



# Circa 1794

*The Newsletter of Historic Rock Ford*

## “Emma: The Matchmaker” Returns to the Hand Mansion in November

Historic Rock Ford is pleased to once again present “Emma: The Matchmaker.” This one-act play, adapted by Historic Rock Ford Director Sam Slaymaker from the classic novel by Jane Austen, will be presented in the theatrically candlelit rooms of the General Edward Hand Mansion on November 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 16, 17 and 18. with performances at 7 PM and 8:30 PM. Tickets are \$20 and are available at [rockford.yapsody.com](http://rockford.yapsody.com). The performance will run approximately 50 minutes with scenes taking place in each of the four parlors on the main floor and in the central hallway of the circa 1794 mansion. The Rock Ford Dancers will be participating in this production to enhance period music, dance and festivity. This play was first performed at Rock Ford to sold-out audiences in 2019 and was revived in 2021.

Since Cynthia Charles, of Theater of the Seventh Sister, was unable to direct the play this year due to another theatrical commitment, this year’s production will be directed by Rachel Faust, who has portrayed Emma in previous productions. Rachel has recruited a cast of regional actors to play the lead roles and is looking forward to bringing Jane Austen’s sparkling humor, wit and rich repartee back to Rock Ford. “While performing on stage is always special, there is something truly magical about bringing an audience into the historic rooms of the Hand Mansion,” says Rachel. “By doing so, it is almost as if we are able to transport them into the story – back to Regency England.”

There is a rationale for presenting a play based on the work of Jane Austen at Rock Ford. Although it is, of course, set in England, “Emma” takes place circa 1800 – Edward Hand’s era. Furthermore, Hand came from an Anglo-Irish background and lived in a Georgian country mansion. The life and customs of the English country gentry at the turn of the nineteenth century would have felt familiar to him and to his family.

Because “Emma” is a novel of over 400 pages, Slaymaker realized from the outset that it would only be possible to present a small part of it. “Fortunately, Austen divided ‘Emma’ into three ‘Volumes’ – a format that allowed us to adapt a section of the novel in a way that still enabled us to tell a complete story,” explains Slaymaker. “I decided to focus on the first volume, which tells the story of how Emma chooses to act as a ‘matchmaker’ between her friend Harriet Smith and Mr. Elton, the village vicar. Things do not turn out as Emma intends, she learns some lessons and the stage is set for the rest of the novel. By focusing on Volume One, we are able to provide our guests with a healthy sampling of some of Jane Austen’s great dialogue, humor and sharp wit while foreshadowing things that will happen later in the story. We are also able to incorporate some wonderful period music and dancing as part of Emma’s efforts to bring Miss Smith and Mr. Elton together.”

Since performances are limited to 15 guests, early reservations are encouraged to avoid disappointment. Please note that this production is not handicapped accessible. Guests will be standing during the performance and following the characters from room to room on the first floor of the mansion.



The cast of “Emma” during a recent rehearsal (from left to right): Jack Leonard (Mr. Elton), Caitlyn Hughes (Harriet Smith), Tom Englert (Mr. Woodhouse), Rachel Faust (Emma Woodhouse), and Sam Shea (Mr. Knightley).

**2022-23 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, 2022 to September 1, 2023**. The 2023-34 Membership Appeal will begin in early October 2023.

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### New Addition to Our Collection

Historic Rock Ford would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Albert McMullin for their recent extraordinary gift to our collection. Now on display in the Hand Mansion, this splendid spinning wheel is stamped “S. Humes, 1791.” Of note, Samuel Humes (1754-1836) was listed as a “Spinning Wheel Maker” under “Trades & Occupation” on the Lancaster Borough tax list of 1797.



**Announcing two  
October events!**

**After Dark: Exploring  
the Haunted History of  
Rock Ford**

**October 25 and 26  
7 PM and 8:30 PM**

**HAUNTED ENCOUNTERS:  
PERSONAL PARANORMAL  
EXPERIENCES AT ROCK FORD**

**October 31  
10 AM, 12 PM and 2 PM  
Purchase tickets at  
[rockford.yapsody.com](http://rockford.yapsody.com)**

*The John J. Snyder, Jr. Gallery of  
Early Lancaster County  
Decorative Arts will be open on select  
weekdays from November 1-17!*

Admission includes the 2023 Focus  
Exhibit "The Market Town &  
The Metropolis: 18th Century Lancaster  
and Its Artistic Connections to  
Philadelphia."



Visit [rockford.yapsody.com](http://rockford.yapsody.com).  
Admission is free for Rock Ford  
Foundation members!

Thank you to our 2023 Exhibit Sponsors:  
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**Rock Ford Members Enjoy Field Trip to Historic Estates**

On Saturday, August 19, with spectacular weather to complement the journey, a group of Rock Ford members enjoyed a day-long outing to three estates in Fairmount Park in Philadelphia. The group travelled by motorcoach, with the first stop being Stenton, the circa 1730 country home of James Logan, who was a Colonial Mayor of Philadelphia and Chief Justice of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. After a delicious boxed lunch, the group toured the circa 1756 Woodford Mansion, built for William Coleman, a prestigious merchant who was a friend of Benjamin Franklin, followed by a visit to the circa 1789 Strawberry Mansion, built by Judge William Lewis, friend of George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and Benjamin Franklin.

Another members only field trip is being planned for 2024. Look for details in the Summer 2024 newsletter!

To view the expanded digital version of our newsletter, please visit the “In the News” section of our new website. Due to the space limitations of the print edition, our digital newsletter often contains additional articles and photos.

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