

00005



## Sequoia Chapter

Daughters of the American Revolution

# The Rittenhouse Tricentennial Reunion

Good Afternoon:

They tell us in poetry and song, "You can't go back". To a genealogist engrossed in the fascination of unearthing history and family lore, those are challenging words. Of course, one can't actually "go back", but, through diligent research, we can sometimes re-create what has been.

This we did in the Reunion. In 1987, I gave a talk to the Colonial Dames XVII Century, who had welcomed me as a member of Anne Bradstreet Chapter in 1975, because of my direct descendancy from William Rittenhouse, the patriarch. For those listeners who didn't hear the earlier presentation, I will include it as a prelude to today's thesis.

But first, may I say that when this talk was given, had anyone suggested to me that I would "go back" to the paper-making site and be one of the thousands of Rittenhouse descendants invited to a 300th Reunion, I would have said, "No way". My decision would have been strengthened by a reluctance to travel without John, less ardor for airplanes, though I'd flown thousands of miles, and those words, "You can't go back". But, when I sent a note of

regret upon receiving the invitation from Mr. Harold Rittenhouse, Chairman Coordinator of this ambitious venture, and a 10th generation direct descendant like myself, it was done with sadness, knowing I would have attended with my John.

Along with the invitation was a questionnaire regarding all the immediate persons who share my Rittenhouse heritage. I dutifully filled it out, and each of the many so listed received an invitation like mine. Then started the disbelief among all my family that I, as the family historian, was not going to be a part of something so rare and special as a once-in-a-lifetime Tricentennial gathering of kinsfolk.

Visiting my daughter, Victoria, in Southern California, from early March to early May, the Reunion was mentioned in many ways. While shopping in the beautiful malls, a dress would suddenly be "just perfect for the trip back East". Well, after buying several such "perfect dresses", how could I be so thoughtless as to let them hang in my San Francisco closet, never giving them that once-in-a-lifetime trip to Rittenhouse Town? Upon my return to The City in May, one night I suddenly said to myself (my Grandfather considered when one talked to one's self, you'd receive an intelligent answer), "Roberta, go to the Reunion". This decision was firmed by Victoria's interest in flying back with me. It also suggested further searching might unearth a bit more about this interesting ancestor, and I was rewarded with the following, which was not included in my 1987 talk.

The settlement of Germantown had been unique in its initial planning. Usually, the craftsmen followed after the establishment by farmers, carpenters, etc. But, many of its early settlers had been city dwellers in the Old Country and industrial skills superseded farming, etc. Quote: "Germantown earned the right to be called the first distinctly manufacturing town in Pennsylvania. Industrially, Germantown's chief contribution to the British Colonial World was the introduction of an important new trade, paper making."

Quote: "The earliest reference to Rittenhouse paper-making is found in Richard Frame's verses, printed by William Bradford in 1692. John Holmes, who wrote about conditions in the new Colony in 1696, although his comments were not published until 1848, also mentions the paper mill. So did the writer of "An Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and County of Pennsylvania", published in London in 1698. That the enterprise received so much notice is not surprising, for it was of prime interest to all printers, and consequently, to writers as well.

In 1710, William Dewees followed Rittenhouse's lead, and built another paper mill, the second in the Colonies, farther up the Wissahickon. These two mills introduced into Pennsylvania a business in which the Colony and State maintained a leading position throughout the Eighteenth Century. Papermaking continued to be an important Germantown industry for many years, and numerous other mills were built in the Township. When

papermaking machinery was introduced in the Nineteenth Century, however, the old mills which produced handmade paper gradually went out of existence. Few of the Germantown papermakers seem to have adapted their mills to the new process." End Quote

The above is a direct quote from page 19 of the book "Historic Germantown" by Tinkom and Simon. (The American Philosophical Society - Independence Square, Philadelphia, PA 1955) I am very fortunate to own a copy of this book, which was purchased casually by me many years ago in a bookstore near the campus of California State University at Chico.

We come now to the 1987 presentation.



*Anne Bradstreet Chapter*

Good Afternoon:

"My name is William Rittenhouse, and it is because of me that your narrator, Roberta Thomson, is a member of Anne Bradstreet Chapter, Colonial Dames XVII Century. She speaks of me with great pride, may I say rightly so, because I am responsible for the very start of the paper upon which this thesis is written.

Historians have been kind enough to record that I founded the first paper mill in British America in 1690.

This mill was at Wissahickon Creek and Paper Mill Run in Fairmont Park, Germantown, Pennsylvania. Even in my time, its natural wild beauty of forests, streams and waterfalls was second to none. It later became the fourth largest park in the World, 2,740 acres, supplying the great city of Philadelphia with needed resources. Among my neighbors in Fairmont Park was William Penn, which reminds me that even in this year of 1987, a mere 279 years since I left this mortal world, I still harbor a slight resentment against William for referring to me as a "decrepit old man" before I had reached the age of sixty. Why, I wouldn't even qualify for Social Security or the controversial term, Senior Citizen. Of course, I guess he thought it was a friendly, charitable gesture, when he called upon the people to come to my aid when the first mill was swept away in a freshet storm on the Wissahickon Creek. Well, I seem to be getting a bit emotional, so will let Roberta tell this story, as I think she feels quite qualified after reading so many books on the Rittenhouse Family."

Wilhelm Rittenhuysen was born near Mulheim on the River Ruhr, Germany, in 1644, and became a naturalized citizen of Holland in 1678, continuing there his family's flourishing paper manufacturing mills of Germany, until he migrated to America, settling in Germantown, PA in 1688, where his life ended in 1708. His religious persuasion was that of the Mennonite faith,

and William became the first Mennonite Bishop in British America. The demands upon his time must have been great, but he had two sons to help in the mill, Nicholas and Garrett (from whom I descend). He took as a partner, William Bradford of Philadelphia, the first printer in British America, and used the famous clover leaf as the distinguished water mark of their mill. Quote: "From linen rags good paper doth derive". My line of descendancy could have been more glamorous had I descended from the first son, Nicholas. As you researchers have found, I'm sure, the first-born son was usually the favored one, and Nicholas was no exception. William generously set Garrett up in a nearby location on Cresheim Creek, and turned the profitable Rittenhouse Mill over to Nicholas, who was to later become the grandfather of David Rittenhouse, astronomer and clock maker. My grandson, John, is a restorer of antique clocks, and he says, "Grandmother, at least your ancestor was gr. uncle of this famous David".

In 1975, when I was the Regent of Sequoia Chapter DAR, my husband and I took a vacation, the second of three visitations to Pennsylvania, and included a trip through Fairmont Park, where the Centennial Fair of 1876 had been held. It will always remain in my memory as one of the most exciting bits of Americana. The entire Nation was geared to the upcoming 1976 Bicentennial of the United States of America. Incidentally, I shared many good times during this period with our members Anne Smart, Phyllis Laborde and Drusilla Strehlow, DAR members as well as Dames.

