

The Papermaker

HISTORIC RITTENHOUSTOWN

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RittenhouseTown Celebrates the Life of David Rittenhouse and the Anniversary of Historic RittenhouseTown, Inc. at the American Philosophical Society

Over 125 guests joined together at the American Philosophical Society's Franklin Hall on October 29th to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Historic RittenhouseTown Inc. and the life of David Rittenhouse (1732-1796). Hugh Hanson founded Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown in 1984 to preserve and protect the 1690 site of British North America's first paper mill. Through our education program and ever-growing list of special events and workshops, we continue to pursue his vision.

David Rittenhouse was the great grandson of the first papermaker in British North America, William Rittenhouse and his wife Gertrude. He was born in RittenhouseTown's original 1707 Homestead and later grew to be a respected figure among Philadelphia's 18th century elite. Throughout his life he mastered many skills and professions and held some of the nation's highest offices. David was an astronomer, clockmaker, mathematician, patriot, public servant and surveyor. He served as Pennsylvania Assemblyman, Commonwealth Treasurer, Second President of the American Philosophical Society, First Director of the United States Mint and an elected member of the Royal Society. Rittenhouse Square in Center City Philadelphia was named in honor of David in 1824. We are lucky enough to have a 1759 David Rittenhouse clock displayed in the Visitor Center at RittenhouseTown, which was so generously donated by Mrs. Evelyn Rittenhouse of Timonium, Maryland.

Franklin Hall was the perfect space for our event due to David's connection to the American Philosophical Society. We are grateful to Pat McPherson and Annie Westcott of the APS for their generosity and assistance in making the event a great success. Continued on page 3.



David Rittenhouse (1791), by Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) Fine Arts Collection, American Philosophical Society

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past summer was unusually wet. No sooner had the grass been mowed than it was ankle deep again. Invasive plants and trees grew and grew threatening native species. Painted surfaces needed cleaning and paint touch-ups. Since early summer, over 500 volunteers have contributed their time, expertise and energy helping us keep Historic RittenhouseTown looking its best. You will see photos of many of these groups and organizations in this issue of the *Papermaker*. Volunteers are a vital resource for Historic RittenhouseTown and the work they perform critical to our success as a small non-profit organization with limited financial resources. Our volunteer program is an important part of our commitment to building bridges with the community in which we all live and work. Our volunteers leave Historic RittenhouseTown having invested a bit of themselves in the future of our site and pride in what they have accomplished. We benefit from their generosity and good will. Thank you to all who have given the most important gift any of us has to give - time.

Chris Owens
Executive Director

Membership

Become a member of RittenhouseTown or renew your membership today by visiting www.rittenhousetown.org.

Your membership dues help to support our education program and preservation efforts. As a member you are entitled to free tours of the site and discounts on most of our programs as well as in our gift shop.

T H A N K Y O U T O O U R V O L U N T E E R S

Over fifty student-volunteers from Philadelphia University's School of Architecture and Design worked with the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust to scrape, paint and scrub many of our shutters, doors and fences on the University's September 17th Day of Service. The students provided hours of manual labor that would have otherwise taken weeks. An additional group of 25 students worked with Fairmount Park's Volunteer Coordinator, David Bower, to weed our twenty-five acres.

Prior to the Day of Service, Nathan Algie, an independent volunteer with

the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust spent many summer weekends scraping and painting the Visitor Center's porch railing.

Since the summer we have also welcomed volunteer groups from Greater Philadelphia Cares, Summerbridge, Episcopal Academy, Penn Charter, Green Street Friends and Friends Select.

Thank you to the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust, David Bower and all of our volunteers for their countless hours of work and assistance.



Cleaning the Homestead shutters



Scraping the shutters at 208



Weeding the barn fence

**E D U C A T I O N
P R O G R A M
R E C E I V E S
G R A N T S**

Between June and July of 2009 RittenhouseTown's education program received multiple grants. Both the **Ludwick Foundation** and **Skilling Foundation** have once again supported our fall Sponsor-A-School program, an initiative that eliminates all program fees and transportation costs for Philadelphia public schools. Thanks to their support, we were able to maintain the recent increase in public school students served annually.

While the costs to administer the general education program continue to rise, we strive to maintain the program's financial accessibility by actively seeking grant support. **The Barra Foundation** has continued to help us maintain our low \$5-\$10 admission fee by approving our grant request for general education funds.

Thank you to these foundations for their continued support of our education program.

