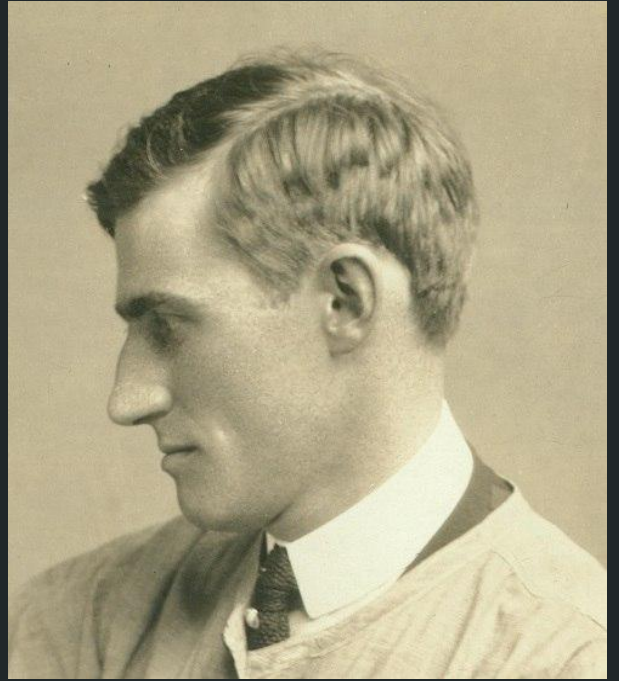




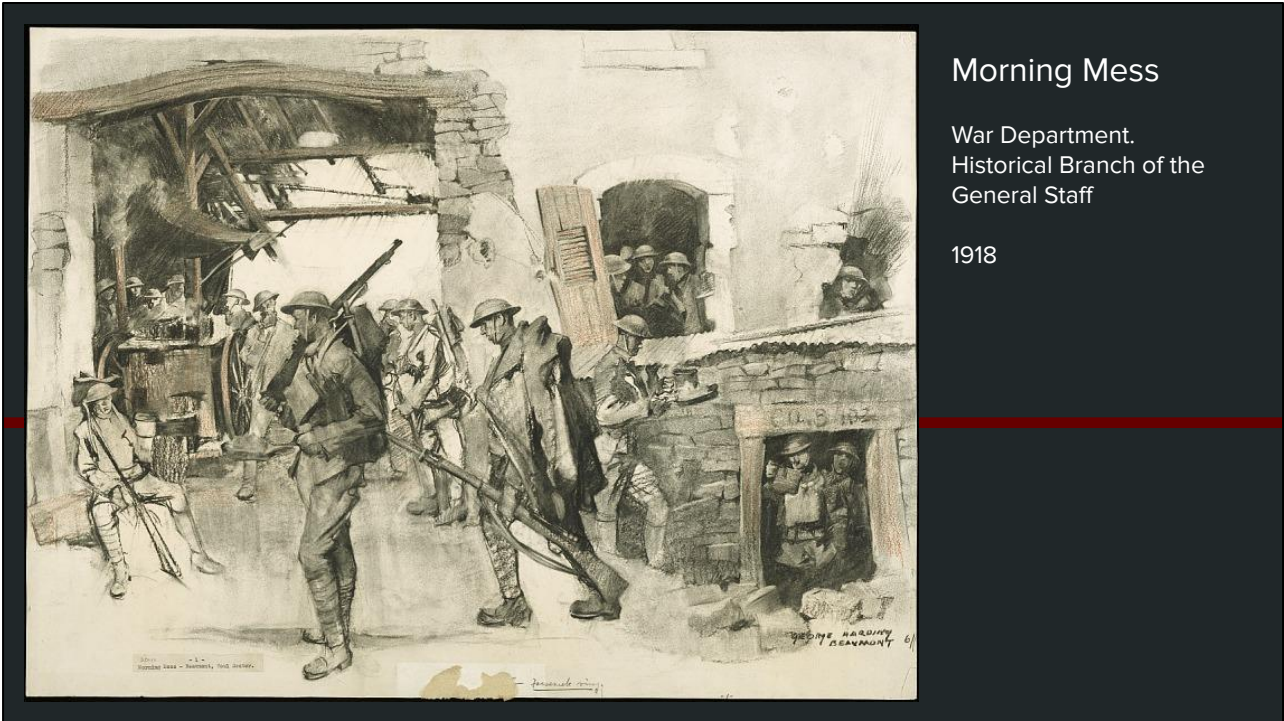
GEORGE MATTHEWS HARDING
"Washington Crossing the Delaware"

The Artist

George Matthews Harding (1882–1959) was an American muralist and combat artist who worked in both World Wars.



George Matthews Harding (1882–1959) was an American muralist and combat artist who worked in both World Wars. Born in Philadelphia, he studied at the Philadelphia Academy of the Fine Arts. After graduation he became an associate professor of fine arts at the University of Pennsylvania.

