

FOUNDING FORCE, FORGOTTEN FOCUS: A CASE STUDY OF
GENDER INFLUENCE WITHIN THE PRESERVATION OF
HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS, WITH EMPHASIS ON
THE JACOBSBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S
BOULTON HISTORIC SITE
IN PENNSYLVANIA

A Thesis
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
MASTER OF ARTS

By
Lyndsey S. Brown
May 2012

Thesis Approvals:

Seth C. Bruggeman, Ph.D., Thesis Advisor, Temple University, History Department

Francis P. Ryan, Ph.D., Temple University, History Department

Christine Arato, MTS, National Park Service

©
by
Lyndsey S. Brown
2012
All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

Historic house museums are the focus of an ideological tension between preservation and interpretation within the public history community. At a time where many house museums are failing, preservationists advocate for solutions to the house museum dilemma focused on saving the building. Historians and other museum professionals point to the importance of the value of the collections, memories, and documents preserved within the house as critical tools for understanding and teaching American history. Of specific focus in this thesis is the role gender influence played in the formation of historic house museums and how an examination of its continuing effect on agency within heritage sites creates access points for cutting-edge public history and interpretation. This is done through a case study of the history of the Jacobsburg Historical Society's Boulton Historic Site in Nazareth, Pennsylvania. The site was the location of the Boulton Gun Works, built in 1812 by the Henry family, manufacturers of the Pennsylvania Longrifle and key members of the early industrial community of Jacobsburg, located just north of the Moravian community of Nazareth.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This paper exists because of the many people who stubbornly insisted I could do this. I am indebted to all of them. They include: the historians who showed me the way, especially David Wrobel, Daniel J. Singal, and Harold Weschler; the academics who set the bar and demanded I believe in my ability to reach it: Rebecca McMillian Fox, Yvonne C. Williams, and R. Stanton Hales; and the history department at Temple University, especially Richard Immerman, for going to bat for me in the beginning, and my advisor Seth Bruggeman, for somehow knowing when to push and when to not.

Recognition for my returning to school mid-career goes to Susan, who by closing a door, forced me to open a long-closed window; Jan, who waved the red flag of the absent history of the Henry women in front of me at just the right moment; and the Directors of the Jacobsburg Historical Society, especially Dave Ehrig, who hired me just after matriculation and patiently supported me through the completion of my degree.

I am grateful also to the inhabitants of the Second Floor Lounge, for loving me in spite of myself; the crew of the Painted Lady, for metaphysically sending the boat and rum whenever necessary; my family, blood and chosen, for reminding me that the world was larger than myself and this paper; the three pieces of my heart who did not live to see this accomplishment - Linda McDaniel, John Glenn, and my father, Gordon E. Brown, for believing in me always; the Pooles, for safe haven whenever necessary; my mother, Chris Brown, who never doubted; Tristan, the joy of my heart and my constant reality check; and Philip, for being my rock and for never leaving.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS SCHOLARSHIP: GENDER AS UNQUESTIONABLE INFLUENCE	5
3. THE REAL “HOUSE MUSEUM DILEMMA”: GENDER AS FORGOTTEN FOCUS	11
4. BOULTON OF THE HENRYS: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY IDENTITY	21
5. THE HENRYS OF BOULTON: DEVISING A FAMILY HISTORY	28
6. BOULTON AS HISTORIC SITE: MAKING A HERITAGE SITE	33
7. HENRY ROAD AS A GENDER DIVIDE: LOSING SIGHT OF AN INTEGRATED PAST	43
8. CONCLUSION: TELLING A COMPLETE STORY; TEACHING A COMPELLING HISTORY	54
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a case study of the Boulton Historic site, specifically an exploration of the construction of its history, both by generations of Henrys and by the core members of the Jacobsburg Historical Society, with an emphasis on the role of gender within historic house museums. The purpose is to support the following arguments: gender is integral to the fabric of house museums; objects within house museums are as important as the buildings; and the historic house museum is a unique setting for accessing history contained within private and gendered spheres, thus providing an irreplaceable forum for teaching the public about the intersections between memory, story, and history.

Boulton was the location of the Boulton Gun Works, a manufactory for the Pennsylvania Longrifle, built in 1812 and closed in 1905. For a century and a half the property was the home and work place of one branch of the Henrys, an American clan of Scottish descent, who so exalted their patriarch, William Henry of Lancaster, they constructed and bequeathed a patriotic, patriarchal history of their founding father and the family that followed. In the 1970s certain Henry descendants taught this history to others when they served as founding members of, and a rallying point for, the Jacobsburg Historical Society. The Society was formed to protect historical and natural resources from potentially harmful developments by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its quickly achieved goal of establishing a national historic district sought to preserve not only Boulton but also the neighboring (and already lost) community of Jacobsburg.

Today the JHS manages an almost forty acre historic site with two formal museums: the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and the John Joseph Henry House.

The first time I visited Boulton the researcher in me was immediately fascinated by the thought of Henry Road as a physical gender line. All I knew then was that on the south side of the road sat a house museum and on the north could be found the remains of a gun factory and the museum dedicated to the guns once produced within. In the two years I have been executive director I've learned, both through daily administrative experience and deliberate historical research, that the division is much more than a remnant of nineteenth century private and public spheres. At the intersection of my study of American history and my experiences in the field, I discovered gendered choices were, and are, a constant influence on the identity of historic house museums, and those run by the Jacobsburg Historical Society (JHS) are no exception. This paper proposes that interpreting the effect of this ever-present influence on the construction of history is a way to make 21st century historic sites, especially house museums, relevant.

My case study of Boulton demonstrates how preservation fetishism has masked and sometimes undermined our ability to effectively represent gender history at house museums. An over-emphasis on the house as a physical structure to be preserved and its contents as objects to be protected for all eternity, has resulted in a type of professional amnesia about the power historic house museums have as teaching tools when house and contents are all used as documents that provide insight to who we were and stimulate discussion about who we want to be. Historic house museums convey a specific message,

one current historians have proven is political, gendered, and constructed, born of both memory and information.

I expand on that research, exploring the history behind Boulton and examining the boundaries of public and private, the questions inherent in the “house museum problem,” and the interplay of identity, especially the aspect of gender. I do this within a historic house museum model based on the existence of four core elements: people, place, content, and community. I make the point, in part by examining changes over time in Boulton’s core participants that leads me to conclude not only is gender history critical at house museums, but also so is interpreting the institutional history of these places for visitors. My sources are drawn from the Society’s archive, manuscript repository, and library. They include family letters and wills; internal and external organizational documents; *The Jacobsburg Record* and other Society publications; and secondary research on Boulton and the Society written by others, especially *Jacobsburg* by Charles Sandwick, Sr. and recent work by Dr. Scott Paul Gordon. I also use newspaper articles, because they provide an external perspective to the internal data. Analyzing this information through the lenses of scholarship on historic house museums and the presentation of public history, I set Boulton in context, explore the role of gender in the shaping of its collection and museums, and explain how the role of gender within historic house museums is not “the elephant in the room,” but an integral and critical component of the fabric of our culture.

I begin with a summary of current scholarship about historic house museums, which introduces the questions of who makes history and with what is it made. I then present a timeline for the current debate over “the problem with house museums” and explain how within the business of running historic house museums, a dichotomy of preservation versus interpretation has been allowed to reach a crisis point. The introduction of the focus of my case study, the Boulton Historic Site, comes next, presented in two parts. The first introduces the early American industrial community in Northampton County, PA of which Boulton was a part. The second concentrates on the Henry family, key participants in the building of the community. The family directly bequeathed their legacy to the JHS, which is dedicated to sharing the Henry history with the public. The history of building that interface comprises the next section. Through each segment, the influence of gender on decisions of preservation and interpretation is considered. Specific actions are examined in more depth when I return to the question of Henry Road as a gender divide, querying how history has been spatially delineated at Boulton, and examining the results. Finally, I make suggestions as to how preservation and interpretation can be balanced at Boulton, how men’s and women’s objects and stories can be presented to tell a unified history, and how creative thinking about key issues at Boulton can lead to innovative public history.

CHAPTER 2
HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM SCHOLARSHIP:
GENDER AS UNQUESTIONABLE INFLUENCE

The history of any entity is multifaceted and historic house museums are no exception. Their study is the examination of the social constructs of politics and identity made manifest through personal actions upon specific items in defined places and times. Put another way, politics, a human emotional need for identity, and our cultural fascination with how objects let us transgress the dichotomy of public and private lives influence both the themes museums are built to convey and the messages visitors expect to hear. Scholarship on historic house museums has identified several key themes: historic house museums reflect and in turn reinforce American politics; the lessons taught by historic house museum speak more about those who choose which history to tell than about those whose history is officially honored; objects are integral to interpretive themes; and most critically, the presence of women in making a museum is essential to the presentation of the history of women by the museum.