The State of Pennsylvania, which had already landmarked the Rittenhouse homesteads earlier, decided to preserve "Rittenhouse Town". John and I had always been adventurous, and somehow, luckily, even though this was before my eye problems, we failed to see the posted signs in this area of the Park -- "Verboten, No Admittance", and so we explored. He took some excellent pictures of the original and the second home built in 1707, the birthplace of astronomer David, and street signs which included Rubicam Avenue. As my ancestor, Peter Rubicam, through whose Revolutionary War services I had been accepted in DAR, descended from Charles Rubicam, who married Barbara Rittenhouse, you can imagine the thrill of photographing memorabilia of two connecting ancestors at one sweep, "Verboten" or not.

"Well, this is William Rittenhouse again, and I think I've allotted enough time to Roberta. But I do want to add that I hear she's had some difficulty in tracing ancestors in places like the Isle of Man, etc. Fortunately for her (and for me), my life was exceptionally well documented because she shares direct descendancy with her cousin, Fellow Milton Rubincam, Past President of the National Society of Genealogists, who has made a lifetime study of the Rittenhouse-Rubicam Families, along with his many other accepted publications.

Please forgive me if I sound like an ancient 279-year old curmudgeon at times, going on about my friend William Penn, etc. But, frankly, I'm not too happy either, that Mr. Kephart, among



other historians, found it necessary to write an in-depth story debunking my personal descendance from Emperor Maximilian and the House of Hapsburgh. I kind of liked being associated with the trappings of royalty. But, I understand that the patriotic societies to which you ladies belong demand authenticity and frown on fanciful bits of "icing on the cake".

Well, you can't have everything, but I did leave for posterity my clover leaf water mark, which has remained unique in paper making history. It has kept alive the question as to whether I actually had the lineal rights to the early German coat-of-arms which included a clover leaf. Or did I designate the "Klee Blatt" clover grass shown on the Seal of Germantown, to be the water mark on my reams of paper. It's been so long, and it's rather vague, but perhaps some historian may yet discover additional material that I, ancestor William Rittenhouse, did take pen in hand to record."

Note: Quote: "Like their German ancestors, the Mennonites had a passion for orderliness and thoroughness, and every personal event from birth to death was recorded". End Quote. A "treasure trove for historians".

# The Rittenhouse Tricentennial Reunion

Having thought my immediate involvement in genealogy had subsided for awhile, the news of the proposed 300th Reunion once again reactivated this researcher's intense interest. In 1876, my Grandmother Rubicam and her daughters, one of whom was my six-year old Mother, had visited the Centennial Exhibition in Fairmont Park, Pennsylvania. Some 10,000,000 people attended The Fair, which lasted for seven months, despite the unprecedented heat. Wondrous displays captured the attention of these crowds. In Machinery Hall, Quote: "The typewriter, an ingenious machine for printing letters or manuscripts instead of writing with the pen, was at work". End Quote. My thesis of today was first drafted on my 1916 Underwood Model #5, then Victoria generously typed all the finished story on her computer and laser jet printer. Another highlight of the 100th Celebration of the 1776 Independence was a preview of the Statue of Liberty's hand holding the Torch, sent by France, before the completion of the Statue.

On 14th July 1988, 112 years after this visit, Roberta and her daughter, Victoria, a member of Sequoia Chapter NSDAR, and Associate member of Patience Wright Chapter NSDAR, flew on United Airlines from San Francisco Airport for a three-night, three-day residence in the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel in Philadelphia, PA, the City of Brotherly Love. As a viewer of television who has seen most of the episodes of "Hotel" which feature the

bustling lobby of the beautiful world-famed Fairmont Hotel, and then goes on to disclose the private lives of the individual guests, I wondered about the many "cousins" milling around the lobby of the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel, as to their life stories. A 25-foot blue and black Rittenhouse Reunion banner hung across the balcony overlooking the handsome atrium lobby.

I had requested lower floor rooms in the hotel, but renovations were not completed, so we had the most spectacular view of Philadelphia from the 24th floor. The hotel is located in Logan Square, and our rooms directly overlooked the Logan Circle Fountain, sculpted by the son of Alex. Calder Sr., who had sculpted the statue of William Penn atop the City Hall. Our immediate view included this historic statue. To have City-owned land named for a family was considered an honor, and so, Rittenhouse Square was named for David Rittenhouse, the scientist. Victoria and I walked through this Park in searing heat, but its charm was worth it.

On Friday evening, 15th July, a Get Acquainted Reception was held. Prior to and during the reception, the genealogical room was open, and the self-assured, knowledgeable genealogists of this huge family immediately found "their lines". Bewildered souls took possession of computered listings, trying to copy by hand material beyond their ken. There were some descendants who felt simply being there was enough, and the buffet table laden with cheese, crackers and wine was just fine.

All were asked to wear name tags, and the many intertwined names and places did indeed indicate that William and Geertruid's descendants have Quote: "over the years really gotten around". (Harold Rittenhouse) Those of the Clan who still bear the surname Rittenhouse understandably did seem to "walk a little taller than the rest of us". Brian Rittenhouse, a native Philadelphian, in his mid-twenties, highly approved of our traveling the many miles from California to Pennsylvania, saying he'd attended because his Grandmother told him Philadelphia respected the 300-year old name of Rittenhouse. As descendants of the patriarch, William, it was a proud moment for the representatives from 26 states, 2 provinces of Canada and from Germany to place their names on the Tricentennial Celebrants Parchment. When Victoria and I signed early on Friday evening, it had already reached six feet in length before unrolling for further names.

Faces were gradually assuming identities, but, trying to remember and describe these hundreds of "relatives" is more than complex, and so today, I have chosen to profile my cousin, Milton Rubincam, with whom I have had only three meetings in almost ten years. But, twenty-five years ago when I was a beginner researcher at old Sutro Library on Golden Gate Avenue and the Mechanics' Institute Library on Post Street, I read with admiration the papers and published works of this brilliant man, never dreaming that one day a letter from him would say, "We should be on a first name basis, Roberta, as we're cousins".

This disclosure was my "open sesame" to becoming a Daughter in 1969. Then ten years later in 1979, he invited me to the Revercomb-Rubincam Reunion in Virginia. This was a memorable visit, and then we met again at the Palace Hotel in San Francisco, when Mr. Rubincam was given a 50-Year Merit Award at the National Genealogical Society Annual Conference in 1984. Finally, I was among the privileged descendants to attend his lecture at the Rittenhouse 300th Celebration on Saturday morning, 16 July 1988. He was, as before, his modest self, a man deservedly honoured and respected by his peers, and the recipient of my deepest gratitude. William Rittenhouse has reason to be proud of this direct 10th generation descendant, whose spoken and written words will long endure. He graciously, when presenting his talk, included me in his family introductions as, "my cousin, Roberta, from California". It was so nice to later receive a big hug from his wife, Priscilla, who remembered me from 1979, and a handclasp from his son, David.

