

# The Sundial



Newsletter of The Rockingham Association

November 2007

## Phase Three Comes to a Close

The orange fencing is finally gone and the piles of dirt and debris taken away. The stone building that once served as a kitchen for hearth cooking demonstrations at Rockingham's previous site on Rte. 518 will soon be open as the Museum Store and Visitor Center (right).

According to research by former Rockingham Sr. Interpretive Specialist, Jennifer Saar, the little structure's history dates back to 1905. The Washington Headquarters Association, predecessor to The Rockingham Association, felt there should be a Colonial style kitchen/slave quarters at the second site (left), since the original out-kitchen, a two-story building, had been demolished decades before. Despite evidence the original was a larger, two-story building, the group constructed a one-room, one-and-one half story structure with random rubble wall, based perhaps on another in the area. The "new" kitchen had a fire place that was too small for cooking, an oven and brick floor. The group operated the out-kitchen as a tearoom in warm weather.



When Rockingham was moved again in 1956 by the State of New Jersey, the decision was made to overhaul the stone building in its design and use. The fireplace was rebuilt to incorporate a bake oven and a stone hearth, and the entire fireplace wall was sheathed with vertical boards. The kitchen became a focal point for the site with open hearth cooking and 18th century kitchen programs held at both special and annual events, including the annual Washington's Birthday celebration.

With the last move in 2001 (right) and the decision to interpret Rockingham's food ways in a more historically accurate reproduction of the site's original kitchen, the building has taken on new and perhaps final use as the Visitor Center and Museum Store. The building has been painted, with new lighting and heating added. Also, a section was constructed with two brand-new bathrooms for public use. The store committee, headed by Mary Kay Muckenhaupt, is busy working on plans for the interior set-up and inventory with a goal of December 9 (Candlelight Tours) for the grand opening.

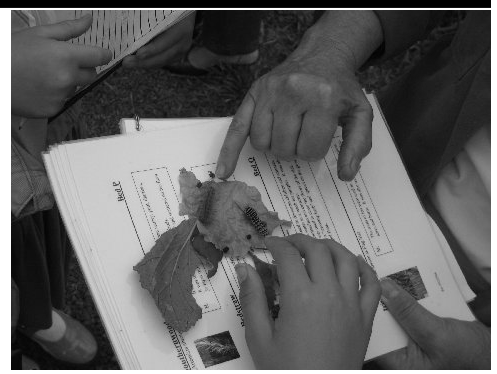


In addition, there is a new fence along the path from the museum store to the main house, reminding the visitor of the fencing that would have been common on an 18<sup>th</sup> century farm with animals and crops—and a working farm is just what Rockingham was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The fence has an unobtrusive modern touch of lighting for the path at night. Lighting has also been added from the parking lot up to the museum store.



The children's museum building, however, is on hold for now, while siding replacement issues are worked out. New lighting has been added as well. We hope to have its chimney relined, so that hearth-cooking demonstrations can resume at the site in the future.

***Come see these exciting new additions to Rockingham!***



The Third Grade at Princeton Day School visited the site and had a tour of Rockingham, plus a wonderful tour of the garden, led by Janet Haring, member of the Stony Brook Garden Club. The children got a feel for what life was like in the 18th century - no medicine cabinets, no grocery stores. Everything had to last through the winter, which meant putting up jars of many things and saving seeds for the next spring. In addition, members of the Garden Gate Garden Club from Lawrenceville were treated to a tour by Janet.

## 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Congress in Princeton 1783 - 2008

Summer 2008 marks the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Continental Congress meeting in Princeton. To celebrate, the 1783 Committee, an umbrella organization of historic societies, museums, libraries and other groups from around the state, is organizing five months of community oriented activities. Most of the events will take place in and around Princeton.

The Rockingham State Historic site, Washington's final headquarters from August to November 1783 when Congress was meeting in Princeton, is a major participant in this celebration. Several events are being planned for the site for next summer by a committee of volunteers. Megan Lintott and Mary Rizzo, both Board members of the Rockingham Association, co-chair the planning committee.