What is a historic house museum? Linda Young provides this definition: “If the significance of the site is constituted by its domestic purpose, the interpretive aim is to express some aspect of domestic culture, and the management regime complies or aims to comply with professional standards, then a house can be called a house museum.”¹ By this definition, the Jonathon Hasbrouk House does not count. Although purchased by the state of New York in 1850 and identified as the first publicly owned historic site in the

¹ Linda Young, “Is There a Museum in the House? Historic Houses as a Species of Museum,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22, no. 1 (March 2007), 60.

country, the motives behind preservation resulted in commemorating George Washington, not in interpreting domestic culture. The creation of the construct that is the American house museum is credited to the Ladies of the Mount Vernon Association, who with the transformation of Mount Vernon from private home to public gateway created a locality within which political themes could be disseminated. Within the history of women carving a public role in American politics, one can view the creation of the house museum as the transformation of the privately accessed parlors of antebellum America, where educated Republican mothers served as “makers of public opinion,” into publicly accessed spaces, where their daughters continued to create personal subjectivities, or inner senses of self and mission, and generated community discussion that in turn affected the public, male, political sphere. Over a hundred and fifty years later, historic house museums still contain the elements Patricia West attributes to the Mount Vernon prototype: a publicly accessible domestic space intended to present a historic message, envisioned by a formal collective of women, commemorating “a mythologized white male political figure,” and created as a political response. We will see versions of all of

these elements in the founding of the JHS and Mary Henry Stites' vision of a house museum.²

Historians have placed several map pins on the American historical landscape identifying political and cultural events and dialogues that directly influenced, and were influenced in return, by house museums and related historic sites. Patricia West ties antebellum cultural politics with Mount Vernon, gender politics with Orchard House, postwar nationalism with Monticello, and federally-funded and mandated patriotism with the Booker T. Washington House. In doing so, she carefully details the link between political climate and the specific reaction that is American historic preservation and presentation.³ Seth Bruggeman has identified similar markers using his and others' studies on birth site commemorations. The moments he has pinpointed, and the political landscapes they embody, include: the 1815 establishment of Washington's birthplace as an American reflection of the late-eighteenth century European trend of "natal nationalism; the "fascination" with famous births begun during the turn-of-the-century focus on patriotic nationalism; the shift of the National Park Service in the 1930s to

² "American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998," accessed March 31, 2012, <http://www.philaathenaeum.org/hmuseum/index.htm>, for the claim that Hasbrouk House was the first house museum, see the index of the Athenaeum's website. Patricia West, *Domesticating History: the Political Origins of America's House Museums*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 4-5, for the motivations behind the purchase of the house. Andrew Hurley, *Beyond Preservation: Using Public History to Revitalize Inner Cities*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010), 3, for other examples of commemoration as the impetus for preservation. Mary Kelly, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15, for thoughts on the evolution of the creation of women's subjectivities triggered by Mary Kelly's work. West, *Domesticating History*, Chapter One, for an in-depth history of Mount Vernon and the birth of the historic house museum movement.

³ West, *Domesticating History*, 1, 39, 93,129.

include cultural resources, a deliberate effort to instill national pride and provide a government sanctioned national narrative; the “new history” response of the later twentieth century wherein historic sites were established specifically to “redress the cultural myopia of those earlier generations who failed to recall that women, workers, and people of color have been born here too;” and the highlighting of famous local citizens by struggling communities attempting to attract tourism dollars in the depressed economic climate of the early twenty-first century.⁴

Because “museums are ritual places where societies make visible what they value,” understanding the political motivations behind the decisions inherent in defining a historic site’s purpose provides insight to the concerns and motivations of those who did the founding. Just as holding a commemorated object or walking through a preserved house allows us to encounter the individual being revered and remembered, understanding the political motivations of the person who chose that object and defined how the public would interact with it, gives us a direct connection with that individual.⁵

Questions of agency are integral. Who chooses the history and which objects are chosen vastly affects what history is told. Christine Arato’s description of the role of Rose Kennedy in the creation of the John F. Kennedy birthplace provides multiple examples of

⁴ Seth C. Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008). Seth C. Bruggeman, ed., *Born in the USA: Birth and Commemoration in American Public Memory*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012). Initial definition of stages of development are discussed secondarily within the former with specific emphasis given in the intro of the latter.

⁵ Robert Sullivan, “Evaluating the Ethics and Consciences of Museums,” in *Gender Perspectives: Essays on Women in Museums*, ed. Jane R. Glasser and Artemis A Znetou, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 101.

both these choices. Kennedy's decisions of which memories to share, what tone to use, what objects to display, and how to explain those objects affected the content and experience of the tour. Just as importantly, so did decisions by members of the National Park Service as to what parts of her narrative to keep or cut or which objects to place or hide. Choices made for museums can also ripple outwards into society. Mrs. Kennedy's choice to display a copy of *King Arthur and His Knights* in the nursery, not only affected the interpretive theme, but also reinforced the constructed societal memory of a historic era, specifically of the Kennedy Camelot.⁶

Finally, the gender of the person making the choice has a direct influence on both the tale and the object. We teach what we know. We share what we cherish. Women's history happens when women are involved in the process. Women assure that their history is told, and historic house museums provide the setting for that conversation, allowing visitors to encounter women's lives through the direct experience of objects and places.⁷

The construction of history is a gendered effort because telling stories, saving documents, conserving objects, interpreting facts, demonstrating skills, and preserving houses are actions completed by individuals, each one with a personal and societal identity. Gender roles, a core component of those identities, affect how lives are lived,

⁶ Christine Arato, "This House Holds Many Memories: Constructions of a Presidential Birthplace at the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site," in *Born in the USA: Birth and Commemoration in American Public Memory*, ed. Seth C. Bruggeman, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 63-64.

⁷ Heather Hyuck, ed., *Women's History: Sites and Resources*, (Santa Cruz, CA: American Graphic, 2009), 5.

recorded, and remembered. As a result, gender directly influences the shape of museums, most especially those that were originally domiciles, the stage for private lives. This is most especially true of the house museum as it has developed in the United States. From the inception of house museums as a response to the exclusion of women in the public sphere of mid-nineteenth century American politics, through the height of the house museum era, up to the patriotic burst of historic house museum creation in the early 1970s in preparation for America's bicentennial celebration, gendered actions directly impacted house museums. So it is quite curious that while the future of house museums has been hotly debated in the new century, the role of gender and our responsibility for its integral relationship to the nature of the historic house museum is conspicuously absent in the current conversation.

CHAPTER 3
THE REAL “HOUSE MUSEUM DILEMMA”: GENDER AS FORGOTTEN FOCUS

Transforming a historic house into a historic house museum is more than a semantic shift. Presenting a house as a museum requires content and a public audience, plus someone or something to connect the two. It also, for better or worse, creates a marriage between preservation and interpretation. One is now simultaneously responsible for protecting the historicity of the structure and explaining the relevance or importance of the organism that is the building and all it contains, both tangible and intangible. But does the need for interpretation come only when there is a collection to consider? What about the house itself as an object? When one views the house as a historical item, not just a historic structure, one moves beyond the straightforward factual content of historical preservation (e.g. this type of wall paper was used between these dates) to setting the building in context, or in other words, to interpreting the house. To reference part of Freeman Tilden’s definition of interpretation, now the goal is “to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience.”⁸

While comparing urban revitalization to house museum preservation may seem counterintuitive, I see a correlation with Andrew Hurley’s argument in his recent work on the preservation of urban historic districts that successful preservation also requires interpretation. Specifically, Hurley posits that a building without context is merely

⁸ Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage, fourth edition*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press: 2007), 17. The full definition is “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, or by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information.”

recycled. Without interpretation, historic structures “lose their capacity to anchor people in the flow of time and to expose relationships between the past and present.” Historic house museums serve this very purpose. And yet, for almost twenty years the discussion about their future has been narrowly focused on preservation.⁹

The first formal discussion on the future of historic house museums occurred on December 3 & 4, 1989 when the Athenaeum of Philadelphia hosted a symposium entitled, “American House Museums in the Twenty-first Century.” Six papers were presented, by individuals with titles such as chief executive officer, executive director, and vice president for organizations including the National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and England’s Landmark Trust. Specific sites represented were Mount Vernon, Biltmore, and the Wyck. The question on the table was, “What is the future for American house museums in the next century?”¹⁰ Frank E. Sanchis, III, then of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, opened the conversation. As would be expected, his focus was on the correlation between preservation and house museums, with the primary goal being an increase in the American public’s commitment to preservation. He succinctly stated his stance: “House Museums are first and foremost houses - buildings - not museums.” This dichotomy, and the prejudice of preservation over presentation, set the tone for the

⁹ Hurley, *Beyond Preservation*, ix.

