

Look for Signs in the Orchard

Each tree in the orchard has a sign with a photo of the fruit and other information about the variety. These historic varieties along with many others are becoming more widely available from nurseries around the country.

Acknowledgements

The orchard was researched by Charles Thomforde, historic horticulturist, and designed and planted as the Eagle Scout project of Sidhant Swami with the help of members of the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Mercer County and other volunteers. Sid wishes to acknowledge the Trent House Association, Mr. Thomforde, Mrs. Louise Senior, Mrs. Susan Ryzuk, his fellow scouts and parents of Troop 43 of Princeton NJ, the Master Gardener volunteers, and his parents, Chetna and Ashok Sharma, for all of their help and guidance throughout the project.

For More Information

Tom Burford, *Apples of North America* (Portland OR: Timber Press, 2013)

William Coxe, *A View of the Cultivation of Fruit Trees, and the Management of Orchards and Cider* (Philadelphia: M. Cary and Son, 1817)

Rowan Jacobsen, *Apples of Uncommon Character* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2014)

Bernard M'Mahon, *The American Gardener's Calendar* (Philadelphia: B. Graves, 1806)

Michael Pollan, *The Botany of Desire* (NY: Random House, 2001)

The William Trent House

William Trent built his country estate north of Philadelphia, in New Jersey, at the Falls of the Delaware River about 1719. It is a large, imposing brick structure, built in the newest fashion of the time. Nearby, there were numerous outbuildings, farmland, and orchards as well as grist, saw, and fulling mills along the Assunpink Creek. In 1720 Trent laid out a settlement, which he incorporated and named "Trentown."

William Trent, his wife Mary Coddington Trent, and their young son William lived in the house along with a number of enslaved workers – men, women and children. These workers were essential to the running of the estate, serving in the house, growing the produce for household consumption, and working in Mr. Trent's mills and business enterprises.

A number of different people have resided in the Trent House during its long history. The last private owner of the house, Edward A. Stokes, donated the building to the City of Trenton in 1929 with the condition that it be returned to its appearance during the William Trent era and be used as a library, art gallery, or museum.

After extensive restoration by the Works Progress Administration, the Trent House opened as a museum in 1939. Today it is owned and maintained by the City of Trenton, and operated by the Trent House Association. The William Trent House is a designated National Historic Landmark and is listed in both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.



APPLES IN THE ORCHARD AT THE TRENT HOUSE



The 1719 William Trent House Museum
15 Market Street, Trenton, New Jersey 08611
(adjacent to the Justice Building;
entrance in the parking lot)
609-989-3027 • 609-989-0087
www.williamtrenthouse.org

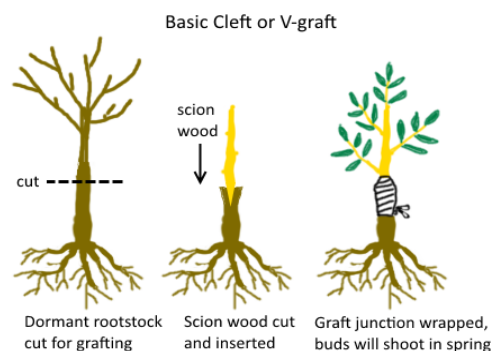
Open for tours Wednesday – Sunday
12:30 – 4 pm and by appointment

Funding support for Trent House operations is provided in part by members and patrons of the Trent House Association, the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, and Mercer County Cultural and Heritage Commission with funding from the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Growing Apples – Grafting, Not Seeds

To form fruit, apple blossoms must be fertilized with pollen from a different tree of a different variety. Seeds of the fruit then have a random combination of genes from the two parent apple trees. When a seed from an apple is planted, it will almost never 'breed true.' Many seeds will produce apples that are small, hard and dry. If a tree grows with good-tasting fruit, it can only be reproduced reliably by grafting.

Apple trees have been propagated by grafting for millenia. Scion wood is cut from a branch of a tree with desirable fruit. The scion wood is fitted against a cut in the trunk of another apple tree with a healthy root system (the rootstock). The two sections are bound together and eventually grow into a single tree bearing apples of the same traits as the scion tree.



<https://deepgreenpermaculture.com/2017/02/16/the-difference-between-seedling-grafted-and-cutting-grown-fruit-trees/>

What about Johnny Appleseed?

Born John Chapman in 1774 in Massachusetts, he spent his adult life spreading trees in northwest Pennsylvania and Ohio. In his eyes, grafting trees was unnatural and against his Swedenborgian beliefs, so he grew trees from seeds. Michael Pollan, in *The Botany of Desire*, notes that Chapman's apples were likely inedible, and thus better used for fermented or "hard" cider.

The Trent estate would almost surely have included an orchard of perhaps 100 trees or more, sufficient to yield 1,000 gallons of cider per year.

An advertisement to sell or lease the House in 1759 described "an Orchard of about 350 Apple-trees, whereof about 150 are old bearing Trees, the others just beginning to Bare and are of the best Grafted Fruit, there is also a fine Collection of other Fruit, to wit, Peaches, Damselfs, Cherrys of several Sorts, Squinces, English Walnuts, Grapes, Raspberrys, and a handsome large [kitchen] Garden." The Pennsylvania Journal, no. 866, 12 July 1759, reprinted in Nelson, Newspaper Extracts, first Series, Vol XX, page 365.

Today there is a miniature orchard of heirloom varieties grafted onto semi-dwarf root stock on the Trent House grounds. While we don't know exactly what Mr. Trent planted, the varieties here were likely grown in the region in the 1700s.

Varieties in the Orchard

Burlington Greening
Early Harvest
Harrison (2 trees)
Maiden Blush
Newtown Pippin
Philadelphia Pippin
Shippens Russet
Smith Cider
Vandevere
Winter Rambo
Yellow Bellflower

See separate brochure for more information

The History of Apples in New Jersey

Our cultivated apples are not native to the New World, probably originating in Central Asia. Grown for thousands of years in Asia and Europe, they were introduced to North America by European colonists. From the beginning, European arrivals in New Jersey grew apples for cider. They also grew apples for eating fresh, for drying, and for cooking.

On October 30, 1748 Peter Kalm noted, "Near every farmhouse was an orchard with apple trees...I observed a cider press at each farmhouse, made in different ways, by which the people had already pressed the juice out of the apples." *Travels in North America, the English version of 1770*. Adolph Benson, ed. (NY; Dover, 1987).

Why was fermented or hard cider the drink of English colonists? Contrary to popular belief, cider was drunk by custom rather than necessity due to contaminated water. In the colonial period, prior to germ theory, water drinking in the colonial period was attributed to poverty, not lack of hygiene. In fact, there are instances, in 18th century Philadelphia, of using cold water as a medicine. For drinking, cider was preferred and good cider prized. And New Jersey from early days on was a major producer of cider.

Governor Carteret, first Royal Governor of New Jersey, wrote to proprietors in England in 1682, "at Newark is made great quantities of cider, exceeding any that we have from New England, Rhode Island or Long Island." Weiss, Harry. *The History of Applejack or Apple Brandy in New Jersey from Colonial Times to the Present*. (Trenton, NJ: NJ Agricultural Society, 1954), page. 18.