Memorializing German Lutheran Patriots of the American Republic

by Karl Krueger

Abstract

In the nineteenth century, German Americans and their friends sought to memorialize the contributions of German Lutherans in the American Revolutionary War and the early republic. Their efforts centered on Peter and Frederick Muhlenberg. Motivated by a desire to expand the prevailing "New England lens," the regional focus that concentrated on Anglo-American achievements, they worked to tell their story to ensure visibility and recognition. This essay examines how memorialization unfolded within Philadelphia's public sphere to promote a more comprehensive understanding of the American experience for future generations.

Five thousand marchers gathered on Philadelphia's Third Street on Friday, July 4, 1788, to celebrate the ratification of the Constitution of the United States with a parade. Peter Muhlenberg (1746–1807) was chosen to carry a flag in the Grand Federal Procession since he was local and had served as a general in the Continental Army.[1] His brother, Frederick Muhlenberg (1750–1801), did not march but watched the parade as an honored guest, having presided at Pennsylvania's Ratifying Convention in 1787. Peter and Frederick were the sons of Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711–1787), a German immigrant who founded the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1748 and wrote a constitution for St. Michael's Lutheran Church in Philadelphia at Fifth and Cherry Streets.[2] One notable achievement of Muhlenberg's constitution was granting members the right to elect both their pastor and their representatives on the church council. This democratic framework for administering Lutheran congregations was established by a German Lutheran immigrant fourteen years before the Declaration of Independence and twenty-five years before the drafting of the United States Constitution. As a result of their father's example, Peter and Frederick understood the importance of voluntary allegiance and individual belonging within

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the American Lutheran paradigm, values they carried into their pastorates and later into the political offices they held.

This essay examines how advocates commemorated the achievements of Peter Muhlenberg, his brother Frederick Muhlenberg, and the German Quaker Francis Pastorius during the colonial era. Over time, German Lutherans and their supporters worked to share the story of their contributions to the struggle for independence, thereby augmenting the American narrative and earning recognition from English-speaking Americans. An early promoter for telling the German story was Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799–1873). Addressing the delegates of the 1841 Baltimore Convention of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church, Schmucker shared his German Lutheran ethnic pride. Schmucker, an advocate of acculturation, "could also be the first to snipe that New Englanders cherished the 'memory of the pilgrim fathers . . . with an interest bordering on veneration.'" When they memorialized Cotton, Hooker, Davenport, and Mathers, Schmucker lifted up Muhlenberg, Brunnholtz, Handschuh, and Bolzius. In contrast, "Schmucker contended, when it came to learning and erudition, colonial Lutheran clerics 'were their superiors.'"[3] Like Schmucker, Samuel Brobst, Oswald Seidensticker, C. J. Hexamer, and Georg von Bosse worked to memorialize German Lutheran contributions in English and German, thereby expanding the prevailing accounts written by individuals unfamiliar with German Lutheran involvement. Paraphrasing historian Rudy Koshar, while "history uses dates, documents, diaries, and statistics," public memory, in contrast, "builds its sense of the past primarily from parades, commemorations, monuments, memorials, historical sites, and honor rolls."[4]

Working in the background of the memorialization movement are three pivotal sociological factors shaping German Lutheran communities in America. First, German immigration increased significantly in the nineteenth century. It is estimated that between five and six million Germans entered the United States between 1840 and 1917. Second, after 1866, with Prussia's victory and the incorporation of the defeated German territories, German Americans, who were once subjects of some of these German states, found themselves mere observers of a new national order. In that uncertain moment,

they feared that the United Prussian Church (*Die Unierte Kirche*) might be imposed upon their Lutheran homelands, altering a core facet of their identity.[5] Third, for those German Lutherans living in Philadelphia in the late nineteenth century, their experience became one of significant loss. Economic realities forced the leadership of St. Michael's and Zion Lutheran Church to demolish its two colonial sanctuaries in Philadelphia's center city. Zion, located at Fourth and Cherry Streets, was torn down in 1869. St. Michael's, located at Fifth and Cherry, was razed in 1872. Within three years, the colonial footprint of these monumental churches, which served as tangible evidence of the substantial German Lutheran population, was erased. In their absence, German Lutherans and German Americans sought new ways to memorialize their colonial heritage.

