




# Pennsylvania Hospital *Historic Collections* Newsletter

*A bi-annual newsletter published by the Friends of the Historic Collections*

FALL 2013 (Vol. 12)



 *Storm at Sea*, Benjamin West

## *Maritime* HISTORY EXHIBITION

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OPENING DECEMBER 9, 2013, the exhibition, "Maritime Health at the Pennsylvania Hospital, 1799-1840" will immerse visitors in the life of a sailor in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. What ailments were common? What resources were available? And what role did the Pennsylvania Hospital play in maritime health during this period? Learn about Pennsylvania Hospital's role as a de facto marine hospital and see volumes used by ships' surgeons and captains to assist in caring for sailors while out at sea.

We will again, host an Exhibition Lecture Series. This years lectures will feature University of Pennsylvania Professor, Dr. David Barnes, who will discuss the history of the Lazaretto; and Tim McGrath, Health and Science Center, Inc., discussing his book on John Barry including Barry's relationship with Benjamin Rush. A full line up of speakers will be sent out shortly.

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**Want a reminder about the great events taking place? Send us your e-mail address! Want to help reduce the cost of printing and postage? Send us your e-mail address!**

Friends will be kept up to date on events and activities as well as helping to create a greener environment by reducing the amount of paper sent out. Simply e-mail Stacey Peebles at [stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu) and your address will be added to the Friends of the Historic Collections list for updates.

## PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL AUXILIARY... A HISTORY, PART III

We have looked back at the founding of the Pennsylvania Hospital Auxiliary, from early donors to religious guardians, to formidable fundraisers. In this, our third and final installment, we will remember the modern Auxiliary from the mid-twentieth century to the present. Many consider the late twentieth century to be the zenith of the Auxiliary; armed with the respect of the Board and flush with members, the Auxiliary of the 1970's,

1980's and 1990's raised significant funds for Pennsylvania Hospital. The Auxiliary was very visible; making departmental rounds and hosting fundraising events such as the popular Fantasy Ball, Garden Bazaar, Golf Tournament, and Pennsylvania Hospital Day, which started back in 1948. The Auxiliary continues to operate the Bargain Shop, providing new life to goods and individuals in need or those simply bargain hunting. Over

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# PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL AUXILIARY...

## A HISTORY, PART III

(Continued from cover)

the years, the Auxiliary raised and donated millions of dollars (average annual donation was over \$100,000.00). That money directly served the Pennsylvania Hospital community making the women's imaging center possible, as well aiding in all areas of the hospital. While the Auxiliary is a volunteer organization, the time and energy spent on behalf of the members was often a full-time job. The women of the organization demonstrated many talents, including their keen ability to make connections. Whether part of the Sick and Injured committee, Maternity committee, or the Social Services committee (including the Sewing Circle), the Auxilians provided Pennsylvania Hospital with much needed energy and support.

Today's Auxiliary is comprised of: Auxiliary Chair Barbara A. Nadley; Allocations Committee Chair & Secretary Dollie Buckwalter; Treasurer & Office Manager Lucille DeRitis; Bargain Shop Manager Velda Bray; and members at large: Dorothy Abelson, Margaret Cackowski, Dolores Danielle, Marjorie Gregory, Joan Switt Langbord, Josephine Lawrie, Marie Lovera, Marianne Miller, Etta Risch, Thelka Sacksteder, and Patricia Topper. The committee continues to raise money for the Hospital through the Bargain Shop and the Golf Tournament, allocating funds each year for Hospital projects.

Over the years many talented and committed individuals served as Auxilians. Many members have been associated with the Auxiliary for over 40 years. Marjorie Gregory joined the Auxiliary in 1970, holding several posts including Chair of the Bargain Shop where she put in 40 hours a week! Another dedicated member is Jo Lawrie. Mrs. Lawrie first worked at Pennsylvania Hospital, working closely with the president, Mr. Robert Cathcart. She is now 89 years young and attends all meetings, coming from a distance of two hours away. She drives to the train station, transfers to the Market East line, then walks to the hospital. Dorothy Abelson joined the Auxiliary in 1973. She remains active, holding several titles over the years, and continues to attend



➡ Pennsylvania Hospital Auxiliary Members.

all our meetings. Mrs. Abelson was also a founding member of the Friends of the Library, now the Friends of the Historic Collections.