**H I S T O R I C
R I T T E N H O U S E T O W N
B O A R D O F D I R E C T O R S**

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Louise B. McCabe

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**A T A S T E
O F H I S T O R Y
A I R S O N P B S**

Chef Walter Staib's cooking show, *A Taste of History*, began airing on PBS in November. Many episodes were filmed at RittenhouseTown and feature our original Bake House. An episode dedicated solely to RittenhouseTown is slated to air in early 2010.

The production team for *A Taste of History* is currently conducting research on David Rittenhouse to be included in new episodes scheduled to film next year. For more information about the show visit www.atasteofhistory.org.

DVDs of the episodes that have already aired are now available in our gift shop. We also carry Chef Staib's most recent cookbook, *Recipes from the Birthplace of American Cuisine* along with an older book of 18th century dessert recipes. You may purchase these items by visiting RittenhouseTown or through our website's online gift shop.

**C O M P A S S C O L L E C T O R ' S A S S O C I A T I O N
V I S I T S R I T T E N H O U S E T O W N**



Jeff Lock examines the Benjamin Rittenhouse compass



The Association and other guests stand in front of the Rittenhouse Homestead

On June 19, the Compass Collector's Association of America along with special guests from the American Philosophical Society and Atwater Kent Museum visited RittenhouseTown to view our 1760 Benjamin Rittenhouse compass, its coupler and accompanying wooden staff. Both pieces are very rare and

are believed to have been used in some of the 18th century's most important surveying projects.

David Rittenhouse was born in RittenhouseTown's 1707 Homestead and was considered one of the most important surveyors of 18th century America.

AN EVENING IN CELEBRATION OF DAVID RITTENHOUSE

Continued from page 1

The menu for the event was designed by our friend Chef Walter Staib of City Tavern and catered by Feast Your Eyes Catering. The food was served in an 18th-century, family-style manner similar to what David may have experienced when dining at City Tavern. Items served included Thomas Jefferson's sweet potato pecan biscuits and West Indies curried lamb pie. Yards Brewing Company generously donated their Ales of Revolution and City Tavern donated the wine and champagne. Students from the Curtis Institute provided the music which was underwritten by a generous donation from Urban Engineers.

James Delbourgo, Associate Professor of American History at Rutgers University and our keynote speaker, discussed David Rittenhouse and his contributions to the American Enlightenment.

Professor Delbourgo is the author of *A Most Amazing Scene of Wonders: Electricity and Enlightenment in Early America* (Harvard, 2006), and co-editor of both *Science and Empire in the Atlantic World* (Routledge, 2008), and *The Brokered World: Go-Betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Science History Publications, 2009). He has written several articles on early modern science, colonial history and the Enlightenment.

This event would not have been possible without the support of our guests and planning committee. We look forward to another 25 years of preserving and protecting our National Historic Landmark District.

Please **save the date** for our next fundraiser on **June 3, 2010**, the focus of which will be the circa 1811 Jacob Rittenhouse Home at RittenhouseTown.

Planning Committee

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| James Nelson Kise , Chair* | Elizabeth T. Lukens* |
| Jeremy J. Alvarez | Martha Hamilton Morris |
| Charlotte H. Biddle* | Sarah D. Price |
| David B. Brownlee | Paul M. Rittenhouse, Sr*. |
| Edward M. D'Alba PE | Robert J. Rittenhouse |
| Michael DiBerardinis | Wendy H. Rosen |
| Edward W. Duffy* | Kim Sajet |
| Oliver St. Clair Franklin OBE, HM Hon. Consul | Mary Rittenhouse Schwartzentruber* |
| Nancy Goldenberg | Anne Standish |
| Ellen L. Goodwin | Micki Stolker |
| Barbara L. Greenfield | Anna Coxe Toogood* |

* HRT board member

Menu

- | | |
|--|---|
| Champagne Shrub | Potato Cakes |
| Ales of the Revolution—Yards Brewery | Tri Colored Cole Slaw |
| Selection of Wines & Madeira | String Bean Salad |
| Cheddar Cheese Coins | Corn Relish |
| Field Greens with Bib, Radicchio & Flowers | Sally Lunn & Adadama Breads |
| Chicken Madeira | Th. Jefferson's Sweet Potato Pecan Biscuits |
| Salmon Corn Cakes with Herbed Remoulade | Gingerbread with Apple Sautee |
| West Indies Curried Lamb Pie | Martha Washington's Chocolate Cake |



Students from the Curtis Institute of Music entertain guests during the cocktail hour. Special thanks to Urban Engineers for their support of the music.



