



WINTER 2023

Circa 1794



The Newsletter of Historic Rock Ford

Yuletide Tours scheduled for the end of December

Historic Rock Ford is excited to once again present 18th Century Yuletide tours with period dance demonstrations by the Historic Rock Ford Dancers, open-hearth cooking demonstrations by members of our Warm Hearth Committee, and live harpsichord music by Margaret Marsch and Faith Martin with Mercy Martin on violin.

“We are delighted to have our talented musicians returning to Yuletide since they were well received last year,” states Executive Director Sam Slaymaker. “Our visitors enjoyed hearing traditional music played on the harpsichord — a sound that is greatly enhanced by being performed in the rooms of an eighteenth century home.”

Visitors will also be able to hear the voice of an actor portraying Edward Hand in his study recounting his memories of Christmas night 1776 when he and his men crossed the Delaware River and launched a surprise attack against the Hessian Garrison at Trenton, New Jersey. The General Edward Hand Mansion will be decorated with festive greenery in the style of the 1790s.

During the era that Edward Hand and his family lived at Rock Ford, the traditional English Christmas was celebrated as “Yuletide,” a period of gatherings, games, ghost stories, dancing and dining with family and friends. Yuletide extended over the 12-day period from December 25 (which was mostly a day for religious observance) and culminating in “Twelfth Night” on January 6 which was sometime celebrated with a Ball or an elaborate feast highlighted with a special cake. When gifts were exchanged at all, they tended to be small items or tokens of affection and were usually given on New Year’s Day rather than as part of the Christmas celebration.

To fight the post-Christmas blues, we invite you and your family to visit Historic Rock Ford for the celebration of Yuletide—a time when Christmas Day was only the beginning of the festive season.



PHOTOS: The Historic Rock Ford Dancers await a performance by Faith Martin on the harpsichord and Mercy Martin on the violin in the Gold Parlor (top). Volunteer Sophie Walters shows the fashionable dresses for a Twelfth Night Ball in the Master Bedchamber (middle). Warm Hearth Committee members Karen and John Lyter answer questions from young visitors in the kitchen (bottom).

Yuletide tours will be held on
December 27 and December 28 (4 PM-6 PM and 6 PM-8 PM)
and December 29 (2 PM-4 PM and 4 PM-6 PM).

Due to limited capacity, advance ticket purchasing is strongly recommended through rockford.yapsody.com.

Tickets are \$15 for adults,

\$13 for seniors (65+),

\$12 for youth (6-17),

free for children 5 and under, and

\$10 for current members of the Rock Ford Foundation.



2023-24 Membership Appeal

Historic Rock Ford would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who became new members or who renewed their memberships **from October 1, 2023 to December 1, 2023**. This list will be updated in future newsletters.

General Edward Hand Society (\$10000)

Donald and Elizabeth Steckler

Jasper Yeates Society (\$1000)

Jane Eastman

Thomas G. Englert

Kenneth and Margaret Shaffer

Samuel C. and Laura Lyon Slaymaker

Wohlsen Construction Company

Edward Shippen Society (\$500)

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Hilary Grant

Dale and Sadie High

Carrie Hill

Ben Kauffmann

Mr. and Mrs. H. Herbert Poole, Jr.

Lee and Nancy Sheaf

Robert and Deborah Smith

George Ross Society (\$250)

Alan and Susan Andersen

Donna Arment

Michael and Barbara Brown

Jill Edwards and George Beech

Robert and Carol Falk

Thomas Gehr

Dennis and Betty Jo Grimm

Joel Marc Mumma

Louise Steinman von Hess Foundation

Stephen Trapnell

Doug and Linda Weidman

Patron (\$100)

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Kathleen Ashworth

Mary Ellen Bachman

Phil and Cindy Biechler

Ronald and Lori Black

Michael and Ann Carter

Forrest and Kay Collier

Richard and Sylvia Drennen

Harold and Ellen Eager

Rufus and Judy Fulton

Wendell Funk, MD

Patron (cont.)

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Nancy Hamme

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Robert Hershey

Mark and Glenda Jardel

Tom and Sharon Kennedy

John Kolar

Richard and Lynda Levensgood

Todd Lindsley

John and Karen Lyter

John and Kathi Markley

Eric Munro

Bonnie Nolt

Dave and Kathy Parse

Sally Patterson

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Kent and Patricia Spotts

Arlene Golden Stewart

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Kathryn Thomas

Dr. and Mrs. Nikitas Zervanos

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David and Tina Hammel

Penny Kulp

Bob and Susan Marshall

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Sam Mecum and Debbie Frantz

Joseph and Linda Myers

Dr. Robert and Anna Roschel

Karl and Betty Salmon

John and Mary Stefan

Phil and Beth Wade

Leonard and Mary Cae Williams

Individual (\$50)

