David Rittenhouse Encyclopedia Article

David Rittenhouse

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David Rittenhouse

1732-1796

American astronomer and instrument-maker known for the fine workmanship of his clocks and scientific devices. He produced high precision telescopes, thermometers, surveyor's compasses, and other instruments that were superior in quality to anything previously produced in America. His scientific interests were diverse, but astronomy was his primary interest. He observed the 1769 Venus transit and contributed to the best American calculations of solar parallax. Rittenhouse also played an important role in the American Revolution.