

High School Students Create Eighteenth Century Toys

by Deborah Smith, Vice-President Board of Trustees, School Programs Coordinator

In a May 8 workshop in the barn at Rock Ford, high-school students created their own Skyhooks and Ball and Cup games, period-correct folk toys. Dr. Alex Johnson, Assistant Professor of Manufacturing Technology at Millersville University and his Graduate Student Justin Egresitz guided the event, a collaboration with I.U. #13 Student Enrichment Experience (S.E.E.) Program, Millersville University and Rock Ford.

Using poplar and cherry as basic materials, students carved the wood using jigsaws and wood lathes. Working intently and carefully with the jigsaw, students carved skyhooks, unique balancing toys. To create the Ball and Cup game, they held dowels attached to a block of cherry wood to carve the cups on the lathe, and later attached the ball and string to finish. Balancing toys, such as Skyhooks, are simple in shape, but the physics governing their movement both intrigues and amazes people to this day. It is possible that the Hand children would have had both of these toys when they lived at Rock Ford during the late 18th century.

Nancy Wiker, a Rock Ford docent, and I affirm that our 21st century students were fascinated and entertained, as they spontaneously broke into competitions in the Ball and Cup game while they waited for their classmates to finish. Seeing the students learn and practice using the saw and lathe, we were heartened by their ability to work confidently and safely with the equipment.

While one group of high-school students made toys in the barn, another group of students participated in 5-step object lessons, exploring the ways 18th century objects in the house relate to a range of academic fields, such as ecology, economics and engineering. These object lessons included opportunities for the students to assemble a rotating and tilting tea table and kitchen jack that Curator Sarah Alberico dismantled prior to the session. During these experiences, each group evolved into an effective team to finish the tasks.

These educational programs meet Rock Ford's mission to inform and educate the public about the life and times of Edward Hand. We are pleased to partner with I.U.#13 and Millersville University to offer these opportunities to local students.



Students use a lathe to carve a cup for a Ball and Cup game.



Students work on sanding their skyhooks, an 18th century balancing toy.

**2018-19 Membership Appeal**

Rock Ford would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who became new members or who renewed their memberships **from November 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019**. This list will be updated in future newsletters.

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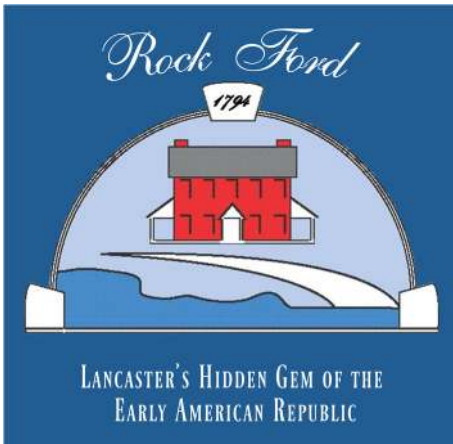
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Rock Ford Announces New Podcast Series

Rock Ford Plantation is excited to announce an upcoming series of podcasts about Revolutionary War General Edward Hand and the history of his home at Rock Ford. The series is produced by Heather Teysko, who has one of the longest continuously running independent history podcasts and has been broadcasting since 2009. Although she currently resides in Spain, Teysko grew up in Lancaster where she served as a docent at Rock Ford while in high school. She has retained a strong interest in her former hometown and is enthused about the idea of using podcasting to show how small museums can use this technology to tell their stories to a wider audience.

According to a 2018 Pew Study, 44% of Americans have listened to a podcast. Nevertheless, Teysko's Rock Ford series is remarkable in that it represents one of the first times that a historic house museum has been the subject of a podcast

series. "It's an opportunity to share Edward Hand's story with a much larger group of people, not just in Lancaster, but around the world," stated Teysko.

Teysko's podcast is currently a three-episode mini series consisting of Teysko's discussions with Rock Ford's Board President, Executive Director and Curator. The first episode focuses upon the life story of Edward Hand. The second discusses Rock Ford in the broader context of Lancaster and American history and the third episode is a walk-through of the first floor of the mansion with the Curator, highlighting some outstanding items in the collection.

"Podcasting is a new way for us to showcase Lancaster as an outstanding makers' community that fabricated such fine pieces during the life and times of General Edward Hand," stated Rock Ford curator Sarah Alberico.

Michael Wright, a recent listener of the podcast, commented, "Thank you for allowing Heather Teysko to do a podcast from your wonderful location. Edward Hand is a gentleman I was unfamiliar with but certainly enjoyed learning about. I reside in Portland, Oregon and doubt that I will have the opportunity to visit Rock Ford Plantation, but I want to thank you and your staff for all you are doing in preserving our history."

The podcast may be found on the Rock Ford website and will also be available on iTunes, SoundCloud, YouTube, Spotify, Stitcher and all podcast apps and may be found by searching "Lancaster's Hidden Gem of the Early American Republic."

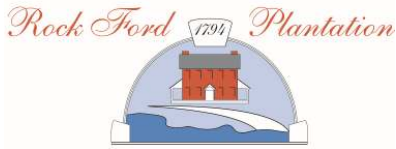
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881 Rockford Road
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717.392.7223
www.rockfordplantation.org
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ROCK FORD PLANTATION STAFF

Office: 717-392-7223
Rentals: 717-799-8751

Samuel C. Slaymaker
Executive Director
director@rockfordplantation.org

Sarah Alberico
Curator
curator@rockfordplantation.org

Nancy E. Bradley
*Assistant to the Director and
Office Manager*
office@rockfordplantation.org

Meagen Lebo
Rental Coordinator
rentals@rockfordplantation.org

George Rhoades
Buildings and Grounds Maintenance

The Rock Ford Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit tax-exempt corporation incorporated within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on May 22, 1958.

The Foundation is supported by admissions, gifts, grants, earned income from barn rentals, museum memberships, fundraising events, and bequests.

Capital Campaign Update

As of May 14, 2019, Rock Ford's Capital Campaign to establish the John J. Snyder, Jr. Gallery of Early Lancaster County Decorative Arts has gone public! As of this writing, the Campaign Steering Committee has raised over 70% of our campaign goal and construction has begun. We have made a great start, but we need your help to reach our goal!

To find out more about this exciting chapter in Rock Ford's story, please contact Samuel Slaymaker at director@rockfordplantation.org or call the Rock Ford office at 717-392-7223.