Saturday afternoon we boarded our charter buses for the Family Heritage Tour, and fortunately got the first seats in the lead-off bus, with the nicest of docents, who bravely didn't complain of her many layered Colonial costume. In fact, she was concerned about my ability to stand the heat, knowing I came from "foggy San Francisco". We toured highlights of Philadelphia, stopping at Independence Square to view the Liberty Bell in 103 degrees heat, Independence Hall, America's most historic building, and then on to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, for viewing a

special collection of Rittenhouse memorabilia dating back to the 17th Century.

Our next stop was the campus of the University of Pennsylvania, where David Rittenhouse's orrery is proudly displayed. Definition: Quote: Orrery - a mechanical apparatus exhibiting relative motions-positions of members of solar system. End Quote. It is encased in one of the most beautiful cabinets I've ever seen. The invading British so admired its original Chippendale workmanship they spared the orrery, considered one of the greatest early scientific achievements. While there, I told Norman and Victoria that our Pennsylvania/Maryland Jackson family had two of the first graduates in medicine from the University.

By the time the banquet "rolled around" on Saturday evening, all the descendants, who were going to be a part of the celebration, had become a unit. Dinner music was enjoyed, as was the interesting guest speaker, Mennonite Minister John Ruth, Ph.D., Author and Historian. He told of William Rittenhouse's long delayed decision to become a Mennonite minister. Had he done this earlier in his life, he would have actively served as British America's first Mennonite Bishop, as well as first Mennonite minister. He died as Bishop-Elect, a man worn out from hard work. It is reasonable to surmise that perhaps his younger son, Gerhardt (Garrett) didn't feel too badly about his second-son role in his father's life. The very nature of the difficult job of turning linen rags into single sheets of paper by hand

seemingly didn't appeal to him, and he became owner of a grist mill with farmland acreage.

Mr. Rubincam spoke briefly at the banquet and again mentioned his "cousin from California". When the mistress of ceremonies, Jennifer Rittenhouse, took her mike "at random" among the 400 plus people gathered in the ballroom, she included me in the invitation to introduce ourselves. And so, I proudly introduced Victoria and Norman (who had flown all Friday night after work to join us very early Saturday morning). The words I spoke on video tape included my admiration for Mr. Rubincam, and this later prompted another big hug from cousins Priscilla and Milton. Victoria ordered a copy of the tape, which is a 90-minute capsule of the entire Reunion. I was delighted to learn that I was not a casualty of the editor's cutting room floor, but, haven't yet seen the tape. I'm anticipating that pleasure during Christmas with the Broadhurst's.

Another "at random" was Cousin Howard Revercomb Hammond of South Carolina, who had been in charge of the Revercomb/Rubincam Reunion held in Virginia in 1979. It was interesting that the only five persons present at The Tricentennial descending from Charles Rubincam who married Barbara Rittenhouse, spelled their names Revercomb, Rubincam and my mother's maiden name, Rubicam. There are 145 ways to spell the original name of the Widow Rubekam who came to The Colonies in 1726.

"The 300" came to a successful dry (it rained hard two days later) conclusion with the Sunday picnic in Rittenhouse Town, which saw several hundred of us in our blue Rittenhouse tee shirts. Picnic lunches were served in mini shopping bags after we toured the interiors of the two historic houses. The 1690 dwelling has the largest Colonial primitive fireplace in the country. Because of the searing heat, we visited only these two houses -- there are six remaining buildings of the original forty structures in the Colonial days.

In 1984, the Fairmont Park Commission, which owns and maintains Rittenhouse Town, welcomed the assistance of Friends of Historic Rittenhouse Town (which I joined in July). Mr. Hugh Hanson, the current President, was co-organizer with Mr. Harold Rittenhouse, for the Tricentennial Reunion. And so, the waters of the Creek, reflecting the 100 degree sun's rays, sparkled like jewels in this unique rural village of twenty acres set in Fairmont Park (now the World's largest, over 8,000 acres), while the Rittenhouse descendants disproved the words, "You can't go back".

Leaving the picnic on Sunday afternoon, Norman, Victoria and I began our drive to Virginia in a 1988 rented car. In Cape Charles, VA, Victoria spotted midst heavy trees, a "Rittenhouse Motor Lodge". We stopped and proprietor Robert Rittenhouse was most surprised to see three strangers from California, wearing Rittenhouse tee shirts. He was unaware of the gala. (After returning to The City, I looked with curiosity in the San



Francisco phone book to see if there were any more "surprises". Only one is listed, a Rittenhouse Paper Co. on Lyon Street, manufacturers of cash register paper ribbon, etc., but I haven't researched the background of the company.)

The highlight of our Virginia trip was to hug my first great grandchild, Mathew, who in September of 1987, became the 13th generation Rittenhouse in my immediate family. Yes, I intend to put a copy of this talk away for him, as he just might, like Roberta, become a genealogist in the dawning 21st Century.

This concludes my talk, but in the back pages of this gift pamphlet, you'll find further Rittenhouse material, which includes press news, etc. Also included are copies of the original congratulatory letters, requested by Roberta, from Mrs. Raymond Franklin Fleck, President General, The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, and from Mrs. John Harrick, President General, The National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century. These gracious letters were sent by Roberta to the Tricentennial Reunion Committee in Pennsylvania.

Thank you.

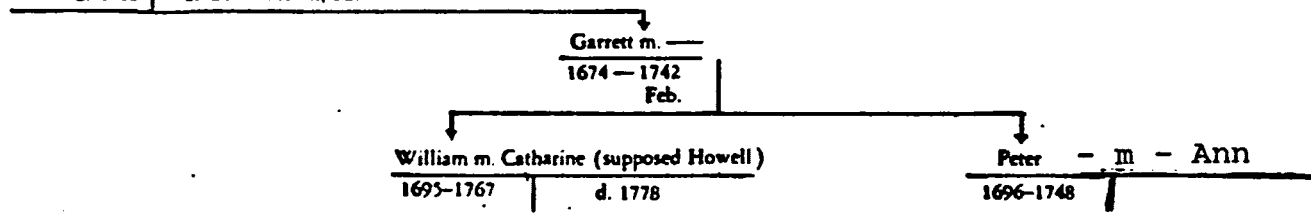
3 October 1988



Roberta N. Thomson  
Mrs. John Thomson Jr.  
Past Regent  
Chaplain  
Sequoia Chapter NSDAR

## RITTENHOUSE PEDIGREE

b. 1644	—near Mülheim on River Ruhr
d. 1708	—at Germantown, Pa.