Rockingham's two largest events will take place in August and November 2008 to celebrate the arrival of General Washington and his writing of the *Farewell Orders to the Armies of the United States* at the close of the Revolutionary War. In August a Washington re-enactor will arrive at the house, accompanied by aides and militia men, to greet the visitors. In addition there will be a Dragoon encampment, a colonial tea, tours of the garden and activities for all.

In November we will mark the departure of General Washington, as it was in 1783. At this event, a Washington re-enactor will read portions of his *Farewell Orders*, written at Rockingham, and discuss the Treaty of Paris, which ended the war.

Smaller events will be held offsite throughout the summer, including a presentation by Richard Toone, creator of museum quality reproductions, as seen in Mel Gibson's *The Patriot*; a lecture by former Montgomery resident Matthew Thurlow, now at the Department of American Decorative Arts of The Metropolitan Museum of Art; and a musical presentation by John Burkhalter and *The Practitioners of Musick*.

In addition, area high school students will compete in an essay contest about the continued relevance of the *Farewell Orders* and the origins of representative democracy in the U.S., sponsored by the Rockingham Association. Entrants will be judged on originality and analysis of primary sources by members of the historic community, the Rockingham board and teachers. The winning essay will receive a monetary prize and certificate at the November event.

The committee is also working with the Kingston and Rocky Hill post offices to create four pictorial cancellation postmarks designed in honor of the 225<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These postmarks would cancel mail for four months (two months in Kingston, two months in Rocky Hill) next summer.

## Changes to the Board of Trustees

In May the Association thanked retiring board members, Mary Kay Muckenhaupt, Gordon Griffin, Jr. and Dr. Bart Hoebel, who have served The Rockingham Association with devotion for many years. Mary Kay will continue to head the Museum Store Committee and Bart will devote efforts to a Delaware River floating steamship. We hope Gordon will retain his fence building skills. We are grateful to all three for their dedication to Rockingham.

Also in May, James M. Farrell and Rose Maguire were re-elected as President and Vice President respectively; John Butcher, Recording Secretary and Bill Gates, Treasurer.

Welcomed to the board were newly elected Trustees:

**Barbara Carroll** is a resident of Monmouth Junction and a sales representative. She is a devoted docent at the site every Sunday and volunteers at many levels. Barbara found us through a website search for volunteers wanting to become involved.

**Tim Ellard** has been an area resident almost entirely since 1964 and retired as Senior Vice President at Opinion Research. He has been active as a volunteer in a variety of not-for-profit organizations and his church. **Eric Holtermann** is a Pennington resident and architect with Holt.Morgan.Russell in Princeton. Eric has been the Rockingham site architect for many years and was instrumental in facilitating the move of the structures from the Route 518 site in 2002, as well as planning the design of the current location.

**Jeanette Muser** is a Rocky Hill resident, retired public high school librarian and author of the book, *Rocky Hill, Kingston and Griggstown* (Arcadia Press) 1998. She established the Rocky Hill Heritage Project in 1996 to promote public awareness of Rocky Hill's history through exhibits, lectures and programs.

## Donations to the Association

Geraldine L. Boone  
Robert Booth  
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Larry Bryan  
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Anthony DeSantis  
Willard G. Eldred  
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Daphne Townsend  
Charles W. Ufford  
Rae Anne Voorhees  
Stephen White  
Ariana Wittke

*We are grateful for your support of our educational and outreach programs and sincerely regret any errors or omissions we may have made.*

## Memorial Gifts

**Evelyn Carillo**  
Elizabeth Patton  
**Frederick, William & Alexander Cruser, former residents of Rockingham**  
Thomas Cruser  
**Peter Fish**  
**Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Moffett**  
**Helen Griffin who worked on the first restoration garden**  
Mrs. Christopher Cole  
**Richard and Patricia Paynter**  
William Osborne, Anne Woolley  
**Jack Rimalover**  
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Schmidt

