



The Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

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Fall 2013

GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION!

December 3, 2013 is declared

Gilbert Stuart Day

Excerpt from the Gubernatorial Proclamation:

WHEREAS, Gilbert Stuart was born in Saunderstown, Rhode Island on December 3, 1775 and...

...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, 2013 Gilbert Stuart Day in Rhode Island and urge the state's citizens to recognize the importance of this day.

Lincoln D. Chafee
Governor



Gilbert Stuart by Charles Willson Peale 1805



Ray and Sam Clidence install the new dam gate

Another dam problem After some heavy rains this summer, we noticed that one of the gates in the big dam had sprung a good-sized leak. The boards of the gate had deteriorated and needed to be replaced.



Ray Clidence built a temporary gate to prevent further leaking and allow for repairs. With the help of Bart McNeil our caretaker, Ray plunged into the millpond to affix the temporary gate. He built a new gate out of ipe wood, installed it, and then removed the temporary boards.

2013 Save the Date:

Tuesday, December 17th 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Reception at William Vareika Fine Arts

****Gilbert's Birthday Party****

President's Message Fall 2013



Dear Friend of the Museum,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director, I would like to once again extend a sincere thank you for your continued support of and membership to the Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum.

We should all be grateful for the wonderful job the event committee did in organizing our Paint the Town Red gala. Thanks to the committee's hard work, the evening was a resounding success despite the inclement weather. I would like to personally acknowledge everyone involved for their dedication; they made the whole process seem easy, even while rolling up their sleeves and putting in long hours of hard work.

Things are progressing nicely and we should be breaking ground for the new Center as soon as the permits are complete. We have chosen Field Building as our contractor; Clayton Field has done work for us in the past and was among four very professional and competitive bids we received. The committee was unanimous in the choice, and we are eager to get going.

We have raised most of the funds for the project, with the exception of landscaping, gallery lighting, and the all-important endowment needed for future care of the buildings and grounds. We plan to continue the Capital Campaign and the President's Challenge until we have achieved one hundred percent of our goal of \$350,000, of which we have already raised \$230,000. We thank everyone for all the heartfelt support we have received since the rebuilding of the museum complex began in 2008. This full restoration - the first since the museum's opening in 1931 - was sorely needed, and was all made possible through contributions from museum members such as yourselves and three grants received from the incredibly philanthropic Champlin Foundation. Our vision is nearly complete, and with your continued generosity, we can protect our investment and preserve the museum's future for generations to come. I am confident that we will meet our objective before my term as president ends in April.

We have a Gilbert Stuart birthday celebration and fundraiser planned for the evening of Tuesday, December 17th (6-8pm) at Vareika Fine Art Gallery in Newport. Bill and Alison Vareika have graciously

offered to host this important milestone event and we are extremely appreciative. Please mark your calendars, and plan to attend.

This year a number of valuable team members will reach the maximum terms allowable in our By-Laws and will go off the Board of Trustees. Please help us thank them and send them off with the assurance that the Museum will have the funds and the infrastructure to be sustainable for many years to come.

A special thanks to the Trustees and the many, many people of the past that have given us so much to work with, and best wishes to the Trustees of the future who will no doubt care for and keep the Museum the special place that it is.

Thank you for your support and confidence in the work we are undertaking that will benefit not only the Museum family, but also the many visitors who can enjoy our new offerings for years to come.

Please join us in December to help finish the project.

Sincerely,
Daniel Bell, for the Trustees

Gilbert Stuart Birthplace and Museum

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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 history, art, and nature, the Museum is charged with directing and supporting its operation as a National Historic Landmark and with the conservation of its natural setting

CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN JAY



Chief Justice John Jay Gilbert Stuart

1794 oil on canvas 51 9/16 x 40 3/16 in.
National Gallery of Art

Would Gilbert Stuart have had early success in the United States if he had not known John Jay? Possibly not, for his meeting with Jay in England provided him with an early introduction to the important people in America. While living in England, Stuart painted two heads (unfinished portraits) of Jay but had to pawn them when he found it necessary, for financial reasons, to quickly leave for Ireland. (John Trumbull purchased them and later painted in the bodies!)