Guests enjoy an 18th century menu served in a traditional family-style manner



Professor James Delbourgo discusses David Rittenhouse and the American Enlightenment

Thank you to our sponsors & supporters



Anonymous

RECENT EVENTS / PROGRAMS

VISIT WWW.RITTENHOSETOWN.ORG FOR OUR 2010 CALENDAR

PAPER ARTS WORKSHOPS

Over eighty guests participated in this year's Summer Paper Arts Workshop Series. Almost every class was full and the barn was bustling.

The 2009 Summer Paper Arts Workshop Series included:

- Open Vats Papermaking
- Japanese Collage
- Colonial Printing & Papermaking
- Turkish Marbling
- Momigami/Paste Painting
- Japanese Papermaking
- Papermaking from Invasive Plants

We plan to offer the occasional winter workshop in order to serve our newest paper enthusiasts. Please continue to check our website for upcoming classes.



Turkish Marbling



Colonial Printing



Japanese Papermaking



Making Date Stones

CAMP

Our 2nd annual summer camp went off without a hitch as we welcomed an enthusiastic group of campers to the week-long program.

Each summer we aim to teach campers about the history and importance of Historic Rittenhouse-Town through hands-on crafts and activities. This year's schedule included papermaking, bookbinding, printing and cooking. We walked the Wissahickon, made date stones, played water games and learned about archaeology.

We look forward to offering camp again next year. Contact Ariel Wilson for more information or a sample schedule. Discounts available when registering two or more campers.

20TH ANNUAL PAPER MILL RUN 5K RACE



And they're off...



Prize ceremony

The 20th Annual Paper Mill Run 5K Race was held on September 12. Over 120 runners participated in this important fundraising event. This year's top winners in finishing order were: Stuart Calderwood, Thomas Kolimago and Brian Wolff

Thank you to our sponsors:

- City Tavern
- Beneficial Bank
- McCoubrey-Overholser
- Samuel's Seafood
- Killian's Hardware
- Daddy's Lemonade
- Weaver's Way
- Penn Maid,
- Gtown Radio

SPIRITS OF THE WISSAHICKON

Despite torrential downpours, 50 guests attended Spirits of the Wissahickon on October 24. Interpreters acting as the 'spirits' of the Rittenhouse family performed traditional 18th century domestic and workplace tasks to demonstrate 18th century life in Rittenhouse-Town's authentic landscape. The 'spirits' were stationed in the Rittenhouse Homestead and Bake House. They included a cook, medicine maker, harpist, sweet bag maker and teacher.

The Visitor Center was open for tours. Warm cider and cookies were served.



Writing with quill and ink



Learning about 18th century medicine

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

In addition to our own in-house events, we frequently participate in community festivals. This year, like many before, we attended both the Revolutionary Germantown Festival at Cliveden of the National Trust and Chestnut Hill Fall for the Arts on Germantown Avenue. Using our tent, paper making supplies and gift shop items, we set up a make shift RittenhouseTown. Events such as these allows us to reach audiences that may be unfamiliar with RittenhouseTown.



Making Paper at the Revolutionary Germantown Festival

HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AND CRAFT FAIR



Gingerbread Decorating

On December 5 we hosted our annual Holiday Open House and craft fair. Over 75 guests joined us to make paper, decorate gingerbread cookies, drink warm cider, watch a colonial cooking demonstration and browse our handmade crafts. Special items included handmade paper books, cards and stationary as well as potholders and pillows quilted by Mennonite crafters. The weather for the event was questionable and we thank our guests for braving the first snow of the season.

**RITTENHOUSE DESCENDENT SHARES FOND
MEMORIES OF BLUE BELL HILL**

Once RittenhouseTown covered over 200 acres. By the time William (d.1772), great grandson of William and Gertrude Rittenhouse, began to divide the land among his descendants, the original 20 acre tract had grown to include several Rittenhouse homes, large barns, many outbuildings, orchards, vineyards, land for animals and crops, and, of course, the mills. To the north of RittenhouseTown a community would develop on Rittenhouse land and come to be known as Blue Bell Hill - for the blue flowers that populated the steep hill that rises behind the Rittenhouse homes nestled along our village road. Many of the streets in Blue Bell Hill - Daniel, Bridget and Naomi for example - are named after Rittenhouse family members who lived there. Numerous ancestors of current Blue Bell Hill residents worked in the mills at RittenhouseTown in the 19th century. Members of the Rittenhouse family continued to live on the 'Hill' until just a few years ago.