Former chair and member of the Auxiliary Essie Karp described how the Auxiliary “created a sense of Pennsylvania Hospital family” and was a stable presence at the hospital. The Auxiliary hosted events, like the fur sale and gift cart (which later became permanent as Telly's Gift Shop), which brought together the hospital community, as well as large galas such as the Fantasy Ball, which brought the medical community together and served as a major fundraiser. The Auxiliary members not only gave generously of their time, but added great value to the hospital by bringing in their connections. Auxiliary members were not always directly connected to Pennsylvania Hospital; rather, they were individuals with a desire to assist in making Pennsylvania Hospital a continued success. These ladies brought their friends—and their connections—to Pennsylvania Hospital, adding financial resources through the private sector as well as new patients through recommendations.

Current Auxiliary chair Barbara Nadley is certainly committed to Pennsylvania Hospital. Mrs. Nadley saves a special place in her heart—as well as her time—for the Bargain Shop. The Bargain Shop serves as a touchstone in the community, providing deals to those on a budget in a welcoming environment.

There is no mistaking the dedication and commitment so many individuals have made over the years to the Auxiliary. Their time, talents and treasure were shared freely with the Pennsylvania Hospital community to make it a better, stronger, healthier place to be; truly creating an atmosphere where a patient wants to be a patient, where physicians want to practice medicine, and employees want to work.





## Benjamin West at Pennsylvania Hospital



— By Thomas Ardill, PhD student supervised by David Solkin (*Courtauld*) and Martin Myrone (*Tate*)  
*Between God, Art and Mammon, Religious Painting as Public Spectacle in Britain, c.1800-1850*

*Continuing our series of articles written by scholars who have utilized the Historic Collections, this edition features Thomas Ardill, a PhD student from London. Mr. Ardill spent time here in the spring reviewing our collection of Benjamin West related correspondence.*

As a London-based PhD student, studying early nineteenth-century exhibitions of religious paintings in Britain, I have to admit my jealousy of Philadelphia's rich collections of paintings by Benjamin West. In March I was lucky enough to be awarded a travel grant by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, which allowed me to visit Philadelphia to see these paintings and use the city's archives. I am especially jealous of Pennsylvania Hospital for having West's huge oil painting, *Christ Healing the Sick*, 1815, because the first version (sold by West to the British Institution in 1811 and now in the Tate collection) was badly damaged in the Thames flood of 1928. Thought to be irretrievably damaged, the canvas was finally unrolled last year by conservators at Tate. Although it was indeed a sorry sight, conservators believe that much of the surface, currently obscured by 'blooming' of the varnish, could one day be restored. It was therefore a relief to see the hospital's painting looking so good. In fact, Stacey Peebles, Curator-Lead Archivist at Pennsylvania Hospital, pointed out a bulge in the bottom-left of the canvas which, thanks to funding from the Stockman Family Foundation, has been assessed and will be remedied. The hospital also has in its archives a folder of over four-hundred pages of letters and documents relating to the painting's commission, West's progress (or lack of), the changing plans for its display, arrangements for shipping, and subsequent management of the specially built Picture House.