Early in the 1790's, while he was living in Ireland, Stuart decided that he could become rich if he returned to America and made "a plurality" of portraits of George Washington. So he booked passage for his family on a ship bound for Philadelphia early in 1793. When Stuart learned that a traveling circus would also be on board, he changed ships to the "Draper" and set sail for New York in March. The family arrived almost 8 weeks later and quickly found a home in the growing, commercially bustling city. It had been almost twenty years since Gilbert Stuart had lived on this side of the Atlantic. Society had changed and now there was a new class of merchant leaders. His old connections had disappeared so the artist had to put up advertisements offering a portrait for \$50.00, a third less than he charged in Ireland.

Within the year, John Jay, the now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, visited New York and Stuart contacted him hoping to get to George Washington through him. Jay sat briefly for him and the artist

completed only his head. But it was enough to get the letter of introduction to The President.

The portrait of the forty-nine year old John Jay evolved gradually. Jay went off to England as a diplomat to negotiate a trade treaty, so it became necessary to have his nephew stand in. The nephew donned Jay's Harvard academic robe and the portrait was finished, but not until John Jay's wife had to call on Stuart often to get the "inimitable picture" finished. And when it was, she was delighted and hung it in the dining room.

This is a portrait of an imposing man who fills the large canvas with his personality. While the artist painted Jay's features in fine detail, they are contrasted by the bold, broadly painted scarlet and black robes. The man is shown as resolute and determined with dark, deeply set eyes. Stuart's fine treatment of the Justice's complexion is done with highlights in opaque paint on top of translucent glazes. The receding hairline adds to Jay's look of cool intellectuality.

The Chief Justice is posed slightly to the left of the canvas and turning to the left. This off centeredness is balanced by the law book held vertically in his left hand. The background is barely suggested - a rose colored drape to one side and a ghostly column to the other. The focus here is on the man, John Jay.

Gilbert Stuart demonstrated by this painting of a statesman of international reputation that he was indeed the premier portraitist in America. Soon he had commissions from many of John Jay's friends and, of course, the sitting in Philadelphia by President George Washington.

John Jay's portrait can be seen in the National Gallery in Washington. The Stuart/Trumbull portraits are in the National Portrait Gallery.

Gail Shields



Gilbert Stuart, right (David Ely) confers with one of his most famous subjects, George Washington (Ronald A. Sullman) at the 2013 Spring Fair.

Milling Around at the Museum

NK Groundwater Committee and the Gilbert Stuart Museum Partner at Harbourfest

The Gilbert Stuart Museum and the North Kingstown Groundwater Committee partnered with an exhibit at NK Harbourfest on September 15th at the Town Beach. One of the features of the combined exhibit was a display of lawn types. Many homes and buildings in North Kingstown use large amounts of water on their lawns. Not so the Gilbert Stuart Museum, which hand-waters and cuts long, following the recommendation of lawn experts. Many attendees were impressed and vowed to use less water on their lawns. The Groundwater Committee also showed examples of clover lawns and over-seeded clover lawns. Also on display were many of the distinctive and beautiful photographs of the Museum and its grounds taken by Executive Director Peg O'Connor, which drew many complimentary remarks. In the opinion of this writer, these pictures are worthy of a coffee table book, they are truly lovely.

Submitted by Harriet Powell, Chair, NK Groundwater Committee, and Gilbert Stuart Museum member.



August 9, 2013 Paint the Town Red gala

Paint the Town Red August 9th dawned rainy, gray, and dreary. But spirits were not dampened and the show went on. We were prepared for the rain with the tent right next to the Welcome Center. However, the sky cleared and we had a marvelous evening. We enjoyed wonderful wine compliments of Newport Vineyards and scrumptious hors d'oeuvres compliments of Tavern by the Sea. The young men in the jazz trio "Just Us" were outstanding! There was some very competitive bidding in the Silent Auction. We all enjoyed meeting and talking to our Honorary Chair, Shirley Bell! Winner of the 50/50 raffle was Peggy Todd! We raised over \$8000 for the cause! We thank all who helped to make this evening a success.