Mary Anne Aichele

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Kary Connolly

Alison Emmons

Dr. S. Kendrick Eshleman, III

Vicki Ferguson

Lisa Garner

Larry Greenawalt

John Krill

Scott F. Martin, State Senator

Elizabeth B. Miller

Margaret Perella

David Price

Ronald A. Ritter

Charles Schroeder

Margaret Tassia

Darlene Walker





Warm Hearth Members Learn New Techniques in Workshop

On November 11, members of the Rock Ford Warm Hearth Committee welcomed April Thomas for a workshop in the Hand Mansion kitchen. April grew up hearth cooking. She began cooking at age 7 and by 16 she was instructing others in the methods. She has been the Director of the Historic Foodways program at Dill's Tavern in Dillsburg. Currently, she enjoys hearth cooking as much as possible but earns her living as a historic costumer.

April recently collaborated with author Marc Meltonville, contributing her "thoughts, observations and conclusions to this chapter (ragouts) of the Briggs cookbook." The book is currently for sale in our museum shop. April explained a ragout was the forerunner of the casserole or one pot meal, just gaining popularity around the time of Edward Hand. She demonstrated and instructed the group of eight WHC members on the making and plating of a ragout with lamb shoulder cooked over the fire and finished in a stew pot, small beef meatballs, lamb chops and chopped egg whites to garnish over a bed of watercress served with gravy. They also cooked salmon in paper with lemon and garnished with orchids and finished with gently stewed strawberries in a sugar syrup. Warm Hearth Club members enjoyed the fellowship and learning new techniques under April's direction with her perfectly suited sous chef, Kat Metzger.



Rock Ford Hosts First Ever "Enigmatical Dinner: A Feast for the Mind" Fundraising Event

On November 9, Historic Rock Ford took a big step outside of its comfort zone by hosting its first known off-site fundraising event which was held at the Refectory at Lancaster Theological Seminary, now home to Cracked Pepper Catering. The evening's theme was also quite novel. Entitled "The Enigmatical Dinner: A Feast for the Mind," the event was inspired by Sarah Yeates of Lancaster's circa 1800 recipe book which contained a selection of dishes and accompanying riddles. Guests were encouraged to solve each arcane riddle and thereby identify the next course to be served. Enigmatical dinners first developed in the mid-18th century in the court of King George II, and subsequently become popular in early America. Historic Rock Ford's event was most likely the first Enigmatical Dinner to be held in Lancaster since the early 1800's.



The setting was a central element of the dinner. The Neo-Gothic Refectory Hall with its vaulted ceiling, stained glass windows, long tables adorned with candelabra with a warm fire burning in a fireplace burnished with gorgeous Mercer tiles evoked the dining hall at Hogwarts and made for a whimsically magical evening. Bob Frick, Master of Ceremonies, did a masterful job of keeping things moving along by providing hints to help guests in solving the riddles, all served with a generous helping of humor and wit.

The dinner, which raised over \$10,000 for educational programs at Historic Rock Ford, was well received by guests and may well be making a re-appearance in 2024 to allow even more Historic Rock Ford supporters to share in this enchanted evening.





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ExtraGive 2023 Update

The Extraordinary Give was held on November 17. During this 24 hour on-line event, 51 donors gave a total of \$5,541. We thank everyone for their continued generous support of Historic Rock Ford.

EXTRA
GIVE



New Trees in Rock Ford Meadow

Thank you to Rubio's Tree Service & Landscaping for donating and planting two willow trees in the Rock Ford meadow. The willow tree will be the symbol for our 2024 Focus Exhibit "A Time to Mourn: Death & Mourning in Pennsylvania 1750-1820" that will open in April in the Snyder Gallery. The weeping willow motif was one of the most popular gravestone decorations in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was often paired with the urn on many gravestones.



RUBIO'S
Tree Service & Landscaping

To view the expanded digital version of our newsletter, please visit HistoricRockFord.org/in-the-news. Due to the space limitations of the print edition, our digital newsletter often contains additional articles and photos.

Historic Rock Ford acknowledges and thanks our 2023 Season Sponsors for their generous support:

Lead Sponsor: Carrie Nunan Hill

Sponsors: Mr. Thomas G. Englert, John F. Pyfer, Jr. and Carol T. Pyfer, and Daniel B. Strickler, Jr. & Ellen B. Strickler

Supporting Sponsors: Thomas A. & Georgina T. Russo Family Fund, Fulton Bank and Fulton Financial Advisors, The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Rhoads Energy, and H&H Group



Historic Rock Ford, an Educational Improvement Organization, sincerely thanks Clark Associates Charitable Foundation, Fulton Forward, UGI and John and Susan Garofola for their generous support of our school programming.