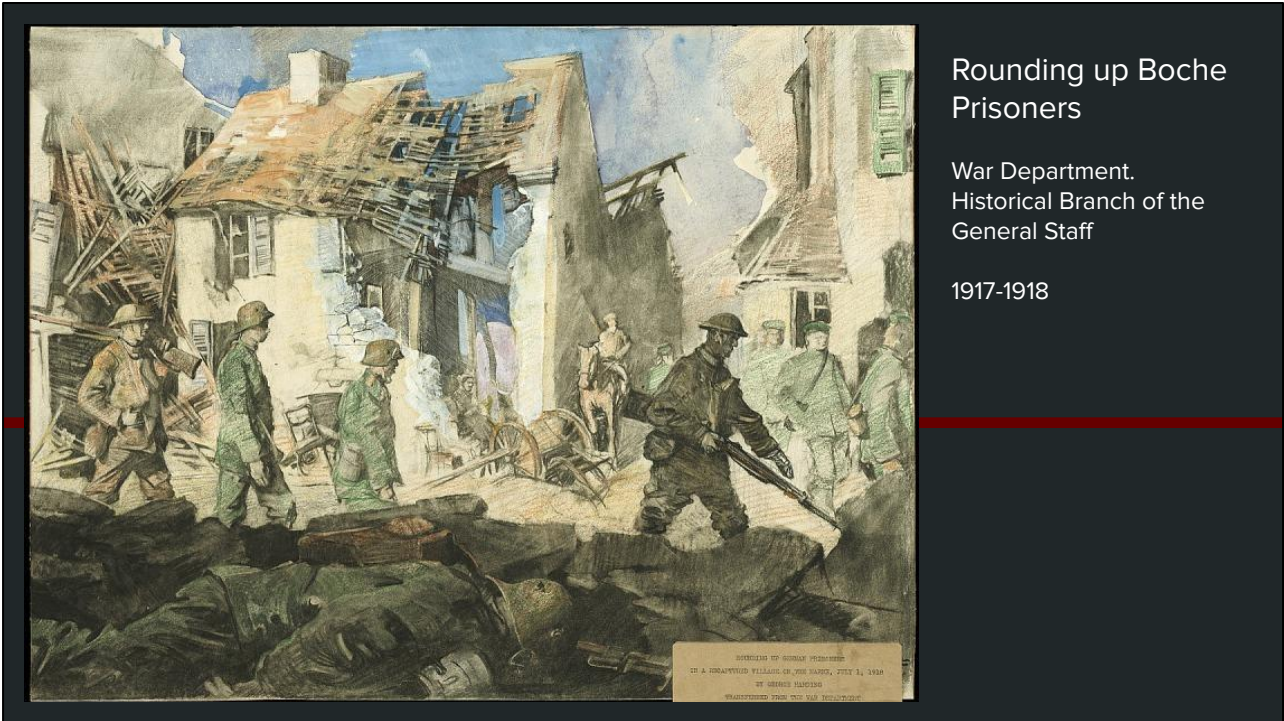


Morning Mess

War Department.
Historical Branch of the
General Staff

1918

When the United States entered World War I, Harding was chosen as one of eight combat artists attached to the American Expeditionary Forces in France. Here are two works from that era: "Morning mess," from 1918...



Rounding up Boche Prisoners

War Department,
Historical Branch of the
General Staff

1917-1918

And "Rounding up Boche Prisoners" from the same year.



Ben Franklin,
Colonial Postmaster

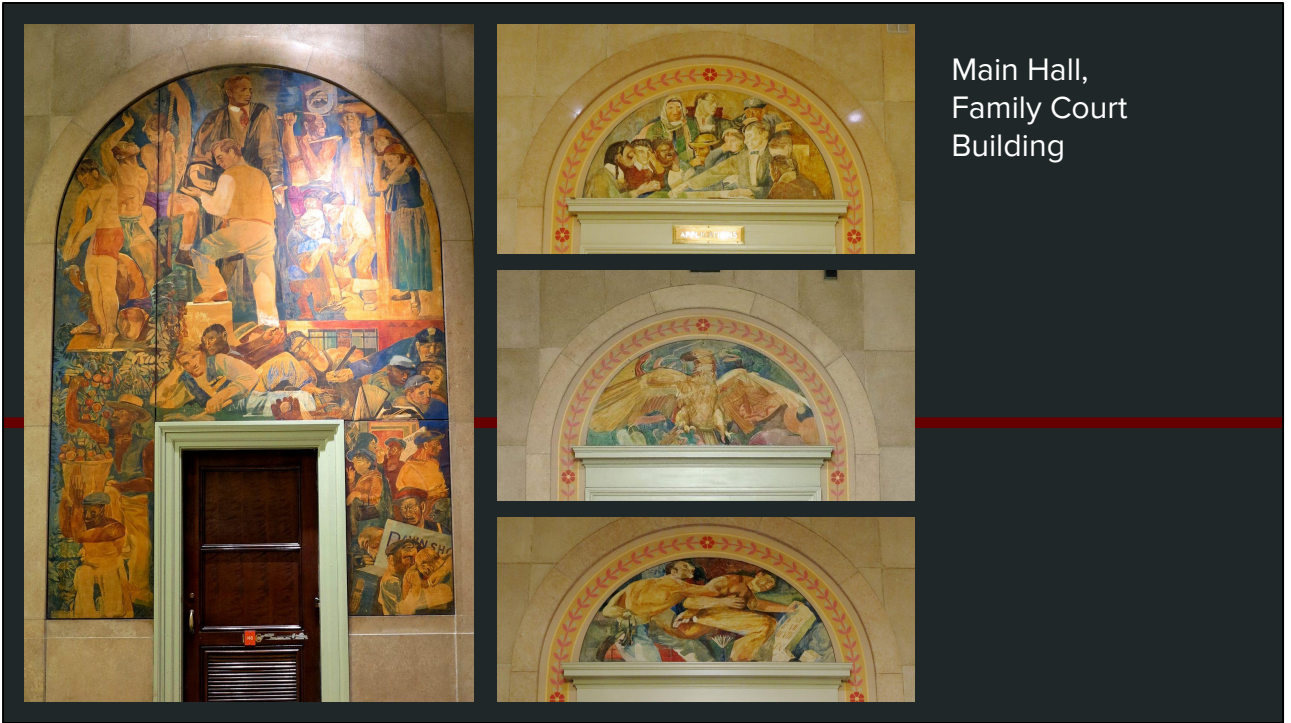
1938

Oil on canvas, 71" x 159"