¹⁰ “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998,” accessed March 31, 2012, <http://www.philaathenaeum.org/hmuseum/index.htm>. All proceedings are available online.

conference and for the “house museum dilemma” going forward. His solutions focused on planning, programming, partnerships, and audience.¹¹

Mr. Sanchis mentioned the importance of memory, but he did so in the form of an unvalidated question. “If historic preservation is fundamentally about memory, it is important to ask the question, ‘Whose memory?’” While this question may have sparked ideas in specific graduate students, the concept that emerged most loudly was the belief that the penultimate purpose of a house museum is the preservation of the building. He also stressed that historic house museums were engaged in a struggle for survival based on a failing model. He predicted said struggle would ultimately result in a reduction in the number of house museums, and the museum community must address the issue of how to meet the primary goal of preservation for the building for those house museums that close. This preservation-centric message still dominates the American conversation - whether the medium is conference, workshop, thesis, dissertation, blog, or listserv.¹²

The remaining presentations at the Athenaeum served two roles: to flesh out the house museum dilemma and to provide examples of what was being done to overcome it. Simply put, the root problem was too few resources. John M. Groff summarized, “Our sites have looked sadly upon a dwindling pool of visitors, a shrinking volunteer corps, and realized that professional preservation and management can not be achieved with a budget of \$20,000 or \$30,000 a year and one or two committed Board Members who pay

¹¹ Frank E. Sanchis, “Looking Back or Looking Forward? House Museums in the 21st Century,” “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.”

¹² *ibid.*

the bills.”¹³ Through the rest of the conference, themes arose of what did work: hands on visitor engagement, the necessity of community partnerships, and emphasis on being true to the core mission of one’s site.¹⁴

The symposium at the Athenaeum began a discussion about the future and sustainability of house museums that is still active, along with the other two main themes in publications on historic house museums, these being history and background and interpretation and planning. (An adjacent genre is the historic house tourist guide. “Historic House Museums, A Select Biography” by Mary A. Vance was published in 1983. This was updated as, “A Directory of House Museums in the United States” in 2000. Field guides to house museums in specific states abound.) The Athenaeum symposium also paved the way for the sentiment, for which Barbara Silverman is credited as being the first to state in print, that “there are too many house museums.”¹⁵

The next milestone event concerning sustainability occurred in April of 2002 when twenty-seven hand-picked individuals with professional expertise specific to the

¹³ John M Groff, “To Thine Own Self Be True: The Small Historic House Museum in the Twentieth Century,” in “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.”

¹⁴ James C. Rees, “Forever the Same, Forever Changing: The Dilemma Facing Historic Houses,” in “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.” William A. V. Cecil, “Biltmore Estate: as the Century Turns,” in “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.” Donna Williams, “Great Expectations: Historic House Museums in State History Programs in the 21st Century,” in “American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.”

¹⁵ Ron Potvin, Malgorzata Rymysza-Pawlowska and Shana Weinberg, “A Selected Compilation of Historic House Museum Resources,” John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, November 2010, accessed January 3, 2012, http://www.brown.edu/Research/JNBC/presentations_papers/A%20Selected%20Bibliography%20of%20Historic%20House%20Museum%20Resources.pdf, for a comprehensive list. Tanya Barrientos, “Houses, Histories and the Future,” www.pewtrusts.org.

topic at hand convened to discuss the state of the house museum. The National Trust for Historic Preservation was again at the center of the conversation, with the AASLH as a formal partner and financial support provided by the Rockefeller Brother's Fund. Kykuit, as the conference came to be known, now stands as a landmark moment.¹⁶

For some, Kykuit is seen as the beginning of the solution, resulting in awareness and action. One particularly lauded action credited to Kykuit-triggered thinking was the return of specific historic houses to private ownership. Carter's Grove, part of Colonial Williamsburg, was one such property. What wasn't raised in the newspaper articles or even museum industry articles praising "out-of-the-box thinking," was the question of the contents of such houses. One can assume, or at least hope, that the objects within Carter's Grove were relocated to other collections owned by Colonial Williamsburg. But what of the specific relationships and stories those items allowed visitors to access within the context of the house? Will their stories be tell elsewhere and can the objects serve as the same kind of document outside of the house?¹⁷

¹⁶ "AASLH History House Museum Affinity Group," accessed January 27, 2011, <http://www.aaslh.org/hhouses.htm>. The formal report, "Kykuit Findings and Recommendations on Creativity and Sustainability" proposed thirteen issues to be discussed and considered and made eleven recommendations.

¹⁷ Marion Godfrey and Barbara Silberman, "A Model for Historic House Museums," in *What To Do About These House Museums* (Spring 2008 Pew Trust Magazine briefing), for the report on Carter's Grove as a success story. Tracie Rozhon, "Homes Sell, and History Goes Private," *New York Times*, December 31, 2006, for an example of public reporting on the topic. Magaly Cabral, "Exhibiting and Communicating History and Society in Historic House Museums," *Museum International*, 53 no. 2 (2001): 41-46, regarding the language of objects and their ability to create dialogue between the past and the present through their manifestation as documents through which we can directly interact with the past. Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, "Reality as Illusion: The Historic Houses that Become Museums," *Museum International* 53 (2001), for more on the transformative nature of objects within a house museum.

Others worry that Kykuit ignored the essence and purpose of house museums and its published reports stand as an professional admission that house museums aren't sustainable, pointed to by local communities as professional best practice and used to justify closing sites before trying new creative solutions. Ironically, the seeds of those solutions were among the recommendations to come out of Kykuit, echoing statements made at the Athenaeum: know your mission, be true to that mission, build partnerships, and be creative in how you tell the site's story to the public.¹⁸

What is the state, twelve years into the twenty-first century, of the American House Museum? Most claims, on both sides of the argument, have come true. Some sites have closed. Others are struggling. Some have done the hard work of looking in the mirror and thinking outside the box and have implemented the recommendations discussed above. The revitalization of Woodlawn, the home farm for Mount Vernon, as a working farm with partnerships with local restaurants, hospitality companies, and school districts, is one success story. Other success stories include Cliveden's response to a previously hidden history of slavery.¹⁹

One reaction to Kykuit has been case studies, especially in the form of masters theses, exploring different aspects of the question on the table. Some make suggestions as

¹⁸ Gerald George, "Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What's Wrong," *History News* 57 (2002): 21-25, for a public presentation of the conversation at Kykuit. Cary Carson, "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B," *The Public Historian* 30 (2008): 9-27. References Kykuit in this now oft-referred to question in museum critique.

¹⁹ Laurie Ossman, "Saving the Historic House -While Saving the World," *Center for the Future of Museums blog*, February 1, 2011, <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2011/02/saving-historic-housewhile-saving-world.html>. David W. Young, "The Next Cliveden: A New Approach to the Historic Site in Philadelphia," *Forum Journal* (2008).

to successful practices, others try to answer specific accusations. Diana Kanawani digs into the arguments about unsustainable models in, “Founding or Funding, Are House Museums in Trouble?” Hal Salzman explored interpretive strategies at literary-house museums. Sabra Smith suggested creative marketing ideas meant to “Keep Historic Sites from Going Silent.” Sarah Lauren Wade wrestled with the move to privatization.²⁰

Interestingly, amidst all the accusations and suggested proof that the original form and function of house museums has completely failed, the Daughters of the American Revolution are quietly and staunchly still using the model to preserve and teach history while championing patriotism, goals set by their charter in 1890. The DAR lists sixty locations in their historic properties and sites database, of which over thirty were once homes. Many are used as meeting houses for a local chapter. Some are available to tour. And yes, some are still formally run as house museums, such as the Richards DAR House in Alabama, the Pennsylvania House in Ohio, and the Caples House in Oregon.²¹

So why is a weighted focus on preservation a concern? Because this spatial versus ideological focus on the structure places primary, and often sole, attention on only one of four core elements of a house museum. These include: the volunteer core, those whose

²⁰ Dina Kanawati, “Founding or Funding: Are Historic House Museums in Trouble?” (Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2006). Hal A., Salzmann, “Reading Historic Sites: Interpretive Strategies at Literary House–Museums” (Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2004). Sabra Smith, “Dead Men Tell No Tales: How Can Creative Approaches to Communication Keep Historic Sites from Going Silent” (Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2008). Sarah Lauren, “The Privatization of American House Museums: Three Case Studies” (Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

²¹ “Daughters of the American Revolution,” accessed February 17, 2012, <http://www.dar.org/natsociety/workSociety.cfm>.

contributions and actions comprise the life force of a museum; the collection, which we might colloquially refer to as the museum's inspiration; the house itself, which serves simultaneously as part of the collection and the container that holds it; and the community, whose education and edification is viewed by public historians as any museum's reason for being. A preservation-only strategy results in a failure to address our obligation as historians and professionals to the collection and the community. We need to take the revolutionary next step in historic preservation and flip the late twentieth century view that "our enormous collective investment in preserving historic houses justifies the effort to reinterpret women's lives in these settings" and insist that our obligation as historians to interpret lives, including women's, justifies the continued investment in protecting the settings in which those lives are preserved.²²

American house museums are one of the physical public spaces where the history of the individual is celebrated by a community. Whether the museum superimposed on the domicile recognizes the birthplace of a single personage or the residence of multiple generations, the draw of a house museum is that someone lived there. The concept "someone lived" is critical to this argument. House museums are ultimately not about objects. They are about people, and more over, about the intimacy of people's lives. The object is what we use to interpret that life. A house museum tour grants us, the public, formal permission to transgress, to break the rules of propriety and view what is on the other side of the front windows. Visitors gain this perspective from physically being

²² Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 7.

within the space where the life or lives in question were lived, surrounded by the objects that were used.²³

Additionally, when we visit a house museum, we set ourselves in context, and contrast to other individuals. Understanding how gender defined and shaped other's lives, specifically their choices, can serve as a mirror for contemplating the affects of gender within our own experiences. Because historic houses museums are where women's history is represented, preserved, and studied, they are also the physical manifestation of American gender lines. The unique museums that result are formed from the choices made by individuals of both genders regarding what to save from families and communities and how to present it to the public. Our mandate as historians and museum professionals goes beyond bricks and mortar. If we turn house museums into simple houses again, we will lose not only their contents and the history those contents tell, we will lose the audience for that history, and we will fail our society obligation to tell that story to those audiences.²⁴

These concerns are relevant to the Boulton Historic Site. To understand how the Boulton Historic Site is currently interpreted, one must have a sense of the history the organization strives to share. Today's Boulton is the result of decisions made by two

²³ Cabral, "Exhibiting and communicating history and society in historic house museums," for more on museums as representing lives lived by engaging imaginations, and the concept of objects as documents.

