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Jacobsburg — Where History Lives!

JHS Spreads Holiday Cheer at Boulton

On December 9th a clear cold front blew into Jacobsburg, covering the ground with a white blanket of snow and ushering in the many elves (our very own volunteers) who were helping to set the stage for the Society's Christmas Open House, "A Walk Back in Time." In my mind's eye I could see a team of horses pulling a sleigh, flickering their tails and sleigh bells ringing ... calling to all the Henrys who had celebrated Christmases past. After months of planning and preparation, the 1832 John Joseph Henry House and the Henry Homestead would be transformed into a Christmas Wonderland Event. From noon until 5 p.m. the public shared in holiday joy by mingling with adults and children in period dress.

Victorian history was brought to life at the JJ House by highlighting the Henrys' social, cultural and religious traditions during the holiday season. All were welcomed into our Philadelphia-style townhouse, warmly decorated and sparkling with lights. Lorita Musselman (of Miss Lorita's Vintage Clothing) provided period clothing and actors to portray Henry family members and friends. Visitors were treated to live music, sung by Sally Shutler, who specializes in baroque and classical music and is welcomed back to the JJ House where she sang for Molly's Garden Tea. In the true Moravian tradition practiced by the Henry family, young and old joined in to sing along with our vocalist.

The parlor featured a Christmas tree trimmed with Henry family decorations. Beneath the tree was a collection of Henry toys, which fascinated a little girl who, in her white ruffled dress and hat, greatly resembled Molly Henry (Mary Adeline Henry Stites) as a child. In the dining room the Stites' set of Nativity figures was nestled in a Moravian putz of rocks, mosses, and greens. Fireplace mantels as well as a dining room centerpiece were bedecked with ribbons and Victorian sparkle created by

Nancy Little of Nazareth Floral Design. The kitchen of the JJ House was a favorite for many of the guests. Across the open fireplace in the kitchen were Henry long-johns, ice skates, and a teddy bear watching all the guests come and go. At the end of their house tour, visitors received handmade Victorian cornucopias tied with satin ribbons and stuffed with candies, and they were invited to tour the summer kitchen.



Our guests traveled farther back into Christmas past by walking across Henry Road to the old Henry Homestead (Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum), which bustled with holiday activity reminiscent of the rugged Colonial era. Smells of apples cooking and sights of flames licking the sky beckoned guests to the Homestead. Pies baked in the Dutch oven outdoors while indoors children enjoyed Colonial-era games and crafts. JHS volunteers offered tours of the longrifle museum, and Virginia

Lopresti welcomed visitors to the gift shop and displayed archaeological artifacts. Refreshments of Moravian sugar cake, cookies and candies were offered to all. Hot spiced "Jacobsburg Brew" warmed the innards, while beribboned note cards featuring sketches of Jacobsburg were given to visitors to warm their hearts.

As the day drew to a close, shouts of holiday cheer rang through the air. Our Christmas gift to the community was a resounding success thanks to the generous support of numerous JHS volunteers: Sarah White, Howie and Cathy White, Rich Steiner, Joe and Bobbie DiGerlando, Sybil and Jeff Marsh, Bill Atherton, Joe and Carolyn Flemish, Tim and Terri Lubeneski, Barb and Phil Schroeder, Paul Lopresti, Mary Turzo, Cheryl Groff, Jan Ballard, Karen Prinkey, Ron Marshall, and our special youth violinist, William Dixon.

—Roberta Steiner

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The Jacobsburg Historical Society is a member-supported nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and presenting the art and industry of making early American firearms, and the character of the individuals and community that created and sustained that enterprise.

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Message from President Rich Steiner

2006 was a great year of achievement for Jacobsburg Historical Society, and 2007 holds great promise. Among this past year's achievements:

Building Restoration. With the support of a Greenway grant we contracted with Gordon Bennet Painting for exterior painting of the John Joseph Henry House. Much needed interior repairs, including for ceiling moldings and wallpaper, were recently completed by restoration contractor Ray Groff. We were awarded a second phase of Greenway funding which will allow us to continue with a series of John Joseph Henry House renovation projects during 2007.

Longrifle Museum. Our Museum Committee has nearly finished its interpretive exhibits and display project with completion targeted for our May opening. Museum attendance doubled from the previous year with patrons visiting from around the globe.

Educational Programming. We expanded our very successful core events to include well attended "Spring Fling" yard and antiques sale, "Molly's Tea", and an enhanced Christmas Open House. Our 2007 calendar now includes a total of 11 programs. Our one-of-a-kind gunsmithing class had record attendance with participants commuting from as far as New England and Mid Atlantic States.

Grants. We completed our PHMC-funded Archives and Records project. As a result our manuscript and photo collections have been professionally catalogued and preserved. Consequently, we will be better able to interpret our museums, as well as open our archives to the public. A significant grant obtained from the National Endowment for the Humanities will allow for the next phase in professionally conserving our collections. A DCED-funded grant will pay for directional signs and make it easier for our visitors to locate us. With funding received from PHMC we secured consulting expertise from Bernard Fishman, executive director of The Rhode Island Historical Society. His input will be used to help us assess and develop organizational priorities.