West was approached by the hospital Managers in September 1800 with a request for the donation of a painting for the

Managers' Room. Although they seem to have expected him to offer a fairly modest picture, West recognised an opportunity for a much more ambitious work; one that would not only be 'analogous to the situation', but would also enable him to promote himself in America in a way that he had until then been unable to do. He therefore proposed a sixteen foot painting, and in return hoped that the Managers would follow his ideas of 'how a picture of its dimensions could be placed to most advantage.' Early suggestions for a suitable situation included the circular operating theatre which was then being built; the painting was considered to be 'particularly appropriate in its subject to the intended use of this room'. West, however, preferred the Committee Room,<sup>2</sup> and sent the Managers a diagram of how it should be arranged with blinds placed over the windows on one side so that 'The light on the picture [...] will then be the same in which [it] was painted. This is always to be observed in hanging pictures.'<sup>3</sup>

West exhibited a small oil sketch of his design at the Royal Academy exhibition in 1801 (no.307), and in February 1804, John R. Coates reported to his father Samuel (Secretary and then President of the Board of Managers) that the painting was 'now on the frame and the outlines are drawn'.<sup>4</sup> Although West had assured him that it would be 'completed in the course of the ensuing summer', Coates Junior was sceptical and advised his father that 'altho[ugh] this great master of his art is exceedingly industrious, he would probably be more expeditious if some appeal was made to his vanity.'<sup>5</sup> He was right to be suspicious of West's good intention as the painting was not to be completed for some time to come.

We next hear from West in the spring of 1807 when he wrote to Joseph Wharton that the painting would be ready to send to Pennsylvania by one of the autumn ships.<sup>6</sup> In November 1809 the work was still not finished, though West told John Coates that it was

nearly completed. By now the artist was confirmed in the idea that the painting was to be considered one of his most important works, and had come up with the notion of presenting it to the State of Pennsylvania, to be given by them to the hospital. Coates feared that the government 'might wish to do him less justice from his talents having budded and bloomed in the rays of Royalty', and that they might claim a share in any income generated from the painting. Assuring West that it would be safer to entrust the picture to the care of the Hospital Contributors alone, Coates managed to dissuade him from pursuing such a scheme.<sup>7</sup> A month later West was apparently 'engaged on [the painting] alone from morning til midnight', and intended to exhibit it in London the following Spring and then send it to Philadelphia in August. The artist was now seventy-one and Coates feared that he would never complete it; though the advanced state of the picture reassured him that if West died 'the picture might be finished by an inferior artist'.<sup>8</sup>

The picture was completed by early 1811, at which point it was promptly sold to the British Institution. Coates attributed this to West's poverty,<sup>9</sup> though the artist was also tempted by the prospect that the painting would form the foundation of a future National Gallery. West promised to paint a copy for the hospital which he hoped to complete in the summer.<sup>10</sup> Once again, however, the hospital would have to wait several more years as the popularity of the first painting had prompted West to paint two more large religious works which he exhibited commercially in London: *Christ Rejected*, 1814, and *Death on the Pale Horse*, 1817; both of which are now at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts. The second painting was completed in 1815, but it would still be a further two years before it was shipped across the Atlantic, as West took the opportunity to add it to his London exhibition.

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<sup>1</sup>Benjamin West to the Hospital Managers, 8 July 1801.

<sup>2</sup>Joshua Gilpin to Managers, 29 October 1801.

<sup>3</sup>West to Gilpin, 13 August 1802.

<sup>4</sup>John R. Coates to Samuel Coates, 29 February 1804.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Joseph Wharton to Managers, 15 April 1807.

<sup>7</sup>John R. Coates to Samuel Coates, 4 November 1809.

<sup>8</sup>John R. Coates to Samuel Coates, 18 December 1809.

<sup>9</sup>John R. Coates to Samuel Coates, 17 April 1811.

<sup>10</sup>West to Samuel Coates, 24 April 1811.

## SPECIAL THANKS



The Pennsylvania Hospital Historic Collections would like to recognize and thank the Rugart family. This past year Mrs. Patricia (Patsy) Rugart passed away. In lieu of flowers, the family asked for donations to be sent to the Pennsylvania Hospital Historic Collections. Mrs. Rugart was a beloved woman, as the generosity of family and friends demonstrate. We express our sincere condolences, and heartfelt thanks, to the Rugart family.

