



Exterior of Priestley Avenue side of Priestley House painted in summer 2015 by contractor, Armstrong Aesthetics. The siding was scrapped, primed and painted. Three full sides of the mansion were painted and half of the Priestley Avenue side above the windows. Carpentry work is necessary to finish this side. Project funded by PHMC.

### FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE



P.O. Box 346  
Lewisburg, PA. 17837



Chemist Dee Casteel of Bucknell University and Larry Zapotocky, Managing Producer, Service Electric Cablevision- SECV Productions at filming of Priestley's discovery of nitrous oxide in modern lab.

The project funded in part by Anesthesiology Department, Penn State College of Medicine, Penn State Hershey Medical Center. Finished video will be posted on website in January 2016.



# POSTINGS FROM PRIESTLEY HOUSE

Newsletter of  
The Friends of Joseph Priestley House

Number 63 Fall 2015

www.josephpriestleyhouse.org

570-473-9474

## 2016 SEASON

Visitor Center open 1 to 4 p.m.,  
Saturday & Sunday (except Easter)  
March 13 through Nov. 27  
Tours at 1, 2 and 3 p.m.

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, January 3, 2016  
Twelfth Night Open 4 to 7 p.m.  
Dr. Priestley's  
Demonstrations at 5 & 6pm  
House decorated as English  
manor house. Children's games  
Regular Admission fees

### Sunday, March 13

Commonwealth Charter Day  
and Priestley's Birthday  
Open from 1 to 4 p.m.  
Dr. Priestley's Demonstrations  
at 1:30 & 2:30  
Free admission

### July (dates to be determined)

Summer History Camp  
For 1st - 6th graders  
From 9am to noon.  
Pre-registration required  
Fee - \$30 per camper

### Sunday, August 7

Oxygen Day  
Open from 1 to 4 p.m.  
Dr. Priestley's Demonstrations  
at 1:30 & 2:30  
Free Admission

### September

Annual Meeting of the Friends  
Of Joseph Priestley House  
Location and time  
to be determined

### Sunday, November 6

Heritage Day  
Open from 1 to 4 p.m.  
Dr. Priestley's Demonstrations  
at 1:30 & 2:30  
Regular Admission fees

### Sunday, January 8, 2017

Twelfth Night  
Open from 4 to 7 p.m.  
Dr. Priestley's Demonstrations  
Children's games  
Regular Admission fee

## CHILDREN'S YOKE DONATED TO FRIENDS OF PRIESTLEY HOUSE

By Hope Kopf

Thanks to the generous gift from a Northumberland business woman, visitors to the Priestley House can now experience an invaluable, labor-saving device from 1800. The gift, a wooden yoke, helped each family member cope with tasks of daily life.



Every household would have had at least one yoke to use to make several chores a bit easier. Yokes came in different sizes, so where possible there would be at least one for children and one for adults. Two buckets were carried at a time. Using them, they provided grain for the animals as well as water. One source says that for a typical farmette 30 trips a day were necessary just to water the livestock.

The yoke also was used to carry ripe fruit and vegetables as well as the milk from their cows. In springtime, if the family was lucky enough to have sugar maple trees, it carried the sap for boiling down into maple syrup. Each Monday was wash day in most households. The wash tub held over 20

gallons of water. It was carried in either 2 1/2 gallon or 5 gallon buckets. When you consider that one gallon of water weighs about 8 1/2 pounds, the yoke was helping them carry two buckets, each weighing twenty or forty pounds. The gift of this yoke, which visitors are encouraged to try on, will allow folks to better imagine the difficulty of this task.

## TWELFTH NIGHT CELEBRATION

By Cindy Inkrote

A time for merrymaking, the Twelfth Night celebration will feature musical entertainment, experiments by Dr. Joseph Priestley in his laboratory, children's activities, wassail, Twelfth Night or king's cake, and other warm and spicy refreshments that would have been enjoyed during the Priestley family's celebrations.

The Joseph Priestley House will be decorated for the occasion with greenery and the warm glow of lantern light will add to the ambience of the evening.

In merry old England Twelfth Night marked the end of Christmas, and it was commonly believed that all seasonal decorations were to be taken down on that date to avoid bad luck for the year. It was a night of gaiety often filled with practical jokes and short plays. Have you ever wondered how the Priestley family celebrated Twelfth Night in Northumberland? Plan now to attend this festive occasion when the Friends of Joseph Priestley House will host a Twelfth Night celebration on the Sunday evening prior to Epiphany, January 3rd, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.



# NEW DISPLAY AT PRIESTLEY HOUSE

By Hope Kopf

Visitors to the kitchen of the Joseph Priestley House now have the opportunity to learn more about the life of children who would have lived in town during the time the Priestleys lived here.

Both the front of the tri-fold display and the table area focus on two topics: chores and fun activities. It is hoped that today's children will realize that life was much more difficult and that it was important that all the children performed as many of the necessary jobs as possible.

There was very little time for play although when it was your turn to watch the youngest child or children, play was part of your duties. Everyone over the age of five knew how to knit. Boys knit their first pair of suspenders. Much time was spent knitting stockings and mittens. A photo in the display shows you "double mittens." You'll see white ones laid out separately. Above that you'll see a blue mitten that has had the second mitten stuffed inside the other so the wearer had two thicknesses.

Girls often made the straw hats that were so important in the days before sun block. First they had to collect the appropriate grasses, then dry them, and then braid them. When the braids were long enough they wound them into the circle that was the brim and then up into the crown.

Girls had to learn all the tasks necessary to make clothing including carding fleece before spinning it into wool yarn. They learned to sew in order to make the families' clothing as well as to mend any tears. They learned to make quilts which were very necessary in the cold of the bedrooms.