²⁴ Bruggeman's work on birthplace commemorations raise points that bear on this work. First is the critical component of a "faith in the power of objects" that is "common to all historic sites and museums." Second is his expansion of the concept of "gendered memory."

collectives: the Henry family who settled the area and the individuals who define the JHS. It is relevant that these are not distinct sets. In the next two sections, I explore Boulton's history. As the JHS was established to protect a specific place and a vanishing community, I start with the founding of the Society and then provide a brief history of the area that becomes the Jacobsburg National Historic District. I then provide a brief summary of family that settled the community, with a focus on information necessary for creating a representative interpretive message.

CHAPTER 4 BOULTON OF THE HENRYS: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY IDENTITY

The Jacobsburg Historical Society was founded to protect a specific geographic area of Bushkill Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania and its associated history. Begun in the early 1970s, the organization was a local reaction to proposed state visions for recreational green space. (Founding can be dated between 1972 and 1974, depending on whether one counts the first meeting date or incorporation.) The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania had acquired 1,166 acres in the northeast corner of the Lehigh Valley between 1970 and 1973, supplementing a 1959 purchase of just over 532 acres. Originally named the Jacobsburg State Park, it was rededicated as the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center (JEEC) in 1985. The property that became the JEEC spans an area encompassing several small villages that had formed a vibrant early industrial community dating back to 1740s.²⁵

When work on the park began in the 1970s, plans considered multiple options for the creation of a recreational lake on the south-eastern corner of the property, near an area of old growth forest known as Henry's Woods. Recreational lakes were a popular strategy in Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) at the time, and welcomed by boaters and fishermen. The idea was not well received by local residents and organizations. Among their concerns were loss of cultural resources by

²⁵ Michael Jones, Manager, "JEEC Park Management Plan, Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources," (October 5, 2011). Jim Wilson, *History of Bushkill Township, Pennsylvania 1813-2007* (Nazareth, PA: Bushkill Township, 2010.), 49. Also see the National Registry of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for the Jacobsburg National Historic District, held in the Jacobsburg Historical Society archives.

flooding if such a lake was created and the effects on the ecology of Henry's Woods and on the Bushkill Creek watershed. Several existing groups resisted DCNR's proposal, including the Bushkill Watershed Association, the Easton branch of the American Association of University Women, and the Forks of the Delaware Chapter of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology. Individual historians and archaeologists, both amateur and professional, opposed the project as well, as did neighbors and local businesses. Specific note is made of the importance that Henry descendants remained at Boulton. Interest in a society focused on preserving the history of the area generated 275 members by fall of 1974.²⁶

Preservation of the now-defunct communities of Boulton and Jacobsburg was of specific cultural concern. Memory of the razing of buildings in both communities (the Jacobsburg Inn and the Boulton Gun Works, most especially) was still painful, and the desire to protect remaining buildings, including the Benade House and Henry Homestead, was fierce. In June of 1974, a National Registry of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form was completed, defining the Jacobsburg Historic District. Submitted by Joseph DiGerlando in his role as secretary of the Jacobsburg Historical Society, both the Bureau of State Parks Environmental Services and Miss Mary Henry Stites are listed as property owners. This began a partnership between Society and State still in existence.²⁷

²⁶ Charles Sandwick, *Jacobsburg: A Pennsylvania Community and Its People*, (Nazareth, PA: The Jacobsburg Historical Society, 1985), 1-7. *The Jacobsburg Record*, 3 no. 1, (January 1971).

²⁷ Robert P. L. Frick, *The Henry Heritage: From Nazareth to Boulton*, (Nazareth, PA: Moravian Hall Square Museum Craft Shop, 1994), 36.

The Nomination Form carefully delineated borders. “Except for the small southwest dogleg encompassing the Boulton Mansion, the Park boundaries enclose the major areas of industrial activity and settlement.” The document was signed in 1975, by then Executive Director of the PA Historical Museum Commission. Dates of significance for the interpretation of history within the district are listed as 1740 - early 1900s. The district is defined in the document as comprising 500 acres and having “three distinct areas: the Jacobsburg, Benade, and Boulton tracts.” The former is described as being “almost in ruins”, the second as having two unnamed “former dwellings” and the latter as including, “the most important of the standing structures, Boulton and the Henry Homestead.”²⁸

All three tracts of land are located in what in 1813 became Bushkill Township in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. Bushkill Township was part of Plainfield Township, or the Plains, until August 14, 1813.²⁹ Northampton County is the eastern most county within Pennsylvania’s Lehigh Valley. The area is three or so miles north of Nazareth, Pennsylvania, which itself was established as part of the Moravian communal settlement of Bethlehem in 1741 and remained a closed community controlled by the Moravian church until 1858. While the communities in question were not Moravian, the area was very much influenced by the church in this era. Additionally, the Boulton branch of Henry family remained at least nominally Moravian through the twentieth century.

²⁸ *National Registry Nomination Form.*

²⁹ James Wright, *History of Bushkill Township, Pennsylvania, 1813-2007* (Nazareth, PA: Bushkill Township, PA, 2010), 13-15.

The original Jacobsburg tract was acquired by Jacob Hubler between 1743 and 1753. A consortium of three local gentlemen purchased about three quarters of Hubler's estate from his heirs in 1790. One of these gentlemen was William Henry, a prominent member of the nearby community of Nazareth. Over the next twenty five years, he added to, sold, and added expanded his land holdings southwest and east of the original property. Between 1796 and 1801, another local, Nathaniel Michler, bought a portion of the original Hubler estate and negotiated with Henry for the section of his land on which stood the Jacobsburg Inn, located at the Y-intersection between the roads leading north to Wind Gap and West to Bushkill Center. Jacobsburg was a thriving industrial community as early as 1790. Charles Sandwick's research of the Schoeneck Congregation of the Moravian Church lists 35 different trades practiced in early Bushkill Township, between 1792 and 1825. The nomination form reported the existence of 20 buildings of which, in 1975, all that was left of any structures were "foundations and rubble areas." Early Society efforts included archaeological work on several of these sites, including the Inn and the tannery. William Henry also had a gun factory there briefly, which was later used as a mill.³⁰

Another portion of Henry's land, on the eastern end of Jacobsburg, was rented by his second son, Matthew Schropp Henry, in 1812, later purchased by him, and lived on well in the 1830s. This was the location of the Henry Forge, which William built in 1808. (Published materials set this date as 1815. Deeds indicate the sale was for 470 ½ acres in

³⁰ Sandwick, *Jacobsburg*, Chapters 3 & 10. Frick, *The Henry Heritage*, 20-23.

June 1818.) Part of this property was purchased at Sheriff's Sale by Moravian Bishop Andrew Benade, who lived in one of the stone houses on the property from 1848-1850. Hence, the name, Benade tract. Originally, based on data from local church and civic records listings in which communities specific individuals lived, the section of land from Henry's Forge back to the Inn (so, two of our tracts) was considered the community of Jacobsburg. Eventually, as the two areas to the east and the south developed identities of their own, the area directly around the Inn retained the name, Jacobsburg, with Boulton given its own community identity, separate from Jacobsburg, by 1818. The history of the Jacobsburg and Benade tracts are relevant because they are missing in current interpretation at Boulton and their presence would allow for a more complete history. For example, including in the interpretation the fact that in 1824 Matthew S. Henry built Northampton County's first blast furnace for the production of iron, and named it the Catherine Furnace, in honor of his first wife (and first cousin) Ann Catherine Henry, the story could now move beyond family gunsmiths, while simultaneously touching on the theme of early industrial communities and mentioning a female Henry.³¹

The final tract of land was further south along the Bushkill and was where Henry's first and third sons, John Joseph and William, built in 1812 what has been

³¹ Note: the land transactions were many and complicated, have been misrepresented in print, and only highlighted here. Sandwick, *Jacobsburg*, Chapter 3 and Frick, *The Henry Heritage* 2, 22, for a narrative history on the Jacobsburg land purchases. "The Jacobsburg Tract Traced Through Time," prepared for the Jacobsburg Historical Society by Helen Schnek and Jeff Kenyon Principal Investigator, (Museum Historic Research Center, March 1977), for a more documented history and specific references to deeds and individual transactions. Hope Luhman, "Moravian industry: the history and archaeology of the Henry tradition of gunsmithing," (Ph. D. thesis, Bryn Mawr College, 1991), for a careful examination of Matthew Schropp Henry. The Benades are discussed in Sandwick, *Jacobsburg*, 67-69 and also in Schnek.

identified as the third Henry gun factory in Northampton County, the Boulton Gun Works. Current interpretation teaches that the factory was named in honor of English entrepreneur, Matthew Boulton, and is an excellent example of the friction between constructed memory and documentable history. While family lore shares that William Henry of Lancaster highly respected Matthew Boulton and visited with him when he traveled to London in 1761, no recorded evidence can be produced now. Boulton became a small support community, comprised of the Henry family members directly involved in running the factory and employees, both factory workers and domestic help. The name can refer, sometimes simultaneously, to the factory, the family homes, and the entire complex, which is figured today at approximately forty acres.

