



The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

Fall 2011

815 Gilbert Stuart Road
Saunderstown, RI 02874
Phone 401-294-3001
Fax 401-294-3869
www.gilbertstuartmuseum.org

GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION!

December 3, 2011 is declared

Gilbert Stuart Day

Excerpt from the Gubernatorial Proclamation:

... WHEREAS, Gilbert Stuart created lasting images of President Washington and definitive images of the next four presidents, leaving a proud legacy that secured Gilbert Stuart's lasting fame; and

WHEREAS, Gilbert Stuart introduced a new level of sophistication to the American portrait, achieving convincing likenesses and successful representations of characters through his choice of poise and expression, and was the most sought after American portraitist of his era, and today is counted among the greatest early American artists; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lincoln D. Chafee, Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby proclaim December 3, 2011 Gilbert Stuart Day in Rhode Island and urge the state's citizens to recognize the importance of this day.

Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor



Peggy O'Connor, Governor Lincoln Chafee, Harriet Powell, Museum President Dan Bell

Many thanks to Museum Secretary Harriet Powell, Trustee Carol Hueston, and Carol's former student Brian Daniels of the Governor's Office for this initiative to celebrate Stuart's 256th birthday. Robert Albee of Chafee's office talked Harriet through the process and in due course, the proclamation was declared.

"Picture This..."

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Our Campaign is in full "waterwheel" motion!

Donations and pledges from Trustees, members, and friends of the Museum have reached a total of \$90,000, 25% of our goal of \$350,000.

You are an essential part of this organization. Your financial support is vital to the success of our campaign. Your donation in any amount is a valued gift towards making the Museum a significant destination for years to come.

If you need a Capital Campaign brochure with donation envelope, please contact the Museum.

Let's keep the waterwheels turning!

If you have already donated or pledged, we wish to extend a warm and appreciative thank you! We are grateful for your generous support of the Museum.

Thank you!



Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum
Board of Trustees

Daniel A. Bell, President
Dennis E. Stark, President Elect
Harriet E. Powell, Secretary
Wheaton C. Vaughan, Treasurer

Cathy DiColo	Louis R. Sansone
Dr. Joseph Dowling, Jr.	Robert J. Sgroi
Barrie Ekman	Gail Shields
Patricia D. Fuller	Peggy Todd
Curtis V. Givan	M. Ray Wertz
Carol H. Hueston	Alice V. Westervelt
Thor S. Johnson	Joseph B. White
Norine J. Keenan	<u>Trustee Emeritus</u>
Lillian C. Patterson	Henry L. P. Beckwith
Alan R. Post, D.C.	<u>Executive Director</u>
Kathleen Romeo	Margaret M. O'Connor

Our plan is to better tell the history of the Museum and the incredible life of Gilbert Stuart. To do this, we need a safe, secure, and accessible place to tell this story. We have a magnificent portrait of Gilbert Stuart painted by Jane Stuart that will be gifted to the Museum when the Welcome Center is complete. Other certainties include the loan of at least one documented original Gilbert Stuart painting and a handwritten letter from George Washington. We have had many offers for loans and gifts of great interest, but at this point we are still unable to accommodate them. A Welcome Center with ever-changing exhibits will keep our offering fresh and no doubt will generate the visitors and new membership that we will need to move forward into the 21st Century.

Please be as generous as possible to ensure the sustainability of the Museum for another eighty years and beyond. With your help, we can continue to make this museum a true destination for the ages.

Sincerely,

Dan Bell
President of the Board of Trustees

P.S. Thank you so much for your support and confidence over the past four years. I am confident that with your help we can accomplish this lofty goal and break ground for the new Welcome Center this fall.

