

YOUR DAY AS A GUIDE AT THE JASON RUSSELL HOUSE

OUTDOOR TOURS 2021

Safety and guide self-screening at home

1. Guides should make sure they are **not experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms**, have **not had “close contact”** with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19, and have **not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine** recently.
2. If any of these situations exist, **please telephone the Month Manager and fellow guide as soon as possible and try to find a replacement**. You should not come in for your shift.
 - a. Please self-screen first thing Sunday morning, so that you will have time to work with the Month Manager on finding a replacement.
3. Please read our *Guide COVID-19 Protocols 2021* handout for further details.
4. Guides should bring masks when they come to guide and masks should be worn when you are in the building.

Outdoor tour format

1. Free tours will be offered on Sunday from 1pm-4pm, available on a walk-in basis. Guides should arrive at the house by 12:45pm.
2. Maximum group size is 9 visitors. A maximum of 2 household groups can be in one tour if the total is under 9 people.
 - a. MA COVID regulations have recently been relaxed. If a situation arises, guides can allow more participants or more households, if there will be sufficient space for social distancing between the household groups and if the guide is comfortable with more people.
3. Masks are not required for outdoor tours as long as the visitors maintain a safe distance.
 - a. Please remind the visitors and/or 2 household groups to remain safely distanced by 6 feet during the tour.
 - b. Guides are free to wear masks outdoors if they are more comfortable
4. Each household must complete a Registration Form which the JRH will keep, largely for contact tracing information needed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
5. No public restrooms are available. No visitors are allowed in the building.

Weather decisions

1. Guides will want to follow the weekend weather closely for their tour. We would like the outdoor tours to be offered rain or shine. Umbrellas are available for guides to use in intermittent or light rain.
2. If there is going to be extreme weather with high winds and/or heavy rain and/or lightning between 1-4pm, then the guides will need to make arrangements to cancel.
 - a. On Sunday before 11:00am, the two assigned guides should discuss the weather with each other and what they think the best decision is.
 - b. Please contact the month manager by 11:00am on Sunday to either discuss and/or share your decision to cancel.
 - c. If cancelling, the month manager will contact the caretaker, Greg Stathopoulos, (and Jean and Elaine) to let him know not to unlock the building and to indicate it as closed.
3. If extreme weather develops during your shift, please follow all of the steps in *Ending the Day*. When you leave, flip the “Closed” sign on the glass front door. You should let the Month Manager know about your decision to close early.

Preparing for the day

1. Greg will open the house and meet you when you arrive. However, if the house is not open when you arrive, wait a few minutes, and if you have a cell phone, call Greg (ph.781-589-7872). If you

can't reach him, you can go around to the Mass Ave side and knock on his door. Other people with the key include several members of the Tour Guide Committee, whose phone numbers are listed at the end of this document. Enter these numbers into your phone so they are handy. **NEW: the new glass doors lock automatically when closed. You must have your key fob (see #3) with you at all times after initially entering the building.**

2. Upon entering the building, guides should write their names on the sign-in sheet at the front desk, as this is protocol for all who enter the building.
3. **Two key fobs on a coil bracelet** are kept in the front desk right drawer. Each guide should claim one for the day to get in and out of the building because the **front door locks automatically when it closes**. To open the door, place the fob on the small black rectangular box to the left of the "Ring" doorbell.
4. Welcome Table: Greg will put a 2' x 4' white table outside at the bottom of the front steps.
 - a. There is a Welcome Table basket on a shelf in the coat closet with visitor registration materials: touchless sanitizer dispenser, clean pens, 2 pen holders (marked clean and used), extra face masks for visitors, and a donation jar.
 - b. Set up contents of the Welcome Basket on the table outside. (Don't forget your key fob!)
5. Place the "open" flags outside. The taller flag should go into the holder by the door, and the shorter one on the wooden art exhibit sign at the stone wall. These flags are kept in the closet.
6. Flip the "Open" sign on the glass front door.
7. If it is not too windy, take the wooden easel from the closet and set it up at the bottom of the steps to the front door. Place the reproduction of *The Battle of Menotomy* by Ruth Berry on the easel.
8. Put on your nametag which is kept in the alphabetized box in the grey cupboard.
9. The voice amplifiers and personal fans are kept in the cupboard inside labeled plastic containers.
 - a. Restrooms, voice amplifiers, personal fans, and 2 large umbrellas are labeled A and B and each guide will claim a letter for the day.
10. Locate the Tour Binder (yellow cover) in the cupboard. You can use this binder at the front desk or take it outside with you. It stores our tour data so be sure it stays secure and dry and is returned to the cupboard at the end of the day. This binder holds:
 - a. Guide roster with telephone numbers
 - b. Phone numbers for the Guide Committee and for Greg
 - c. Blank and completed Tour Guide Logs
 - d. Blank visitor Registration Forms
 - e. Blank and completed Russell Descendent Forms.
11. Begin filling out the Tour Guide Log sheet with the date and your names, and be sure to update it throughout the day with tour data.
12. Keep the glass front doors closed. If you will be sitting indoors be sure to watch for approaching visitors so you can greet them outside.
13. If you would prefer to sit outside, you can move the folding chairs outside.
14. Two large umbrellas (if needed) will be in the coat closet (labeled A and B).
15. For access to the Smith Museum or the Assembly Room, the key for those doors is also in the front desk right drawer on a green lanyard or hanging on a hook in the hall between the 2 bathrooms.
 - a. One guide may want to sit in the Smith Museum to be safely distanced.
 - b. There is a phone on the wall in the kitchen and a cordless phone is kept in the charger at the front desk. To answer the cordless phone, push the green "talk" button on the left.
16. Please listen for incoming calls especially on unsettled weather days. The website instructs visitors to call if they have tour questions. If you are sitting outside, you can take the cordless phone and keep it safely on the Welcome Table.

