



## What Cheer Day Visitor Guide

### ***1. What will I experience?***

A day in the life of the Brown family, visiting friends and townspeople, and household staff in 1800. You'll also have a chance to sample foods from the 18<sup>th</sup>-century and play historic games on the lawn.

### ***2. Who will I meet?***

You will meet costumed interpreters who are playing the roles of people who lived in and visited this house in 1800. Here is what was happening in Providence on Oct. 25, 1800: the first free public schools in the state were slated to open on Monday, October 27, 1800. Many people, like John Brown, were fervent supporters of public education, but some of the people you meet today were opposed to the idea. Nearly 10 ships, schooners and sloops had pulled into port in Providence the week before, and the city was awash with goods from faraway lands: mahogany, logwood, coffee, spices, molasses, silks, chinaware, fruits, port, sherry, and molasses. Some of these ships may have brought slaves to Providence to be sold.

In 1800, Providence was home to both enslaved Africans and free African Americans. We know that John Brown participated in the slave trade, and we also have documentation indicating that he owned slaves. We do not know whether slaves lived in this house, but the 1800 federal census tells us that there were four free African Americans living here. Costumed interpreters will not be playing the role of slaves, but one interpreter will play the role of Goody Morris, a fortune-teller. Historic records tell us that a free African-American woman named Goody Morris told fortunes in Providence in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***3. What should I talk about?***

Remember that anyone dressed in clothing from 1800 is playing a person who lived during that time, and they will not know anything about electricity, phones, or the internet! The role players use both documented facts known about their particular character and general information about the time period to answer your questions. You'll discover that there are at least two sides to every story.

Need some ice breakers? Here are some questions that you might ask the interpreters:

- How were you educated? Do you think women should be educated? What do you think about the new public schools opening on Monday?
- How do you spend your day?
- Do you think the slave trade is immoral?
- Will you be purchasing any of the goods that have lately come in to Providence? Can you purchase anything you need in stores in Providence?

### ***4. Who are the people wearing name tags, and what can I ask them?***

These are RIHS staff and volunteers who will be stationed throughout the house. Want to know what happened to the Browns after 1800? Want to know where the restrooms are? Ask someone with a nametag, and they'll be happy to help.

### ***5. What can I touch?***

If an interpreter asks you to hold something, feel free to hold it. But we ask you to refrain from touching any of the items in the house, as they are museum collection items and are fragile.

Please note: The views expressed by the role-players in character are not necessarily the views of the role players themselves or of the RIHS.