Commissioned through
the Section of Fine Arts,
1934-1943: FA569A

Photo by Carol M. Highsmith

Between and after the wars, Harding painted many murals. Among those surviving are two commissioned by the WPA that hang in what is now the William Jefferson Clinton Federal Building. Here is one, entitled "Ben Franklin, Colonial Postmaster," from 1938.



Main Hall,
Family Court
Building

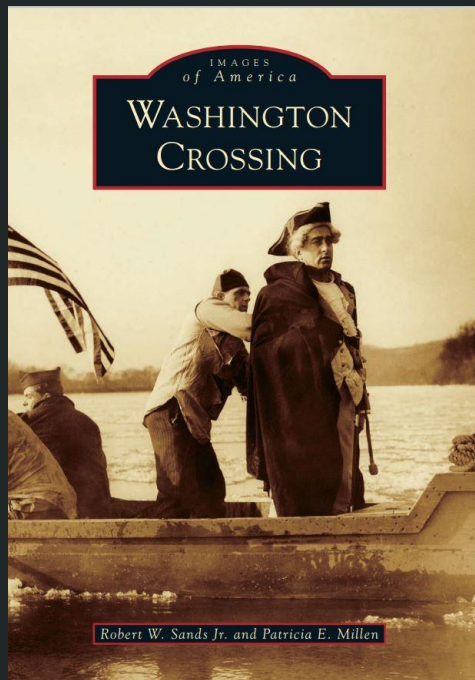
Several of his WPA murals also survive in Philadelphia's beautiful Beaux Arts "Family Court" building in Logan Square, which is currently being renovated into a luxury hotel.



The U.S. National
Archives

World War II

In 1942 at the age of 60, Harding accepted a commission with the U.S. Marine Corps as a combat artist in the Pacific during World War II. Here is one of his pieces from that era, year unknown.



A Mural, Rediscovered

*Images of America:
Washington Crossing*

By Pat Millen & Robert Sands

One of our founding board members, Pat Millen, rediscovered *our* long-lost Harding mural while doing research on a book with her writing partner, Robert Sands. The book is called "Images of America: Washington Crossing," and we are giving copies of it to our Patron and George Washington members!



Melodrama in a Movie House

By MARION R. PAGAN

The wreckers were coming to the 1920 International Theater, the home of the Taylor Opera House. The New Jersey Department of Conservation and Economic Development, in the person of its home commissioner, Robert A. Row, called for help from the American Association of Conservators and Restorers. The AACR sent 40 of its members to Trenton to help out.

A 15-foot wide mural, "Washington Crossing the Delaware," painted by George Harding, was fixed to the wall of the lobby, above the entrance to the theater. The mural had been given to the state by a theater executive, but the state had to get it off the wall.

The AACR principle of mobile rescue had to wait while Frank and Barbara Mertz, assisted by mural restoration expert Henri Courtaud, figured the job out. Frank assumed responsibility for the overall job, and Henri established how to hold some number rescue work in the place. It was Barbara who designed the cylinder upon which the mural was rolled



and stored, and built it. She also dropped the scaffolding to hold the block-and-tackle equipment to hold the cylinder and roll the mural.

Wreckers at Door

The wreckers were typically of the door by that time. The theater was had been purchased by the Trenton Saving Fund Society for additional summer parking.

Conservator's Work

Barbara stayed up all night fixing the cylinder. Then she cooked four gallons of wheat flour paste. It was a simple formula: four pounds of wheat flour, one gallon of water, 25 milliliters of light corn syrup, one or two cups of salt dissolved in alcohol in a preservative, and 10 milliliters of glycerine.

When the crew met at the theater early in the morning, its members were loaded with equipment, including rickshaws and cypress.

The whole operation was taped and filmed in a movie and video, to use as aids of the operation's archive and for teaching in the future.

(Please turn to Page 2 & 3)

(More pictures on page 3)

Art Rescue in America

American Association of Conservators and Restorers, Inc.

Early Spring, 1971

"Melodrama in a Movie House"

While researching, Pat came across brief references to a Harding mural in the State's possession. They led her to this 1971 "American Association of Conservators and Restorers" article on the removal of a beautiful mural of Washington's Crossing, painted in 1921 by George Harding for Trenton's Taylor Opera House.



Taylor Opera House

1867-1969

The Taylor Opera House was Trenton's first theater, opened March 18, 1867 at 18 South Broad Street.