Memorializing Peter Muhlenberg

In 1849, Philadelphia publishers Carey and Hart released Congressman Henry Augustus Muhlenberg's (1823–1854) biography of his great-uncle, titled *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg of the Revolutionary Army.*[6] His comprehensive coverage of Peter's service in the Virginia Regiment and Continental Army was a significant step in expanding the narrative of the Revolutionary War, as much of the information he presented had been buried in American libraries and archives, such as his account of Peter Muhlenberg's "1776 Farewell Sermon" in Woodstock, Virginia.[7] Peter was elected colonel of the Eighth Virginia Regiment, consisting of German settlers living in the Shenandoah Valley.[8] Peter, recognizing the urgency of the commission to canvas the region for recruits, decided to resign his call to his frontier parishes in Virginia in January 1776. According to Henry Augustus,[9] on his last Sunday, Peter moved through the crowds in the cemetery outside of the overcrowded church, walked into the sanctuary, and climbed the steps into the pulpit wearing his "full uniform, over which his gown, the symbol of his holy calling, was thrown."[10] Peter ended the sermon by saying "that, in the language of holy writ [Ecclesiastes], there was a time for all things, a time to preach and a time to pray, but those times had passed away." In a voice that echoed through the church like a trumpet blast, he declared, "that there was a time to fight, and that time had

now come!" After the benediction (*Das Votum*), Peter deliberately took off the gown "which had thus far covered his martial figure [and] he stood before them a girded warrior, descending from the pulpit, ordered the drums at the church door to beat for recruits."[11] Although Peter's dramatic conclusion after the benediction has become legendary, recent scholarship has challenged the timing of the sermon. Evidence from the Beckford Parish register shows that Peter continued performing baptisms and marriages until March, indicating his farewell sermon likely occurred on March 17, 1776, as Peter left the Shenandoah Valley on March 21.[12]

Whether fact or fiction, Henry Augustus's version of Peter's impressive final sermon in Woodstock captured the imagination of Americans. After reading Henry Augustus's biography, Benson Lossing (1813–1891) was inspired to include "a sketch" of Peter Muhlenberg in his popular *Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (1852).[13] Inspired by the frontispiece engraving of Peter in Henry Augustus' biography, Lossing's depiction features a commanding chest-up portrait of Peter in his general's uniform, with his head turned to the right. Lossing ended his "sketch" by quoting Henry Augustus's account of the "1776 Farewell Sermon," verbatim.

Lossing's *Pictorial Field-Guide,* with its engaging texts and woodcuts, caught the attention of a young American poet and painter, Thomas Buchanan Read (1822–72). Inspired by Lossing's account, Read fashioned a poem about the Revolutionary War in the 1850s while living in Italy, titled "The Wild Waggoner."[14] In the section titled "The Brave at Home," Read describes a pastor so committed to the struggle for freedom that he steps into his pulpit, surrenders his calling, and urges men to join him in the fight.[15] Although Read does not mention Peter Muhlenberg by name in the body of his poem, he shared his name and the source of his inspiration in an endnote where he wrote "Lossing's Sketch of the Life of General Muhlenberg."[16]

Samuel Brobst's "The Lutheran Magazine"

During this period, the German Lutheran community in America was also actively memorializing its cultural heritage and highlighting its contributions to the nation's founding. In January 1858,

Samuel Brobst (1822–1876) established *The Lutheran Magazine:Youth Companion and Missionary Papers* (*Lutherische Zeitschrift: Jugendfreund und Missionsblätter*).[17] In 1859, the second year of its publication, Brobst published a "Special Edition" (Extra=Nummer) addressing the German American community's lack of recognition.[18] After interacting with the dominant English-speaking culture for decades, Germans wanted to share their contributions to their new homeland.[19] Brobst adopted a conciliatory tone, honoring the merits of English literature and English virtues while advocating for the inclusion of his own tradition.

> 1. While we as Americans have decided to stand for the German in this publication, it is not our intention to attack the right of English literature or the noble virtues of the English or in any way to diminish them, but instead we only wanted to demonstrate that the Germans in relation to the English have not been respected and that in many instances have been mistreated.
>
> 2. We believe, that America owes its German-speaking population a great deal, particularly the German Lutheran church in America whose treasures are almost all of German origin, and that German has earned the love and respect of all its faithful members.