(Continued from History is Alive! on page 3)

Meanwhile he had proposed to the managers that a special picture house be erected to accommodate the work. He believed that this would 'dignify' his 'present' and the hospital, and generate an income from admission charges.<sup>11</sup> The managers agreed to his proposal,<sup>12</sup> but were weary of erecting the building before the arrival of the painting in case it was lost at sea.<sup>13</sup> They were spurred on to agree to West's terms, however, by Caleb Cressons, who learnt that West had been offered 3000 Guineas by a speculator for the loan of the painting for a year in order to exhibit it in New York and Boston with the intention of raising a profit through admission fees. Although West had declined the offer, Cressons feared that he could be tempted if the picture house was not built soon.<sup>14</sup> The Managers followed Cressons's advice, and their minutes for June 1816 record the arrangements for the building. 135 pages of receipts and accounts detailing the construction are also preserved in the archive. The building cost about \$10,000, but upon its completion in 1817, William Tudor remarked that he had never seen a better placement for a picture in England or Europe.<sup>15</sup>

Among the letters is correspondence about the shipment of the painting, and details about negotiations over the remittance of export and import duty, recording perhaps the first instance of such an exemption. After the arrival of the painting, correspondence about the painting became much less frequent, though records continue to the middle of the nineteenth-century, including several requests to borrow the work for exhibitions.

During my visit to Philadelphia I also visited the Historical Society of Pennsylvania where I consulted the Pennsylvania Hospital Account Book, which contains records of daily visitors to the picture house, committee reports and copies of correspondence. Letters and clippings about West collected by his first biographer, John Galt, also include documents concerning *Christ Healing the Sick*. The Society also holds the research files of Helmet von Erffa and Allen Staley who wrote the catalogue of West's paintings. I only wish I could have spent longer in the city which is a goldmine for Benjamin West research!

<sup>11</sup>West to Wharton, 17 March 1814.

<sup>12</sup>West to Samuel Coates, 5 September 1815.

<sup>13</sup>Caleb Cressons memorandum of interview with West, 13 February 1816.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>William Tudor to West, 15 April 1817.

### Questions/comments?

Please contact Curator-Lead Archivist Stacey Peeples at 215.829.5434 or [stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu).

## Friends 2013 Campaign

The 2013 solicitation was mailed to Friends in June; if you have not received your annual solicitation and wish to give, please contact [stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu](mailto:stacey.peeples@uphs.upenn.edu).

This year's solicitation contained two important changes: first, **all checks must be made payable to the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania**. This is a streamlining approach and will not affect your intention for the donation. Please be assured that all donations to the Friends of the Historic Collections will be deposited into our account. Our account information was included with the enclosed envelope so please be sure to return your donation in that envelope. Second, **our solicitation this year will be put toward the conservation of Benjamin West's *Christ Healing the Sick in the Temple***. The total conservation treatment and related charges will be over \$100,000. We ask that you please continue to support this important and unique painting. Please see related story by researcher Thomas Ardill for more information on the painting. There is always something new to learn about our collections!

## QUAKER ROOTS

In late August the Pennsylvania Hospital returned to the Arch Street Meeting a dated stone from the former Orange Street Meeting House. Haven't heard of the Orange Street Meeting? Built in 1832, the Orange Street Meeting was closed in 1872, folding those orthodox members into the Arch Street Meeting. The stone, dated 1832, was found in the basement of the Farm Journal Building. A little detective work by history lover Nick Nastasi of Engineering revealed the history of the stone. The Farm Journal building is on the site of the former Orange Street Meeting! Nick sent Curator-Lead Archivist Stacey Peeples several links explaining the connection. Ms. Peeples contacted Lynne Calamia at Arch Street Meeting to inquire if they were interested in receiving the stone. Arch Street Meeting was elated to have the stone. In late August, Horticulturalist Sam Royer, his assistant Nate, and Ms. Peeples met with Ms. Calamia at Arch Street Meeting to officially turn over the stone. It will be incorporated into a garden there.



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Pennsylvania Hospital