

YOUR DAY AS A GUIDE AT THE JASON RUSSELL HOUSE 2025

Safety protocols for guides

1. Guides should make sure they are **not experiencing any COVID-19, cold or flu symptoms**.
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 if you are feeling sick.
3. Guides can **use their discretion** to decide if they prefer to wear masks while in the building and giving tours. If yes, please bring a mask with you for your shift.

Indoor tour safety protocols for visitors

1. **Maximum group size is 12 visitors**.
2. Wearing a mask is optional for visitors. Extra masks are available at the front desk.
3. The geothermal heat and cooling system in the **JRH has an ionization air filtration system** which clears 99.4% of COVID particles in 30 minutes.
4. On Beer Garden Saturdays an AHS representative will form a bathroom line for beer garden attendees outside the entrance.

Preparing for the day

1. Tours will be offered on Saturday and Sunday from 1pm-4pm, available on a walk-in basis. **Guides should arrive at the house by 12:45pm**.
2. The caretaker, Greg Stathopoulos, 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.
3. **Greg will also unlock the Exhibit Hall and the April 19th Room**.
 - a. Turn on the **lights** in the **April 19th Room**. One light switch is to the left of the door as you enter. The 2nd light switch is to the right of the door to the JRH kitchen.
 - The dimmer switches are kept lower than the halfway mark.
 - b. There are **light switches** in the JRH kitchen and cellar stairs, in the front hall, and in the 2nd floor hall of the JRH.
 - c. Turn on the lights in the **Exhibit Hall**. Secure the **velvet ropes** to block the basement and office stairs.
 - d. Keep the **door to the JRH kitchen in the April 19th Room closed** and the **cellar door in the JRH kitchen open**.
4. **The main entrance doors are programmed to open automatically at 1pm and lock at 4pm**. On Beer Garden Saturdays, the door stays unlocked longer.
5. If for any reason the main entrance door is locked, you must have a **key fob** with you in order to reenter if you exit the building.
 - a. **A key fob is on a coil bracelet** and is kept in the front desk drawer. To open the door from the outside, place the fob on the small black rectangular box to the left of the "Ring" doorbell.

6. Put on your **name tag** which is alphabetized by last name and is kept in a box in the guide cabinet.
7. There is a **phone** on the wall in the kitchen and a **cordless phone** is kept in the charger at the front desk.
 - a. To answer the cordless phone, push the green “talk” button on the left.
 - b. Guides can answer the phone and help people who want to know if we are open.
 - However, never take a message for AHS staff. Have the person call back on Wednesday.
8. The **Visitor Sign-In Book** (blue cover) is in the **guide cabinet** in the front hall. Open it to the next blank page, enter the date and leave a pen for the visitors.
9. Also remove the **Tour Binder** (yellow cover) in the guide cabinet. You should use this binder at the front desk. It stores our tour data so be sure it stays secure and is returned to the cabinet at the end of the day. This binder also holds:
 - a. Blank and completed Tour Logs
 - b. Blank and completed Russell Descendent Forms
 - c. Your Day at a Glance; Your Day as a Guide; Tour Outline; admission information, etc.
 - d. Guide Directory with phone numbers; phone numbers for the Guide Committee and for Greg
 - e. AHS Emergency Response Policy
 - Please review in your down time
10. Begin filling out the **Tour Log** with the date and your names, and be sure to update it after each Square transaction with visitor numbers and tour time.
11. Store your **personal items (purses, backpacks, etc.) in the closet** and keep the **door closed**.
12. **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).

Using Square; setting up the cashbox and clear plastic donation box

1. **Square**: We have the ability to accept **admission fees, book and merchandise sale payments, membership and donations using credit cards or cash**. The Square Manual is in the desk drawer. A 2nd copy of the manual is in the guide cupboard.
 - a. **Process all transactions on Square, including cash transactions, free admission, memberships, and book and merchandise sales.**
2. The **cash box** can be used for collecting cash sales for admission fees, book and merchandise sales, membership, donations and for making change for cash sales.
 - a. Remove the grey cash box from the **top drawer in the drop-front desk on the office stairs**. Take out the **plastic cash compartment** from the cash box and put it inside the **front desk drawer**. **Keep the desk drawer closed during the afternoon**. Store the **metal cash box** in the guide cabinet for the day.
3. **Cash Donations**: visitors can put cash in the **clear plastic donation box** which should be placed on the top of the guide cabinet. If a customer wishes, you may also process a cash donation through Square.
4. **Merchandise sales**: We will now be selling **five items with the AHS logo** (baseball hat, coffee mug, pint glass, car magnet and bumper sticker) and a **tricorn hat**. A sample of