Peter Rubincam - m - Hannah, daughter of Ezekiel Potts  
(circa 1746-died 1821) : (Died 1833)

Charles Rubincam - m - 1. Hannah Gooderl (Died 1831)  
(Died 1848) : 2. Hannah Wickersham (Widow)

George Rubincam Sr. - m - Harriet Hudson  
(1808 - 1879) : (1810-1876)

Charles Rubicam - m - Rebecca W. Dickey  
(1834-1876) : (1832-1903)

Florence C. Rubicam - m - Robert E. Nelson  
(1870-1915) (1900) (1876-1915)

Roberta Miriam Nelson - m - John Burnside Thomson Jr.  
(1909- ) (1930) (1907-1981)

Phyllis Lea Thomson (1937- ) Sykes	Joyce Beth Thomson (1941- ) Crowell	Victoria Rose Thomson (1948- ) Broadhurst
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## Progeny

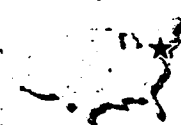
**Progeny :**

Patricia (1963)	Melinda (1964)	Michele (1966) Malenda : Mathew (1987)	John (1961)	Diana (1963)
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# Reunion of Clan Marks A Heritage of 300 Years

By WILLIAM K. STEVENS

Special to The New York Times



PHILADELPHIA, July 17 — There has almost never been a Philadelphia without a Rittenhouse. The name calls forth images of old money and low-key gentility.

Rittenhouse Square, one of four eight-acre public parks set aside when William Penn laid out the city, is at once a symbol of the city's past glory and an elegant, leafy oasis of throbbing late 20th-century urban humanity. Business after business in the surrounding neighborhood of town houses and skyscrapers basks in the reflected cachet of a name everybody knows, or has at least heard of: Rittenhouse Psychology Group and Rittenhouse Cleaners and Tailors, and so on, through 39 lines in the telephone book.

But who really were the Rittenhouses and what do they represent? Not even all those who bear the name have always been entirely sure. "I always knew Rittenhouse Square was there, but I didn't know what it meant," said Jennifer Rittenhouse, 24 years old, who lives just north of here in the town of Blue Bell.

In this season of family reunions, Ms. Rittenhouse and more than 400 of her clan of 40,000 to 50,000 blood relations converged this weekend on Philadelphia from 26 states and Canada to explore and re-illuminate the family heritage. It was a time of reawakening and in some cases rediscovery, the first Rittenhouse reunion in nearly a century and only the second in 300 years.

## More than 400 Rittenhouse descendants gather.

Three centuries ago this year, just six years after Philadelphia's founding, the first Rittenhouse came to America. He was William Rittenhouse (Wilhelm Rittinghausen in his native Germany), and he came here as did so many others of his age to find economic opportunity and religious tolerance.

He was the first Mennonite minister in America, and he established its first paper mill, in what is now Fairmount Park. It produced most of the American-made paper of the Colonial and Revolutionary periods. Rittenhouse paper went into not only Revolutionary tracts but also into cartridges and gun wadding for the Continental army.

The whitewashed stone buildings of the original Rittenhouse homestead, restored and spruced up, are nestled in RittenhouseTown, along the banks of a tumbling brook in a secluded, thickly wooded enclave in the middle of Philadelphia. This afternoon the patriarch's descendants gathered there for a box lunch, a short play and the sharing of memories.

This weekend they ate, drank, pored over genealogical books and charts, listened to lectures about their ancestors and decided to set up a permanent family organization. In

the words of Harold R. Rittenhouse of Harleysville, Pa., the organizer of the tricentennial reunion, they "reasserted family ties."

It was David Rittenhouse, the patriarch's great-grandson, who is perhaps most responsible for the name's luster. He was a contemporary of Benjamin Franklin and was born at RittenhouseTown, became a clock maker and an astronomer and was deeply involved in the Revolutionary movement. Rittenhouse Square was named for him in the 19th century.

Although many of the city's movers and shakers lived around Rittenhouse Square in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, few, if any, were Rittenhouses. Milton Rubincam, a genealo-

gist and an authority on the family who spoke at the reunion, said that while many in the family have distinguished themselves in given fields over the years, they have generally not been part of Philadelphia's industrial-age ruling elite.

Rather, as is true with most American clans, they have spread across the continent and throughout the walks of life. Harold Rittenhouse, for instance, is a real estate broker. His distant cousin, Jennifer, who coordinated arrangements for the reunion, is a pharmaceutical sales representative. Kirtland G. Smith, who came to the reunion wearing a T-shirt proclaiming his Rittenhouse lineage, is a stockbroker from Seattle.

"It's a pretty diverse group," Mr.

Smith said. "Over 300 years you're bound to get that kind of diversity."

Why do people come to such a reunion? Pride, surely. But also, said Jennifer Rittenhouse, "I think people are searching more for their identity now, becoming more aware of themselves and wanting to put into perspective where they've come from."

Ms. Rittenhouse is the daughter of a farmer, and schoolmates used to call her Jennifer Chickenhouse. "I used to get angry at being teased and having to write such a long name," she said.

But today, she said, "people ask, 'Are you related to the Rittenhouses of Philadelphia?' and you say yes, and it's really a nice feeling. You feel special."



MRS. RAYMOND FRANKLIN FLECK  
PRESIDENT GENERAL  
NATIONAL SOCIETY DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION  
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 1776 D STREET, N. W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

July 6, 1988

Mrs. John B. Thomson, Jr.  
2451 40th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94116

Dear Mrs. Thomson:

Thank you for your letter and all the information about the Rittenhouse Family and your Tricentennial reunion to be held in Philadelphia this month. Wonderful!

I wish you much success as you celebrate the 300th anniversary of the arrival of William Rittenhouse in America. Wish all families would follow your good example and have similar reunions celebrating their heritage. Know you will have an exciting weekend. Enjoy every minute.

Again, my thanks for letting me know about the Rittenhouse Tricentennial.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Raymond Franklin Fleck

ADF/rgn



## NATIONAL SOCIETY COLONIAL DAMES XVII CENTURY

MRS. JOHN P. HARKINS, PRESIDENT GENERAL  
4065 BOXWOOD CIRCLE, JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI 39211

To Whom It May Concern:


It is my pleasure to extend congratulations to the Rittenhouse Family on the occasion of its Tricentennial Reunion. I believe that William Rittenhouse, the Patriarch, would be pleased with his outstanding descendants, among whom are many well-known citizens who have made vast contributions to our great nation.

It has been my pleasure to know a couple of this family: Mrs. Roberta N. Thomson (Mrs. John Jr) of the Anne Bradstreet Chapter, Colonial Dames XVII Century, of California and a close personal friend, Susan Lamb Griffith (Mrs. James E.), of Jackson, Ms. member of Rev. Samuel Swayze Chapter, CD. Susan presented a program on the family at one of our chapter meetings and everyone was favorably impressed. I understand that Mrs. Thomson also gave a program on William Rittenhouse and that it, too, was well-received.