299 YEARS OF HERITAGE IN AMERICA!



The Taylor Meat packing plant in 1870

As America celebrates its 200th anniversary of being a nation, the Taylor family celebrates its 299th anniversary of being in New Jersey. The first Taylor, (Samuel), sailed from England in 1877, and settled in Chesterfield Town-

ship in West Jersey. His grandson Colonel John Taylor originated the recipe for minced ham which through the years has been perfected into pork roll. Colonel Taylor was known to have been a meat dealer in the early

1770's and his recipe for minced ham was a popular dish at that time. Colonel Taylor fought in the revolution under General Washington. His grandson, another John Taylor (pictured) founded the Taylor's Provision Company in 1856. He later went on to be a N. J. State senator, from Mercer County.

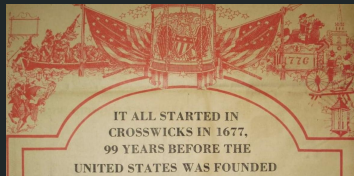
The Taylor family has since lived and been businessmen in the Trenton area. They are proud of being the oldest family owned meat packers in N. J. and have taken part in its growth.



JOHN TAYLOR

TAYLOR PROVISIONS CO.

Trenton N.J.



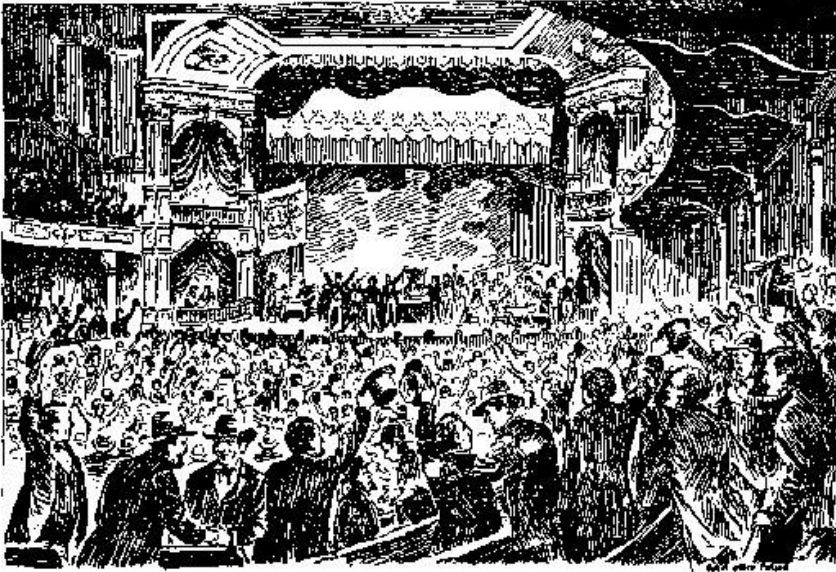
TAYLOR OPERA HOUSE PROGRAM



It was founded by John Taylor, creator of Pork Roll and responsible for what may be the greatest breakfast sandwich of all time, the Pork Roll, egg and cheese.

Their advertising, shown above, claimed that the founder's Grandfather, who originated the recipe for minced ham, was a colonel in the Revolutionary War, fighting under George Washington.

Democratic State
Convention of 1877
at the Opera House



FAMOUS SCENE IN OLD TAYLOR OPERA HOUSE, WHEN GENERAL GEORGE B. MC CLELLAN AT THE DEMOCRATIC STATE CONVENTION OF 1877 WAS NOMINATED FOR GOVERNOR BY ACCLAMATION.

The Taylor Opera House presented major performers of the day, including Mark Twain and Ethel Barrymore, and played host to political conventions, including the inaugurations of Governor George B. McClellan in 1877, and Woodrow Wilson in 1910. Here is a drawing from the McClellan nomination.

In 1921, the Opera House was converted into a movie and vaudeville palace known as **Keith's Capitol Theatre**, then as the **RKO International**.

Sadly this beautiful theater was razed in 1969 to create a parking lot.

Association Working to Restore Art Treasure

By MILDRED JAILER

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES

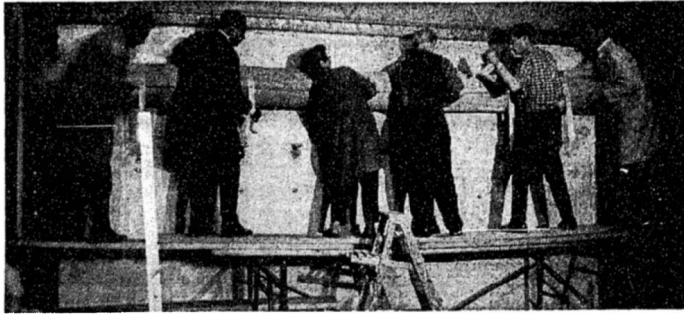
WYCKOFF—When a 15½-foot mural is rescued from destruction or a battered old painting is restored, neither is a world-shaking event. But it means another step forward to the 120 members of the five-year-old American Association of Conservators and Restorers, who feel that preservation and conservation of America's visual arts should hold equal status with environmental protection for their fellow citizens.

They also believe their group may well be the clearing house for making restoration everybody's business around the United States.

To attain their goals, these people, who run the gamut from executives and artists to housewives and attorneys, and who call home anywhere from Tenafly to Bernardsville, labor to implement their multifaceted public education and work programs. They meet at museums, homes of historic interest and colleges to talk, hear lectures, learn the rudiments of art preservation and even embark on practical restoration projects.

Right now, the association operates exclusively in New Jersey but groundwork is being laid for additional chapters, with at least one, in Washington, D.C., to go into action during the coming year.