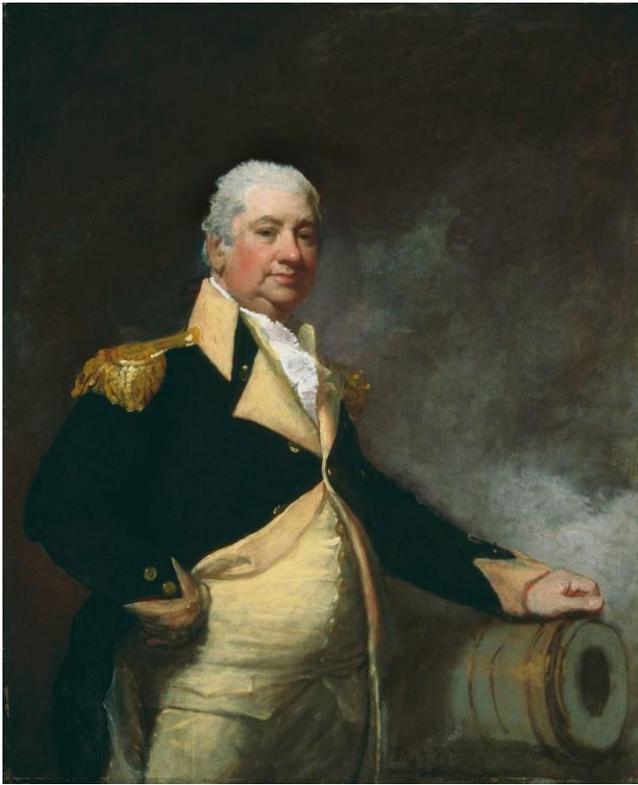


Dear Friends,

Our Capital Campaign has been years in the making. It is the culmination of many meetings and spirited discussions. Our Board of Trustees is 100% committed to making this campaign a success, and we hope that we can count on you once again for your support.

I am in my fourth and final year as your President and have been honored by your trust and support while implementing the plan that was set forth just before I took office. In 2007, the Executive Board developed our vision and plans for the future, and I'm pleased to report that we are now on target to accomplish what we originally set out to do – to keep history, art, and nature alive and well for generations to come.





General Henry Knox by Gilbert Stuart
c. 1805 oil on panel 47" x 38.5"

General Henry Knox

When you go to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, be sure to visit the American Wing. There, in an 18th Century gallery, you will find the Gilbert Stuart portrait of General Henry Knox. It dominates the room as he must have dominated a room during his lifetime.

Henry Knox was a man of extraordinary accomplishments and one of America's underrated heroes. He was born in Boston in 1750. At 12 he left school and went to work to support his mother and siblings. By the age of 21, he was able to buy a book shop. There he read widely about military tactics and artillery and soon joined the militia. Once the Revolution began, he designed fortifications around Boston. General George Washington was impressed when he viewed these ramparts and soon made Knox his Chief of Artillery. Henry Knox was the heroic figure who dragged 60 tons of captured ordnance from Fort Ticonderoga through the snow to Boston. After having been installed on Dorchester Heights, the cannon drove the British from Boston. Knox then received a military commission of colonel and rose eventually to the rank of major general.

Henry Knox's military career was nothing short of amazing. He was said to be every place during the revolution. Besides managing the expedition of the "Crossing of the Delaware", Knox was involved with campaigns from Valley Forge to Yorktown.

George Washington greatly admired his skills and treated him like a brother. When Washington became president, he named Knox as the first Secretary of War. Knox served in the Cabinet until he retired in 1795.

But it was not until 1805 or 1806, very shortly before the General's death, that Gilbert Stuart took up his brushes to paint the portrait of Henry Knox.

Hepzibah Clarke Swan, one of Gilbert Stuart's Boston patrons, commissioned a portrait of her good friend Henry Knox. The portrait shows the General standing against a background of dark clouds, possibly suggesting the clouds of war and his long involvement in the Revolution. Stuart painted an impressive figure, dressed in the blue and buff general's uniform of the day. Knox is standing with his left hand on a cannon. As we know, the artist never gave much attention of the rendering of hands but in Knox's case it was of necessity. When he was in his twenties, Knox accidentally shot off two fingers of his left hand and he always took pains to keep that hand concealed.