We're off to an excellent start for 2007. At their January meeting, the Board of Directors approved moving forward with our long-time goal of hiring an executive director. I am pleased to announce that Jan Ballard has accepted the position. She assumes her role on a half-time basis as she continues in her position as archivist with Moravian College. She comes to us well qualified with experience from Moravian College, Lafayette College, Lehigh County Historical Society, and Historic Bethlehem Partnership. Most recently she managed our PHMC Archives and Records project to a very successful conclusion. Lastly she demonstrates an intense passion and enthusiasm for JHS.

In closing, I want to recognize the passing and memory of our long-time friend and master gunsmith, George Dech. I think my fellow Board member, Phil Schroeder, best expresses our sentiments at JHS: "George served our Society faithfully and well from its beginnings. At the time of our founding he signed on as our first life member and he was an active and enthusiastic member and volunteer ever since. He was regarded as our true expert in the gun making craft that is so important to our mission. He was a mainstay in our education program and he shared his remarkable knowledge and expertise with a gentle enthusiasm that was contagious. He will be sorely missed."

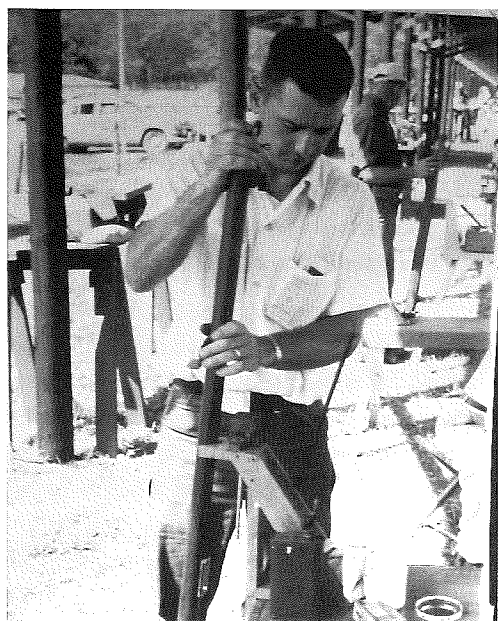
Remembering George Dech

It is with deepest sadness that I must convey the passing of an old friend and devoted associate, George Dech. George's battle with cancer took a turn around Christmas, and he passed on the morning of January 1. He would have celebrated his 80th birthday on January 8.

The Society's first life member, George had a very long association with JHS, dating back 25 to 30 years ago to the shoots and rendezvous of the 1980s. In the mid-1990s, George helped to start our Kentucky Rifle Gunsmith Course, now in its eighth year of operation. As one of the three original Master Gunsmiths George made six custom-built Henry reproduction rifles. Two are on permanent display in our Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Boulton, and two others hold a special esteem in our collection. George also made several raffle guns for the Rifle Frolic and sold them to the Society at parts cost or less as fund raisers. The early Rifle Frolics would have lost money without the gun raffle.

George's coy smile and his great attitude were contagious. He will be missed by all that knew him.

—Tim Lubenesky



Master Gunsmith George Dech, winner of this national championship in Friendship, IN.

Calendar of Events

2007



March 7 — Spring Gunmakers' Class. Wednesdays through April 25, 7pm-10pm at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Boulton. Advanced course in the art of early gunsmithing.

April 14 — Spring Buildings and Grounds Cleanup. 10am, Boulton.

April 21 — Spring Fling Trade Blanket Event. 10am-3pm, Henry Homestead, Boulton. Antique yard sale.

May 6 — Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum Open House. Sundays through October 28, 1pm-4pm, Boulton. Permanent display of Henry longrifle collection.

June 16-17 — Kentucky Rifle Frolic. 10am-4pm, Boulton. 18th and 19th century living history encampment.

June 30 — Kutztown Pennsylvania-German Festival. Daily through July 8, 9am-6pm, Kutztown Fairgrounds. JHS display and working exhibit for the art of gunsmithing.

July 8 — Easton Heritage Days. 11am-5pm, Bachmann Publick House, Easton, Pennsylvania. JHS display.

July 27-29 — Dixon's Gunmakers' Fair. Dixon's Gun Shop, Kempton, Pennsylvania. JHS display will feature early Lehigh and Northampton County longrifles.

TBA — Garden Tea. Boulton. 19th Century "High Tea" social gathering.

September 26 — Fall Gunsmithing Course. Wednesdays through November 14, 7pm-10pm. Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, Boulton. Learn the art of early gunsmithing.

October 18 — Annual Membership Dinner. 6pm, Holy Family Club, Nazareth, Pennsylvania. Membership banquet.

October 27-28 — American Fur Trade. 10am-4pm, Boulton. Living history encampment, blacksmithing, colonial cooking, Rendezvous demonstrations, Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and John Joseph Henry House tours.