Probably its biggest undertaking took place in 1970 when, at the request of the State Department of Conser-



Final stage of the removal of George Harding's "Washington's Crossing the Delaware" at old Trenton Opera House

vation and Economic Development, they worked night and day to save a 15½-foot mural, George Harding's "Washington's Crossing the Delaware." Painted on canvas and fixed to a well of the old Trenton Opera House, it had been given to the state with the condition that the state be responsible for its removal. The building was about to be razed, with the mural still intact, when the association was called to help.

Removing a mural from a wall is an arduous and

delicate procedure, and association volunteers tackled the last-minute rescue with knowledgeable zest. They applied a protective coating of 110 sheets of rice paper, using four gallons of wheat paste. They perched on scaffolds to gingerly roll the huge canvas onto a cylinder. And, finally, they smuggled it into a plastic sleeve.

They are planning to restore the mural, now stored at Ringwood Manor Museum, in time for hanging at Washington's Crossing by 1976—the bicentennial year.

Seminars to familiarize art educators, gallery owners and laymen with first-aid techniques for paintings, and workshops that offer the basics of professionalism are also an important outgoing aspect of the association's program.

At one seminar, Barbara Morato, a professional restorer from Wyckoff, turned a landscape from the Passaic County Historical Society collection back to mint condition.

The workshops cater to

only six or seven serious students who concentrate for as long as 12 weeks on a single area such as retouching or color-mixing and varnishing.

Mrs. Morato's husband, Frank, a professional art restorer of long standing, is the founder and current president of the Conservators and Restorers Association. Mr. Moratz tends to place prime consideration on the organization's plans for a national registry of competent restorers who would represent all of the visual arts.

The New
York Times

April 23, 1972

"Association
Working to
Restore Art
Treasure"

We recently uncovered a *New York Times* article about the AACR's efforts. It describes the painstaking process of preparing it for storage as volunteers raced to remove the mural ahead of the wrecking ball.

The mural was coated with home made wheat paste and Japanese rice paper, and rolled onto a custom-made cylinder, as seen here, in the hopes that it would be restored for the the Park's new Visitors Center, slated to be completed by 1976 for the Nation's Bicentennial.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1972/04/23/archives/association-working-to-restore-art-treasure.html>



Ringwood Manor
State Park

This cylinder was carefully transported to Ringwood Manor State Park in North Jersey, where it was placed into storage in a basement.

Sadly the new Visitors Center was too small for such a large piece, and the mural was essentially forgotten for the next fifty years.



From the book,
“History of the
George Washington
Bicentennial
Celebration”

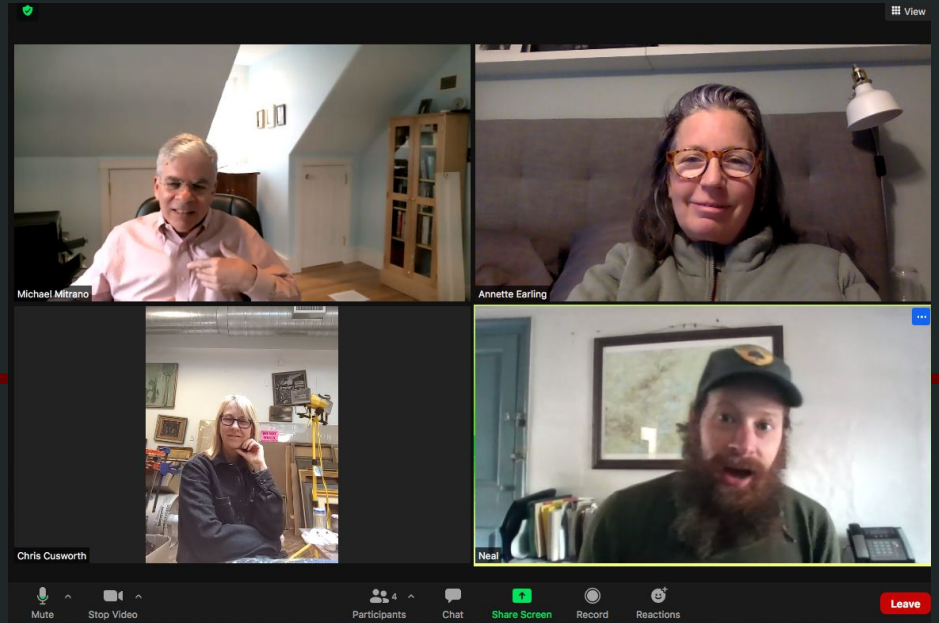
1932; George Washington
Bicentennial Commission

Pat Millen discussed her findings with Washington Crossing State Park Historians Mark Sirak, Clay Craighead, and Will Krakower, who dove in enthusiastically and put her in contact with the Historian at Ringwood Manor.