Having access to the *Halle Reports*, Brobst incorporated numerous excerpts into many subsequent issues, showcasing the experiences of German Lutheran settlers and their clergy in British North America. Through these citations, he underscored for his German Lutheran readers that their ancestors and compatriots left an impressive footprint in eighteenth-century Pennsylvania. Like their British neighbors, German Lutherans had cleared the land, established farms, and opened businesses in towns.

In the "Special Edition," Brobst also included a brief article titled "Our German Ancestors" (*Unsere deutschen Vorfahren*). Here, Brobst commended a recent publication by Nicolas Schmidt that highlighted German contributions to "the new Fatherland" (*dem neuen Vaterlande*) and created an "honor roll" of the many Germans who should be memorialized. In his list, he included Franz Daniel Postroius (Pastorius), Konrad Weiser, Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg, Peter Muhlenberg, Christoph Ludwig, von Kalb, and von Steuben. "Our hearts swell with pride," Brobst commented, and because of their leadership, "we no longer feel like foreigners on American soil."[20]

Oswald Seidensticker

In the same year that confessional Lutherans left the General Synod to create the General Council of the Lutheran Church in America (1867), the University of Pennsylvania established a chair for German Language and Literature. The administration appointed Oswald Seidensticker (1825–1894) as its professor. Seidensticker emigrated to America in 1846, having completed his doctorate in Philology and Philosophy at the University of Göttingen. Seidensticker served the university faithfully from 1867 until his death in 1894. In addition to teaching at Penn, he was appointed the historian of the German Society of Pennsylvania. Established in 1764 in Philadelphia, the society's library provided him with the information needed to tell the story of colonial Germans in British North America. Seidensticker's academic output was impressive, with articles about Francis Pastorius, William Penn's travels in the Netherlands and Germany, and German-Swedish relations in colonial Pennsylvania.

Seidensticker gained notoriety with his *History of the German Society of Pennsylvania, from Its Founding until the Celebration of the Republic, 1876*, which was published in German for the centennial in 1876.[21] Seidensticker's history was reviewed by the *Lutheran Magazine* (*Lutherische Zeitschrift*). Priced at just two dollars, the book was deemed valuable for connecting the Society's history to the "great battle for freedom and independence" celebrated by the 1876 Centennial.[22]

Through Seidensticker's book, the German American community gained new insight into its leaders and their roles in American society,[23] especially the German Lutherans Frederick and Peter Muhlenberg. As a result of Seidensticker's scholarship, German Americans could lay claim to the centennial celebration because their German compatriots had participated in the unprecedented action of leaving the British Empire and establishing a free and independent nation.

Memorializing Frederick Muhlenberg

In his short biography of Frederick Muhlenberg, Seidensticker noted that he joined the German Society of Pennsylvania in 1778

and was its president from 1790 to 1797, when Philadelphia was the capital of the young United States. Seidensticker then described Frederick's transition into politics: "In 1779 and 1780, he was elected by the Pennsylvania legislature as a representative to the Continental Congress; in 1781 and 1782, he was a member and speaker of Pennsylvania's State Legislature." Then, as Seidensticker notes, "from these humble circumstances, he was called to an important post, the ratifying Convention for the Constitution of the United States. His colleagues elected him chairman." From there, he became a representative of Pennsylvania in the first, second, third, and fourth Congresses (1789–1798), making this branch of government a diverse group of politicians from the outset. In the first and third, he was elected Speaker of the House. According to Seidensticker, the admiration of German settlers (*Landsmann*) played a significant role in his appointments. To support this claim, Seidensticker describes a campaign launched by the colonial German newspaper, the *Philadelphia Correspondent* (*Philadelphia Correspondenz*), which encouraged German Americans to elect Frederick and Peter Muhlenberg, along with Daniel Hiester, to Congress in 1791. As a result of the campaign, these German-American candidates were elected by their constituencies to the Second Congress.[24]

Seidensticker also believed that Frederick needed greater exposure among non-Germans. With that in mind, he published an extensive article in English (1889) in the widely read *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, titled "Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in the First Congress, 1789."[25] Interpreting Frederick's election, Seidensticker emphasized it was not just a political event but a symbol of national unity and cultural integration, as it represented the successful inclusion of ethnic and religious minorities in the new republic. Contemplating Frederick's decision to enter politics, Seidensticker posits that it was his older brother's example that inspired him to act upon it in 1779.[26] He lists the offices Frederick held, such as president of the German Society and Trustee of the University of Pennsylvania. He concludes his presentation by citing remarks from President John Adams (1735–1826) regarding the influence of the "Muhlenberg boys."

