

*The Macungie and Lower Macungie Township Historical Societies
are pleased to invite you to the following programs*

SILK WEAVER FOR THE WORLD

presented by Martha Capwell Fox

Macungie Institute, 510 East Main Street, Macungie

Wednesday, April 23, 7:00 p.m.

Join us for an illustrated talk about the silk industry in Pennsylvania by Martha Capwell Fox, a leading expert on the development of the industry in the state and the Lehigh Valley, which became the second-largest silk-producing center in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Many former silk mills still stand in cities and towns throughout the area, including Macungie and Emmaus.

From 1913 to 1933 more silk was produced in Pennsylvania than anywhere else in the world. Forty-nine of Pennsylvania's counties had at least one mill, and the silk industry was one of the top five employers in the state in the 1920s. This presentation will examine the processes and challenges of making silk, how and why the industry came and went, and its importance for women's labor in the state. The talk includes professional and amateur photographs from the 19th and 20th centuries and a video made by Fox's brother in 1987—a rare record of silk making in Pennsylvania.



Martha Capwell Fox was raised in Catasauqua in a silk weaver's family. Her father owned the Catoir mill, the last silk mill in the Lehigh Valley, which closed in 1989. She has been studying the silk industry for the past 15 years and has written papers, lectured, and mounted a museum exhibit about it. She is a former senior editor at Rodale Press, Inc., and has written several books in the Images of America series.



ON THE LIGHTER SIDE: MEMORIES OF A FIGHTING MAN

by Frank Eugene Speer

Macungie Institute, 510 East Main Street, Macungie

Wednesday, May 14, 7:00 p.m.

Frank Eugene Speer began his military service as an Aviation Cadet in January 1942. After training in the U.S. in the new P-51 Fighter, he sailed to England in March 1944, where he was assigned to 334th Fighter Squadron, 4th Fighter Group, and soon began flying combat missions over Germany. He destroyed six enemy aircraft before his plane was hit by flak on his 17th mission while strafing an airfield near the Polish border. He initially evaded capture, but eventually became a POW. He and his fellow prisoners were forced on a "Death March" as the camp was being relocated in the face of advancing Russian troops. On his second, successful attempt to escape, he and a fellow POW, with the aid of some French forced laborers, captured 25 German soldiers and turned them over to Patton's advancing Third Army. After this adventure, he returned to the U.S. and fulfilled other duties, including ferrying P-47 Thunderbolts overseas. He was discharged as a First Lieutenant in December 1946. His awards include the Presidential Unit Citation, the Prisoner of War Medal, the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters and the Distinguished Flying Cross. Frank spent some of his early years in the village of Brookdale in Lower Macungie Township. He now resides in Emmaus.

Frank has written three books about his wartime experiences, *Wingman*, *The Debden Warbirds*, and *One Down, One Dead*. He is currently working on his fourth book. *Wingman* is out of print but he will have copies of the other two available for sale and signing.

Instead of focusing on his personal exploits during World War II, he will talk about the humor of the American fighting man.

*For more information, contact the Lower Macungie Township Historical Society at 610-967-3653
or the Macungie Historical Society at 610-965-0372. All are welcome, free of charge.*