



Circa 1794

The Newsletter of Historic Rock Ford

Building Relationships at Historic Rock Ford

In late March and early April, as Historic Rock Ford was preparing to open for its 2023 season, a very special blending of past and future, of youth and age, was taking place on the ancient grounds of the estate. In a collaborative effort between Lancaster City not-for-profit neighbors, the Rock Ford Foundation and Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, up to 20 Stevens students re-constructed a long collapsed stone farm wall near the barn and re-laid a buckling brick walk leading up to the main entrance of the General Edward Hand Mansion.

“We were extremely impressed by the caliber of work provided by the Stevens students and by how much they were able to accomplish in just a couple of weeks” says Sam Slaymaker, Executive Director of Historic Rock Ford. “These projects had been on our ‘to do list’ for years, but the estimated costs of having this work done by commercial contractors were prohibitive. Our Board President and Head of School Programs, Debbie Smith, had collaborated with Stevens College in an EITC program on brick making and house construction in the 18th century. Our collaboration with Stevens on the stone wall and brick walk projects was a natural outgrowth of this relationship. This was a great project for both of our institutions in that Rock Ford was able to accomplish these much-needed masonry and brick projects while Stevens’ students were able to hone their skills and use their 21st century equipment in an 18th century setting while making lasting improvements to a Lancaster landmark. A grant from the High Foundation provided for expenses and for the purchase of supplies, so we are also deeply grateful to High for making all this possible.”

Mike Gardner, the Chief Masonry Construction Technology Instructor at Stevens, explained that the project was of great value to his students as well by giving them real-world experience: “When you get out on a live wall, that really helps the kids see all the things we’ve talked about [in the classroom].” The students of Mitch Kauffman, Civil Engineering Construction Technology Instructor, re-laid the brick walk: “The kids figured out that the bricks from that period, because they are older, are very irregular [shaped] as opposed to a modern paver. It made it quite challenging to try to lay the brick straight and even.”

In sum, this collaborative construction project was a success for both Stevens and Rock Ford.



After tamping down the gravel substrate and a layer of dirt, students begin relaying brick using guides to keep the bricks evenly spaced and straight.



TSCT students work on removing and restacking stones during the reconstruction of the stone wall in front of the Rock Ford Barn.

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 May 15, 2023**. This list will be updated in future newsletters.

General Edward Hand Society (\$10000)

Anne D. Gardner

Katherine Hand Society (\$5000)

Donald & Elizabeth Steckler

Jasper Yeates Society (\$1000)

Dr. & Mrs. John Bowman

Jane Eastman

Thomas G. Englert

Dr. and Mrs. John W. Gareis

Edith Z. May

Carol T. & John F. Pyfer, Jr.

Ken & Peggy Shaffer

Samuel & Laura Slaymaker

Daniel & Ellen Strickler

Edward Shippen Society (\$500)

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Peter & Millicent Christie

Robert & Carol Falk

Dan Gillis

Hilary Grant

James K. & Lisa Rae High

Carrie Nunan Hill

Orpheus Theatre Co.

Robert & Patricia Pontz

Lee & Nancy Sheaf

Mary Louise Shenk

Robert & Deborah Smith

George Ross Society (\$250)

Alan & Susan Andersen

Barbara T. & Michael K. Brown

John & Dolores Gareis

Thomas Gehr

Scott & Paulette Goldman

Dennis & Betty Jo Grimm

Gary & Debbi Langmuir

Dana Lewis

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Connolly Accounting Solutions

Melissa Engle Photography

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Leslie Ann Photography

Kate McCord Photography

Katie MacDonald Photography

Annie Sharp Photography

Ashley Silva Photography, LLC

Amanda Souders Photography

Tanya Stewart Photography

Crystal Wenger Photography

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Thomas Bowen, Jr.

Louis & Mildred Caccamo

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Christopher Scott

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Rock Ford Board of Trustees Transitions

The Rock Ford Board of Trustees is deeply grateful to John Frymyer for his dedicated contribution to the Board, and wishes him well as he steps away from his second round of service. During his previous tenure on the board, John held the offices of both Vice President and President. He remains an enthusiastic member of the Warm Hearth Committee – maybe you’ll see him in the kitchen on your next tour!

As we thank John for his service on the Board, we also welcome four new members to the Board of Trustees. Please welcome and learn about new members Tom Englert, Tom Gehr, Eric Munro, and Stu Van Ormer.



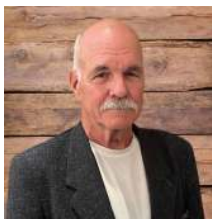
Tom Englert is a man who needs little introduction to the Rock Ford membership. He has been a friend, guide, trustee, and benefactor for decades and has contributed to Rock Ford’s growth over those many years. Tom is a steadfast advocate for our organization and never misses a chance to promote Rock Ford within our community and beyond. Whether he is leading visitors through Lancaster on a Walking Tour, guiding at Rock Ford or at James Buchanan’s Wheatland, Tom shows his deep love of history – particularly the history of Lancaster.



Tom Gehr was a teacher at Lampeter-Strasburg School District for 35 years, which included 5 years teaching in Amish one-room schoolhouses. He and his late wife, Cindy, were always interested in history and bought an 11-acre, 1767 stone farmhouse in southern Lancaster County. Tom spent summers learning masonry and many other skills while restoring the property back to its former glory. It was featured in “Early American Life” in 2013! Tom began volunteering at Rock Ford as a docent in 2002 after responding to a newspaper article recruiting new house guides. He has volunteered innumerable hours over 20 years. Tom hopes that his service on the Board of Trustees will be beneficial to the group, the visitors to Historic Rock Ford, and to the community at large.



Eric Munro works at Wohlsen Construction and was the last site manager on the Snyder Gallery construction project. He is a Lancaster County native who became interested in construction in his early teens and earned a construction management degree from Philadelphia University. Eric’s hobbies include participating in local recreational sports leagues and enjoying mountain biking, skiing, kayaking and travel. Eric will be working with the Building and Grounds Committee and is excited to continue the relationship between Rock Ford and Wohlsen that began in the 1950s.



Stu Van Ormer is the founder and owner of Grant Street Woodworking Company in Lancaster. He and his employees build boardrooms, offices, hotel lobbies, museum exhibits and enormous grand clocks, like the Donor Clock in the Snyder Gallery. He has a plethora of interests and experience – from astronomy to beekeeping and much, much more. Stu works well with people of all ages. His wide range of experience and his approach to solving problems make him a welcome addition to the Rock Ford Board.

Field Trip to Historic Fairmount Park Estates in Philadelphia: Woodford, Stenton & Strawberry Mansion



AUGUST
SAT | 19 | 2023



For Rock Ford Foundation members only! Look for a postcard mailing with all of the details soon!



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The next time you visit the grounds at Historic Rock Ford, please take a moment to admire and enjoy the beautiful flowers in the planters along walkway under the overhang of the barn, by the tenant house and by the Welcome Center to the Snyder Gallery. These lovely arrangements were designed and planted by Tudbink's Farm, Conestoga, PA.



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, 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.