December 1 — Fall and Winter Buildings and Grounds Cleanup. 9am, Boulton.

December 8 — Christmas at Boulton. A Colonial-era Christmas at the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and a Victorian Christmas at the John Joseph Henry House.

"Shaken Not Stirred" at Jacobsburg



Barry Nelson, the first James Bond.

The stars are out at Boulton. Numbered among our many illustrious members is Barry Nelson, the first actor to portray Agent 007 James Bond, when he starred in a 1950s television adaptation of Ian Fleming's *Casino Royale*.

This handsome actor of Scandinavian heritage began his career in the 1941. In film he was cast as the leading man alongside such established leading ladies as Ginger Rogers, Ann Sothorn, and Debbie Reynolds. In 1980 Nelson figured in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* as the hotel executive who hires Jack Nicholson as a caretaker.

A theatre staple since the late 1940s, Nelson's Broadway credits include *Light Up the Sky*, *The Moon is Blue*, and *Cactus Flower*. He was nominated for a 1978 Tony for his lead role in *The Act*, a Broadway musical directed by Martin Scorsese and co-starring Liza Minnelli.

TV afforded Nelson some of his most popular roles. He played in several live dramatic anthologies of the 50s, such as "The Chevrolet Tele-Theater" and "Starlight Theater." After his role as Bond, Nelson headlined in his own spy series, playing U.S. agent Bart Adams in *The Hunter*.

These days Barry Nelson, at age 86, enjoys antiquing with his wife, Nansi. The couple are frequent visitors to JHS Rifle Frolics.

—Rob Gabel and Jan Ballard



JHS members Barry Nelson and Ron Gabel at a Rifle Frolic.

Volunteers Corner

Happy 2007 to all! ... and, thanks to everyone who made our 2006 events so successful. Despite inclement weather, our intrepid volunteers contributed to the success of our Spring Fling Blanket Trade, Molly's Garden Tea, and Fur Trade Rendezvous in the fall. Hopefully Mother Nature will be more cooperative in 2007!

Special thanks to Roberta Steiner and Sarah White. Roberta was the driving force behind Molly's Tea and also joined forces with Sarah to do a fantastic job on our last event of 2006, a Christmas open house featuring the Colonial era at the Homestead and Victorian times at the JJ House. These events brought many new faces to Jacobsburg (including children), improved our visibility in the community, and even added some new volunteers.

As we look ahead, we will need volunteers for Spring clean-up and additional museum docents for Sundays, May to October. We would also like to create a Green Team to plan, plant, and maintain the gardens. Whether you have expertise in gardening or just like to dig in the dirt, give me a call at 610-759-0361 (wassergass@msn.com).

All our events require the help of many cooperative minds and hands. Plans for a special event to honor our volunteers is currently underway. I look forward to working with volunteers new and old in 2007.

—Sybil Marsh, Volunteer Coordinator

Special Research Section

The Social Life of a Colonial Masterpiece

Scott Paul Gordon

For the better part of two centuries, an American masterpiece—according to Allen Staley, “the most ambitious and interesting picture produced in colonial America”—hung in Boulton: Benjamin West’s *The Death of Socrates*, painted for William Henry in Lancaster in 1756.¹ The painting has at times been called “lost,” but it was lost only to those who did not know where to find it. From 1756 until 1989, without interruption, it could have been found where it belonged, hanging on the wall of a Henry home. The Henry family papers in the Archives of the Jacobsburg Historical Society reveal, in detail typically invisible or unavailable, the process by which a “forgotten” painting is re-integrated into society.

The Death of Socrates hung in William Henry’s home that faced Lancas-

ter’s Market Square probably until 1809, when the residence was sold. The painting appears among the “Goods and Chattels” inventoried at the death of Henry in 1786 (a “History Piece”) and at the death of his wife, Ann Wood Henry, in 1799 (“5 pictures”).² A granddaughter of William Henry recalled seeing West’s “Death of Socrates h[anging] on the mantelpiece” in Ann Henry’s “sitting room.”³ Two documents, taken together, confirm that the painting remained in Henry’s home, where his sons continued to reside. Matthew Schropp Henry, a Nazareth relative, recalled a visit to “Benjamin West Henry, the youngest son of William Henry, who lived in the house of William Henry” (this visit must have occurred before 1806, when B. W. Henry died) during which he saw a “second picture” by West, a landscape with cattle.⁴ Another visitor, Augustus Forster, a British diplomat in America between 1804-1807⁵,

reported seeing the *Death of Socrates*, along with other paintings by West, in Lancaster in the house of one of William Henry’s sons. Since Forster’s report establishes that the several paintings that West produced for William Henry remained together, we know that the *Socrates* still hung in “the

house of William Henry” for two decades after his death. It is likely that only after the 1809 sale of the Henry home⁶ was *The Death of Socrates* removed from the space in which it had been painted and had hung for so long.