During a recent visit from Betty Jane and Burt Church, Betty Jane, an 11th generation Rittenhouse descendant, shared stories of growing up at 6040 Wissahickon Avenue near the modern entrance to Historic RittenhouseTown in what is now Blue Bell Hill. While 6040 was not part of the original 20 acres the Rittenhouse family acquired from Samuel Carpenter in the early 18th century, it was part of RittenhouseTown

by the time 3rd generation William divided his land six decades later. Betty Jane traces her line through that very William back to the first William and his wife, Gertrude. Betty Jane's parents, Sarah Emma Everman Shank and George Myers Shank moved into 6040 in 1921 sharing the space with Sarah's parents who had built the home. Growing up Betty Jane remembers celebrating May Day as a student at the nearby Crease School:

. . . all the students would walk down Wissahickon Avenue to Long's Lane which is now the entrance to RittenhouseTown to the hill behind the home of Captain Long, now the RittenhouseTown Visitor Center. The hill was completely blue with violets. All morning long the students sat on the hill picking violets, returning to the school in the afternoon to fill beautifully decorated paper cups with bunches of fragrant violets to be delivered to patients in nearby hospitals.

Until the Crease School was built, the children in and around RittenhouseTown attended Rittenhouse Academy which stood on a ridge at the lower end of the village road at RittenhouseTown.

Betty Jane and her family moved from 6040 when she was ten years old but remained residents of Blue Bell Hill until the 1960's. Her father was President of

the Blue Bell Hill Civic Association for a number of years. Betty Jane and Burt donated deeds for 6040 and other artifacts to Historic RittenhouseTown in 2000. They are now part of our permanent exhibit, *The Blue Bell Hill Oral History Project*.

We welcome visits from Rittenhouse family members and others with memories of our village and the neighborhoods surrounding it. Their stories enrich our understanding of what life was like for generations of folks who lived and worked along the Paper Mill Run.



Sarah Emma Everman Shank and George Myers in the yard at 6040 Wissahickon Avenue



Betty Jane Church at 6040 Wissahickon Avenue in 1939.

**YOUTHWORKS STUDENTS
PROVIDE SUMMER
ASSISTANCE**

We were once again lucky enough to have students from the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf's Youthworks program work with us this past summer. The Youthworks program places hearing-impaired PSD high school students in hearing work environments. The two students helped us with both program and fundraising mailings as well as inventory. Thank you to the students and Youthworks leaders for thinking of us. We look forward to next year.

**ROXBOROUGH GARDEN
CLUB DECORATES FOR
THE HOLIDAYS**

On December 2, The Roxborough Garden Club decorated the visitor center, Homestead and Bake House for the holidays. Along with their time, the club donated garland, bows and pine branches. The RGC also actively maintains our colonial-style herb garden next to the Bake House.



Decorating the Visitor Center

I N M E M O R Y



Merlyn Schwartz

Long time member and supporter of RittenhouseTown, Merlyn 'Bert' Schwartz, passed away on September 2. Bert is seen in the adjacent photo sitting in the Blue Bell Hill oral history project display room at RittenhouseTown. We extend our sympathies to his family and friends.

**FAIRMOUNT PARK
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
TRUST MAKES A
TEMPORARY HOME AT
RITTENHOUSE TOWN**

The offices of the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation Trust have temporarily relocated to the second floor of our barn/papermaking studio We are glad to have them.



*The Papermaker
Historic RittenhouseTown
206 Lincoln Drive
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**DAVID RITTENHOUSE
CLOCK 250 YEARS OLD**

**2010 CALENDAR
OF EVENTS**

This is a year of celebrations! At the same time we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the founding of Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown, we also are commemorating the 250th anniversary of our David Rittenhouse clock. Built in 1759 when David was 27 years old, our clock was first acquired by Ralph Assheton, MD (1735-1773), who lived in nearby Norristown, PA. For nearly all of the next two hundred years the clock stayed with the descendants of Assheton who continued to live in the Norristown area. In the early 1950's the clock passed to Jane H. Barnhart who sold it to John A. Leutkemayer, Sr of Baltimore who, in turn, sold the clock to the late David G. Rittenhouse and his wife, Evelyn, in 1995. Mrs. Rittenhouse gave the clock to Historic RittenhouseTown. It has been on display in our Visitor

Center since November 2006. We are proud to say that we have this wonderful example of a David Rittenhouse clock in our collection!



David Rittenhouse clock at RittenhouseTown

Continue to check www.rittenhousetown.org for the most up-to-date event listing

March 27: Annual Egg Hunt

April 21: Members' Meeting

June 3: Spring Fundraiser

June-September: Weekend Summer Tours

June-September: Paper Arts Workshop Series

July 26-30: Summer Camp

September 11: 21st Annual Paper Mill Run 5K Race

October 2: Revolutionary Germantown Fest/German American Day

October TBA: Fall fundraiser

October 23: Spirits of the Wissahickon

December 4: Holiday Open House