> These two Germans, who had long been in public affairs and high offices, were the great leaders and oracles of the whole German interest in Pennsylvania and the neighboring states. The Muhlenbergs turned the entire body of the Germans, significant numbers of the Irish, and many of the English, and in this manner introduced the total change that followed in both Houses of the legislature, and in all the executive departments of the national government. Upon such slender threads did our elections then depend.[27]

Peter's Statue in the Nation's Capitol, 1889.

In 1864, Congress established the National Statuary Hall and invited each state to send statues of two individuals who made significant contributions to their state's or the nation's heritage. Daniel Ermentrout (1837–99), a member of the Pennsylvania State Senate representing Berks County, presented a bill in 1877 that made "an appropriation for this purpose." Ermentrout proposed a Pennsylvania German, specifically General Peter Muhlenberg. It was no surprise, as he had delivered a powerful speech in Reading, Pennsylvania, during the Centennial Year 1876, that lauded German contributions to the United States: "May we . . . celebrate deeds of German liberty, German valor, German patriotism, and German virtue in American History."[28]

The marble statue of Peter would be sculpted by Blanche Nevin (1841–1925) and presented to the Capitol in 1889. The statue is notable for two reasons. First, Blanche Nevin, who studied art at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and the Royal Academy of Venice, was the first woman sculptor to be represented in the United States Capitol. Second, the statue was designed as a "snapshot in stone" of Peter's "1776 Farewell Sermon." It depicts Peter in a military uniform, his clerical robe draped over his right arm, his left hand firmly grasping the hilt of his sword.

The German Quaker Legacy of Francis Daniel Pastorius, 1908

In the opening decade of the twentieth century, the German Society turned its attention to Francis Daniel Pastorius (1651–1720) for the 225th anniversary of Germantown's founding in 1908. On the evening of October 6, 1908, after a massive commemoration in

Germantown, people gathered at Philadelphia's Academy of Music for an evening of speeches as well as instrumental and choral music. Dr. Adolph Spaeth (1839–1910), professor at the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia, addressed the audience in German, followed by a second address in English by the noteworthy New York German-American newspaper publisher, Herman Ridder (1851–1915).[29] Ridder's speech retraced German settlements and contributions beginning with Pastorius and the founding of the Quaker colony in Germantown.

When Philadelphians opened their copy of *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the next morning, October 7th, the headlines said it all: "German-Americans Hold Sway. Germans Honor Race Pioneers in Penn's Province."[30] The focus of the parade was the unveiling of the pedestal upon which the statue of Pastorious would eventually stand. After the unveiling, the Reverend Georg von Bosse (1862–1943), the pastor of St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Brown Street, delivered an address in German. Von Bosse supplied *The Inquirer* with an English translation. "It is a site, hallowed in history, where we now stand," he proclaimed and continued by listing German contributions in colonial Pennsylvania. He referenced the New England interpretation of American history by saying, "We hear so much of what the Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants have done for our country, but that which Germans have done is passed over oftentimes in silence or belittled." In a recent and unnamed biographical dictionary, von Bosse noted "that among the 14,000 names, 10,376 [are] English, 1430 Scotch, and only 659 German. "In the face of such statistics," he declared, "it is high time that we German-Americans awake and snatch from oblivion the names of our ancestors who have left footprints in the sands of time."[31]

The Dedication of the Peter Muhlenberg Statue in Philadelphia, 1910

Since German Americans had installed monuments honoring Alexander von Humboldt (1871) and Friedrich Schiller (1886) in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, some leaders in Philadelphia's Germania also wanted to memorialize Peter Muhlenberg with a statue. In July 1905, at a meeting of the officers of the German Society,

Dr. Charles Hexamer reminded them ". . . that the Puritans had recently erected a monument in front of City Hall, and that a figure like Peter Muhlenberg, who had served for years as President of the German Society and played such a significant role in the history of the United States, deserved no less recognition."[32] Two months later, *The Allentown Reader* ran an article, "To Pay A Just Due." The reporter stated that "New England historians, as a rule, have done scant justice to this distinguished soldier and general, worthy son of the American Lutheran Church's greatest sire, and the effort of the German Society of Philadelphia to rectify this injustice in a measure comes none too soon." The final paragraph closed with the cost of the project, $15,000, and a plea that "Lutherans generally may be expected to take an interest in this project and to assist in thus honoring Washington's boy companion and bosom friend who won the fourfold title of preacher, general, representative and senator."[33]