The Boulton tract was defined in the nomination form by the house that is now 402 Henry Road and currently is known as “The John Joseph Henry House.” Other buildings listed in the Boulton tract were its outbuildings, a school house, a stone worker’s house, a second worker’s house, and the Henry Homestead and its outbuildings. It is this third tract that has come to be most associated with the Henry family, for this is where J. Joseph Henry, eldest son of William of Nazareth, settled and stayed. (Youngest brother William moved from Boulton in 1822; middle brother Matthew from Jacobsburg in 1833.)

Awareness of Boulton extended beyond the family. While never a formal municipality, it was a recognized community. Despite not having a post office, mail addressed to “Boulton, Penna” was delivered for years, as is documented by the many

envelopes in the JHS archives. Even today a Google or other internet map search will correctly place Boulton at the intersection of Schoeneck Ave and Henry Road in Northampton County. It is at that location, during the lifetime of J. Joseph's only child James, that Boulton became the family seat, and to many in later generations, a place of "coming home." References about coming home to Boulton abound in the family archives. Lydia Henry Stites' obituary referenced her body being taken home to the family estate of Boulton; her cousin William Henry Atherton visited often as a young child; and Emily Henry Jostrand wrote of the same in a recent email.³²

³² Sandwick, *Jacobsburg*, 62. Frick, *Henry Heritage*, 33.

CHAPTER 5 THE HENRYS OF BOULTON: DEVISING A FAMILY HISTORY

The question of family history versus family memory is a recurring issue in the interpretation of the site. The Henrys left us written histories, preserved documents, collected objects, and stories highlighting the family's role in historical events from the massacre at Glencoe through the American Revolution and onward through American history. Histories written in the early years of the Society were often based on this constructed history, and the interpretation within the museums reflects both this bias, and the gender of those presenting the information. (Interpretative signage in the Pennsylvania Longrifle museum tells an almost exclusively male history. Stories told in the House are disjointed, object-based but without agency.) There is a critical need to correct the omissions in the current canon. However, while an exacting summary of the Henry family is mandatory for building future interpretation, inclusion is too unwieldy for this forum. Of more use is a summary providing enough information to answer the question deconstructed later in the paper, "What do we need to know of the family to discuss implementation of critical gender interpretation at the Boulton Historic Site?"

Interpretation at Boulton spans seven generations of Henrys: two who never lived on site, three who did so during the operational years of the Boulton Gun Works, and two more who inherited the legacy. Concerning the dates of significance for the interpretation of history defined for the Jacobsburg Historic District, the start date of 1740 correlates with the birth of William Henry of Lancaster and the end range of early 1900s was chosen to mark both the formal close of the Gun Works in 1905 and the death of

Granville Henry in 1912, more the former than the latter. Henry family history is disseminated to the public primarily through interpretive panels in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, signage along a self-guided outdoor tour, written histories, and information provided when touring the John Joseph Henry House. The message has been constructed from family oral tradition and written research done in multiple centuries, by authors with different agendas, resulting in products of differing focus and varying authenticity.

William Henry and Ann Wood comprised the first generation, though their significance lies less in being first and more in being individuals whose lives were revered by their descendants. Emphasis is placed on William (1729-1786), who is lauded as a “gunsmith, inventor, and patriot,” and served as an integral member of both the then-quite-significant community of Lancaster, PA and the emerging American nation. Ann (1734-1799) is credited for the unique public role she assumed upon William’s death, that “of Treasurer of Lancaster County, an extraordinary role for an American woman in the eighteenth century.” Interpretation on William is extensive, pages of text and multiple descriptive panels, highlighting his national activities and international connections. While Ann receives more focus than any other woman on site other than Mary Henry (her great-great-great-great granddaughter), that attention is limited to the fact she did a man’s job for a brief period of time.³³

³³ Scott Paul Gordon, “Entangled by the World: William Henry of Lancaster and ‘Mixed’ Living in Moravian Town and Country Congregations,” *Journal of Moravian History* 8 (2010): 9, 44.

Their children, born between 1757 and 1776, came to age in the new Republic. William and Ann's conversion to the Moravian church forged ties to Bethlehem and its supporting communities. Three of the second generation were sent to Bethlehem to study, including eldest son William, who settled there, marrying Nazareth native Sabina Schropp. William and Sabina raised nine children within that closed Moravian community, several of whom become key members of the small communities of Jacobsburg and Boulton, established on land north of Nazareth and owned by William. Interestingly, the land is later purchased by his sons and sons-in-law, not gifted. Sabina (1759-1848), like her daughters-in-law, is given mention only as wife and mother. This is more than is afforded to her sister-in-law Elizabeth or her own daughters, all of whom can be found in Moravian documentation but whose Boulton fame is limited to genealogy lists in Sandwick's *Jacobsburg*. With this generation, the canon focus narrows to the business of making guns and the Henry men involved in that endeavor.³⁴

While William of Nazareth is often credited at Boulton for founding the Boulton Gun Works in 1812, careful research proves the endeavor was the work of sons John Joseph and William. William of Nazareth trained his eldest and youngest sons to be gunsmiths, but apprenticed middle son Matthew Schropp Henry to merchant Samuel

³⁴ Charles M. Sandwick, Sr., M.A., Chairman and compiler, "Eighteenth Century Vital Records from the Early Registers of the Moravian Congregation at Schoeneck, Northampton County, Pennsylvania," (Easton, PA: Historical Research Society, Easton, PA, 1978), for information on the Henry women of these generations. Gordon, *Entangled*, for information on Ann Wood Henry. Scott Paul Gordon, "A Considerable Building on Bushkill Creek," for an academic look at William Henry of Nazareth's life, especially his findings that Henry was not solely, or even continually, focused on the gunsmithing trade. Sandwick, *Jacobsburg*, Ch. 4 "The Henry Family of Nazareth and Boulton," 16-20, for details on William and Sabina.

Grosch. All three brothers were business partners in varying endeavors, and with widely different degrees of success, with their father, each other, male cousins and brother-in-laws. While not always, these interactions document the interconnectivity of the Henry family and the Henry family businesses.³⁵ Interpretation for this generation focuses on J. Joseph and William and their connections to the American Fur Trade and industrial revolutions such as William's achievement of a hot blast at the furnace at Oxford and his connection to the community of Scranton, Pennsylvania and the Lackawanna Railroad. William's wives and children are not part of the general discussion. J. Joseph's wife Mary Rebecca Smith (1785 -1871) is noted for her Philadelphia roots and is given credit for being the reason the second family home was built, but she disappears after J. Joseph's death in 1836, despite living, reportedly by herself in her stately federalist home, for another thirty-five years.

James Henry was the sole child of J. Joseph and Rebecca and the only member of his generation now widely discussed, despite family records proving an expansive network of cousins and other relations. The heir of the Boulton Gun Works, he managed the business at the height of its productivity. He is portrayed as a gentleman scholar turned reluctant businessman. James expanded the physical complex at Boulton to include houses for married sons, and his eldest son Granville inherited J. Joseph and Rebecca's home. Family life begins to make an appearance in interpretation of this Victorian era, largely because of the massive collection of pictures and objects from this

³⁵ Luhman, "Moravian Industry", 88.

time, and because the historical figures involved are recent enough to be part of the living memory of the women who serve as the bridge between the family and the Society, Granville's daughter, Mary Adeline Henry Stites, and granddaughter, Mary Henry Stites.