Stuart's likeness of the general fills the canvas with a figure of great assuredness - a man larger than life. With his right arm akimbo, Knox holds back his coat to reveal his robust, 300 pound figure. One has the feeling of an imposing man, confident and even amiable. But when Knox forthrightly suggested a change to the artist, Stuart in his artistic arrogance replied that he would rather use the portrait as a gate to his pig sty!

The portrait was finished and Mrs. Swan hung it in her home until 1828 when she lent it to the Boston Athenaeum for an exhibition honoring Gilbert Stuart. Three years later she gave the portrait of General Henry Knox to the city of Boston and thus you can enjoy it today.

Gail Shields



General Henry Knox (detail) by Gilbert Stuart

Externship Program at the Museum

North Kingstown Teacher Sandra Makielski



Over the past several months I have enjoyed volunteering at the Gilbert Stuart Museum as an intern through the 2011 Education Externship Program. I am a seventh grade social studies teacher at Davisville Middle School, North Kingstown, where I work with nearly one hundred students from a mixed socioeconomic

background. My family and I have attended multiple events at the museum and when I was presented with an opportunity to do an internship, I quickly chose the Gilbert Stuart Museum.

While working at the museum as an intern, I offered to help and assist in any capacity. I had the pleasure of shadowing numerous, experienced docents to learn about what they had to share. Eventually, I too, became a docent. I tagged along with various junior docents as they impressed the visitors with their many tales of Gilbert Stuart. Greeting guests proved to be the most interesting and entertaining as part of volunteering at the museum. I was intrigued by the distance people travel to visit the museum and the many ways people learned about the museum. Whatever role I have played, I have learned a great deal about Gilbert Stuart and I have met many captivating people.

An important component to my internship is the creation of a lesson plan that incorporates my newly gained knowledge of Gilbert Stuart and the North Kingstown seventh grade curriculum. After many weeks of shadowing docents, giving tours, and reading about Gilbert Stuart I am developing a curriculum which will allow me to bring my seventh graders to the museum for a day in the spring. With such a rich art history, compelling water wheels, two working mills, and excellent examples of colonial life, every Rhode Island student should have the opportunity to visit this historic Rhode Island landmark.

Sandra Makielski



Honorary Chair artist David Schock with gala guests

Moonlight Magic

Moonlight Magic proved to be an upbeat and enchanting evening. One hundred sixty-six guests attended the August 12th gala, which was held once again on the banks of our beautiful millpond. The magic of the impending full moon cast a spell over the evening as guests enjoyed Greenvale Vineyards wine, great food, and the lively music of The Elderly Brothers. All that was missing was the dance floor. Guests enjoyed meeting award-winning RI artist David Schock and browsing his beautiful works of art. Thank you to David for so graciously agreeing to be our Honorary Chair, for so generously creating the stunning painting of the "Birthplace by Moonlight" for our event invitation, and for his donations for our Silent Auction. Thanks are due to event Premier Sponsor *Greenvale Vineyards of Portsmouth, RI*; Platinum Sponsor *Gretchen Morgenson and Paul Devlin*, and to all supporters of this event! With ticket sales, sponsorships, donations, proceeds from the silent auction, and art sales from the Artists-in-Residence exhibit, David Schock's donated original oil "Lighthouse Sunset", the event raised over \$11,000 for the repair of the fish ladder dam and continued restoration efforts at the Museum. Many thanks to the event committee for their tireless efforts. P. O'C



Browsing the Artists-in-Residence Sale



Ray and Lynn

Clidence



President Dan Bell



Moonlight Magic guests

Milling Around at the Museum

American Chestnut Trees at the Museum: The American chestnut comprised almost half of Rhode Island's forests in the early 1900s, until the introduced chestnut blight fungus destroyed virtually all adult chestnuts. Loss of the chestnut is thought to have devastated wildlife populations and removed a human food source. It also removed access to a very fast-growing, rot-resistant lumber tree with numerous uses such as building construction, fencing, and railroads.