17. **Generally speaking, a tour guide should not serve alone.** For instructions on what to do if your fellow guide does not show up, please read “If your guide partner does not show” (Attachment A).

Handling Visitors

1. When visitors arrive, ask the head of household to complete the Registration Form. Please be sure that all household members are listed with their full names.
2. For those identifying as *Russell descendants*, ask them to fill out the Russell descendant form found in the yellow Tour Binder (i.e., how they are related to Jason Russell, their home address, family stories they like to share). For more information on welcoming Russells, see the instructions “If a Russell Descendant Visits” (Attachment B).
3. One guide gives the tour while the other guide stays by the door or outside to greet new visitors who might arrive.
4. There are two options if visitors arrive while a tour is in progress. If the tour has just begun (and if the total number of people will be less than 9 and no more than 2 households) ask them if they would like to join the group in progress and what they have missed will be shared at the end of the tour. Be sure to have them complete the Registration Form before they join the group. Or they can wait until the current tour is finished. Tours should take approximately 20-25 minutes.
5. Remember that you are the ambassador for the Jason Russell House – and for all of Arlington. Many guests are tourists from far away. It is obvious that all should be welcomed with warmth and enthusiasm.

Downtime

1. Guides can take turns viewing the new exhibit in the Assembly Room, “Menotomy: Road to Revolution.” For access to the Assembly Room, the key is in the front desk right drawer on a green lanyard or hanging on a hook in the hall between the 2 bathrooms.
2. Please familiarize yourself with the Information Binder (blue cover) in the cupboard. This binder holds information about the Jason Russell House. Consult this source if you have any questions about tour guiding content.
3. There are also books available for review, which are on the shelf along the stairs going down to the basement.

Ending the Day

Starting around 3:45pm, encourage late arrivals to come back another time since tours are finished by 4:00pm. Closing is a reversal of the steps in “Opening.” Here are the things to do:

1. Complete Tour Guide Log in the yellow Tour Binder.
 - a. Don't forget to put an accurate tally of the number of visitors and tours on this log sheet and total them. This is important for our annual statistics and for grant proposals.
 - b. The completed Registration Forms for your day should be filed by month in the box in the cupboard.
2. If the donation jar has money in it, place it in the cupboard. Then take an empty donation jar and put it in the Welcome Basket.
3. Return open flags, easel, painting reproduction, and umbrellas to the closet.
4. Return chairs to the hall and Welcome Basket (with contents) to the shelf in the closet. Greg will bring in the table later.
5. **Return both key fobs** to the front desk right drawer.

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6. Guides should wipe down anything they have touched including front door handle, key fobs, phone, voice amplifier units, umbrellas, restroom door handle, toilet flush handle, and sink handles.
 - a. Cleaning supplies are on each bathroom cabinet (disinfecting wipes and disposable gloves).
7. Be sure the cordless phone is in its charger on the front desk.
8. Place voice amplifier units in the plastic container in the cupboard.
9. Return your nametag to the box in the cupboard.
10. Lights off.
11. As you leave, make sure all doors are closed and locked behind you.

