

# Timeline

While the Trent House, like our city, is named for William Trent, the most authentic story of the Trent House and its grounds is ultimately one that captures the countless individuals who have lived, worked, and left their mark here. As you learn about the house's history, take a moment to envision how its landscape has been thousands of years in the making.



## Early Human Settlement

### Bountiful Land, Generous River

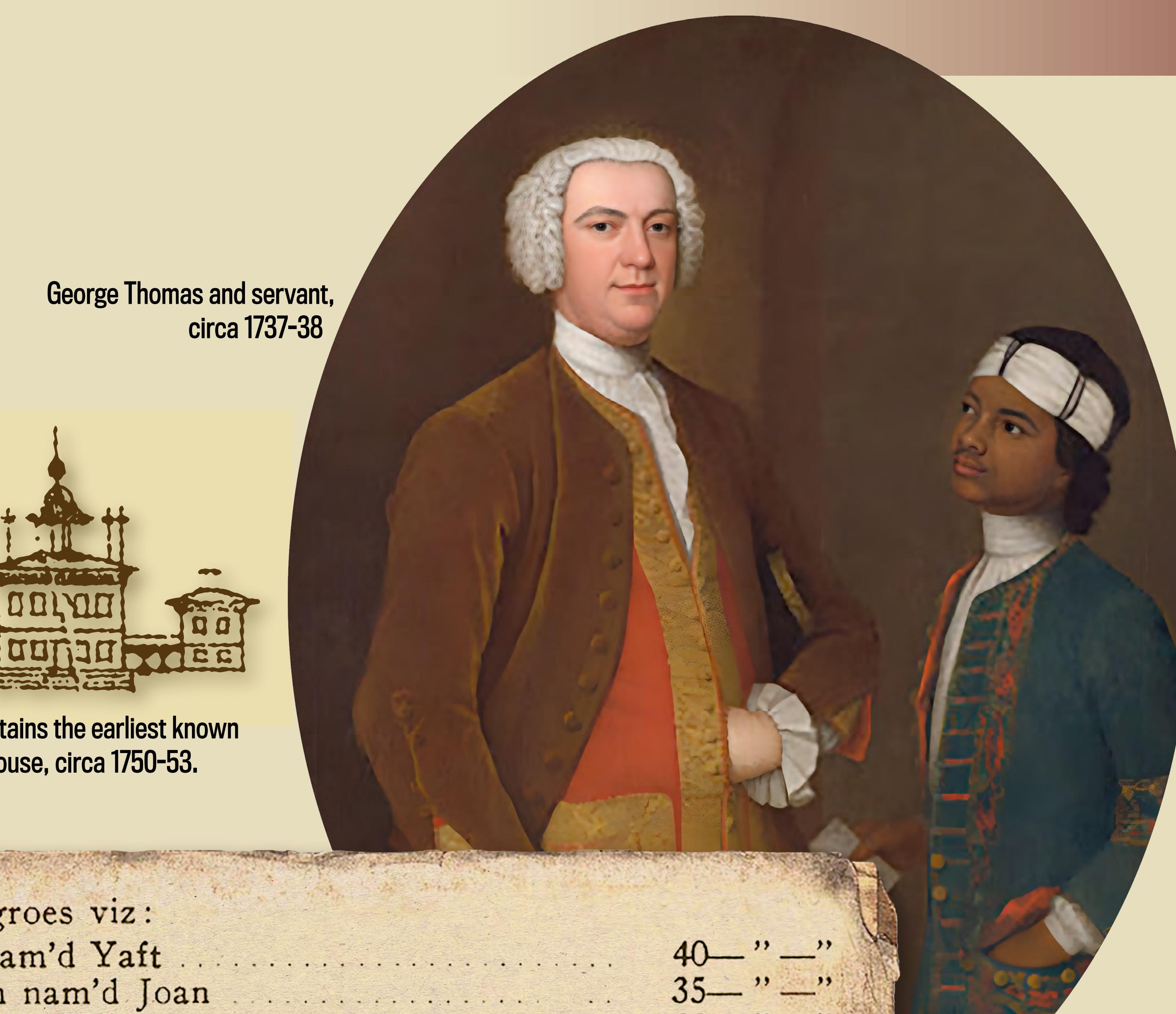
10,000 to 2,000 years ago

The Trent House is situated on a low knoll of postglacial sediment deposited by the meltwaters of the last ice age. This landform was attractive to Indigenous peoples, who used its higher and drier ground to establish temporary camps.