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) works to incorporate the blight resistance of Chinese chestnut into a mostly-American population designed to incorporate the genetic diversity and local adaptations of our state chestnut populations.

The MA/RI Chapter of TACF plans a small planting of potentially blight-resistant chestnuts at the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum. These demonstration trees are an early sample of TACF's southern VA research work that can re-acquaint Americans with our native chestnut, and will also help us test the trees. MA/RI-TACF is currently working on creating our first local "seed orchards" to create similar trees descended from RI and MA trees.

Yvonne Federowicz



Yvonne Federowicz plants an American chestnut seedling at the Museum.

Yvonne Federowicz is the current President of MA/RI-TACF, and has volunteered with the chapter for approx. 10 years. She is also an intern with the URI Master Gardeners, and works in the Brown University Libraries as a web programmer. A presentation entitled "Chestnut Trees in Rhode Island: Restoring a Native Keystone Species" will be given at the Museum in the spring.



President Dan Bell and Peggy Todd pull the winning ticket

"Give a Dam" Quilt Raffle: Many thanks to quilt makers Joan Ann Gardiner and Susan Adams for the donation of their beautiful handmade quilt! The raffle raised \$1660 for the restoration of the dam. The drawing was held on October 10th. Congratulations to the lucky winner, Elaine Rinehimer!



Susan Adams, Peggy O'Connor, and Joan Ann Gardiner

Early American Life Magazine: The Magazine's publisher Tess Rosch and contributing editor and photographer Winfield Ross visited the Museum in June to photograph the snuff mill. They were so taken with the charm and personality of the Museum that they spent several hours photographing the entire Museum. Watch for these photos in Early American Life in 2012.

Happy Anniversary Gilbert Stuart Museum ~ 80 years! The Museum was incorporated on January 31, 1931. This is our **EIGHTIETH YEAR** of operation as a private non-profit organization. We are supported solely by admission fees, yearly membership dues, and donations to cover our daily operating expenses.

Happy Birthday Gilbert Stuart: Gilbert Stuart was born on December 3, 1755. This year is the 256th anniversary of his birth.



Andy Shrake and Jesse Lambert repair the gristmill waterwheel

Keep the Wheels Turning: One day in June both waterwheels stopped turning! Ray Clidence was able to make a quick adjustment and the snuff mill was repaired. The problem with the gristmill was more serious. Several bolts had sheared on the gristmill waterwheel, causing it to come apart on one side. Miller Andy Shrake and Jesse Lambert removed all the boards that formed the drum, installed new bolts, and repaired the wheel.



Will and Trish Farnsworth with their 1928 Bentley 4 1/2 Litre

Bentley Driver's Club Visits the Museum: During the New England Bentley Drivers Club Fall Tour, 9 vintage Bentleys spent a day in Newport and detoured by the Museum on their way to the Shelter Harbor Inn. Many thanks to NEBDC members (and Gilbert Stuart Museum members) Bob and Betty Sue Reed for suggesting the Museum as a destination.

Snuff Tin Collection: The Museum recently received a donation of a collection of over fifty interesting and colorful

snuff tins and other snuff memorabilia. The collection can be seen in an exhibit in the Welcome Center. Tins in the collection date from 1923-2000 and are mostly from American snuff mills. Two of these mills include: **The Helme Tobacco Company**, which was founded as the Railroad Mills Snuff Mill in 1866 by a pair of brothers from New Jersey, produced snuff until 1993.



Some tins from the snuff memorabilia collection

The Larkin-Morrill Snuff Mill was purchased by the **Pearson Tobacco Company** of Kittery Maine in 1899, later known as the **Byfield Snuff Company**. Ben Pearson's family milled on the Parker River in Massachusetts since colonial times and began grinding snuff when the industrial revolution brought textile mills to the Merrimack Valley. The **Byfield Snuff Company** continued making snuff until 1990. Its most popular product was called Red Top.

Dates for some of the tins in this collection include: Wild Cherry Sweet Scotch Snuff 1923, Dental Sweet Snuff 1934, Old Mill Scotch Snuff 1970.