CHAPTER 6 BOULTON AS HISTORIC SITE: MAKING A HERITAGE SITE

While the JHS was a local response to potential state interference in local resources, its concerns for historic preservation and ecological protection reflected family practice and contemporary national sentiment. In 1974 America as a whole was simultaneously preparing to celebrate the country's bicentennial in 1976 and responding to the oil crisis triggered in 1973. It is not surprising that a perceived threat to Henrys Woods, an old growth forest, was received with dismay by organizations such as the Bushkill Watershed Association. But the endangerment of the Henry history hit closest to home with individuals who had tangible knowledge of the legacy. The two most directly affected were Mrs. Thomas Stites (born Mary Adeline Henry and known late in life as Miss Molly) and her daughter, Mary Henry Stites. It is understandable that the Stites ladies, as they are still referenced by older members of the community, had a direct stake in what happened to the Boulton property. Regardless of the perceived responsibility to sustain the family historical legacy, simply put they owned a property estimated at the time of Mary Henry Stites' death to be worth over a million dollars.³⁶

Understanding these factors, seeking national designation of a historic district was a logical step for the Society. But, was creating a heritage site with public museums a goal from the beginning? Did charter members of the JHS have agendas for interpretation? It is likely the decision to provide public access was assumed from the

³⁶ Lorna Weil, "Historical Society Given \$1 Million Bushkill Estate," *The Morning Call*, April 4, 1990, http://articles.mcall.com/1990-04-04/news/2750255_1_henry-gun-works-henry-family-granville-henry.

start, due to the placement of the bulk of the Jacobsburg National Historic Site on land owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, designated as a state park and already affording public access. Because of this, there was no doubt people would be visiting the property. The question was what would they learn or do while there? Two places to look for answers are early documents of the JHS and the JEEC management plan. Coverage of initial activities by the Society and lists of State improvements to the Boulton area of the park provide clues to key objectives.

The Jacobsburg Record details how Society members dedicated their time and what types of activities were offered to the public. The earliest event was a walking and driving tour of Henrys Woods, the combination necessary as the carefully delineated and maintained trails of today's park were not yet constructed. This Woods Walk was the Society's key event for years, attracting upwards of 500 people each time, and serving as an opportunity to show case other efforts. Among these were the multiple archaeological digs conducted in Jacobsburg, including of the Inn and the tannery. Also on the tour was a stop at the Homestead, to see what changes had been wrought. Interest in occupying the Henry Family Homestead was voiced in the very first JHS newsletter, printed early in 1973, when an offer from the State to rent the property for \$1 a year was shared. The Homestead and its grounds were the location for preservation efforts and beautification projects, with stated goals of creating living space for caretakers, office space for JHS

business, storage space for the growing collection of donated items, and space to interpret the lives of the Henry family.³⁷

Another early event was the annual craft and heritage festival. This was a conscious effort to celebrate American traditions and was launched to celebrate America's bicentennial. Local craftsmen demonstrated everything from beekeeping to weaving to barrel making. The roots of this strategic goal to keep American hand crafts alive ran deeply. Over twenty years later, the Society began teaching the craft of making a Pennsylvania longrifle, and in 2008 a conscious effort was made to add additional classes. Branded the Early American Craft Education program in 2010, this program serves multiple purposes: education, engagement, and income revenue.

Early DCNR involvement was focused on physical improvements. After the final purchase of land in 1973, the first order of business was removing abandoned buildings. Attention for the rest of the 1970s was placed on making Henry's Woods accessible to the public, including creation of formal trails, parking lots, foot bridges, water access, and bathroom facilities. (Regulating access with formal paths and usage rules was in part a response to earlier misuse of the Woods.)³⁸ The early 1980s saw a continuation of access work and the introduction of interpretive efforts. DCNR was officially involved in the 1980 renovation of the Homestead for educational purposes and to house the JHS.³⁹

³⁷ *The Jacobsburg Record*, 3, no. 1 (January 1971).

³⁸ *Easton Express*, 1973-1976 Newspaper Articles Index Request Form, March 24, 1973 & March 28, 1973, accessed February 5, 2012, http://www.eastonpl.org/NewspaperArticles/1973_1996.pdf.

³⁹ JEEC Park Management Plan.

It was during this period, under the management of Dale Prinkey, that the State invested energy and often resources into the “history aspect” of the park. However, this shifted after the formal reclassification of the Jacobsburg State Park as the Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center in 1986, followed only three years later by the bequest by Mary Henry Stites of the Boulton tract, a pivotal moment in the JHS’s history. The decision to accept the bequest created the ability for a Society-managed historic site of 36 acres, spanning the Bushkill and bisected by Henry Road. Thirteen acres are leased from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; twenty-three are privately owned by the JHS. The rest of the Jacobsburg Historic district is either in private hands (a very small portion of the Boulton tract) or owned by the Commonwealth (the Jacobsburg and Benade tracts.)

The intent for the Homestead to be interpreted and used for historical education is well documented in newsletter articles and detailed in an April 5, 1984 “Homestead Development Proposal.” The overarching goal was this: “The role of the Homestead itself should be that of a place where the life-style and character of the Henry Family can be interpreted. Not only should the rooms be furnished with antique furniture and historical artifacts, but the public should be able to meet individual characters from the Henry family who will talk about their activities and lives.” The plan included restoring parlor and bedroom to 1820 appearance and furnishings, with interpretation family-specific. The original log portion of the building would house artifacts and convey the history of the Jacobsburg area as a whole. The kitchen would be a working one, where visitors could actively participate and partake of samples. Outbuildings were intended to eventually

meet specific society needs: office space, historical education, research , interpretation, exhibit space, restoration, parking, etc. Complete with maps and architectural layouts, this document is a long-term strategic plan for creating a heritage area at 403 Henry Road, one that was obviously abandoned when the JHS accepted the Stites estate in 1990.⁴⁰

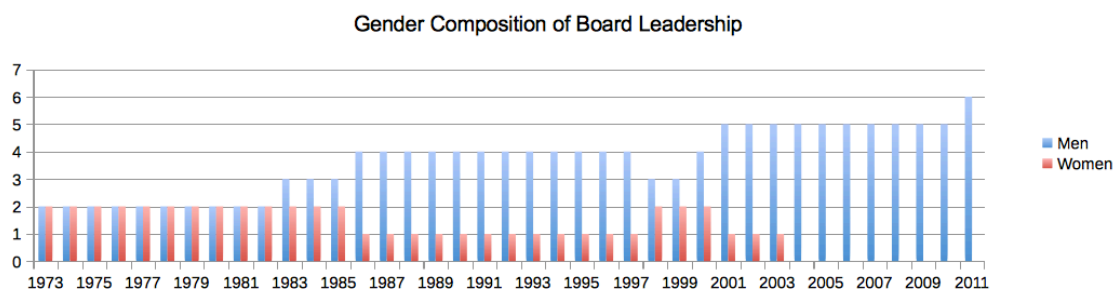
A critical component for understanding Boulton is knowing who comprised the core - those who believed in its history and shaped its message - and when the composition of the core changed. Each time the core was altered, shifts in vision occurred. The internal composition of the “people element” at the JHS includes the membership, volunteers, and Board of Directors, circles that for most of the history of the organization, have almost completely overlapped each other. Since the beginning, the Board has been very much a working Board, going beyond making financial and policy decisions to being both the administrative and volunteer muscle. Most of the core has historically been current or past board members and spouses. Until an executive director was hired in 2008, the president of the board ran operations. Term limits do not exist.

When I started research for my thesis, my first year of interaction with the Society had resulted in a gut sense of at least three different periods of leadership and focus within the Board and at least one major turning point. I was curious to see if statistics supported this hunch. A very basic analysis of the Board leaves no doubt I was on the right track and that, interestingly, one can break Board mindset down by decades, with

⁴⁰ Homestead Development Proposal, (Archival document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, April 5, 1984), 1.

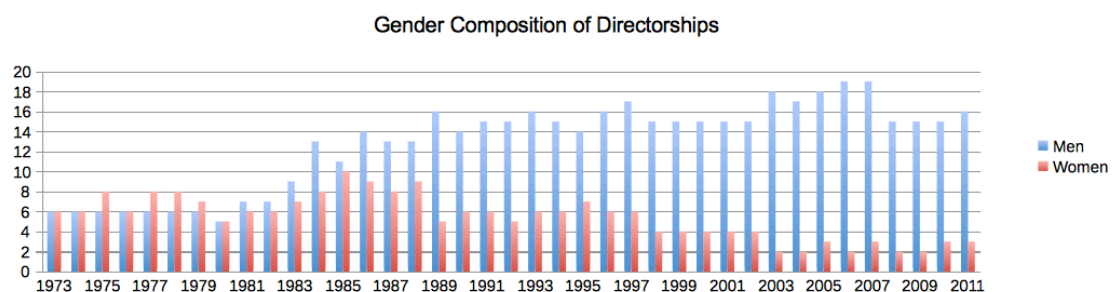
the most significant shift occurring in the middle of the organization's history, in the years around 1990. Changes in leadership directly affected the presentation of history at Boulton because pivotal decisions were made about how space and objects were used and shared. I looked at the data for two categories of gender breakdown: composition of the executive committee or leadership team and composition of the board as a whole.⁴¹

The leadership of the board was comprised of the same individuals until 1980, when founding president Catherine Beers died. There was gender balance on the leadership team - two women, two men - until 1982 when the position of second vice president was added and filled by Hilton Rahn (who had held the position of secretary for all of the 1970s,) taking the count to three men and two women. In 1986 this shifted to four men and one woman. Briefly in 1998-2000, the count went back to three to two. Between 2000-2003 a third vice president position existed and the leadership team was entirely staffed by men. While the third VP position didn't last, the male control of the board did. The executive committee remains all male as of 2012.