The Death of Socrates next surfaces in the Philadelphia home of John Joseph Henry, a grandson of William Henry. Indeed, documents in the JHS Archives reveal that J. J. Henry wanted to invite the public to see his painting, a decision that



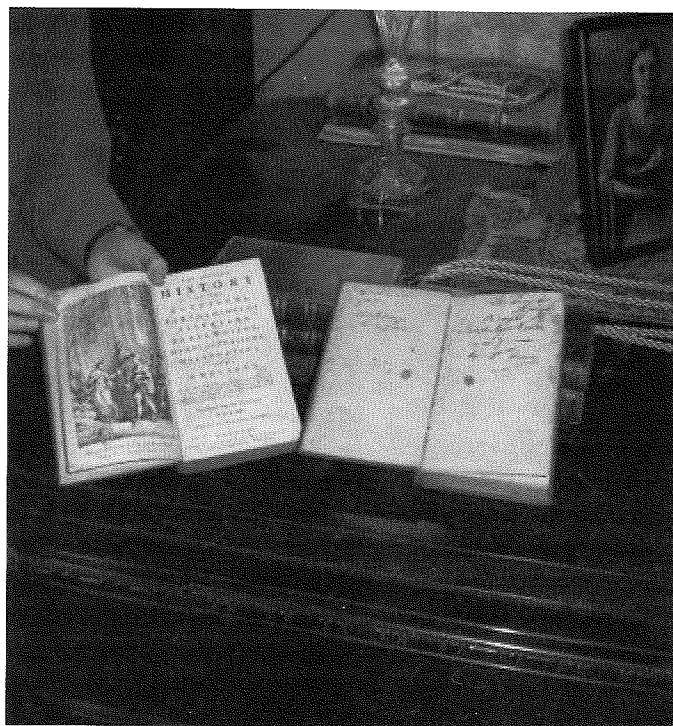
Reproduction of Benjamin West’s *Death of Socrates*, shown hanging in the 1832 John Joseph Henry House Museum.

likely resulted from John Galt’s publication of *The Life and Studies of Benjamin West* (1816). Based on conversations with the elderly painter, this memoir of West’s early years in America (in 1760 he left for Italy, never to return) describe how a Lancaster gunsmith, William Henry, encouraged the eighteen year old West to devote his genius to history painting and provided a subject by reading to him the story of the death of Socrates. One can imagine the Henrys’ surprise at finding their family history with West made public for the first time! (Indeed, the Henrys knew what West withheld from Galt: Henry read from Charles Rollin’s *Ancient History of the Egyptians, Carthaginians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Macedonians, and Grecians* [10 vols., 1738-40], a volume of which contains an engraving of “The Death of Socrates”—elements of which West borrows. Unwilling to admit to a literary source, West hid the fact that his *Death of Socrates* stems from a prior image.) Two draft “announcements” in the JHS Archives surely respond

to the publication of Galt's memoir of West: beginning with an extended quotation from the 1816 Philadelphia edition of Galt, they disclose that the painting has "remained in the family of his benefactor, and is now in the possession of Mr. John Joseph Henry, a grandson of the above mentioned Gentleman [William Henry of Lancaster], residing in this City, who would be pleased to afford an opportunity to such of his fellow citizens as are desirous of viewing that first effort of their countryman" at his residence at "290 North Third St., 2d door above Noble Street, where the ... painting will be cheerfully exhibited."⁷

In 1822 John Joseph Henry closed his Philadelphia gunworks and moved to Boulton, where the painting's first home must have been the Henry Homestead (now the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum). Occasional visitors trekked to Boulton to see it: in 1838 John Trumbull (revolutionary war hero and West's most distinguished student, who painted the famous *Declaration of Independence*) visited James Henry to see West's work, and in 1925 Judge Charles Landis traveled from Lancaster to "the home of Mr. Charles Henry and Misses Sophia and Clara Henry, who live near the Borough of Nazareth" to see it.⁸ At some point the painting migrated across the road to the Federal-style house that John Joseph Henry had built in 1832. There *The Death of Socrates* remained until 1989, when Mary Henry Stites's will permanently deposited it in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP, in turn, produced for the Jacobsburg Historical Society the actual-sized reproduction that hangs in the J. J. Henry house). West's *Death of Socrates* now resides in Philadelphia's Atwater Kent Museum, which houses HSP's collection of paintings.

