



Independence: The Best Park in History

Independence Hall Tower Ready for The Limelight

On February 18, 2012, the Centennial Bell will chime the hour once again, inviting all Philadelphia residents and visitors to come out and see the newly restored Independence Hall Tower.

Independence NHP Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod, Mayor Michael Nutter and Congressman Chaka Fattah will welcome visitors as they cut the ribbon for the completed project.

The program will start at 4:30 p.m. and all visitors and residents are invited to join the park for this event, which can be viewed from Independence Mall, across the street from Independence Hall. After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Independence Hall will be open for tours until 6 p.m. If you haven't had a chance to visit Independence Hall again recently, now's the time!

Funded by \$4.4 million in stimulus funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the rehabilitation project began in July 2010.

The project gained momentum after an April 2007 investigation revealed significant deterioration of the exterior wooden siding at the fourth, fifth and sixth levels. Over the years, driving rain had rusted the iron rods securing the wooden cladding which, in turn, damaged the pine boards.



In the process of removing the wood cladding from the Independence Hall Tower, workers exposed the structural framing of the tower at the clock face level. This was the first time anyone has seen the tower framing exposed in this manner since the wood portion of the tower was added in 1828.



On the outside, the original gilded clock hands and numerals have been regilded and returned to their rightful place. The exteriors of the clock faces were painstakingly repainted and restored. From the interior, the new steel girders seen in this picture will hold the clock faces securely in place.



In addition to swapping the corroded iron rods for stainless steel and replacing the weathered wood and bricks, workers stripped degraded paint and applied new coatings, refurbished the copper urns and stabilized the large clock faces. While the glass in the clock faces, which dated to the 1970s, was replaced, the brass hands and numbers were regilded and returned to their home on the four faces of the tower. The weathervane was also regilded.

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends of Independence, a decorative scrim featuring a screened image of Independence Hall Tower maintained the facade during the rehabilitation project. The scrim, which covered the scaffolding during the 18-month project, served both an interpretive and a safety and protection function.

Under the stewardship of the National Park Service, Independence Hall has been restored whenever possible to its original late-18th century appearance, inside and out.

The tower visitors see today was designed by William Strickland and erected in 1828. It is one of America's earliest examples of colonial revival architecture. Workmen removed the original tower in the late 18th century when it became structurally unsound.

Celebrating Franklin & Poe Birthdays

Franklin's Musical Invention is a Star Attraction

On January 17, 2012, Independence National Historical Park marked the occasion of Benjamin Franklin's 306th birthday with a unique opportunity for visitors to hear a performance on Franklin's famous musical invention, the Glass Armonica.

With the Franklin Court Underground Museum closed for renovations, the Glass Armonica has been out of view for visitors. For this special occasion, on January 17, visitors were able to see rangers play the instrument at the Independence Visitor Center.

Interpretive Rangers Tom Degnan and Jane Storsteen put on a performance that attracted the attention of some local media. Media coverage included a clip on 6ABC Action News and a story on KYW News Radio 1060, part of CBS Radio, a division of CBS Corp.

A short recording of Tom's performance is available on the KYW News Radio website: <http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2012/01/17/for-ben-franklins-306th-birthday-music-from-one-of-his-inventions/>

Along with the Glass Armonica performances, the park offered a series of events designed for the whole family. Activities included special Franklin tours at the Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank of the United States

Remembering Edgar Allan Poe and his Haunting Tales

January 19, 2012, would have been the 203rd birthday of renowned author - and creator of the detective story - Edgar Allan Poe. To mark the occasion, the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site held a series of events and activities to entertain and educate visitors.

Philadelphia was a printing and publishing center in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries thanks to the contributions of two unique men born a century apart: Benjamin Franklin and Edgar Allan Poe. The illustrated program, "Edgar Allan Poe and Benjamin Franklin in American Culture," celebrated their January birthdays and their contributions to American culture. The program, offered twice in The Second Bank of the United States, drew a diverse crowd of Poe and Franklin aficionados.

On Poe's birthday, those visitors lucky enough to have RSVP'd before the event sold out joined park staff to celebrate the 203rd Birthday of Edgar Allan Poe with "Edgar Allan Poe in the Dark." This special candlelight tour of Poe's house focused on the famous stories Poe wrote while living in Philadelphia, including the chilling Black Cat.