Fundraising began in 1906, and by 1909, the German Society had sufficient funds to commission a statue from J. Otto Schweizer (1863–1955) and to schedule its dedication on German Day, October 6, 1910. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* shared details about the statue of "General Peter Muhlenberg, Patriot of Revolution" that would be installed on City Hall Plaza. Describing the monument, the reporter for *The Inquirer* wrote, "The statue, designed by [J. Otto] Schweizer, represents the patriotic fighting pastor of Revolutionary times in the uniform of a general of the Continental Army. A tablet on the front will show a scene in the Woodstock, Va, church where Muhlenberg called on the congregation to follow him into the American Army.[34] Schweizer's statue portrays an older Peter in his Continental Army uniform, holding his cocked hat with a cockade in his left hand just above his sword. As noted, his transformation from pastor to patriot-soldier is depicted on the statue's pedestal, where Peter is shown in the pulpit, casting off his clerical robe to reveal his uniform.

On October 7, 1910, the day after the dedication, the front page of the *Inquirer* announced, "30,000 Spectators Witness Tribute to Memory of General Peter Muhlenberg." A highlight was Judge William Staake (1846–1924), who gave the climactic speech. He ended with the cherished story of the 1776 Farewell Sermon.[35] "When he had completed his address to his congregation . . . Peter Muhlenberg

General Muhlenberg Statue, City Hall, Philadelphia, from Rev. William Finck, *Lutheran Landmarks and Pioneers in America* (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1913), 177. Public domain.

said, 'There is a time to preach and a time to fight, now is the time to fight.'" Having issued the call, the "renowned patriot cast off the robe of his office and stood before his people dressed in full military uniform." After mentioning that the robe had been carefully preserved, Staake lifted it above his head and cried, "Here it is." The crowd burst into thunderous applause.

The closing paragraphs of the *Inquirer* article included excerpts from speeches that recalled the German American community's efforts to augment the New England approach to writing American history. Dr. Charles Hexamer summed it up when he stated,

> To me, the work of art we are about to present . . . is . . . tangible proof of the awakening of Americans of German birth and extraction to claim their rightful place in American history. Surprisingly, we have allowed others to write our history for us, a history viewed through New England spectacles. As a result of this bias, individuals like Pastorius, Graffenried, and countless others of distinguished ancestry, fine education, and refined culture have been overlooked.

He continued, "And what is still more valuable, these German colonists brought with them the highest ideals of liberty which have left an indelible impress on the American people." In support of his point, Hexamer noted that the earliest German settlement, Germantown, located just north of Philadelphia, was established on October 6, 1683, and only five years later appealed for the freedom of slaves by signing a petition that called for the end of slavery.[36]

Impact of World War I and Later Developments

The winds of opinion about German Americans changed dramatically in 1917 when the German Emperor declared unrestricted submarine warfare. After American ships had been sunk, President Woodrow Wilson was left with no alternative other than to ask Congress for a declaration of war on April 6, 1917. A dramatic transformation occurred almost overnight. Foreign ties, especially with enemy nations, were viewed with hostility. German language instruction was banned in schools. German books were removed from libraries, and German-sounding street names and food items were renamed. The celebration of the 400th Anniversary of the Reformation at

Philadelphia's Academy of Music in 1917 was entirely in English, and the cover of the program featured an American flag.

Statuary also came under new scrutiny. The statue of Francis Daniel Pastorius, completed in 1917 by the German-American sculptor Alfred Jaegers (1868–1925), was installed on the pedestal in Vernon Park and immediately hidden from view by a massive wooden box. In November 1920, the box was removed, and the statue was finally dedicated. Unlike earlier dedications that involved thousands, this unveiling was attended by only five hundred people who listened to speeches delivered by the mayor and city officials. The entire ceremony was conducted in English. No leaders from Philadelphia's Germania were mentioned.[37]

A statue honoring Henry Melchior Muhlenberg was commissioned by the Lutheran Church for display in Fairmount Park, but was rejected by the City of Philadelphia. The statue was to be erected in 1917 "in some conspicuous place in Philadelphia" as the year 1917 marked the 400th Anniversary of the Reformation, as well as the 175th Anniversary of Henry Muhlenberg's arrival in America.[38] City Commissioners met in January 1917 and rejected the request. "The Commission told the Lutherans that if the monument were erected every other religious body would want to place a monument there."[39] The members of the Ministerium understood that the statue was too German, and it was subsequently installed on the campus of the Lutheran Seminary in 1917, where it continues to welcome everyone who walks onto the campus.

