

#844 The Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg – The Muhlenbergs from Trappe, part 1, Trappe: The Center of the Lutheran Church in America in the mid-1700’s

Providence, Pennsylvania. Outside of Philadelphia, a small backwoods settlement developed in 1717 near the tavern of John Jacob Schrack on the trail to the frontier. As more and more families settled in the clearings in the forest, the community adopted the name Providence. Religious services were few and far between since the nearest congregation was twelve miles away. Philadelphia Lutherans beckoned to Europe for a regularly ordained pastor. It was Henry Melchior Muhlenberg who answered the call, arriving in November 1742.



The Old Trappe Lutheran Church
(oldest Lutheran church in the United States)
Trappe, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Providence becomes Trappe. What was then called Providence is now known as Trappe, Pennsylvania, and has been for quite some time. The name Trappe came from the tavern of John Jacob Schrack near which the town developed. Here is what two sources say:

(1) Trappe was a village in Upper Providence Township (in fact the oldest in the Township). In 1896, it was incorporated as a borough. The Great Manatawny Road, later the Perkiomen-Reading Pike and now Main Street, passed through the village and made it a natural stopping place for travelers enroute from Philadelphia to Reading. The village dates from 1717 when John Jacob Schrack settled there. The name Trappe came from Schrack’s tavern, which was spelled “Trap” or “Trapp”.



The “Muhlenberg House”, originally owned by Henry Muhlenberg, Trappe, Pa.

Trappe was the center of the Lutheran Church in America during the mid-1700’s and home to the “patriarch” of the North American Lutheran Church, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. Several of the church buildings and Muhlenberg’s private residences are still present today and are of great historical importance. Two other Muhlenbergs are important to national history. General Peter Muhlenberg served in Washington’s forces, and Frederick Muhlenberg was the

nation's first Speaker of the House. Frederick's house still exists today. [Original source: http://www.livingplaces.com/PA/Montgomery_County/Trappe_Borough.html]

(2) The Schracks ran an inn in Montgomery Co. that was often referred to as “the trap,” hence the village acquired the name “Trappe”. The location is now known as Collegeville. The Schracks had very close connections with the family of Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg, father of the Lutheran Church in America, whose principal congregation, the Augustus Lutheran congregation, was nearby. In fact, Eva Barbara's father was responsible for bringing Muhlenberg to America in 1742. [Original Source: <http://chrisman.org/immigrants/George6.htm>]

The website for the Augustus Lutheran Church that Henry Muhlenberg first pastored at Providence calls their first church building “Old Trappe Church.”

Here is #844–Doc 1, the church history of the Old Trappe Church, pastored by Henry Muhlenberg.

[Click here](#) for #844–Doc 1

[Click here](#) for the Original Source of #844–Doc 1

Key Understanding: *The snare.* The Lord ordained the birthplace of the Lutheran Church in America to be at a village known today as *Trappe* – the name originating from Trap, or Trapp – as a warning that the church/state doctrines and “just war” beliefs of the *sword-carrying Lutherans* were/are a spiritual *snare*, or *trap*, for any soul who follows.

Let's use Jeremiah 5:26-27 as our key “snare”, or “trap”, verse. We will see why shortly.

Jeremiah 5:26-27 (KJV)
FOR AMONG MY
PEOPLE ARE FOUND
WICKED MEN: THEY
LAY WAIT, AS HE THAT
SETTETH SNARES:
THEY SET A TRAP,
THEY CATCH MEN.
27 As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich.



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