## Welcome New Members

Peter Arrowsmith  
Robert and Betina Bandel  
Lyman and Maraie Bethke  
Susan Bonfield  
Elizabeth and Keith Chase  
Amy Ann Conover-Jensen  
Capt. Thomas & Mrs. Linda Cruser  
Charles Dolan & Dana Van Meter  
Timothy Ellard  
Kenneth Elgersman  
Frederick Greenstein  
Mathew Hamel  
Jessie Havens  
Jill Herring  
Eric Holtermann  
Barbara Hollywood  
Jerrie Hoover  
Eleanor Kolbert  
Simon Lee  
Anthony Lehan  
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Joseph Mancowski  
Patricia McCrohan  
Charlie Miller  
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Melissa Molnar  
Elizabeth Patton  
Kelly Powers  
Dr. Mary Rizzo  
Douglas Rose  
Andrea Savadelis  
Mr. and Mrs. N.J. Sollenberger  
Thomas Stange  
Robert Vorhees  
Stephen White  
Martha Wisner

## **In the Dark** by Amanda Plumb, Assistant to the Director

*Amanda used the following research in her recent program about 18th century lighting at the site.*

Electric lighting is something we take for granted today. When we enter a dark room, we flip a switch and—voila—light. Our homes, cars and streets are nightly set aglow by fluorescent and incandescent light bulbs. But what did we do before Edison's late 19th century invention of the electric light bulb? What did we do even before the 1850s, when gaslights were introduced? What did our founding fathers do when it was dark?

The answer seems obvious: candles. Well, yes and no. Candles in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were nothing like the ones we use today to set a romantic mood at dinner or help us when the power goes out in a storm. They were used in the past with severe economy and all attempts were made to avoid using them if there was a better alternative.

Our modern candles are made of paraffin wax and stearin (or stearic acid), give off very little smoke but emit quite a bit of light. We can read and write by the light of a candle for hours or use scented candles to freshen up our homes. But in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, candles were made primarily of tallow—animal fat. And yes, it was as disgusting as it sounds. Tallow smelled terrible both when making candles and burning them. They smoked horribly, were soft and easily susceptible to melting and were a favorite snack of rodents and cats. Tallow candles could really only be made using moulds, as they lacked the cohesiveness to make good dipped candles. When finished, tallow candles were an ugly yellow color, though mutton tallow could produce some whiter shades. Candles could also be bleached in the sun to lighten the color, as well as to reduce the amount they smoked and dripped.

Tallow was used most commonly because it was readily available on colonial farms, but there were other materials available that made slightly more pleasant candles. Many farms or towns kept bees to provide them honey and wax. Beeswax candles had a sweet smell and created less smoke. They were also firmer than tallow candles and were less prone to running from candlesticks onto tabletops or from candelabra onto clothes. However, it took at least three days to clean the beeswax of impurities before it was ready for use, and cost more than tallow if candles were purchased ready made.

Robert Beverly in his 1705 *The History of Present Day Virginia* praised candles made from bay or myrtleberries. These berries, which grow in marshy coastal areas along the Eastern seaboard, have a very thin waxy coating that can be used in candle production. According to Beverly, berry wax candles were not greasy, didn't melt, gave off a nice scent, and though they were more expensive than tallow, they were less costly than beeswax or spermaceti candles. An extremely large quantity of berries would have to be collected, though, to produce just a small amount of wax. Due to the cost and difficulty in obtaining beeswax and berry wax, many colonists mixed small quantities with their tallow; this reduced the smokiness and smell of the candles and made them firmer.

Spermaceti, derived from the sperm whale, was another alternative in candle making, used more in the New England colonies where the whales were available. James Clemens used spermaceti candles at a 1748 entertainment for their sweet scent and soft, easy light. Spermaceti candles lasted twice as long as beef or mutton tallow, didn't melt in one's hand and required less snuffing.

Regardless of the material used to make a candle in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the light one emitted was very meager. An 18<sup>th</sup> century candle gave off about as much light as your cell phone screen—try lighting your way to bed tonight using your cell phone to get the full effect of how little light that is. There were various devices and methods available to magnify or amplify the little light provided by early candles. High-backed tin sconces mounted on walls reflected flames, or candles could be positioned so the light caught in mirrors or the glass doors of bookcases. The furnishings of a room or one's clothing could also be used to brighten a room. Wooden furniture was often highly polished; walls were white-washed, painted in high gloss paints or covered in glossy wallpapers; upholstery and clothing could be shiny silks or satins. *Continued on the next page.*



**Amanda Plumb and Lisa Flick examine various forms of lighting pieces from the Colonial period.**

## **In the Dark** (continued from previous page)

Another problem with colonial candles lie with the wicking. Eighteenth century wicks were made of twisted strands of cotton or tow (coarse remnants of linen), rather than braided like modern wicks. A braided wick bends over when lit and is consumed completely, burning evenly with the wax.