Although the Henry family never lost track of *The Death of Socrates* during its long stay in Boulton, some evidence suggests that they lost track of its significance. Stanley Jordan (son of Francis Jordan, Jr., who wrote *The Life of William Henry of Lancaster*, 1910) remembered that when he visited Boulton as a "young man" and Granville Henry "showed [him] the painting," it "hung in a dark part of the hallway and was difficult to see."⁹ The gloom may have masked that the painting had, over the years, severely deteriorated. Another document in the JHS Archives exposes even deeper uncertainty about the painting that the Henry family had possessed for so long. In 1953, a journal planning to reproduce a copy of *The Death of Socrates* requested that Mary A. H. Stites provide "exact wording" for the acknowledgment to "be included in the caption beneath the picture." The effort to



William Henry of Lancaster's volumes of Rollins' *History*. A plate from Rollins was used by West in painting *Death of Socrates*.

comply with this request reveals that the Henry family doubted the painting's authenticity. A half-dozen or so drafts struggle to devise precise wording. One reads: "The painting 'The Death of Socrates' reputedly by Benjamin West has been in the possession of the Henry family for many generations. While Mrs. Stites makes no claims as to authenticity, numerous art critics agree that it is probably one of West's very early works." Another reads: "This reproduction of a painting—reputedly by Benjamin West—entitled 'Death of Socrates' has been checked over by several art critics all of whom agreed it was one of West's early works. It has been in possession of the Henry family for generations—and tradition has it that the subject was suggested to him by William Henry who referred West to Rollins." These papers also preserve an effort to establish Mary A. H. Stites's precise relationship to William Henry (a chart traces her lineage backwards: "GH, James H, JJoseph H, Wm of Nazareth, Wm of Lancaster").¹⁰

This moment in the early 1950s was the painting's low point, its authenticity doubted by the Henrys (despite

uninterrupted provenance) and, equally crucial, its location unknown to art historians. Art historians had so thoroughly lost track of *The Death of Socrates* that an important article published in 1938 to mark the 200th anniversary of West's birth identified it as "Unlocated" (this despite an illustration that had appeared in Jordan's *Life of William Henry* and Charles Landis's published report of his visit in 1925).¹¹ A letter in 1939 from Henri Marceau, Assistant Director at Philadelphia's Museum of Art ("I am looking forward with the greatest pleasure to seeing you and also the picture, which I feel is almost like a long lost relative—I have been looking for it for quite some time"), proves that he had located it, but he kept his crush to himself.¹²

The early 1950s, however, also marked the moment of the painting's resurrection. For it was in 1952 that the great historian of American art, James Thomas Flexner revealed in print his "recent rediscovery...after more than ten years' search" that the painting "belongs to Mrs. Thomas H. A. Stites, of Boulton, Nazareth, Pennsylvania."¹³ He had been helped by his "high-school classmate," Philip Jordan. Flexner's article propelled the painting back into what might be called the "social life" of important American paintings: the *Socrates* had more visitors, it hung at important museum exhibitions, and art historians began to talk about it in publications. authenticity, numerous art critics agree that it is probably one of West's very early works."

An exhibit in Allentown permanently reversed the fortunes of *The Death of Socrates*. In late 1961 Richard Hirsch, Director of the Allentown Art Museum, who was planning a West exhibition for Allentown's bicentennial, contacted Mary A. H. Stites. His first letter reveals his unfamiliarity with the painting: "It has been brought to my attention" (surely by a reader of Flexner's article) "that you own a picture by West entitled 'The Death of Socrates.' This picture does not appear in any of the volumes which we have on the work of this artist. Possibly, however, it is of such a quality that we should be happy to display it on this occasion." But in a later letter, after recognizing the painting's value, Hirsch begs for its inclusion in his exhibition: "It would be such a contribution to the importance of an exhibition which will have national stature that, at the risk of appearing insistent, I would like to emphasize our desire to display this piece prominently along with those which we are borrowing from thirty-five of America's most important museums." The Stiteses were

reluctant to part with the painting, which had never left a Henry home in over two hundred years—Mary Henry Stites told Hirsch that her mother did not want to "be without this piece for ninety days"—but they agreed to loan it. From May to July 1962, the painting was displayed in a public museum for the first time.

This Allentown *World of Benjamin West* exhibition changed the painting forever. Quite literally: in the public spotlight, the *Socrates*'s age was apparent, and as the exhibition concluded Hirsch wrote to Boulton to urge that the painting be restored: "I felt from the start that... 'The Death of Socrates' was, by all standards, the most important individual contribution to the exhibition. As time has gone on and as I have done further research, I have also concluded that this may well be one of the most important paintings produced in colonial America.... As I have told you already and as I am sure you realize, this invaluable work is threatened by its present exceedingly poor physical condition. I would venture to say that, within the next ten years, this painting will be only a shadow of itself unless drastic measures of restoration are taken at this time.... it is my duty to urge you in the strongest way to have this painting restored."¹⁴ The Stiteses wisely took Hirsch's advice, hiring Bruce Etchison to restore *The Death of Socrates*. The painting's "absolutely deplorable" condition caused the project to take longer than expected. Responding to an anxious inquiry as to "why this project has taken what apparently seems to be a long time," Etchison reported that during one day he worked "from 9:00 in the morning until 9:30 in the evening, with only time out for meals and an hour and a half during the afternoon" and "with all of [that] time expended" he "was only able to clean a 4 1/4" strip from the top of the canvas to the bottom." (Etchison added: "I would rather have the owner mad at me now, because of the slowness of the project, then mad at me six months from now, because I didn't do the job properly.")¹⁵ His restoration was complete by Christmas 1962.