Many thanks to Doris Shaw for the donation.
Research by Museum Registrar, Jim Hall.

Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum Mission Statement

The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum preserves the birthplace of Gilbert Stuart and its surrounding acreage. Focused on art, nature, and history, the Museum is charged with directing and supporting its operation as a National Historic Landmark and with the conservation of its natural setting.



The Miller's Stepping Stone

Perhaps it was a caveman--no doubt at the urging of a cavewoman--that first placed a flat stone, or a series of flat stones, leading up to the entrance of their cave to eliminate ruts and the soiling of fresh straw from muddy feet. After all, the stones would last forever and there were lots of flat stones lying about.

We may never know exactly when the first stepping stones were placed, but we do know one was used by the millers at the Mumford mill, possibly in the year 1700. We know this because we step on it every time we go into the North entrance to the Birthplace. It even has the year, "1700", chiseled into it.

Was this date carved then in the year, "1700"? The answer is, "No".

The 1954 Gilbert Stuart Annual Report states: *"The date of '1700' was re-cut last summer [1953] on the Mumford Mill stone at the front door of this house, as the tread of so many feet was fast wearing it away, so that it was barely discernable"*.

Can it be that it's the original stone set by the millers in 1700? The answer is, "Perhaps".

The Annual report does say, *"The date of '1700' was re-cut last summer on the Mumford Mill stone..."*. And the date itself, "1700", sounds reasonable. Consider a newspaper article published on Sept 30, 1931, taken from the land records: *"In 1686, Thomas Mumford and partners agreed to build a grist and fulling mill on the Metatoxet River to operate under water power, and in the same year Mumford and Wharton agreed about the dam."*

So, it is at least possible that the existing stone set in front of the North door is the very stone set at the first Mumford Mill constructed just upstream from our Mill in about 1700.

Well then, did Gilbert Stuart tread on this stone? Maybe. There is no practical way to know when the original stone was carved but the evidence, while not conclusive, exists.

As we approach the Fall of 2011, it is we, museum staff and esteemed visitors, who now tread on this old stone. Let us, with all good hope, envision that a hundred years from now, having withstood the tread so many feet, and becoming once again barely discernable, it will become necessary to re-carve the date, "1700".

Jim Hall



The Dam Project

Ray and Sam Clidence, of 18th Century Woodworks, began work on the repair of the dam on October 11, the day after the closing of the Museum for the season. Ray has had some experience with this dam as he had designed and constructed the previous dam in 1990. The fish ladder connected to this dam provided a design challenge. Ray worked in close collaboration with the RI DEM's Fish and Wildlife engineers and with fisheries biologist Phil Edwards to ensure the proper repositioning of the fish ladder.

How do you block the water so you can work on a dam? Ray, Sam, and crew installed a platform about ten feet upstream from the small dam and pounded in pales along the edge of the platform to form a cofferdam. Once the cofferdam was lined on both sides with sandbags, and the streambed was dry, the dam repair work began. After removal of the old dam, the fish ladder was suspended over the stream bed, and the new dam frame was installed.

While the water was dammed, the workers were able to examine and repair the sluice gate for the snuff mill waterwheel. The deteriorated wooden frame was removed and a new frame and sluice gate were constructed and installed.

Meanwhile, the juvenile river herring were beginning their migration from their birthplace in Carr Pond to the ocean where they will live and mature. The usual route for the herring is to go down the fish ladder, proceed to Narrow River, and then on to the Atlantic. With the cofferdam blocking access to the fish ladder, the herring were provided with an alternate route via a specially constructed temporary fish ramp - accessible through the big dam. It worked! Many juveniles and even some adult herring (who had summered in Carr Pond) went over the spillway, down the fish ramp to the stream and to Narrow River. Work on the dam project is expected to be completed by mid November.

Peggy O'Connor



Building the cofferdam

Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum
815 Gilbert Stuart Road
Saunderstown, RI 02874