CONTACTS

Caretaker and keyholder:

Greg Stathopoulos
781-589-7872

Tour Guide Committee co-chairs and keyholders:

Elaine Ropi (C) 617-816-6203

Jean Yoder (H) 781 643 9894 (C) 617-510 8371

Tour Guide Committee keyholder:

Doris Birmingham (H) 781-641-2392 (C) 781-526-4911

Other Tour Guide Committee Member*

Stuart Brorson (H) 781 648 2628, (C) 914 589 9820

Susan Lum (H) 781-643-4315 (C) 781-223-3005

Kathy Way (H) 781-643-4356 (C) 781-883-9963

*Although these committee members do not have keys, you should feel free to call them for advice in case of a problem.

Attachment A: If your guiding partner does not 'show'

Once in very great while one guide fails to appear either because of a last minute emergency or a memory lapse. This is of course a serious problem and very disconcerting for the guide who is already there. Generally speaking, **there should be two guides on duty at all times**, so we suggest that you take the following steps if your partner guide does not appear by 1:05 p.m.

1. Call the guide (A guide roster can be found at the front of the yellow Tour Binder). If you can reach them, they may tell you that they are just running late. In that case, you can go ahead and start setting up for the day. If you already have visitors, tell them that another guide will be there shortly and ask them to wait.
2. If you cannot reach the guide, call your "Month Manager" (Guide Committee member) whose name and number was given to you in the reminder email which you received earlier during your month. (Guide Committee phone numbers are also within the body of this document.) Your Month Manager will give you advice about what to do next. In some cases, a very experienced guide may be advised to work alone if they feel confident in doing so.
3. If you and a Guide Committee member decide you cannot work alone, you must call Greg (his number is inside the front door), explain the situation, close the house, and leave. **Tape a sign on the inside of the front door apologizing to visitors for the unexpected closure.**

And a final reminder...Remember that if you discover that you cannot guide on a certain day, **it is your responsibility to find a substitute as quickly as possible and notify your Month Manager of the change.** Please do not expect the Guide Committee or the month manager to find a substitute. If you know far enough in advance, you might be able to find a substitute or make a trade through the e-mail, but a more direct and effective option is to use the telephone—phone numbers will be on your guide roster. Sometimes you may have to contact several people to find someone who can serve, so be persistent. We must strive to develop a culture of helping our fellow guides in such circumstances because at some point we, too, might need to be bailed out!

Attachment B: If a Russell descendant visits

Occasionally, we receive visitors who are descendants of Jason Russell. Many of those visitors come from far away and have made a special trip to see the house. When a descendant visits the house, it is a special event for both the Historical Society and for the visitor(s). For the Historical Society, the visitor represents a person who can become an advocate for the Jason Russell House by describing his/her visit to their family and friends. They may also be willing some day to donate money to help preserve the house. As for the visitors, they have often found out about the house through genealogical research, and are extremely proud to find that one of their ancestors was significantly involved in the American Revolution. They are always overjoyed to find that the Society continues to tell the heroic story of Jason Russell and his house on the first day of the American Revolution. For some, the visit takes on characteristics of a pilgrimage.

Therefore, when you have a visitor who identifies him/herself as a Russell descendant, you have received a special visitor with whom you should follow these procedures:

Before the tour

- We have a special form, copies of which are in the yellow Tour Binder (with spaces for two separate sets of Russells per month) for genealogical information about Russell descendants. Once they have signed into the normal guest log, please ask them to fill out the special Russell descendant form. (If there are other visitors waiting for a tour, you should have the Russells fill out the form after their tour.) This form is kept in the Tour Binder behind the log sheets for each month.
- Please make sure to give them an AHS membership brochure, and encourage them to join the Society (in front hall).
- Finally, give them a free copy of the blue booklet, "Jason Russell and His House in Menotomy." by Nylander (on sale bookshelf).

After the tour

- Ask to take their photograph. With their approval we may use their photo on our website, Newsletter or Facebook page. Otherwise, we will simply store it in our archive. Use your cell phone. Take the photo outside, in front of the house (for best light). Be sure to get all photo information onto the Russell Descendant form (i.e. names of people in the photo, l. to r.). E-mail the photo directly from your cellphone to Sara. (contact@arlingtonhistorical.org).

In general, please make a big fuss about Russell visitors. They will appreciate it, and the good will you create is beneficial for everybody.