I hope that the celebration of the 300th anniversary will be successful and that all will have a great time visiting with all the "kin".

*Robbys R. Harkins*

Mrs. John P. Harkins  
President General  
National Society  
Colonial Dames XVII Century



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## Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown

A Non-Profit Corporation  
3612 Earham Street • Philadelphia, PA. 19129

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### WELCOME

We are delighted to welcome you to The RittenhouseTown Family Reunion - the first such event in 100 years - and the Tri-centennial Celebration of William Rittenhouse's arrival in America with his wife Geertruid and three children: Nicholas, Gerhardt and Elisabeth.

The New World provided William, a peaceful and God-fearing man, the freedom to worship in the Mennonite tradition. For eleven generations The Rittenhouse Family has expanded and scattered across North America and abroad. There are perhaps 30,000 descendants of William and Geertruid, a substantial family tree.


The Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown which sponsors this weekend reunion is dedicated to the legacy of William Rittenhouse, the celebration of his contributions and of those generations that followed.

The Reunion Committee is anxious to have your participation in the scheduled events; we also want to be sure you have a good time in Philadelphia this weekend. Please call on committee members (identified with ribbons on the badge) for help and information at any time.

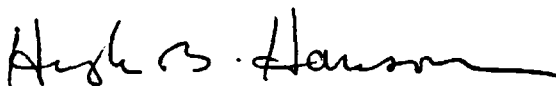
Your Reunion Packet provides the schedule of formal events for the weekend. But the greatest event of our celebration will be the meeting and greating of the attendees.

Have a wonderful time.

Sincerely,



Harold R. Rittenhouse  
Chm. Family Reunion  
300th Anniversary Celebration



Hugh B. Hanson  
President  
Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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William Penn atop City Hall

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# The Papermaker

July 1988

Newsletter of Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown

Reunion Issue

## WELCOME ALL and now a word from....

**Hugh B. Hanson**  
*President of Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown*

**Harold R. Rittenhouse**  
*Reunion Chairperson*

Dear Members:

We greet the Rittenhouse Family members this July with much excitement; this is the kind of event that makes our efforts at RittenhouseTown worthwhile.

In one sense, this celebration of William's arrival in America 300 years ago is the beginning of a two and a half year long celebration. We now look forward to 1990, anniversary of The William's leasing land along the Monoshone Creek for 5 shillings per year and consequently the making of the first American sheet of paper.

Coinciding with the Reunion this month, the Friends are very pleased to have the completed Master Plan Study in hand. This report was commissioned to John Milner Associates eighteen months ago and is the basis upon which restoration can begin. It contains history, architectural evaluation, archeology, and site analysis confirming the "validity" of RittenhouseTown as a major historical site.

*Next steps will be to:*

1. Prepare a short range (1988-1990) developmental plan for approval by the City (Fairmount Park Commission).
2. Begin the fund raising process to finance the short range capital and operating budget.

*Some key elements of the short range plan are:*

- An interpretive trail -- "a walk through history"
- A visitor's center and orientation program
- Continuing archeology each summer
- Furnishings collection for the homestead
- A competition to design a memorial to the first paper mill

Meanwhile we continue our public programs for educational and community interest. The future of RittenhouseTown is looking bright. Your support is appreciated.

Warmly,  
**Hugh B. Hanson**  
President of Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown

As Chairperson of the Rittenhouse Tricentennial Reunion, I would like to welcome all of the reunion attendees to the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel where we will be celebrating the arrival of William Rittenhouse in America in the year 1688. We hope that you will enjoy the varied and interesting program that has been planned by family members and Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown. We are most appreciative of the countless hours that have gone into this group's planning over the past two years and would like to take this opportunity to thank them for a job well done.

I shall be looking forward to meeting each of you during the three-day celebration.

Sincerely,  
**Harold R. Rittenhouse**  
Reunion Chairperson  
1st Vice-President, Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown



L to R: Harold Rittenhouse, V.P. of Friends, Jack Asher, Board Member and Hugh Hanson, President of Friends. Stirring apple butter during Oktoberfest festival '87.



## Guest Speakers

### Milton Rubincam

Born in Philadelphia in 1909, Milton Rubincam is a descendant of Peter Rittenhouse, a grandson of William. A retired Foreign Operations Officer and Security Officer with the Department of Commerce, Mr. Rubincam has been interested in genealogy since an early age. He formerly served as President of the National Genealogical Society and The American Society of Genealogists, and at one time was Chairman of the Board for Certification of Genealogist. Mr. Rubincam has written numerous articles in genealogical periodicals and a biography of William Rittenhouse.

### John Landis Ruth

Born in Lower Salford Township in 1930, John Landis Ruth has taught English at several colleges, including Eastern and Bethel Colleges. He has served as pastor at Conshocken Mennonite Mission, King of Prussia Mennonite Fellowship and associate pastor at Salford Mennonite Church. Dr. Ruth has variously been a writer, producer, narrator, director, and/or actor over the past two decades. Much of his work focuses on Mennonites, and to a lesser extent on groups such as the Amish and Hutterites.

## Schedule of Events

### FRIDAY, July 15, 1988, 4-8 p.m.

Registration.

Get acquainted/wine and cheese reception.

Historical Signing of Tricentennial Parchment by all participants.

### SATURDAY, July 16

#### Morning 7:45-12:30

Registration

Family Organization Session

Welcome by Harold R. Rittenhouse and Hugh B. Hanson

Address by Milton Rubincam, Historian and Genealogist

Coffee Break

E. Mark Haacke, Ph.D., European Rittenghausen Research

Family Goal Setting Session

#### Afternoon 1:30-5:00

Optional Family Heritage Tour \*

Free time for those not participating in tour.

#### Evening 6-9:30

Reception and Banquet

Guest speaker: John L. Ruth, Ph.D., Mennonite historian

### SUNDAY July 17

#### Morning 8:30-10:15

Optional worship service and open forum.

#### Midday 10:30-2:30

Celebration Picnic at RittenhouseTown. Group bus transportation from Hotel.

\*Centipede Tours of Philadelphia includes: Independence National Historical Park including Independence Hall and Liberty Bell; David Rittenhouse memorabilia display at Historical Society of Penn.; and the Orrery in the Van Pelt Library, U. of Penn.

All Reunion events, except Heritage Tour and Picnic to be held on *Ballroom Level at Franklin Plaza Hotel*. See separate schedule of events for detailed times and directions.

family group sheets which have been prepared have been entered onto the Personal Ancestor File program for easy retrieval and the eventual preparation of an updated book or books on the Rittenhouse family. A copy of this work will be at the hotel.

During the last few years, several significant items have been uncovered. First, Willem Rittinghausen's marriage and father's name were found. Second, a document dated 1698 connecting us directly to relatives in Europe is still in a Rittenhouse descendant's possession. Third, a great deal of information on several European Rittenghausen families has pointed to possible early origins of the family. More details and displays will be presented at the tricentennial.