To clear the outer perimeter of City Hall for the planned Broad Street Subway entrances, the statue of Peter Muhlenberg was relocated to Reyburn Plaza on North Broad Street in 1920 and later placed in storage in 1961 to make way for the new Municipal Services Building. Readers asked *The Philadelphia Inquirer* about its whereabouts.[40] The statue of Peter was eventually installed behind Philadelphia's Museum of Art, where it overlooks the William M. Reilly Memorial, honoring six prominent figures from the American Revolutionary War.[41]

Curiously, during World War II, Frederick Muhlenberg was memorialized in a unique way: a Liberty Ship bearing his name was constructed and launched on May 13, 1942.[42] It was a troop

and cargo carrier and was bombed by the Germans in Naples, Italy, in January 1944. It was returned to the United States, repaired, and then put back into service.

More recently, German Lutheran contributions were once again highlighted in anticipation of the 1976 Bicentennial Celebration of the United States. *The Lutheran*, the magazine of the Lutheran Church in America, published two lengthy articles for readers interested in visiting colonial landmarks that highlight the part German Lutherans played in the Revolution and the formation of the young American republic.[43] When Frederick's historic home in Trappe faced demolition in 1999, residents responded by founding a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, "Save the Speaker's House." Thanks to a grant, the mortgage was paid off, and the organization was renamed "The Speaker's House." A plaque from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission was dedicated to the life and service of Frederick in April 2018.[44]

As Lutherans planned their celebration of the Tricentenary Anniversary of Henry Muhlenberg's birth in 2011, "The History Detectives" visited the campus of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia in 2007 to investigate Peter Muhlenberg's robe. Their findings were aired on PBS stations nationwide in 2007.[45] The robe was examined in Williamsburg and verified as eighteenth-century "weighted silk." The care provided by the Henkel family until it was donated to the Lutheran Seminary in 1909 was sufficient evidence that its original owner was Peter Muhlenberg. On January 6, 2011, at the Tricentenary Celebration of Henry Muhlenberg's birth, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter arrived at the seminary with an official revocation allowing the Henry Muhlenberg statue to be placed in Fairmount Park after all. Today, the statue remains on the Mount Airy campus of the United Lutheran Seminary.

Conclusion

Over time, Lutherans adapted and worked with the English-speaking host society, eventually realizing the importance of sharing their stories, as most Americans had limited access to their writings or accomplishments. A turning point came in 1849 with Henry

Augustus's English biography of his great-uncle, Peter Muhlenberg. His book brought to light Peter's role in the struggle for independence and the founding of the American Republic, accounts that had been buried in libraries and archives. Motivated by his account, German Lutherans and their supporters responded with books, speeches, parades, and multiple monuments that proudly asserted their place in the nation's narrative.

The final sentence of the 1776 Declaration of Independence reads, "And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor." Peter and Frederick Muhlenberg embodied those words. Inspired by their father's devotion to ministry, they, pastors-turned-public servants, pursued their vocation in the patriot cause, one on the battlefield, the other in the legislatures of the early republic. Peter and Frederick Muhlenberg stand as colonial examples of the distinct Lutheran understanding of vocation. For them, pastoral ministry and public service were not competing loyalties but complementary callings, two ways of building the community and caring for their neighbor. "With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence," they offered their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor, expecting no reward. Their commitment to the patriot cause and civil service in the early republic was recognized and memorialized with parades, commemorations, and statues. On this 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Peter and Frederick's legacies affirm that America's story is made richer by the many voices, past and present, that have given it life.

NOTES

1. Laura Rigal, "Grand Federal Procession," in *The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia*, (Rutgers University, 2016), accessed February 20, 2025, https://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/essays/grand-federal-procession/.

2. For an English translation of the Constitution, see Appendix IV in Lars Pederson Qualben, *The Lutheran Church in Colonial America* (T. Nelson and Sons, 1940), 297-303.