Franklin Birthday Events



Park Rangers Tom Degnan and Jane Storsteen



Park Ranger Tom Degnan performs on the Glass Armonica

Poe Birthday Events



Edgar Allan Poe (above, Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff, below, Park Ranger Paul Campbell) greets visitors at the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site

New Irrigation System in Washington Square

Thanks to support from our neighbors, a new irrigation system has been installed in Washington Square, home of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier of the Revolutionary War.

This project was funded in part through support from the Society Hill Civic Association and the Society Hill Fund, which donated \$25,000 to Independence National Historical Park specifically for this project. The funds were raised through the Washington Square Affair, sponsored by the Society Hill Fund, which was held in Washington Square in 2010.



Andrea Layden and Sissie Lipton, Society Hill Civic Association, with Superintendent Cynthia MacLeod

One of five original squares in the 1682 plan for William Penn's city, the square was named in honor of George Washington in 1825. The square has, over its lifetime, served as a potter's field, Revolutionary War burial ground, pasture, market place, site of congregation and burial for free and enslaved Africans, public square, commemorative landscape and urban park. A statue of Washington marks the site of the memorial tomb, reminding visitors of the words of President Washington, still clearly relevant today: "The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils and joint efforts – of common dangers, sufferings, and success." A long-time supporter of Washing-

ton Square, Society Hill Civic Association organizes volunteer events in Washington Square every spring, summer and fall.

In 2007, the Society Hill Civic Association had the bronze lily pad fabricated for the center of the reflecting pool. This sculpture was inspired by a drawing of a similar element in architect Edwin Brumbaugh's 1950s plans for the memorial which was never installed.



Thanks to the relationship between the park and the civic association, the irrigation system in Washington Square was improved and expanded. Earlier evaluations of the irrigation system had determined that inadequate water was being delivered to the plant beds, most of which are on the perimeter of the Square. Based on further evaluations, additions and upgrades to the system were designed to provide adequate water to all of the planting areas. The new system has been completely installed, and the contractor will be returning in the spring to start up the system.



Volunteers at INDE

Every weekend, Al Cavallari gets in his car and drives to center city Philadelphia from his home in New Windsor, New York. Al serves as one of the 275 volunteers who contribute their time, knowledge and enthusiasm to the mission of the NPS.

"I do this as a result of having taken repeated vacations at the park beginning around the year 2000 and being continually thrilled with the visits," Al said. "Being on the inside is like a Giants fan getting to watch a game from the sidelines instead of from the stands."

Interpretive volunteers like Al help NPS Park Rangers answer questions at the visitor center, offer talks at the Liberty Bell and provide tours of Independence Hall. Other volunteers in the park help our staff maintain park gardens and grounds, interpret archeological finds, and archive the historical documents kept by the park.

"I think the core reason that anyone does this work is the simple thrill of getting to tell the story. And what a story it is," Al said. "We are the stewards of some of mankind's most precious resources."

Independence NHP has been relying on its active corps of volunteers for many years. The Friends of Independence, the first friends group within the NPS, has been actively in the park since its 1972 founding. The volunteer program that supports the park's archaeology lab was recognized in 2010 as one of nine Preserve America Stewards, a program that honors volunteer efforts nationwide that help preserve our nation's historic places. If you are interested in volunteering at Independence NHP, please contact Jeff Collins at (215) 597- 1039.



Left, a volunteer with the Friends of Independence; Right, volunteer in the archaeology lab.



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Independence National Historical Park

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The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

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February Programs at Independence NHP

Special Programs at the Second Bank
420 Chestnut Street, between 4th and 5th Streets

“The Many Faces of George Washington” – Celebrate George Washington’s Birthday with this special tour of the many portraits of Washington. The Portrait Gallery also features a portrait of Martha Washington and the first President’s many friends and comrades. Join a Park Ranger to see the generals, diplomats and congressmen who knew and worked with Washington. Program will be held in the Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank, February 18 and 19 at 2 p.m.

“The Underground Railroad in Philadelphia” -- During the 18th and 19th centuries, Philadelphia was an important stop on the Underground Railroad. Learn more about the people and places connected to this important era in Black history during this 30-minute slide program at the Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank. Saturdays in February at 1 p.m.

“The President’s House” – Learn more about the house that stood at the corner of 6th and Market Streets and the various individuals (both free and enslaved) that lived there. This 30-minute slide program will be shown at the Portrait Gallery in the Second Bank. Sundays in February at 1 p.m.