⁴¹ Data was compiled from board of director lists published annually in *The Jacobsburg Record*. Special thanks to Jake Johnson, an undergraduate at Lafayette College, and JHS secretary Phil Schroeder for their assistance with gathering this information.

The 1973 Board consisted of 12 people and was evenly divided gender-wise. When John Schlamp and Matthew Morris took the positions of president and vice president in 1980, there were 22 directors, (not counting Mary Henry Stites and Margaret Taylor, both still living and involved but holding emeritus status on the board,) still split evenly by gender. In 1991 the count held at 22, with women in only six seats. In 2002, the number of directors remained constant, but there were only four women, dropping to three the next year, and two the year after that. Bobbie DiGerlando and Virginia Lopresti remained the only women on the Board until 2010 when Andrea Smith was recruited, followed by Lyndel Curtis in 2011.



Women were still involved members of the core up through the turn of the 21st century, just not in the position of director. Couples were a key component. In the 1980s there was a habit for both members of a couple to sit on the board. By the 2000s, wives weren't on the Board, but focused on activities within the J. Joseph Henry House, be that office tasks or docent responsibilities on the few days a year the House was open for tours. It is striking that 2003, the year the gender divide grew to its greatest, was the year

the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum was opened, ending the era of the Homestead as house museum, and emphasizing the importance of a dominantly male object.

The lifespan of the Board can also be divided into periods of ideological focus, easily tagged as Jacobsburg, Boulton, and long rifles. Unquestionably a bit over simplified, these key words represent where energies and decisions were focused. The decade of the founding was dedicated to the preservation of the entire Jacobsburg National District, with emphasis on archaeology and documenting local history. Charles Sandwick's historical research and Virginia & Joseph Lopresti's archaeological work were at the heart of these efforts. The renovation of the Henry family homestead in 1980 began the shift of focus to Boulton, though the Benade tract continued to be interpreted throughout the 1980s, with a intended formal Interpretive Center established, at least briefly, in 1982-83.⁴² The JHS provided both volunteers and funding to renovate the Benade and Spring Houses and provide public access and education through special events (specifically a fur trade rendezvous) and regular tours. For example, in 1985, the JHS gave \$2,000 to Benade House renovations, combined with \$5,000 in state funding. The purpose of renovations was to create a space safe and comfortable enough in which to offer year-round tours. Gun-making was among the trades demonstrated.⁴³

⁴² JEEC Management Plan.

⁴³ "Jacobsburg May Change Format for Encampment," *The Morning Call*, November 21, 1985, accessed February 5, 2012 http://articles.mcall.com/1985-11-21/news/2497772_1_encampment-state-parks-education. Rich Harry, "Gun-making Revival Will Help Re-Make History," *The Morning Call*, September 13, 1984, accessed February 5, 2012, http://articles.mcall.com/1984-09-13/news/2428047_1_gun-aficionado-gun-factories-rifle.

In the early 1980s, two key Nazareth businessmen joined the core of charter members who had comprised the Board previously. John Schlamp and Walter Peters were, respectively, the CEO of the Nazareth bank and head partner of Nazareth's leading law firm. Peters stayed on the Board until his death in 1994 and Schlamp until 1997. Their efforts to establish long term financial stability for the organization is well documented in organizational minutes and records. Neighbors (past and present), comprise yet another subset of Board members, represented in part by Matthew Morris (who served on the board from 1997 until 2000) and Philip Schroeder, who joined the Board in 1989 and still retains his seat. All four of the gentlemen discussed were committed to the history of the family and the area. (Morris was himself a Henry.)

The Boulton tract took center stage upon the death of Mary Henry Stites and the bequest of that tract to the JHS. One of the key moments in the organization's history was the decision to accept the bequest. In doing so, the JHS now owned land and buildings. Also noteworthy, the number of objects owned by the JHS significantly multiplied, as the contents of the House represented the collecting habits of generations of Henrys. These decisions were made at a time when board composition was shifting again, this time to include individuals with skills necessary to running a museum and re-enactors whose skills were in demand for staffing the living history demonstrations presented to the public. Earl and Mary Ann Van Norman were active in a local colonial regiment of re-enactors, as was A. James Shedlauskas. All three, along with Estelle Shedlauskas, served on the Board in the 1990s, the first three holding leadership positions at one point or

another. Another re-enactor, Robert P. L. Frick, who became a member of the JHS in the early 1980s after his retirement as curator of Old Bethpage Village on Long Island, joined the board in 1986 and was made president in 1990. This was in part, according to Bob himself, to handle the acceptance of the estate and the conversion of the J. Joseph Henry House from a home into a museum. Donald Repsher came on the board in 1995 as archivist and put immense effort over many years into organizing the family papers that remained in the house.⁴⁴

Another subset of board members also appeared in the 1990s, some of whom were also re-enactors. These were the self-proclaimed “gun guys.” Timothy Lubenesky, Robert Sadler, Ronald Gabel, and Joseph Flemish were among those who joined the Board in the 1990s, began holding positions on the executive board in late 90s and early 2000s, and were directly responsible for decisions resulting in the second renovation of the Henry Homestead, now to be known as the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. This shift leads to the period of Boulton history where interpretive emphasis was, and still is, placed on the longrifle. At this time arose a tension between the gun guys who held sway in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum on the north side of Henry road, and those volunteers who were dedicated to the interpretation of Henry family history, now perceived to be relegated to the J. Joseph Henry House on the south side.

⁴⁴ Brian Hay, “Area gun-making Family Featured Keepsake Book Details History of the Henrys,” *The Morning Call*, November 25, 1994. http://articles.mcall.com/1994-11-25/news/3004277_1_henry-family-civil-war-book.

CHAPTER 7
HENRY ROAD AS A GENDER DIVIDE:
LOSING SIGHT OF AN INTEGRATED PAST

Any discussion of the core, place, or collection of the Jacobsburg Historical Society must include consideration of Mary Henry Stites. Mary Henry was raised to be the embodiment of the family devotion to its history. That expectation is inherent in her very name. Another little girl might have been named Mary Jo, but first born and female, she was given the family patronymic as part of her given name so that the family name would be both saved and constantly part of daily life in the community.

Naming practices were very important to the Henry family. All generations and most nuclear families possessed a “William Henry.” Mary Henry’s first given name was also her mother’s, grandmother’s, great-grandmother’s, and great-great-grandmother’s. (Mary Adeline Henry Stites, Mary Elizabeth Krause Henry, Mary Magdalena Sautter Henry, and Mary Rebecca Smith Henry, respectively.) Interestingly, the Henrys passed down both women’s and men’s names, though a thorough examination is best kept for another article.

Neither Mary Henry nor the inhabitants of Boulton were to forget that they were Henrys. Mary never did, nor did other descendants of an adjacent generation by different lines of descent. Mary’s cousins William Henry Atherton, Charles Henry Atherton, William Benson Henry, Ruth Henry Clewell, John Clewell and others were equally devoted to the family canon. Their heirs still treasure personally-owned family artifacts. (Jane Henry Ives owns the portrait of William of Lancaster on loan to the Society and

hung in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum. She and her sister proudly own pieces from the Christmas China collection. The Henry family signet ring is treasured by the Atherton heirs.)

Mary Henry's decision to form a museum (which is specifically indicated in her will), came as a surprise to some members of the family. Ruth Henry Clewell stated as much in a letter to the estate attorney, with a request for certain items to be returned, as they were not Henry and therefore had no place "in Mary Henry's idea of a museum."⁴⁵ This viewpoint raises questions of public and private. Did Mary Henry breach Henry family etiquette when she released the family treasures to the public sphere or did she merely upset those who had expected the estate to be dispersed differently? Earlier versions of the will indicate previous intentions to distribute at least some of the Henry family collectibles to various members of the family. Of course, some items had been passed down through other lines, and were in other hands. Mary Henry's cousins Emily Henry Jostrand and Jane Henry Ives, for example, both have portions of the black and white china given to Mary Rebecca Henry upon her marriage to J. Joseph, some of which still holds pride of place in the kitchen of the J. Joseph Henry House.