The Delaware River and its nearby tributary, Assumpink Creek, were rich, biodiverse ecosystems for gathering wild grains, berries, and other natural flora, and for hunting wildlife. Fish such as sturgeon, alewife, and shad were also a plentiful food source, migrating, and spawning every spring in the fresh water at the falls.

2,000 to 500 years ago

Over time, the Lenape established semi-permanent settlements along both sides of the Delaware near Trenton. Archaeologists have uncovered on the Trent House grounds many artifacts and abundant evidence indicating this land's use by Indigenous peoples for thousands of years.



## European Colonial Settlement, 1677-1774

### Mansion for Prominent Men

After purchasing vast tracts of land east of the Delaware River from wealthy English gentry, English Quakers entered into land sharing or purchase agreements with local Lenape sachems.

William Trent, a native of Scotland and a wealthy Philadelphia merchant, purchased Ballifield from Mahlon Stacy's son and namesake.

Trent began construction of the Georgian-style residence in the newly fashionable architecture of the English elite. It remains the centerpiece of the property today.

Trent died, enjoying the completed house for only a few years. The inventory of his estate completed in 1726 includes a list of eleven enslaved individuals of African descent.

Lewis Morris (1671-1746), Royal Governor of New Jersey, leased the Trent House as his official residence from George Thomas, Deputy Governor of Pennsylvania. Morris died at the age of 74 while still in office, almost certainly here in the house.

Robert Lettis Hooper (1709-1785), a mill owner, surveyor, and real estate developer, purchased the Trent House. Hooper began to subdivide the former Trent estate, referring to it as the "New Town of Kingsbury."

Dr. William Bryant (1731-1786), a Yale-educated physician, purchased the Trent House and built up a successful practice while also selling off several Kingsbury building lots.

1677

1714

1719

1724

1742

1753

1769

Acco't of Negroes viz:

A man Nam'd Yaft	40	"	"
a Woman nam'd Joan	35	"	"
a boy nam'd Bob	30	"	"
a boy nam'd Dick	20	"	"
a Girle Nanny	32	-10	"
a Child Tom	10	"	"

3 Negro Men as follows viz:

Julius	30	"	"
Bossin	30	"	"
Harry	45	"	"
Two (West?) Indieno Men, viz:			

Cupid	45	"	"
Pedro	35	"	"

Enslaved persons itemized in William Trent's probate inventory, 1726

On this French army map of 1781, the Trent House is labeled as a "chateau." The mansion's cupola may have been used as a landmark to guide troops across a low-water ford.



This version of the painting of George Washington in 1780 by Charles Willson Peale is unique in showing the general against a Trenton background. The Trent House is in the circled area at the far left, near the horizon.

## Revolutionary War, 1775-1783

### Strategic Location and Military Hub

1776 In December, Hessian forces took up winter quarters in Trenton and commandeered the Trent House grounds. They posted sentinels here and at the Trenton Ferry to guard against American attack from across the river in Pennsylvania. Shortly after dawn on December 26, Washington's Continental Army, having crossed the Delaware upstream at the location that later became known as Washington Crossing, caught the Hessians unawares, winning a surprise and crucial victory at the First Battle of Trenton. A small detachment of Hessians guarding the Trent House escaped capture by fleeing south to Burlington.

1777 On January 2, American forces repelled a British attempt to cross the Assumpink Creek bridge at the Second Battle of Trenton, just north of the Trent House. Washington's army regrouped under the cover of darkness and marched north for another successful surprise offensive the next morning at the Battle of Princeton.

1778 Colonel John Cox acquired the Trent House and changed the name of the 180-acre property from "Kingsbury" to the less royalist-sounding "Bloomsbury." He used the mansion as a base of operations for carrying out his duties as Assistant Quartermaster General supplying American forces. Cox's prominent standing brought several famous guests to the house, including George Washington, Henry Knox, and the Marquis de Lafayette.

1781 On the first day of September, Continental Army and French troops encamped overnight south of the Trent House on the march to the victory at Yorktown. The Comte de Rochambeau led the French army. Women and children, known as "camp followers," cooked, sewed, and washed clothes for the soldiers.

1782 In September, the French troops encamped once again south of the Trent House on the return trip from Yorktown, which proved to be the decisive battle of the American Revolution.