Boys and girls had to collect the eggs, berries, fallen fruit and kindling. They also had to water and feed the barn animals. (Nearly every household had chickens, cows, pigs and horses.)

Children help with tasks of making candles and making soap. Photos show the equipment used for both tasks. Candle molds are shown elsewhere in the room.

When you see the display be sure to look for these unusual items: a housewife (sewing kit that men and boys took with them when they went away from the house for an extended time.), buttons made from slices of deer antlers, a wooden egg (which not only was used to darn socks, but was also used to teach a hen where you wanted her to lay her eggs.)

The third panel shows many of the pastimes that were possible. Books were cherished and few homes had many other than the Bible. Toys similar to today are the yoyo, jacks, stilts, tops, dolls, cards, marbles, and checkers. In many households children were not allowed to play on Sundays unless the toy had to do with a Bible story. One popular one was Noah's Ark.

Any items ON the table may be tried. The Jacob's Ladder and the Cup and Ball are very popular. Game of Graces is a game played especially by girls for it's intent was to help girls become more graceful. It consists of a hoop that is passed from one girl to the other by using two sticks. If you'd like to try that one, please go out in the connecting hall.



## FRIENDS OF JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President – Dee Casteel

Vice President – Don Mencer

Secretary – Bill Simpson

Treasurer – Mike Kuhns

Sam Geise

George Godlewski

Cindy Inkrote

**JOSEPH PRIESTLEY HOUSE**  
473 PRIESTLEY AVE.  
NORTHUMBERLAND, PA 17857

### 2015 HOURS OF OPERATION

March thru November

Every Weekend

Except Easter Sunday

Visitors Center

Open 1-4 p.m.

Tours Given at 1, 2 and 3 p.m.

Special Tours

Can be arranged by calling

570-473-9474 or by e-mail at  
[info@josephpriestleyhouse.org](mailto:info@josephpriestleyhouse.org)

Special Assistance

Individuals who need special assistance or accommodation to visit

The Joseph Priestley House should contact us in advance to discuss their needs.

To join the Friends of Priestley House

Call 570-473-9474 or visit  
[www.josephpriestleyhouse.org](http://www.josephpriestleyhouse.org)

# HERITAGE DAY 2015

Visitors to the annual Heritage Day event at Priestley House had the opportunity to talk with docents in each room of the house, learn about spinning and tatting, listen to storyteller, watch chemistry demonstrations and taste a savory dip made from plants grown in the herb garden. Youngsters visiting that day were from a local girl scout troop and a church youth group.

Two Bloomsburg women displayed 18th century crafts. Outside the women's bedroom on the second floor Iva Kressler demonstrated lace making and tatting. Kressler said she has been making lace for about four years, but has been tatting much longer. "I was taught to tat by my 80 plus year old grandmother when I was about 20 years old," she said. Tatting involves the use of knots and loops to make a type of lace.



Christa Hobson showed how to spin wool into threads for weaving. Hobson is a spinner She belongs to the Susquehanna Valley Spinners and Weavers Guild located in Mifflinburg, and the Spins and Needles Guild, Bloomsburg. She has a

hand-dyed yarn and original knitting patterns business called Aisling Yarns.



Ronald Blatchley has portrayed Joseph Priestley for many years and in 2010 addressed a meeting of the Priestley Society in Heckmondwike, England. He has also performed as Priestley in educational videos.

A retired high school chemistry teacher Blatchley explained the early discoveries in

gas chemistry by producing carbon dioxide in the same way Joseph Black did in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Then he produced oxygen by adding yeast to hydrogen peroxide, something that kids could do at home under the supervision of their parents. A video of an earlier presentation is available for sale in the Visitor Center.



Beverly Conrad entertained the audience with one of the stories from her new book, The Headless Dog and other stories. The stories are based on tales heard in her family and from old-timers living in Snyder and Northumberland Counties. Conrad is known to visitors at Priestley House as the guest fiddler stationed in the back stairwell playing haunting tunes during special events. After the reading, visitors were able to purchase copies of the book. Copies may also be purchased in the



Visitor Center. In the back kitchen Shelley Paul and Cindy Inkrote set up a table to clean and dry herbs grown in the herb garden at Priestley House. They offered visitors a chance to sample a dip from parsley, basil, and sweet marjoram from the garden. Inkrote also used some chives and thyme from my own garden.

The Joseph Priestley House is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and administered by Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission. The Friends group, under an agreement with the PHMC, provides volunteer staff to keep the museum open to the public on weekends from March through November.

## ANNUAL DINNER 2015



The Friends of Joseph Priestley House held its Annual Dinner on Wednesday, September 23 at the Townside, Too in Northumberland. About 40 persons attended the event. Friends' President Dee

Ann Casteel welcomed the guests and after dinner conducted a brief business meeting.

Three board members were elected to fill three year terms. Sam Geise was reelected to another term and Hope W. Kopf and Seth Rohrbach will fill the other two board seats. Hope, a retired elementary school teacher who worked in the Shikellemy School District, is a newcomer and Seth has been a faithful

volunteer for a number of years and served on the board previously. Casteel also lauded William Simpson for his dedication as secretary of the Friends board and Mike Kuhns for his service as the treasurer. Both will leave the board at the end of the year.

All of the volunteers were also recognized for their efforts in staffing the museum and gift shop each weekend from March through November. Local singer/songwriter and educator, Van Wagner, performed a number of songs to entertain the group, which illustrate the region's lumbering and mining heritage and other facets of local history.

Bob Minard, representing Roy Olofson, made a loan to the Friends of Priestley House of Wilkinson tokens and other medals. John Wilkinson is the brother of Mary Priestley. He often assisted her family financially.