Etchison discovered crucial new information about West's painting. Not only did he find that "the young artist made a number of changes in his original composition" but he uncovered "a faint trace of the original West signature"—a signature that did not include only West's name: while "all the details are not clear enough for us to read... West's name and the last name of Henry are unmistakable."¹⁶ This makes *The Death of Socrates* the *only* work from West's American period that carries his signature. The Henry family no longer had to worry about the legitimacy of this long-time resident in their home. *The Death of Socrates* "in its refreshed state," Mary Henry Stites wrote, "has been a source of great pleasure to

our family.” Their pride is evident in later correspondence with Hirsch, who had heard that the painting was for sale. Mary Henry Stites replied firmly: “the ‘Death of Socrates’ is not—has not—and as far as it is possible to foresee the future—will not be for sale.”¹⁷

The Death of Socrates has now hung in major museums, including the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1989 for a major West show and, most recently, the Philadelphia Museum of Art for a 1999 exhibition about early Pennsylvania’s material culture. It’s inclusion in the Philadelphia Museum of Art’s blockbuster Bicentennial exhibit, which lasted six months, testifies to the painting’s newfound reputation.¹⁸ Writing to Mary Henry Stites, the museum’s Director noted that “we are being discreet in the numbers of our requests,” each

made “only after the Museum staff has become convinced that the object would play a major role in the exhibition.” Timed to coincide with “the period when the city of Philadelphia ... expects a staggering onslaught of tourists,” the exhibition and its “major catalogue” placed the *Socrates* before an unimaginably broad audience.¹⁹ The “lost” *Death of Socrates* had joined the list of colonial American masterpieces.

Scott Paul Gordon is associate professor, Department of English, Lehigh University. He is co-director of the Lawrence Henry Gipson Institute for 18c Studies and director of the Lehigh University Press.

Photos: Phil Schroeder

Notes

¹ Allen Staley, “Benjamin West,” in *Benjamin West: American Painter at the English Court* (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 1989), 28.

² “An Inventory of the Goods and Chattels which were of William Henry Esquire Dec’d,” “An Inventory of the Goods and Chattels of Ann Henry late of the Borough of Lancaster deceased,” Accession 1209, Box 13, Folders 1-2, Henry Family Papers 1758-1909, Hagley Museum and Library, Delaware.

³ Note by Anne M. [Henry] Smith (March 24, 1855), William Henry Papers 1759-1821, Vol. 2, Folio 93, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

⁴ Matthew Schropp Henry, “Life of William Henry” (1860), 70 pages, Typescript, American Philosophical Society Library, Philadelphia, 12. In 1860 M. Henry remembered the visit occurring in 1809, but B.W. Henry was dead by then.

⁵ For Forster’s visit, see Henry M. Tinkcom, “Sir Augustus in Pennsylvania: The Travels and Observations of Sir Augustus Forster in Early Nineteenth-Century Pennsylvania,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 75 (1951): 369-99, esp. 381-83. By the time Forster next visited America in 1811-1812, the Henry home in Lancaster had been sold (see next note).

⁶ The house was sold on May 26, 1809; see Herbert H. Beck, “William Henry: Progenitor of the Steamboat, Rifemaker, Patriot,” *Journal of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 54, 4 (1950): 68. A document at Hagley confirms this sale: see the account entitled “John Joseph Henry, one of the Legatees and also one of the Surviving Executors of the Last Will and Testament of William Henry, late of the Borough of Lancaster Esquire deceased,” Accession 1209, Box 13, Folder 1, Henry Family Papers 1758-1909, Hagley Museum and Library, Delaware.

⁷ [J. J. Henry?] “West’s *Death of Socrates*,” 2 Drafts, Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

⁸ Charles I. Landis, “Benjamin West and his Visit to Lancaster,” *Journal of the Lancaster Historical Society* 29, 5 (1925): 57-61.

⁹ Stanley Jordan to Mary Adeline Henry Stites (September 30, 1962), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

¹⁰ [Thomas H. A. Stites?], “This reproduction...” (c. November 1953), 3 pages, Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

¹¹ William Sawitzky, “The American Work of Benjamin West,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 62, 4 (1938): 433-62.

¹² Henri Marceau to Mary Adeline Henry Stites (June 16, 1939), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

¹³ James Thomas Flexner, “Benjamin West’s American Neo-Classicism,” *New York Historical Society Quarterly* 36, 1 (1952): 5-41, rept. in *America’s Old Masters* (New York: Dover, 1967), 315-40.