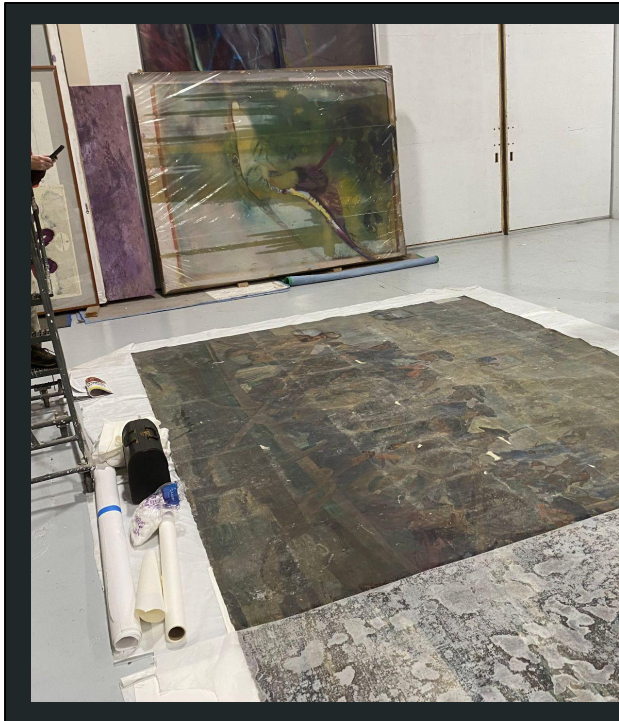
Once it was confirmed that the painting was still at Ringwood, Pat approached the Washington Crossing Park Association, and we took on the mission of determining if it could be restored for the next iteration of the Park’s Museum Visitor’s Center, recently approved to be built in time for the Semiquincentennial in 2026.

With the Park historian’s help, Pat unearthed this black and white image of the painting from the book, “History of the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration,” published in 1932. It gives an excellent sense of the piece’s striking composition.

March, 2021



WCPA jumped into action and found that one of the area's most respected art restorers is based just upriver in Lambertville, NJ...Christyl Cusworth of Cusworth Conservation. We're so grateful that she was willing to take on this task. Here we are in pandemic times (Chris is on the lower left), taking our first Zoom meeting with then Park superintendent Neal Ferrari, at Lower Right.



Storage at a suitable facility:

\$3,600

Conservator fee:

\$35,000

Framing cost:

\$20,000

Moving and mounting:

\$2,300

Total: \$60,900

With approval of NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the WCPA engaged Chris to arrange for transportation from Ringwood Manor to a secure art storage facility at our expense.

Chris carefully unrolled, examined and measured the painting (15'6" by 9'8") and determined that it was in fine shape considering its storage conditions. She reported that it was suitable for restoration.

Chris was also able to provide us with estimates for our budget, seen here.

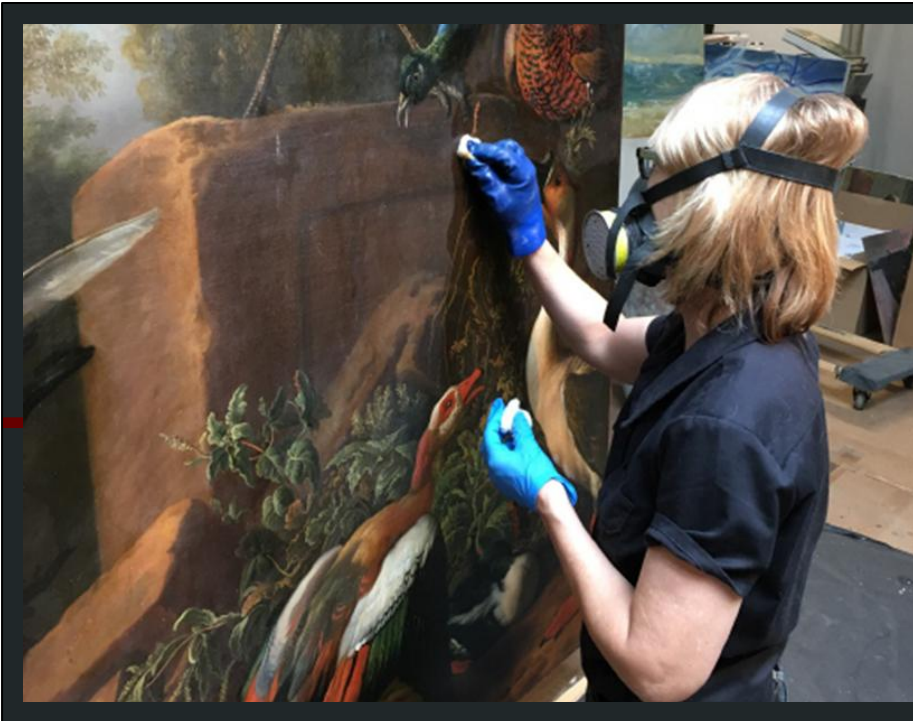


George Matthews Harding Project for the WCPA



Washington Crossing
Park Association

We're so pleased that Chris was able to join us here today to talk a bit about her process, her past projects, and her hopes for the Harding Mural.



About Cusworth Conservation

Chris is the owner, and a *Professional Associate of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* with 20+ years experience in painting conservation. She graduated from The College of New Jersey and studied at the American College in Agia-Paraskevi, Greece, as well as the University of New Orleans and New York University.



About Cusworth Conservation

To ensure that her clients receive the best conservation available, she maintains her state-of-the-art conservation skills through expert classes, lectures and symposiums.



**Cusworth
Conservation**
FINE ART RESTORATION

34 South Main Street
Lambertville, NJ

The studio is at 34 Main Street in Lambertville.

