



JACOBUS VANDERVEER HOUSE & MUSEUM

Spring 2021

The March through 2020

'These are the times that try men's souls' so wrote Thomas Paine in December of 1776. The COVID-19 pandemic was challenging for all of us in different ways and continues to try our souls. The Board of Trustees of the Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House sends you the warmest of wishes and hopes that you and your family have remained safe and well.

As the pandemic continues to resolve, we hope to welcome you back to JVH and want to share with you the happenings at our museum, the additions we have made to our collection and exciting new exhibits as well as events we are planning for 2021. We hope you will join with us to share the celebration of American History through the events and displays at our museum.

Like many of you, we were most disappointed that we were not able to host any events at our museum in 2020. We had planned to have a scaled down version of our 'Colonial Christmas' event in December but due to increased COVID-19 cases and a bad turn in the weather it was with great disappointment we had to cancel our 2020 outdoor Colonial Christmas event. JVH plans to have Colonial Christmas in 2021 with the tree lighting on Friday December 3rd and an all-day event on Saturday December 4th. Please mark your calendar! We will have many new things to share!

Have you seen?

During 2020, we updated our Website. One of the exciting new additions are video links to tours of JVH. If you haven't taken a peek, please do! The videos are no substitute for a visit to our House, but you might enjoy seeing them—and watching these might spike new questions which you can pose to us on your next visit!

Upcoming Events:

Field of Honor[®] and July 10th Community Event

Each year to honor our Military, our veterans and our first responders, the Jacobus Vanderveer House hosts our Field of Honor[®] in which we display 200 American Flags in the field next to our House so that the display is visible from Route 206. Given our historical connection to General Henry Knox and the Pluckemin Cantonment, the first Military Training Academy in the United States, we feel privileged to demonstrate honor and respect for the flag and the men and

women throughout our history who have fought to defend it.

The flags will go up before Memorial Day and remain on display until Sunday July 11th. The community is invited to walk amongst the display. Anyone wishing to designate a flag in honor of a loved one or friend, should visit our website where information is posted to donate which enable you to make this designation. As always, your donation is sincerely appreciated.

As part of our Fields of Honor display, invite you to attend our 2021 reopening community event which will take place on **Saturday July 10th**. Final plans are being set but the day will include a performance of patriotic music by the **White House Wind Symphony** beginning at **12 Noon** and will include a demonstration by a blacksmith—we know that many children were disappointed when they were unable to see the blacksmith when Colonial Christmas was cancelled. And other surprises—watch for our emails! Add additional events as confirmed.

The Jacobus Vanderveer House will be open during the July 10th event for small group tours and we will try to accommodate everyone. Social distancing will be required throughout the day with masks for tours and when unable to maintain six feet distance while outside. And remember to bring a blanket or lawn chairs!

New Additions:

Dutch Kas

The Friends are most pleased to announce that we have received our own Dutch Kas which was donated to us by the Society of Colonial Wars. We were so fortunate to receive this beautiful historical piece. It will be displayed next to the Kas we already have on loan from the Newark Museum. Going forward our goal is to have rotating exhibitions to include decorative art and artifacts on loan from other museums and use the Kas to house the historical items. Be sure to look for the new Kas and compare it to the original one on your next visit!

In the works....

For years, the Jacobus Vanderveer House Board of Trustees has planned to create a model of the Pluckimen Cantonment, the Military Training Center that was built under the direction of General Henry Knox in 1778-79 while he stayed at JVH. You may have seen the hand drawing of the Cantonment or watched the video that discusses its construction. At the end of 2020, we received a private grant to build this model and construction is underway. The model will be unveiled at some time in November with special events for members and donors with unveiling to the public during Colonial Christmas. It will remain on permanent display at JVH. The project will include interpretive videos to discuss the history and describe the cantonment. More to come!

Linking Our Past to Our Present

Did you know that George Washington and his troops faced a viral epidemic throughout the American Revolutionary War? The viral outbreaks throughout the war were caused by smallpox, a feared viral infection that was spread like the COVID-19 virus, through respiratory

droplets dispersed through the air from coughs or sneezes from those who were infected. Smallpox was very contagious and deadly: 3 out of 10 people who contracted the virus died. Those who survived, however, were immune from a second infection. Because much of the American population was rural and fairly isolated, many had no exposure to Smallpox so that when an outbreak occurred in the midst of the Revolutionary War, the virus would spread rapidly through the troops. There were no vaccinations—the concept of vaccinations had not yet been discovered—but an early method of controlling smallpox was variolation in which people were purposefully exposed to the material from the smallpox sores taken from an infected individual, was employed by Washington to protect his troops and help them develop immunity. Variolation would usually cause people to develop some symptoms such as fever or rash but rarely caused severe symptoms or death and importantly resulted in immunity. Overtime, Washington initiated a system to inoculate new recruits on enlistment to ensure they would be immune and well once their training was completed. Washington himself had contracted smallpox as a young man and fortunately survived.

The concept of vaccination was not thought of until 1796 beginning when Edward Jenner recognized that milkmaids who contracted ‘cowpox’ a similar but dramatically less dangerous virus, didn’t develop smallpox when exposed to it. Jenner subsequently inoculated material taken from a cowpox sore on a milkmaid into the arm of a young boy who was then repeatedly exposed to smallpox but did not develop it. Additional studies were undertaken and in 1801 Jenner published his treatise ‘On the origin of Vaccine Inoculation.’ This discovery led to the use of vaccination which ultimately eradicated the Smallpox virus. Jenner’s concept of vaccination led others to develop vaccines for many other viruses including polio, measles, mumps, diphtheria, hepatitis A, hepatitis B and most recently SARS-CoV-2, the virus which caused the COVID-19 Pandemic which so recently disrupted our world.

Imagine how difficult it must have been to repeatedly confront outbreaks of smallpox during the course of the American Revolution when medical treatments were rudimentary and so little medicine was known or understood! That can give you a perspective on our current times!

Be Safe and Stay Well! The Friends of the Jacobus Vanderveer House hope to welcome you back to our House sometime soon!



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