Finally, the genealogical committee of 1987/88 welcomes any suggestions and participation in the upcoming reunion for the continuation of this effort. Many items such as the creation of a newsletter, publication of a Rittenhouse book, and keeping memorabilia will be discussed on Saturday. We look forward to meeting with you.

*E. Mark Haacke, Ph.D., Genealogist.*



KR



## *The Paper Revolution Unfolds . . .*

Every link in the growth of the American concept of Democracy involved some sort of paper. From the Magna Carta to the Bill of Rights, our revolution was a paper revolution. It was started largely because of taxes on paper and influenced by the newspapers which had to pay them. Newspapers and pamphlets became paper bullets that united 13 independent colonies.

The Rittenhouse Mill and nearby mills belonging to other families were the sources of American-made paper for more than 100 years. During the revolution, the Rittenhouses still produced a large part of American-made paper. The RittenhouseTown paper center also served as center for the paper revolution.

Standing between the battlelines of the patriots and the 9,000 English soldiers occupying Philadelphia, the mill was important to the patriots' cause . . . paper from the mill was used to make cartridges and gun wadding and the militia inserted what's said to have been Rittenhouse white paper into their hats during the famous Battle of Germantown, making this their common uniform. A bullet from that battle still remains in the door to 207 Lincoln Drive. It was from RittenhouseTown that the English troop activities could be watched and the roads to Valley Forge and Germantown protected.

The Rittenhouses fought in the Roxborough militia and David Rittenhouse, close friend of Jefferson and Franklin, was a leader in the development of many of our country's causes.

It is no small wonder that the two most important products of the revolution were pieces of paper . . . the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION



VALLEY FORGE



UNITED STATES POSTAGE 8 CENTS



Bunker Hill 1775 by Trumbull  
US Bicentennial 10c

**Friends of Historic RittenhouseTown**

**A Non-Profit Corporation**

3612 Earllham Street

Philadelphia, PA 19129

**Credit:**

**Text:Walt Howat.**

*The Philadelphia Inquirer, Jan. 25, 1988*



*The Philadelphia Inquirer* / MICHAEL VIOLA

Harold R. Rittenhouse (left) and Hugh B. Hanson at ancestor's 1707 "new" house.

By Edgar Williams  
*Inquirer Staff Writer*

## *Historic clan to note 300th anniversary*

It is estimated that there are 40,000 members of the Rittenhouse family in the United States and Canada. And if all goes according to plan, upward of 2,000 of them will gather in Philadelphia in mid-July.

It will be the Rittenhouse Tricentennial Reunion, a three-day bash to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the arrival in America of William Rittenhouse, the patriarch.

William Rittenhouse, born Wilhelm Rettinghaus in Germany in 1644, was the New World's first papermaker. He built his paper mill in 1690 as part of a colonial village called RittenhouseTown, part of which survives today, tucked in the angle between busy Lincoln Drive and Wissahickon Avenue

(See RITTENHOUSE on 8-A)

# *To preserve history, a family gathers to celebrate 300 years*

**RITTENHOUSE, from 1-A**  
in Fairmount Park. And there he  
manufactured fine white paper.

Outstanding as the paper was,  
though, William Rittenhouse is at  
least as well-known today for his  
progeny as for his parchment. He  
founded a remarkable line of descen-  
dants, including a great-grandson,  
David Rittenhouse, who was born in  
RittenhouseTown and grew up to be  
one of the nation's great scientists.

"There must be very few fields in  
which Rittenhouses haven't been ac-  
tive," Harold R. Rittenhouse was say-  
ing last week as he walked through  
the rain at RittenhouseTown. "Over  
the years, we've really gotten  
around."

Harold Rittenhouse, a real estate  
broker in Harleysville, is a 10th-gen-  
eration direct descendant of William  
Rittenhouse. He is chairman of the  
family reunion, to be held July 15-17  
at the Wyndham Franklin Plaza Ho-  
tel. And he is beginning to appreci-  
ate the cogency of the Chinese prover-  
b, "It is later than you think."

Rittenhouse and his committee  
have been working on arrangements  
for the reunion since early 1987, and  
now, in point of locating potential  
attendees, they have gone about as  
far as they can on their own.

Nearly 2,000 invitations have been  
sent to people bearing the name of  
Rittenhouse as well as direct descen-  
dants with other surnames; about 500  
of them went to residents of the  
Philadelphia area. But, Rittenhouse  
says, there doubtless remain many  
family members as yet unlocated.

"So we are asking any and all fam-  
ily members with whom we haven't  
been in touch to let us know about  
themselves and be with us in July,"  
Rittenhouse said.

Rittenhouse may be reached at P.O.  
Box 212, 771 Sharon Line, Harleys-  
ville, Pa. 19438; telephone 215-256-  
6543.

The reunion will feature lectures  
on William Rittenhouse and some of  
his descendants, workshops on such  
subjects as genealogy, a banquet, a  
worship service (the patriarch was  
the first Mennonite minister in  
America), and a visit to Rittenhouse-  
Town.

RittenhouseTown, situated on the  
Monoshone, or Paper Mill Creek,  
which flows into the nearby Wissa-  
hickon Creek, is said to be the na-  
tion's only rural village in a large  
urban center. Of the original 40  
buildings, seven remain. The village  
is owned and maintained by the Fair-  
mount Park Commission, with a  
large helping hand by a nonprofit  
organization called the Friends of  
Historic RittenhouseTown.

Established in 1984, the Friends of  
Historic RittenhouseTown seeks not  
only to rediscover the site of Ameri-  
ca's first paper mill but also to make  
it a major historical attraction, a  
display case for a meaningful "living  
history" program showing a 17th-cen-  
tury industrial community pre-  
served in its original form.

"We are just beginning to gather  
momentum," said Hugh B. Hanson of  
Gladwyne, president of the Friends  
of Historic RittenhouseTown and a  
retired executive of the Weyer-  
haeuser Co., a major paper-manufac-  
turing firm. "Through the Ritten-  
house family reunion, we hope to  
call attention to our program."

In addition to David Rittenhouse,  
who was a superb clockmaker when  
he wasn't working at being a scien-  
tist, direct descendants of William  
Rittenhouse include Maj. Gen. Wil-  
liam Crawford Gorgas, a physician  
who helped conquer yellow fever,  
and Raymond Rubicam, one of the  
fathers of modern advertising.

As Harold Rittenhouse put it, the  
Rittenhouses have gotten around.