¹⁴ Richard Hirsch to Mary A. H. Stites (December 6, 1941; January 30, 1962; July 26, 1962), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

¹⁵ Bruce Etchinson to Richard Hirsch (November 28, 1962), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

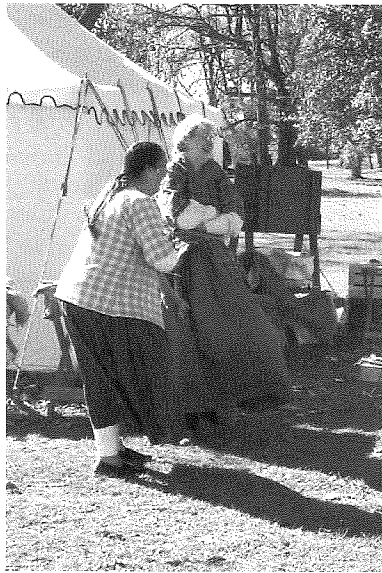
¹⁶ Bruce Etchinson, “Restoration Report: THE DEATH OF SOCRATES” (December 12, 1962), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society (orig. in Artwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia).

¹⁷ Mary Henry Stites to Bruce Etchinson (c. September, 1964); Mary Henry Stites to Richard Hirsch (December 17, 1965), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

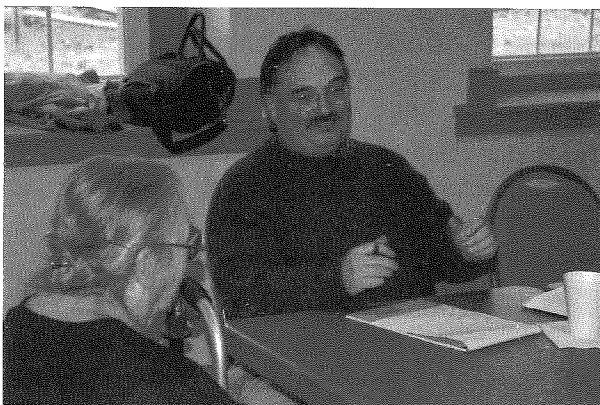
¹⁸ This exhibit likely sparked Ann Uhry Abrams’s important discussion of the painting and visit to Boulton; see Ann Uhry Abrams to Mary Henry Stites (January 28, 1983), Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society, and Abrams, “A New Light on Benjamin West’s Pennsylvania Instruction,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, 4 (1982): 243-257.

¹⁹ Evan H. Turner to Mary Henry Stites (February 4, 1975), Art: Death of Socrates, Folder 2, Box 1, Series IV, Henry Family Papers 1740-1989, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

Fall and Winter 2006 Photos this issue by Dave Ehrig, Tim Lubenesky, Jeff Marsh, and Phil Schroeder.



Above and left. Cold, wet weather made for a truly rugged Rifle Frolic this fall.



Above and left. President Rich Steiner leads the last JHS Board meeting of 2006. PHMC Consultant Bernard Fishman talks with Virginia Lopresti at a JHS institutional review in the fall.



Roberta Steiner (second from left) with her cast of ladies, all dressed and ready to greet visitors at a Victorian Christmas at the John Joseph Henry House.



NOTE
NEW JHS CONTACT
INFORMATION

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(Note change from fast.net to rcn.com)

Early Memories: History of the Jacobsburg Historical Society

The Jacobsburg Historical Society was founded in 1973 in response to a plan by the Commonwealth of PA, through the PA Department of Environmental Resources (DER) - Bureau of State Parks (BSP). The plan was for a State Park in the Jacobsburg area that was to fit into the model of all other state parks developed during the tenure of Dr. Maurice Goddard as Director of DER. This included picnic and camping facilities, hiking trails, a large swimming pool, and a lake for water sports and related activities that were considered standard PA State Park amenities.

The process was started with a gift of more than 500 acres by the City of Easton, PA. The land in the immediate Jacobsburg area had been purchased in the 1950s to use for a potential water supply and a watershed protection area for the City. Water quality tests done on the several wells bored in the area revealed high sulfur content and the plan was later abandoned. (The wells are still in place and the smell is very evident to this day.) The tract remained unused for more than a decade, except for hunters, horse owners, naturalists, hikers, and the newly developing group called "environmentalists".

PA DER was in a growth mode in the early 1970s as they developed other many parks across the Commonwealth. Jacobsburg did not originally fit into the "*Project 70 plan*" because of its small size, but with much political pressure from Northampton County elected and appointed officials, the plan was developed to take that original parcel and add more land through eminent domain actions. The *original DER plan* included more than 2000 acres, in keeping with the PA DER model for state parks. This would include building an earthen dam near the site of the original Boulton dam for the Henry industrial operation, to create a lake of about 700 acres. This would have flooded the Henry's Woods area and the Jacobsburg industrial corridor.

Much of the area in question was still privately held by the Henry Family, including the Henry's Woods. Through the Henry generosity, *Henry's Woods* was already widely used by the public for picnics, parties, fishing, hunting, camping, and even for scout camps. Many other private properties would also have been taken under this plan; great public opposition soon developed. The local community was already government negative because of the Route 33 / PENNDOT construction ex-

perience in the same vicinity. Opposition quickly grew around the project from hunters, sportsman, horse owners and clubs, hiking clubs, garden clubs, environmental groups, educators, and many interested families and individuals. Jacobsburg Historical Society was formed in 1973 as a response to this planned development stage.

