an effective and inexpensive way to stay warm.

The Industrial Revolution brought large-scale production of textiles. Before this, many homemakers were tasked with spinning and weaving fabric for their families. In 1856, the Singer Company modified sewing machines for home use, and by the 1870s, the majority of homes had a sewing machine. With availability and affordability, quilts became very popular at this time and became a domestic trade for women.

Was quilting a necessity? An art form? Or both? Practical quilting used fabric scraps and pieces of old clothing, yet quilts soon showed a wide variety of patterns and colors, showcasing beautiful designs.

There are two types of quilting — pieced and appliquéd, sometimes used together in the same quilt. Appliquéd quilts often featured fine fabrics and were also better taken care of and thus more likely to survive the passing of time. This technique required larger pieces of fabric and thus gained more popularity after the industrialization of fabrics made them more affordable and available in brighter colors and prints.

In the Victorian Era, the pieced "crazy quilt" was all the rage and was made up of a loose pattern with no organized lines, stitched often with brocades, velvets, silks and other fine fabrics, with elaborate stitching — a style that originated in Japan and spread to the western world.

Many patterns for pieced patchwork quilts were based on four larger blocks with designs within that varied from simpler to more intricate. Smaller blocks were a later innovation. Quilters first pieced the top of the quilt, then used chalk, pencil or charcoal to outline stitching designs.

There was never a shortage of quilt patterns, as ideas could be found anywhere — if not a purchased or hand-drawn pattern, then the outlines of a cookie cutter, or household dishes gave inspiration. Many women were prolific in their quilting efforts in the winter months, and quilting bees were lively parties!

Today, we see a resurgence in quilt-making, and though modern sewing machines lend ease and accuracy in following patterns and elaborate designs, some quilters still choose to quilt by hand!

If you're reading this and know a quilter or are one yourself, I urge you to check out the MCHA's "Stars and Stitches Forever" quilt challenge. I'm so excited to see what our community creates!

IN MEMORIAM

The Monroe County Historical Association honors and remembers the following who were lost in 2025.

These individuals were active members, volunteers, committee members, board members, supporters, and friends.

Ian Ackroyd-Kelly
Kimara Ahnert
Roberta Bach
Joe Conahan
William E. Custard
Alan Eickhoff
John Ferro
Bob Groff
Mary Lambert
Anna LeFante
Richard Lesh
Audrey Mitchell
Clarence Murphy
Frank Summa
Margot W. Vagliardo
James C. Werkheiser

New Members

Since 3/25/2025

Richard and Melanie Begun

Family Promise of the Poconos
— Timaki Johnson

Granite Ridge General Contracting
— David Policelli

Janet Jackson
Darrel Joyce

Mary and Steven Kaldany

Kelly Lombardo

Kathi Lockwood

Alexander Marek

Skip Scheetz and Michael Perry
Tammy Frailey Shearer

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
— Rev. Elizabeth Koerner

Jeffrey and Diana Transue



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Preservation Advocate | \$2,000

Anonymous
Monroe County Bar Foundation

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Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
Pennsylvania Library Association
R. Dale and Frances M. Hughes Foundation
The Weiler Family Foundation



Bells Across PA comes to Monroe County

America250PA has launched "Bells Across PA" to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The goal is to have a uniquely designed fiberglass bell on display in each of Pennsylvania's 67 counties, each created by a local artist.

The PA250 Monroe County Committee chose a design by Linda Stockman-Connors from Jonas, who spent months creating scenes from Monroe County's past and present on the local bell.

The bell was officially dedicated on October 3 in the Historical Association's courtyard with much fanfare. Members

of the Stroudsburg High School Choir sang the National Anthem, and local dignitaries offered thoughtful remarks before the bell's unveiling. As if part of the plan, an American bald eagle soared overhead, circling three times before flying away. It was a memorable experience!

The Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau sponsored the Monroe County bell, which is on display in the lobby window of the Monroe County Historical Association.

*See the bells from other Pennsylvania counties online: www.america250pa.org/
PPE: Bells Across PA*



MONROE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

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