*Greetings:*

*You Are Invited To Attend*  
*the*  
*Rittenhouse Tricentennial Reunion*  
*to be held*  
*July 15, 16 and 17, 1988*  
*at the*  
*Wyndham Franklin Plaza Hotel*  
*17th and Vine Streets*  
*Philadelphia, PA*

*To Celebrate the 300th Anniversary  
of the Arrival of William Rittenhouse in America.*

**WHO IS INVITED:** All Descendants of William Rittenhouse, allied families, as well as all other interested persons.

**PROGRAM  
HIGHLIGHTS:**

Friday	<b>4:00-8:00 P.M.</b> Registration. <b>6:00-8:00 P.M.</b> Get-Acquainted Reception.
Saturday	<b>9:00-12:30 P.M.</b> Guest speaker Milton Rubincam, Historian and Genealogist. Meetings to plan family organization, genealogy research, and location and disposition of memorabilia and family heirlooms. <b>1:00-7:00 P.M.</b> Tour Philadelphia on your own or join a tour of the Rittenhouse Connection in Philadelphia. <b>7:00-9:30 P.M.</b> Reception and banquet with guest speaker John L. Ruth, Ph.D., Author and Historian.
Sunday	<b>8:00-10:30 A.M.</b> Optional Worship Service and Open Forum. <b>10:30-2:00 P.M.</b> Celebration Picnic at RittenhouseTown with tours and Special Heritage Program. Transportation provided.



*Anne Bradstreet Chapter*  
*Colonial Dames XVII Century*

510 Country Club Drive, Santa Rosa  
Sept. 11, 1975

Mrs. John B. Thomson, Jr.  
2451 - 40th Ave.  
San Francisco, Ca. 94116

Dear Mrs. Thomson:

This week I received the good news that your application paper for CDXVII Century had been approved by the Registrar General. Your national number is 13131.

Our members are delighted to have you in the chapter and extend a most cordial welcome. Everyone is looking forward to seeing you again on Sept. 20th.

Enclosed is a copy of our new chapter yearbook.

Cordially,

*Dorothy R. Usinger*  
Mrs. Philip C. Usinger,  
Registrar of Anne Bradstreet Chp.



**National Society**  
**Colonial Dames XVII Century**

*This is to certify that*

**MRS. JOHN B. THOMSON, JR.**

*is a member of*

**Anne Bradstreet**

**CHAPTER**

**13131**

**NATIONAL No. 1976**

*Mrs. Chas W. Carroll*  
*ld*  
**Treasurer**

How lucky can a person be, having the well-known Milton Rubican in your family line? He is one of the very TOP genealogists in the country!

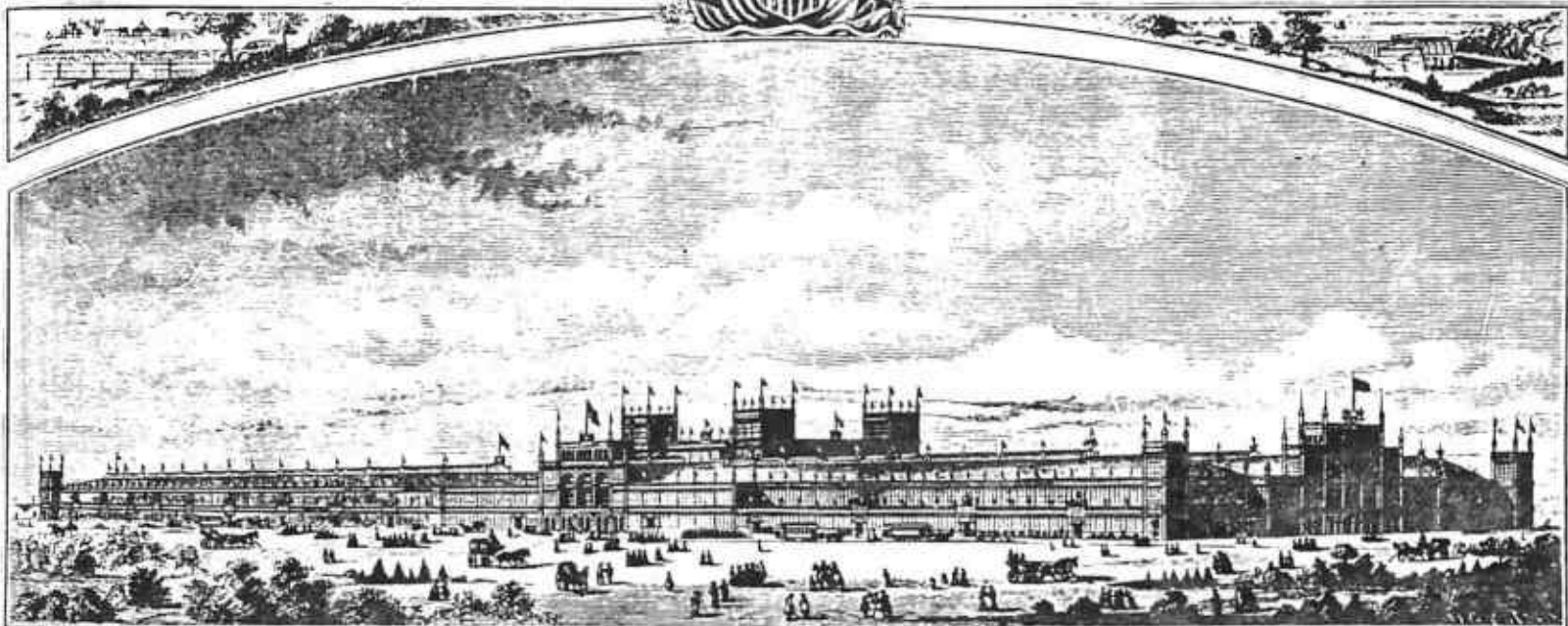
*Dorothy*



PHILADELPHIA U. S. AMERICA



MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> • NOVEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> 1876



MAIN EXHIBITION BUILDING.

1776

# INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.

1876

MAIN BUILDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION, PHILADELPHIA, 1876.

1880 feet in length and 464 feet in width.