The Jacobsburg Historical Society had a very broad based, active, and vocal support from the community at large. This included the original Bushkill Watershed Association, Northampton County Federation of Sportsman, Belfast Rod & Gun Club, Stockertown Rod & Gun Club, Plainfield Riding Association, Nazareth Area Garden Club, Easton Area Garden Club, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women (both Easton and Bethlehem Chapters), Moravian Historical Society, Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society, Northampton County 4H, Bushkill and Nazareth area PTAs, Monocacy Creek Watershed Association, Lafayette College Women's Auxiliary, and many more. Each group and individual had their own reasons, but the point was clearly made that the public did not want the State's park plan. They all wanted to protect the area, for a variety of purposes.

As a result, PA DER downsized the project to the present 1100+ acres and eventually abandoned the lake concept and halted development entirely for many years. The Jacobsburg State Park was put in "caretaker status" and lay semi-dormant for years. The Jacobsburg Historical Society was formed in 1973 with a 12 member board of directors and many volunteer committees in specialized areas. William Forey, the Director of the BSP encouraged and challenged the original JHS Board to prove that we were serious about our proposals for alternative development. Mr. Forey cooperated with JHS as we took on a life of growth, research, education, community programs and projects. It was not easy, but JHS became a strong community force to be reckoned with.

This was accomplished entirely with volunteers and donations from a very supportive community. A monthly newsletter was developed to keep the community informed and active. Public programs included an annual 1 day Historical Craft Fair (the first in the area) that attracted more than 1,000 visitors, an annual "*Walk in Henry's Woods*" that did the same, and programs and speakers 4 - 6 times a year held in Nazareth, Easton, or Belfast. There were a number of successful fund raising programs including a major capital improvement fund drive to renovate the Henry Homestead.

A major milestone was the publication of our first book - *Jacobsburg*, under the leadership of Charles Sandwick, Sr. and his research committee.

JHS is fortunate to have the documentation available and artifacts spanning over 200 years of an American family's continuous development and operation, pursuing the *American Dream*, usually successfully. This story needs to be preserved and told. The history of the members of the Henry family shows their varied industries and passionate interests. Yes, they were involved in gunmaking, but they also were iron makers, tannery operators, storekeepers, coal miners, railroad and transport developers, and more.

The Henrys were interested in the environment and the community. The Henry family legacy includes building churches and schools, planning and developing towns and communities, and providing for the needs of their workers. Yes, they became wealthy, but not on the backs of their workers, but by building and operating businesses in a very meticulous and professional manner, not often seen today. This is a model, well worth studying and using to educate our children.

This is a unique opportunity that Jacobsburg Historical Society is holding. Miss Mary Henry Stites saw this and bequeathed her estate and fortunes to JHS for this purpose. She knew that the Guns and Factory were the tools her family used to gain most of its wealth. Miss Mary also knew that the *real story* to be told was about the philosophy under which her family functioned, and their overpowering interest and concern for the community as a whole. This is what needs to be preserved and told over again and Miss Mary was confident that our Society was up to the task. We were very passionate about our cause and naïve enough to take on the world to accomplish our goals.

Since that time, our passion has only increased, but we have learned the importance of resources, including financial, community, political, and most importantly - our individual volunteers and members. The Jacobsburg Historical Society has accomplished much. Our preservation and construction efforts are truly impressive - especially since most of this was accomplished with donations, grants, and much effort by our many volunteers. Our Board of Directors is taking another major step by hiring our first Executive Director - Jan Ballard. Mary Henry Stites would be proud for many reasons.

Miss Mary was an educator and knew the importance of education to our American society. In our early years, she was the quiet, driving force behind the scenes. She wanted

to know every plan and course of action and would help guide us in preservation efforts, including her financial support. Miss Mary would have supported rebuilding the Gun Factory - not for the purpose of just making guns, but to use as an educational medium. She had been a teacher in the one room school at the top of the hill and was the consummate educator throughout her life. Miss Mary espoused the idea of "hands-on" learning, and teaching by example. She opened her home to any and all that were interested in history of any type. Proudly in her quiet way, she would explain her Henry family heritage and their involvement in forming and founding our American nation. At that time I did not realize that I was learning much about history, the community, and the environment that would have a life-long impact on me. I was just "having fun - doing neat things" with a very gracious and interesting lady. Thank You, Miss Mary.

—Joe DiGerlando



"Miss Mary" Henry Stites, Jacobsburg Historical Society founder. Photo: JHS Collections.

Jacobsburg Historical Society

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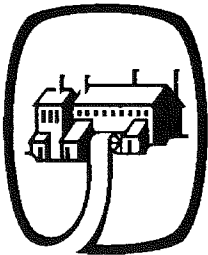
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