3. Steven Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land: Pennsylvania Germans in the Early Republic* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 133.

4. Rudy Koshar, *From Monuments to Traces: Artifacts of German Memory, 1870–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 9.

5. German Lutherans in the United States were aware of this fear as Samuel Brobst made it a major topic in many issues of *The Lutheran Magazine (Die Lutherische Zeitung)* published in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

6. Henry A. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg, of the Revolutionary Army* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1849). Word about the book appeared in the Public Ledger of Philadelphia on January 16, 1849.

7. The "authentic sources of information" Henry Augustus used for his book are impressive. Thanks to James Buchanan (1791–1868), who served as Secretary of State from 1845 to 49, Henry Augustus gained access to Washington's papers. His friend P. M. Nightingale provided him with copies of General Greene's papers, and the librarian of the New York Historical Society welcomed him to access their collections. Besides those resources, Henry Augustus also accessed the Halle Reports (Hallische Nachrichten), manuscript copies of Conrad Weiser's letters in Harrisburg, and manuscript copies of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's journals from 1762, 1777, and 1780.

8. Michael Cecere, *General Peter Muhlenberg: a Virginia officer of the Continental Line*, (Yardley, Pennsylvania: Westholme Publishing, 2020), 14.

9. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg*, 337–38. Henry Augustus asked readers to consult Thatcher's [Thacher's] Military Journal, p. 184; Howe's Historical Collection of Virginia, p. 468; Kercheval's History of the Valley of Virginia, p. 188; Rogers Remembrancer of American Heroes, Statesmen, and Sages, p. 366, and Baird's Religion in America. p. 113.

10. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg,* 52.

11. Muhlenberg, *The Life of Major-General Peter Muhlenberg,* 53.

12. Cecere, *General Peter Muhlenberg: A Virginia officer of the Continental Line*, 17.

13. Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-book of the Revolution*, II (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852), II:177, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/moa/abp1224.0002.001/397. Lossing's "sketch" of Peter includes an interesting episode from his time in London, when he, an ordained Lutheran pastor, was ordained into the Anglican Church so he could serve German settlers in Virginia. Peter arrived in London in April 1772 for his ordinations. William White, who would later become the First Bishop of the Diocese of Pennsylvania in 1789, was ordained a priest just a few days earlier. Peter and William knew one another, and before returning to Philadelphia, the newly ordained American colonists of the Church of England walked to a theater to watch a performance by the charismatic actor David Garrick (1717–1779).

14. Thomas Buchanan Read, *The Wild Waggoner: manuscript, [1855] and [1861]* (1861).

15. Read, *The Wagoner of the Alleghanies: A Poem of the Days of Seventy-Six* (Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott, 1865), 89, 90. http://books.google.com/books?id=wXhBAQAAMAAJ.

16. Read, *The Wagoner of the Alleghanies*, 266.

17. It was published in Allentown and by 1870 had 3,400 subscribers. Arndt and Olsen described *The Lutheran Magazine* as "highly influential." Karl John Richard Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals, 1732–1955: History and Bibliography*, 2d, rev. ed. (Johnson Reprint Corp., 1965), 505.

18. "Ein Wort für das Deutsche und die Deutschen," *Lutherische Zeitschrift* (Allentown, Penn.) 1859, Extra=Nummer: 1–4.

19. Steven M. Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 4.

20. Nicolas Schmidt, "Unsere deutschen Vorfahren," *Lutherische Zeitschrift* (Allentown, Penn.) 1859, Extra-Nummer 7–8. The title of Schmidt's publication was not noted in his article.

21. Oswald Seidensticker, *Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien: von der Zeit der Gründung, 1764 bis zum Jahre 1876 ; Festgabe zum Jubeljahre der Republik* (Philadelphia: I. Kohler, 1876), 263–311.

22. "Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft," *Lutherische Zeitschrift,* June 24, 1876.

23. As Seidensticker wrote in his Foreword, "And so this remembrance, in the jubilee year of the Republic, may also remind the German-American that his old fatherland—united, powerful, and commanding respect—has not fallen behind in the race of progress."

24. Seidensticker, *Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien* ,294.

25. Oswald Seidensticker, "Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, Speaker of the House of Representatives, in the First Congress, 1789," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 13, no. 2 (1889): 184–206, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20083312. His article had a significant impact, mainly due to the contributions of F.A. Muhlenberg (1818–1901), Frederick's great-grandnephew, and Professor William Julius Mann (1819–1892), Lutheran clergymen, who provided Seidensticker with several original sources.