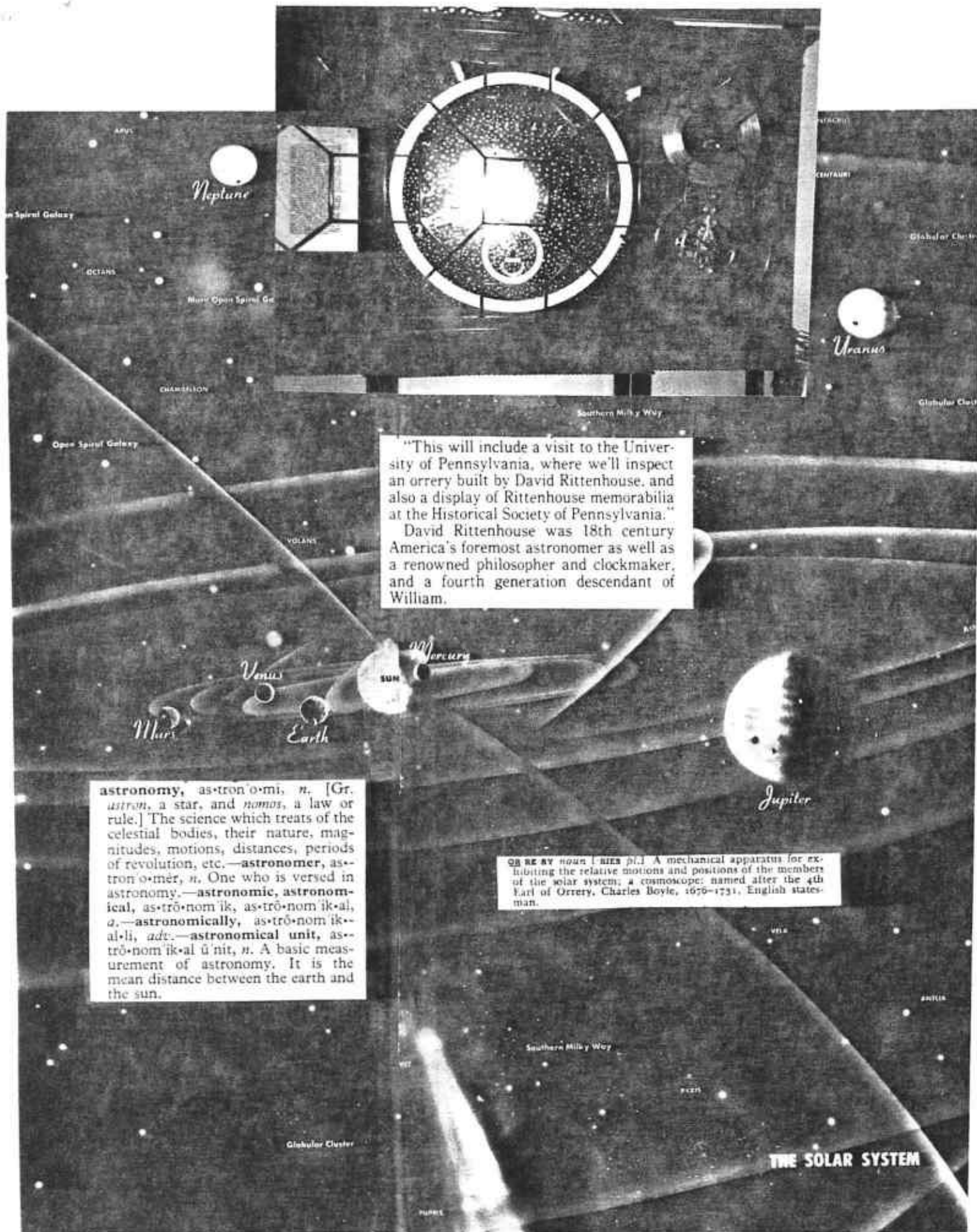
## THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

### *Germantown*

Is the principal and most beautiful suburb of Philadelphia. It is reached by the Germantown branch of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, and by a line of horse-cars. It was settled in 1683 by emigrants from Germany, from whom it takes its name, and was a distinct corporation until 1854, when it was incorporated with Philadelphia, of which city it now forms a part. It contains many splendid country-seats, a large number of elegant but less costly suburban mansions, and several historical mansions, chief among which is the old "Chew Mansion," which was occupied by the British as a fortress during the battle of Germantown, on the 4th of October, 1777. Germantown is a favorite place of residence with the wealthier class of Philadelphians, and its natural beauty has been heightened by a liberal expenditure of wealth and taste in the adornment of the homes with which it is filled.



THE BATTLE OF GERMANTOWN. CHEW'S HOUSE.



"This will include a visit to the University of Pennsylvania, where we'll inspect an orrery built by David Rittenhouse, and also a display of Rittenhouse memorabilia at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania."

David Rittenhouse was 18th century America's foremost astronomer as well as a renowned philosopher and clockmaker, and a fourth generation descendant of William.

**astronomy**, as·tron·o·mi, *n.* [Gr. *astron*, a star, and *nomos*, a law or rule.] The science which treats of the celestial bodies, their nature, magnitudes, motions, distances, periods of revolution, etc.—**astronomer**, as·tron·o·mēr, *n.* One who is versed in astronomy.—**astronomic**, **astronomical**, as·trō·nom'ik, as·trō·nom'ik·al, *a.*—**astronomically**, as·trō·nom'ik·al·li, *adv.*—**astronomical unit**, as·trō·nom'ik·al ū'nit, *n.* A basic measurement of astronomy. It is the mean distance between the earth and the sun.

**ORRERY** *noun* [RIES pl.] A mechanical apparatus for exhibiting the relative motions and positions of the members of the solar system; a cosmoscope; named after the 4th Earl of Orrery, Charles Boyle, 1676-1731, English statesman.

THE SOLAR SYSTEM



# ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RITTENHOUSE SOURCES

1. Historic Germantown by Tinkom and Simon (The American Philosophical Society, Independence Square, Philadelphia PA 1955)
2. An Ancestral Chart and Handbook by Olive Barrick Rowland (Garrett & Massie, Publishers, Richmond MCMXXXV)
3. Ancient and Modern Germantown by The Reverend Samuel Hotchkin (Ziegler and Company, Publishers, Philadelphia 1889)
4. Peter Rittenhouse of Cresheim by Milton Rubincam (Past Pres. National Gen. Society. Article in Society Quarterly 1943)
5. Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania by Wilfred Jordan, Editor. (Lewes Historical Publishing Co. of New York 1932)
6. Germantown 1683/1933 by Edward Hocker (Published by Author, Philadelphia 1933)
7. Rittenhouse Genealogy Debunked by Calvin Kephart (Past Pres. National Gen. Society. Article in Society Quarterly 1938)
8. A Genea-Biographical History of the Rittenhouse Family and All Its Branches in America by Daniel Cassel (Philadelphia 1893)
9. The Illustrated History of the Centennial Exhibition 1876 by James McCabe (Philadelphia 1876)
10. "Philadelphia Journal" (Newspaper article) by William K. Stevens (Reprinted "The NY Times" 18 July 1988)
11. "Philadelphia Inquirer" (Newspaper article 25 January 1988) by Edgar Williams (sent to Roberta by Marwood Darlington, Historian and Genealogist, PA)
12. Friends of Historic Rittenhouse Town Newsletter/Pamphlet (Art and Text). Credits: Larry McMunn, Jan Gleysteen, Walt Howat and Mary Ann Howat.
13. European Rittenhouse Research, E. Mark Haacke PH.D., Gen.
14. Additional material was gleaned from the Rittenhouse and Rubi(n)cam research of Roberta's Cousin Milton Rubincam.

Rittenhouse  
Family

OCCGS REFERENCE ONLY

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