Representative List of Clientele

- City of Trenton, Ellarslie Museum
- Hunterdon County, Hunterdon, NJ
- Allentown Museum, Allentown, PA
- Jane Voorhees Zimmerly Art Museum, Rutgers State University, NJ
- Moravan College, PA
- Roebling Museum, Roebling NJ
- Stevens Institute of Technology
- Permanent Mission of Uruguay, to the United Nations, New York, NY
- Gill St. Bernard School, Gladstone, NJ
- Jersey City Woman's Club, Jersey City, NJ
- United States Postal Service, WSP USA
- Monmouth County Park System, NJ
- Macculloch Hall Museum, NJ
- Hollis Taggart Gallery, NYC
- Vito Schnabel Projects, NYC
- Stella Marris, Julian Schnabel, NYC
- Kiki Smith Studio, NYC
- Laurie Andersen, NY
- Ron Gorchov Studio, Brooklyn, NY
- Christies Auctions, NYC
- Capo Auctions, Long Island City, NY
- Rago auction, Lambertville, NJ
- Jim's of Lambertville, NJ
- Marlborough Gallery, NYC
- Phillip's Auction, Long Island City, NY
- Washington Methodist Church, Washington, NJ
- St. John's Church, Lambertville, NJ

Here is a representative list of some of their clientele over the years.

SET UP

The removal of the painting from the stretcher.



This large tryptic hung in a private school cafeteria for over 100 years. Dirty and full of holes from flying forks and spoons. The stretcher of this painting had been permanently fixed to a concrete wall and could not be removed. We removed the painting from the stretcher, then cleaned and restored the painting at our studio location. A new lining was applied to the verso, providing the Jute with new structural integrity. Later the painting was restretched back onto the original stretcher while it was still attached to the wall. Finishing retouches were done on site.

MURALS

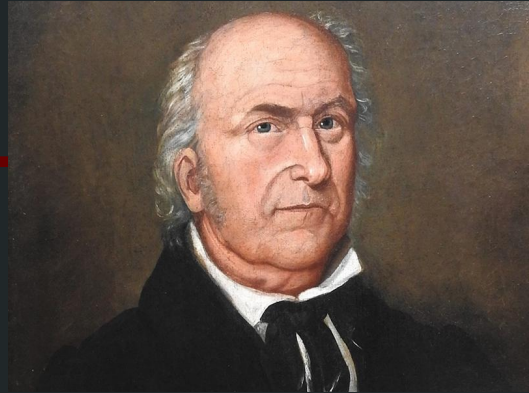
The Life of St. Bernard of Clairvaux



In order to protect this painting from future damages, a back board was applied to the stretcher. Then the large 17" X 12" newly restored painting was re-hung ready to withstand another 100 years.

CLEANING

Discolored varnish removed with organic solvents



A good Before and After example of what they do. Severe climate changes and carelessness can traumatize a painting. Residual dirt, old varnish and air-borne pollutants distort original colors, diminishing the aesthetic value of the painting. After proper evaluation of the painting, the best treatment processes can now be applied with amazing results.

REPAIRING TEARS

Tears can be pre-filled and then inpainted



Torn or punctured canvases can be repaired. Here are a few different methods used. Each treatment is subjective and based on the type and extent of damage as well as the structure of the painting itself, its weaknesses and sensitivities:

- Linings done with BEVA 371 adhesive on a vacuum hot table with Belgian linen
- Fabric Welding and Bridging
- Patching

FILLING AND INPAINTING

Example of inpainting



Damaged areas and areas of paint loss are filled and conservatively inpainted using reversible materials, employing techniques that make the retouched area indistinguishable from the rest of the painting.

OTHER REPAIRS

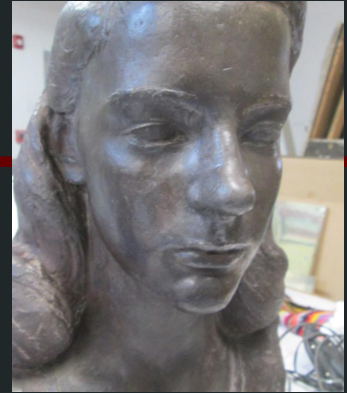
Flaked peeling paint on wood panel



Water damage, flaking, paint loss, shrinking, cracking, reticulation, fungi and insect infestation are all issues that Cusworth Conservation can address and successfully treat.

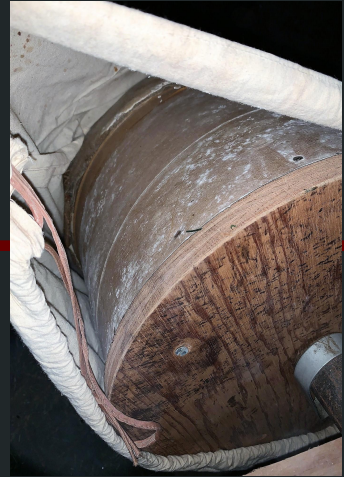
SCULPTURE & OBJECTS

Sculpture of Young Girl



An example of other services, this plaster cast of a clay sculpture is 16" x 12" x 10". As you can see, the nose was broken off. Luckily the client had photos of the piece before the damage occurred and they were able to rebuild the nose accurately.

THE HARDING MURAL



The Harding Mural as it stood for 30 years in the basement.



THE HARDING MURAL

The painting tube had not been designed to stand for 30+ years and had significantly bowed over time. The shape of the painting had gone along with it. We did not want to transport the painting by laying it down, as we were afraid of forcing it into a shape it was not comfortable with and causing damage. So, the painting was transported suspended.



THE HARDING MURAL

It was then kept suspended until we could safely unroll the painting and lay it flat. We did this by supporting the ends of the roller on dollies and slowly unrolling it.