26. Seidensticker, "Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg," 192.

27. Seidensticker, "Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg," 205.

28. "The Germans in Pennsylvania," *The Philadelphia Times*, https://www.newspapers.com/image/53392322. "The Eminent Dead Men," *The Philadelphia Times* (Philadelphia) 1878, https://www.newspapers.com/image/52213196. Daniel Ermentrout, *Our People in American History: An Oration, Delivered at the German Centennial Jubilee, at Reading, Pa., June 19, 1876* (Reading, Penn.: Daniel Miller, 1876), 34.

29. Ridder founded the *Catholic People's Paper* (*Katholisches Volksblatt*) and the influential *New York State Newspaper (New Yorker Staats-Zeitung)*.

30. "German-Americans Hold Sway," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 7, 1908, 3, https://www.newspapers./com/image/168408110/.

31. "German-Americans Hold Sway," 3.

32. *Zweiter Teil der Geschichte der Deutschen Gesellschaft von Pennsylvanien von 1876 bis 1917*, (Philadelphia: Druck von Graf & Breuniger, 1917), 410

33. "To Pay a Just Due," *The Allentown Leader*, September 12, 1905, 6, https://www.newspapers.com/image/70217423. *The Allentown Morning Call* ran a similar article nine days later, September 21, 1905, titled "Monument To Preaching Hero," 7.

34. "Germans Plan Big Day," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 2, 1910, Front Page. https://www.newspapers.com/image/168105922. Richard Juliani, Philadelphia's Germans: From Colonial Settlers to Enemy Aliens, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 165. For a detailed history of the Schweizer's statue of Peter, visit https://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/wmDPTG_General_Peter_Muhlenberg_Philadelphia_PA.

35. Staake was born in Brooklyn, New York, to parents from the Duchy of Brunswick. He studied law at the University of Pennsylvania, was a member of Holy Communion Lutheran Church, and a trustee of Philadelphia's Lutheran Seminary. He was appointed a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas No. 5 in 1906. "Ex-Judge Dies Suddenly at His Summer Home," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 31, 1924, 1 and 3. https://www.newspapers.com/image/171059845.

36. Hexamer explained, "Today it is 227 years since the first permanent German colony landed on our shores. We annually celebrate it as "German Day."

37. "Pastorius Statue Unveiling Today," *Evening Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), November 10, 1920, 3. https://www.newspaper.com/image/162316405. "Germantown Pays Founders Homage," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 11, 1920, 4. https://www.newspaper.com/image/171020632. Richard Juliani, *Philadelphia's Germans: From Colonial Settlers to Enemy Aliens*, (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021), 264–268.

38. "Lutherans Adjourn with Ordination of 11 Men to Ministry," *Evening Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) June 16, 1916, 5, https://www.newspaper.com/image/818531731.

39. "PARK COMMISSIONERS have rejected," *Evening Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) January 31, 1917, 3, https://www.newspapers.com/image/162304905.

40. "Where is the General," The Philadelphia Inquirer, July 4, 1963; "People in the News," The Philadelphia Inquirer, October 14, 1965. In 1971, D. B. asked the *Inquirer*'s "Action Line", "Where is it now?" The reporter explained that the statue "was kept under wraps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art."

41. The William M. Reilly Memorial below Peter's statue: https://www.associationforpublicart.org/artwork/william-m-reilly-memorial-revolutionary-war-heroes/. Accessed on August 24, 2025.

42. Descriptions and images of the S.S. F. A. C. Muhlenberg https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Liberty_ship_construction_12_SS_Muhlenberg_stern.jpg. And https://vesselhistory.marad.dot.gov/ShipHistory/Detail/7951. Accessed on August 23, 2025.

43. George Straley, "Take a Tour of Lutheran Landmarks," *The Lutheran,* (June 4, 1975), 4–8. George Straley, "More Tours of Lutheran Landmarks," *The Lutheran* (June 18, 1975), 12–15.

44. See "Historic Trappe," https://historictrappe.org/. Accessed on August 25, 2025.

45. *The History Detectives*, season 5, episode 5, "Muhlenberg Robe," 2007. https://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/investigation/muhlenberg-robe/.