The twisted wicks of the 18<sup>th</sup> century developed clumps of snuff that would gutter and cause the candle to go out if not tended to properly. Every two to twenty minutes, the snuff at the end of a wick must be trimmed with a scissor shaped device known as a snuffer. One "blade" of the scissor had a vertical panel, the other a little compartment. With extreme precision and care not to extinguish the flame, the snuff had to be snipped from the end of the wick into the snuffer's compartment. As you may imagine, not an awful lot of work could be accomplished with so much attention being paid to the candle. Because candles provided ineffective and inefficient light, most work was done by the natural light of the sun or moon (especially a full moon on a snowy night) or near a fireplace.

### *Sources of Research:*

Garrett, Elisabeth Donoghey. *At Home: The American Family 1750-1870*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1990

Gilgun, Beth. *Tidings from the 18th Century*. Texarkana, TX: Rebel Publishing Company, Inc., 1993.

Nylander, Jane C. *Our Own Snug Fireside*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.



## *Candlelight Tours* *Sunday, December 9*



*11:00 am—4:00 pm*

Mansion Decorated in Colonial Holiday Style

By Stony Brook Garden Club of Princeton

Guided Tours Every Half Hour with  
Activities Presented in Each Room

John Burkhalter of the *Practitioners of Musick*  
Docents in Period Dress and Uniforms

Demonstrations of "Worm" Fence-building  
and Other Colonial Crafts

New Museum Store and Visitors Center

**OPEN**

Cider and Cookies

\$5 Requested Donation per Family/Group

Reservations taken beginning  
November 19th.

Reservation line: 609.683.7136

More information: 609.683.7132

Sponsored by The Rockingham Association,

## *Practitioners of Musick*

The Rockingham Association recently hosted "Musick for Mrs. Martha Washington," a performance of *The Practitioners of Musick*. The program consisted of music associated with and played by Martha Washington during her lifetime. Practitioners of Musick [<http://bigduck.com/practitioners/index.html>] was founded by John Burkhalter and the late Professor Eugene Roan.

For this performance, John Burkhalter played English flute (recorder) and Gavin Black played an 18<sup>th</sup>-century harpsichord. (below)





*Address Correction Requested*  
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### **The Sundial**

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[RockinghamPR@aol.com](mailto:RockinghamPR@aol.com)

**Annual Membership Fee: \$35**

### **Hours for Guided Tours**

#### **Wednesday-Saturday**

10 am; 11 am; 1 pm; 2 pm; 3 pm

**Sunday** 1 pm; 2 pm; 3 pm

Closed state holidays and the Wednesdays after a Monday holiday. Due to our small staff, please call to confirm the site is open. Groups of more than 10 must call at least 2 weeks in advance to reserve a tour.

*Rockingham is a state historic site owned and operated by the State of New Jersey, Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Parks and Forestry.*

Site Director: Lisa Flick



### *Volunteers Needed !!*

Our charming little stone building is now our Visitors Center and Museum Store. The reproduction “kas” and a bookcase are in place to exhibit the many delightful offerings for purchase.

***We need help setting up, working at the store or serving on our committee.***  
What a fun opportunity to get involved!

Contact the office or  
[rockinghampr@aol.com](mailto:rockinghampr@aol.com)

### **New Association Website!**

[www.rockingham.net](http://www.rockingham.net)

*Many thanks to our past volunteer webmaster, Barry Pavelec, for his help over the years!*

### **Message from the President**

Yes, there is plenty of focus on the 225th anniversary in 2008 of General Washington’s residence at Rockingham. That said, we all have a lot of living to do between now and then. Hopefully, you will find time to visit Rockingham in the interim for one of the Association’s planned events or at a more quiet time to enjoy the mansion, collection, garden and grounds.

*James M. Farrell*

### **Holiday Hours**

**Closed:** November 19—23

**Open:** November 24 & 25

**Closed:** December 23 through  
New Years Day

**Reopen:** January 2, 2008