these six items plus the books we will be selling will be displayed on the large table in the corner by the kitchen in the Exhibit Hall. If someone wants to buy an item, please look under the table behind the cloth and get fresh merchandise for the visitor. All book and merchandise items should be processed on Square. All sales are final.

Final set-up

1. Place the **“Open” flag** outside. The taller flag should go into the holder to the right of the main entrance. The flag is kept in the closet.
2. **The teardrop flag** is kept in the corner of the Exhibit Hall near the kitchen.
 - a. It is lightweight for one person to carry, but a 2nd person is needed to hold open the AHS door.
 - b. The teardrop flag pole should be placed in an underground pipe which is covered by an **orange cone** at the corner of Mass. Ave. and Jason St. inside the stone wall. It is located across Mass. Ave. from the Wish Salon.
 - c. Unscrew the **white cap** and place the teardrop’s pole into the pipe. Keep the orange cone nearby.
 - d. Keep the **white cap in the top drawer** of the desk during your shift.
3. Flip the **“Open” sign** on the glass main entrance door.
4. Keep the main entrance doors closed. Be sure to watch for approaching visitors so you can be ready to greet them.

Welcoming visitors

1. When visitors arrive, have a representative of the group **complete the Visitor Sign In**.
 - a. Please suggest that all the information should be completed. For our annual statistics we are particularly interested in knowing what state they live in and how they found out about the JRH.
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, photo information, etc.). For more information on welcoming Russells, see the instructions **“If a Russell Descendant Visits” (Attachment B)**.
3. Ask all visitors to **pay the admission fee** before they view the April 19th Room and take a tour. The current entry fee amount is posted on a sign on the cupboard.
 - a. **Enter the number of visitors into Square and process the payment via credit card or cash.**
 - b. **Adults \$8; Students 6-18 years \$4; 5 and under are free**
 - c. Members of the following organizations, showing their cards, get **free entry**: Mass Teachers’ Association (MTA); North American Reciprocal Museum Association (NARMA); New England Museum Association (NEMA); and active Military and their family. Entry is also free to Arlington Historical Society Members.
 - i. **Visitors with free entry are also entered into Square.**
 - ii. Guides can be flexible about the membership cards the visitor shows.
 - d. **Entry to the Exhibit Hall without a house tour is free and self-guided.**
4. After a visitor pays their admission fee, a guide should **input their information into the Tour Log**.

5. **One guide gives the tour** while the **other guide remains at the front desk** to greet new visitors who might arrive.
 - a. There are **two options** if visitors arrive while a tour is in progress.
 - b. If the visitors are **in the April 19th Room** and there is still room in the tour group, ask them if they would like to join the group in progress.
 - c. **Once the tour has started in the JRH**, politely explain the situation to the new visitors and suggest they visit the Exhibit Hall until the tour finishes or take their admission so they can view the April 19th Room. You can offer to process their admission now or wait until they start the tour, as **sales are non-refundable**.
 - d. If **your tour is running long** (longer than 25 minutes) **please escort your group back to the reception area for any final questions** so a waiting group may start their tour.
6. **Merchandise sales:** Invite visitors to look at the merchandise table in the Exhibit Hall for books and souvenirs to purchase. All merchandise sales should be processed on Square and sales are final.
7. Remember that you are the **ambassador** for the Jason Russell House and for all of Arlington. Many guests are tourists from far away. Our guests should be welcomed with warmth and enthusiasm.
8. **Before beginning a tour, caution visitors that they must not touch anything in the house, lean on walls, or sit on furniture.**