Gilbert Stuart Sightings



Junior Docents Sam and Emi Cormier found a Gilbert Stuart painting at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (left). President Dan Bell with *The Skater*, a Gibby original, in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.!



Peggy Todd explains waterpower technology to a school group

Field Trips to the Museum School groups, Girl Scouts and their families, Cub Scouts, mom's groups, nature groups, birders, home school groups, camera clubs, Red Hat groups, senior groups, and bikers were among our many visitors this summer. Visitors came from all over the states, Europe, Asia, and Australia!



Stanley Steamers The "Eastern Steam Car Tour" stopped by in June for a visit to "tank up" with fuel (water!).



reports of anyone catching a record-breaking bass this year, but some of you sure had fun! There is still time to rent a boat and enjoy the fall foliage.



Museum members Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Smith and granddaughters

Natural dyes We have a remarkable new hand-dyed wool exhibit thanks to a very generous visitor from Philadelphia! Steffenie Kirkpatrick sent some stunningly colorful hand-dyed wool samples for our wool display in the Common Room! Steffenie dyed all of the wool with natural dyes that would have been available in the time-period that the Stuarts lived in the snuff mill. These wonderful colors were produced from dyes made from: madder, cochineal, pokeberry, weld, goldenrod, tansy, marigold, indigo, black walnut hulls, and onion skins. Along with the dyed wool samples, Steffenie sent copies of her research and information about colonial dyeing. Visitors viewing the exhibit are amazed at the wide range of colors available to colonists. Many thanks to Steffenie for this wonderful addition to our exhibit!



H. H. Franklin Club On Friday afternoon, September 20th, the Museum parking lot filled with an awesome array of antique Franklin autos. A group of 45 Franklin owners and their families traveled to Rhode Island from all over New England, the midwest, and from as far away as Seattle for three days of touring, sightseeing, and camaraderie. Organizer and RI resident, club president Bob Harrison included a visit to the Gilbert Stuart Museum on the itinerary. Thank you, Bob! We loved learning about your cars as much as you enjoyed your visit to the Museum!



Boating on Carr Pond

Over fifty-five Museum members enjoyed fishing or a tour around Carr Pond this season! We have not heard

Davisville Middle School Seventh Graders Return to the Museum

Once again, ninety seventh-graders from Davisville Middle School, North Kingstown, spent the day in early May at the Museum. Students participated in five workshops with hands-on activities to enhance their understanding of the Rhode Island “slave experience,” the role snuff played in the Triangular Trade Route, and the connection Gilbert Stuart had to this time period.



In one of the workshops, students were given the opportunity to reflect on the day’s activities by writing poetry while sitting in the

Master Bedroom of the Birthplace.

Two students, Taylin L. and Mckenzie M., were so inspired by their trip to the Museum that they wrote a 500 word article about their field trip experiences. The article was published in the July issue of the “North Kingstown View.”

How lucky these students were to spend a day learning about Rhode Island history and about Rhode Island’s own, Gilbert Stuart. Gilbert Stuart and the Museum continue to inspire young people to create art and in this case, art with their words.

This field trip was made possible through major funding support from the Rhode Island Council for the Humanities, an independent state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from a Target Field Trips grant.

Sandra Makielski

(Thank you to teacher and Trustee Sandra Makielski who created this program and got the grants for its funding.)



Fill the Bucket

*Fill the bucket
Yelling
Pull up the bucket
Yelling
Pour the bucket
Yelling
Carry the bucket
Yelling
Empty the bucket
Endless*

By Amanda S.



A Day in History

*The artist’s house feels lopsided
The smell of wood inside is
Overwhelming, I see the work was
But for a good cause it was because
A happy family resided inside
Their son’s paintings are still known far and wide
by Autumn*



Looked at the Waterwheel

*Looked at the waterwheel
Turning
And turning
Grinding corn*

*Looked at the waterwheel
Turning
And turning
Grinding tobacco*

*Looked at the waterwheel
Turning
And turning
Making the colonists money*

by Mackenzie S.