



Circa 1794

The Newsletter of Historic Rock Ford

SPRING 2023

New Focus Exhibit Opens April 1 in the Snyder Gallery

By Samuel C. Slaymaker, Executive Director

Following the success of our Long Rifles exhibition last year, Historic Rock Ford is delighted to announce a new focus exhibit in the Snyder Gallery for our 2023 Season. "The Market Town & The Metropolis: 18th Century Lancaster and Its Artistic Connections to Philadelphia" will open on April 1, which is also the first day of our tour season.

Throughout most of the 18th century, Philadelphia remained the largest city in the American colonies and then in the fledgling United States. In many ways, it was America's political, financial and cultural epicenter. During this same period, the Borough of Lancaster, Pennsylvania was one of the largest non-coastal towns in America and was closely tied to Philadelphia both commercially and culturally. In addition to serving as a source of raw materials, food and supplies for Philadelphia as well as an important market for its elegantly crafted goods, Lancaster, through which passed the "great wagon road," increasingly came to serve as Philadelphia and its port's gateway to western settlement. This already strong connection was both manifested by and strengthened with the completion of the Lancaster-Philadelphia Turnpike in 1794, the first long-distance macadam road in the new United States.



With Lancaster's growing affluence and stronger ties to Philadelphia as the 18th Century progressed, the connections between both in the fields of the decorative arts increasingly flourished. Lancaster furniture makers developed unique styles that, while clearly influenced by Philadelphia artisans, did not merely mimic them. Artisans, such as furniture makers Thomas Tuft and Peter Frick, worked in both Lancaster and in Philadelphia. Examples of work attributed to both men will be included in this exhibit and demonstrate influences from both Philadelphia and Lancaster.

In the words of John Snyder, "In addition to the general influence of the coastal metropolis on Lancaster, a more specific role was played by wealthy, educated Lancastrians with strong family and professional links to Philadelphia. These were local 'tastemakers' who introduced new styles to Lancaster by their ownership of imported goods bought in Philadelphia and by their patronage of Philadelphia artists and artisans." Snyder cites Judge Jasper Yeates as the most significant of these "tastemakers." The exhibit will include a rare, late-18th century Philadelphia Chippendale camelback sofa believed to have once belonged to Yeates that is part of a private family collection and which has never before been publicly exhibited.

Also included among such Lancaster County "tastemakers" were those affluent persons who had their portraits painted in Philadelphia. This exhibit features portraits of Lancaster Countians Judge Henry Slaymaker and Faithful Richardson Slaymaker (above) by early Swedish immigrant to Philadelphia, Gustavus Hesselius, and by his son John. These outstanding portraits are also part of a private collection and have not been publicly exhibited since 1971 at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts.

It is our hope and expectation that this exhibit will highlight the mutual influence in the decorative arts between 18th century Lancaster and Philadelphia. Because of the significance of the pieces included as well as the unique nature of the exhibit, we believe that it will garner not only regional but national attention that will amplify the significance of Historic Rock Ford as an important destination for all those who cherish early American decorative arts.

This focus exhibit in the Snyder Gallery is included with the purchase of any admission ticket.

[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS](#)

HRF awarded PHMC Grant

In December 2022, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission announced that Historic Rock Ford was one of five Lancaster County museums awarded a General Operating Support Grant. The PHMC is a state agency funded by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These funds will be used to support educational programs and general museum operations. The PHMC awards General Operating Support grants on a competitive basis to eligible museums and historic sites throughout the Commonwealth on an annual basis.



HRF named as a recipient of 2023 Americana Corner Preserving America Grant

Historic Rock Ford is proud to announce that it has been selected as a 2023 Americana Corner Preserving America Grant Program recipient. This program was established to assist non-profit organizations in the telling of the story of America from its founding era through its first century as a nation. This year, 119 grant awardees across 35 states have been selected to receive between \$5,000 to \$10,000 each from the Americana Corner Preserving America Grant. Our 2023 Focus Exhibit, "The Market Town & The Metropolis," will be funded in part through this grant.

Americana Corner



PRESERVING AMERICA
GRANT

The Eastern Bluebird

By Dean C. Rust, DDS

President, Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania

Since 1607 at Jamestown, Virginia, Bluebirds have been part of the culture of North America. They were here a couple hundred years earlier when only Native American tribes occupied the vast coastal areas of North America from north to south.

It happens every spring across the North American continent: the beautiful Bluebird sets out in search of that "perfect piece of real estate" for raising a family. Bluebird lovers everywhere erect nest boxes anxiously hoping to catch their first glimpse of those azure wings flashing in the sunlight and hear the Bluebird's heartwarming warble that reminds us of the promise of spring. Will they be lucky enough this year to have a pair of Bluebirds take up residence in the box they put up? Will they get to share in the intimate details of their lives by monitoring the box?



Indeed, our affinity for Bluebirds has a long history steeped in legend and symbolism that goes back hundreds of years. Just as the Dove is the international symbol of peace, the Bluebird is the international symbol of happiness, hope and renewal. Bluebirds enchant and mesmerize us with their beauty and behavior, but there's more to it than that. Many find it impossible to feel sad when in the presence Bluebirds even if they can't pinpoint exactly why.

Are you ready to find out, first hand, what it is like to experience the joy of Bluebirding? Would you like to witness the miracle of life as it unfolds inside the nest box, watching nestlings emerge from their eggs and seeing them grow? You might even be fortunate enough to see them take their first flight as they fledge from the nest box you erected? What a wonderful experience to share with your children, grandchildren and friends!

The Eastern Bluebird is one of the most cherished songbirds in the United States and has inspired poets, songwriters, playwrights and movie directors for generations. People of all ages love Bluebirds and long to see more of them.

In 2022, Dean Rust refurbished the 8 box Bluebird trail at Historic Rock Ford for the enjoyment of our visitors. Please request a four-fold, color Bluebird Society of Pennsylvania Brochure in the Welcome Center to the Snyder Gallery.

2022-23 Membership Appeal Update

Historic Rock Ford would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who became members or who renewed their memberships from

October 1, 2022 to March 1, 2023.

This list will be updated in future newsletters.

[Click here to view the membership list.](#)

**Historic Rock Ford thanks our 2023 Season
Sponsors for their generous support:**

Sponsors:

Thomas G. Englert
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Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission
The H&H Group

Historic Rock Ford, an Educational Improvement
Organization, sincerely thanks Clark Associates
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programming.



Historic Rock Ford | 881 Rockford Road, Lancaster, PA 17602 | 717-392-7223
www.HistoricRockFord.org

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