THE HARDING MURAL



Once the painting was safely unrolled we could remove the facing and inspect the surface of the painting. One can also see the canvas deformations in the center that we had hoped would relax with gravity.

THE HARDING MURAL



Once the facing was removed in order to stabilize the paint layer, a new facing was applied with a synthetic resin. This will hold the paint layer in place for the next treatment process.

You see in the background some weight being applied to the canvas deformations that are stubborn in relaxing.

THE HARDING MURAL



From left, trustees of the WCPA Stan Saperstein, Michael Mitrano and Ken Ritchey visiting our storage area.



THE HARDING MURAL

A small cleaned area.



THE HARDING MURAL

A close-up of General Washington.



THE HARDING MURAL

A close up of a soldier. One can also see some old discolored retouching from and earlier repair.



THE HARDING MURAL

The painting is very discolored from dirt and old varnish. The brilliance of the colors will be revealed with cleaning. The marks from the old facing will also be removed.



THE HARDING MURAL

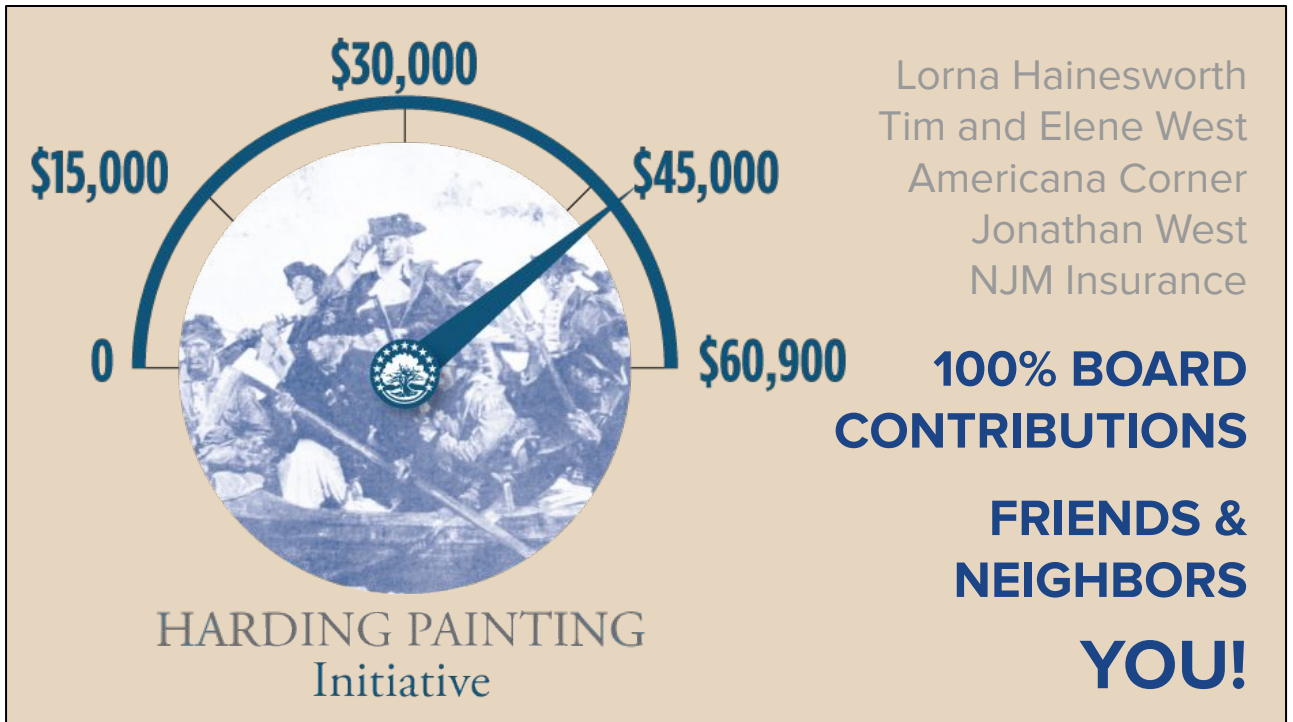
Close up of an injured soldier wearing a fur cap.



A second look at the 1932 black and white image from the 1932 book, "History of the George Washington Bicentennial Celebration."



And finally, an artist's rendering of the mural's placement in the new Visitors Center and Museum.



Our fundraising committee has had great success on this initiative and is getting very close to our \$60,000 goal.

Our first donation came from WCPA founding board member, Joe Carney, who donated \$400 to get the ball rolling.

Soon after, we were fortunate to learn of a grant opportunity by Tom Hand of the Americana Corner organization. Mr. Hand's first annual Preserving America Grant Program really kicked off our efforts with a \$7000 grant awarded in early 2022.

Within a few months, our efforts were given an enormous boost by two extremely generous \$10,000 pledges. Please note that our \$10,000 donors will be recognized on a permanent plaque in the new Visitors Center, adjacent to the mural. We wish to extend our most heartfelt gratitude to Lorna Hainesworth, and to Tim & Elene West for their \$10,000 donations to this project!

We are honored to have other large donations, including a \$2500 contribution from Jonathan West, as well as nine \$1000 donations from neighbors and corporate donors. We've also had many small but mighty donations from WCPA Trustees and members.

We hope to reach our final goal in time for Washington's Birthday on February 19 – with your help. With your assistance we can have this task well underway, and this beautiful and historic painting will be gracing the Park's new visitors center museum in

time for its opening and our nation's 250th!