Downtime

1. Guides can take turns viewing the exhibit, “Menotomy: Road to Revolution” and the Exhibit Hall exhibit.
2. Please familiarize yourself with the **Reference Binder (green cover)** in the cupboard. Consult this source if you have any questions about tour content.
 - a. There is information about the Jason Russell House including the Tour Manual; Tour Outline; ballistics study; dendrochronology study; and the Russell Probate.
 - b. There is also a binder with information about the **JRH Herb Garden**.
 - c. Matt recommends that guides review the following books:
 - *Interpreting Our Heritage* by Freeman Tilden
 - *The Good Guide: Sourcebook for Interpreters, Docents and Tour Guides* by Alison L Grinder and E. Sue McCoy
 - d. The **JRH Guides’ Book Recommendations** is in a clear plastic folder.
3. There are also books available in the **Reference Library**, which is on the shelf along the stairs going down to the basement.
4. Additional guide resources can be found at: <https://arlingtonhistorical.org/guide-resources/>

Ending the day

The AHS website states that the **last tour is at 3:30pm**. Guides can be flexible if visitors arrive a bit later. You can encourage late arrivals (3:45 or later) to come back another time since tours are finished by 4:00pm. To close, here are the things to do:

1. Return the **open flag** to the closet.
2. When retrieving the **teardrop flag**, bring the **white cap** with you.
 1. Remove the flag and screw the cap back on until first resistance is felt.

2. Cover the cap with the **orange cone**.
3. Return the teardrop flag to the corner of the Exhibit Hall.
3. Flip the **closed sign** on the glass front door.
4. Make sure **all keys** are returned to the front desk drawer.
5. Complete **Tour Log** (in yellow binder) and return it and the **Visitor's Sign-In Book** (blue binder) to the guide cabinet.
 1. Don't forget to **put an accurate count of the number of visitors and tours on the log sheet and total them**. One guide should total the figures and the second guide should verify the total.
 2. Tour and visitor data is important for our annual statistics and for grant proposals.
6. Place the **plastic cash compartment inside the cash box** and put the cash box in the **top drawer of the drop-front desk** on the office stairs.
7. Place the **clear plastic donation box** in the cabinet.
8. Return your **name tag** to the box in the cabinet.
9. **Lights off** in the JRH, April 19th Room, and Exhibit Hall.
 1. Front hall lights are on a sensor.
10. **Close the doors to the Map Room and the Exhibit Hall.**
11. As you leave, make sure **the 2 exterior doors are closed behind you**.
 1. The alarm will be set by the caretaker or an AHS officer shortly after you leave.

CONTACTS

Caretaker and key holder:

Greg Stathopoulos (C) 781-589-7872

Tour Guide Committee chair and key holder:

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

Tour Guide Committee members and key holders:

Elaine Ropi (C) 617-816-6203

Jim Vellenga (C) 617-217-1141

Other Tour Guide Committee Members*

Siobhan Foley (C) 617-275-6653

Jim Lindsay (H) 781-643-5939

Susan Lum (C) 781-223-3005

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

Director and key holder:

Matt Beres (C) 203-725-5989

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 should close the house, there are several steps to take. Because the door is automatically unlocked from 1-4pm on Sundays and from 1pm+ on Saturdays, you cannot leave until arrangements have been made.
 - If the weather is good on a Saturday, and the Beer Garden is operating, please explain the situation to the Beer Garden host.
 - If the Beer Garden is rained out on Saturday or if it is Sunday afternoon, then your Month Manager should contact an AHS representative who can program the door to lock.
 - **You must remain at the house until an AHS representative locks the door.**
 - Then **call Greg** (his phone number is in this document) and explain the situation. Also place the **prepared sign on the inside of the main glass door** (unexpected closure...sorry for the inconvenience). This sign is in the guide cabinet.

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.** 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!

- Please start by asking your month’s guides to switch days with you
- You can also contact the full guide email list to find a substitute guide
- Please let your Month Manager know once the situation is resolved, so they can update the guide schedule with the new information
- Also let your original guide partner know about the change.

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 **Visitor's Sign-In Book**, 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 the Director (contact@arlingtonhistorical.org) or Jean Yoder.
- You may also offer to take a **photo on their phone** so they can leave with a memento from their visit.

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