Kathleen V. Cairns and Eliane Leslau Silverman explore the uniqueness of how and why women save things in, *Treasures: The Stories Women Tell About the Things They Keep*. Many of their findings spoke to me about Mary Henry and her choices. "Women become the keepers of their mothers' stories. In the possession of one small artifact, a

⁴⁵ Unprocessed letter by Ruth Henry Clewell, Jr. to Walter Peters, (Archival document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, 1989).

woman tells another woman's story, so that her voice, however silent, however distance, is still heard." Mary Henry Stites' home, and the house museum she envisioned, were simultaneously about enshrining the Henry ideal of a patriotic American inventor and patriarch and protecting the stories learned from her mother and aunts.⁴⁶

"Women are the archivists of each other's histories. Even if they are hidden from public history, their collections are faithfully kept, their stories retold again and again." Mary told the family stories again and again, to whomever would listen. Members of the JHS, her cousins Matthew Morris and William Henry Atherton included, wrote the stories down and shared them with visitors. "Women keep objects from their mothers in order to affirm their continuing presence, but they keep the stories of the objects too." The black and white Christmas china, for example, plays a key role in a story that is printed and framed, set out every year during the Christmas opening house. Against family code or not, Mary Henry's bequest of family estate and contents followed in the steps of her DAR sisters, the Ladies of Mount Vernon. She made the political choice to make private history accessible to the public, so that children could learn, and women could relate.⁴⁷

"By telling us about the important people in their lives, women were in a sense creating a culture and a mythology of the family." This is absolutely true of the Henry family. Mary Henry reinforced this emphasis on the family when she made her choices as to what to keep and what to give away. She also further defined public and private.

⁴⁶ Kathleen V. Cairns and Eliane Leslau Silverman, *Treasures: The Stories Women Tell About the Things They Keep*, (Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2004), 117.

⁴⁷ Cairns and Silverman, *Treasures*, 117, 119.

Everyday correspondence stayed in the House, disordered, tucked every-which-way and every-which-where, as much of the landscape of the house as the Chickering piano in the parlor or the grandfather clock on the landing. Business papers of the Boulton Gun Works, the ledger books and documents she deemed formal family papers, Mary Henry bequeathed to Eleutherian Mills, now part of the Hagley Museum.⁴⁸

I am intrigued by the roles Mary chose within the JHS. A charter member and Board director, Mary Henry's roles fell squarely in the domestic sphere. Her first role can absolutely be considered a mechanism for passing on women's knowledge and specifically the stories from the Henry women. For many years starting in 1974, she wrote, "Recipes from Boulton" a column for *The Jacobsburg Record*, the Society's newsletter. Each column featured a well-loved family receipt, documented its origin, and explained its use, all shared in a colloquial first person narrative.

In the 1970s and early 1980s Mary Henry also held position of chair for the garden committee. This role may have seemed natural due to her first hand acquaintance with the property and personal memory of the gardens when in family possession. But gardening, like cooking, provided a consciously-designed access point for the public. The 1985 strategic plan for the Homestead specifically mentions the kitchen as a place of hospitality, where guests can sample items prepared before them. The homestead gardens were restored for the dual purposes of beautification and education.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Cairns and Silverman, *Treasures*, 123. Final Will and Testament of Mary Henry Stites, (Archival document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, Jacobsburg Historical Society, May 1989).

⁴⁹ *The Jacobsburg Record*, 1, no. 3. Homestead Development Proposal.

To fully understand Mary's intent and choices, a deeper exploration of her life is necessary. What was the effect of growing up away from Boulton and returning as a young woman? Was her profession as school teacher in the one room Henry school house expected or embraced? Was her long-term association with the Moravian Historical Society part and parcel of the Henry inheritance, an extension of her faith, or a specifically personal choice. Answering these questions will be critical to the interpretive themes of family legacy and gender influence.

The presence of women at Boulton was unquestionably linked to the preservation of women's objects and spaces. From Mary Adeline to Mary Henry, from founding president Catherine Beers to the current "ladies of Boulton," women's history was saved and displayed because individuals looked through their own experiences and found connections or items of interest. Virginia Lopresti's first story to me about the Jacobsburg and the archaeological digs was about finding hairpins among the broken bottles and other debris along the outside foundation of the Jacobsburg Inn, and her belief that such was evidence that more than a sleeping place and a hot meal were offered for sale there. In the early years of the JHS, women were involved in every aspect of core team, from the executive committee on down. For the most part, when women have been involved with JHS core activities in the last decade, it has been to open the House for tours, host a garden tea highlighting specific ladies in the family, or renovate second floor rooms for inclusion on tours.

At Boulton, concern for preservation of women's spaces and history has never been solely limited to women, but in the words of Don Repsher, it has been the focus of those most interested in the "personal element of history" versus those more interested in dates, or wars, or in specific, guns. This was true of the JHS' generation of predominantly "couple" volunteers, when the business of running the JHS and building a museum as done primarily by several husband-wife teams. Remarks given at the 2011 Annual Meeting and presentation of lifetime service awards, and the emails leading up to those remarks, spoke to this. Donald Repsher was remembered as serving as archivist and historian, "digging through trunks and boxes for the family papers" while wife Pamela assisted then president and ad hoc curator Robert P.L. Frick with cataloguing the collections. "Pam would painstakingly write the numbers on the objects." A. James Shedlauskas, who served his own term as president, was remembered for "tinkering with the machines and tools" necessary for upkeep of the property and buildings, while Estelle "filed and managed the office side of things." She also "always brought lunch." This "gendered remembering" provides a window on both actions and perceptions.⁵⁰

Is there a gender line at Boulton? Yes, there is. It is imbedded in naming practices and rooted in fundamental choices of which objects to display, where to display them, and when they are accessible. When I asked members of the core who were primary in the creation of the Longrifle Museum why the name change, the consistent answer focused on marketing. A consultant recommended the name as a unique offering

⁵⁰ Bruggeman, *Born in the U.S.A.*, Introduction. Robert Gross and Philip Schroeder, e-mail correspondence to author, November 2010.

appealing to a specific visitor base. "The Henry Museum" was thought to be too vague and unlikely to draw visitors. Simply put, no other museum (in Pennsylvania) was solely dedicated to the longrifle. This substitution of emphasis on the guns, the fruits of family labor, instead of on a holistic view of the family, was of great appeal to the portion of the core who championed the re-envisioning of the museum. It was, and still is, upsetting to those passionate about the larger family story.

Academically, the use and the semantics of the Homestead, are an example of a jockeying for "mnemonic advantage," as termed by Seth Bruggeman. "At sites of public memory historical objects can be positioned over time like chess pieces by players eager to achieve the greatest mnemonic advantage." The choice to rename the entire yellow building "The Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum," fully replacing the name "the Henry Homestead" in literature, on signs, and in spoken reference, was a deliberate elevation of the primacy of the guns over other objects, especially those representing domesticity. All evidence of the previous domesticity of the space was boxed and "sent across the street" to the J. Joseph Henry House, a subconscious, if not an outright conscious effort, to contain women's objects in one place.

When the Longrifle Museum was established, women were all but erased in the Homestead. The only mention of women in the building is on the interpretive signage in the "genealogy room" and that is limited to names and marriage dates, with the exception of Ann Wood Henry, whose placement in the male role of treasurer of Lancaster County is noted. No stories are told of the two sets of unmarried sisters who

lived in the house in the 20th C. Perhaps most telling was the functional erasure of the memorization of Margaret Taylor, an early member of the core, who left a bequest to the Society upon her death in 1987. The Margaret Taylor Room had in the 1990s depicted both spheres of private life. Upon the rebirth of the building as the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum, it was remade into a gallery celebrating the public lives of a very specific subset of the Henry family: male gunsmiths who had a direct tie to the Boulton Gun Works. The stories passed down of family rituals were exiled to the parlors of the J. Joseph Henry House, as were the volunteers passionate about telling those tales.

One could argue that women weren't being removed from the central message, but instead relocated; that specific buildings were dedicated to specific aspects of the Henry Story. This isn't the case. If that were true, the Longrifle Museum would be dedicated to telling the history of Boulton as a workplace. There are many objects in the Society's possession and in other collections (such as the ledger books held by the Hagley) that could be used as evidence of the business life of Boulton. The preferential treatment of the Longrifle museum in terms of staffing is also telling. Resources were allocated in 2009 to pay a docent to open the Longrifle Museum for ten hours a week while staffing of the house was left to a dwindling core of volunteers.

Then there's the argument that the primacy of the Longrifle Museum is a misperception of timing, a result of only having enough money to revitalize and staff one museum at a time, that the House is just as important, but a small organization can only do one thing at a time. Dating the first use of the current nomenclature for 402 Henry

Road as the J. Joseph Henry House also shows a deliberate prioritization of the gun and the men who ran the manufactory that produced them over all other family activities. For decades the white stone home was known as Boulton, including the recent past when the nomination form for National Landmark status was submitted. Charles Sandwick refers to 402 Henry as Boulton in his book, published in 1985. But the DCNR way signs, placed in 2003, the same year the PLM opened, name it the J. Joseph Henry House. The story told by everyone on either side of the street tells that J. Joseph built it for Rebecca. He lived in it for two years; she lived in it for over thirty. I am often asked by women visiting the house, after they hear the story of how J. Joseph built her the house so she'd have a home similar to the one she'd grown up within in Philadelphia, why the house was named for him, and not for her. In everyday interpretation of the House, Rebecca's sole mention is made just inside the front door, where her portrait hangs next to J. Joseph's. Until this past Christmas when one of the family stories was annotated to add historical facts, not even her wedding china was linked to her in any formal interpretation.

These trends at Boulton reflect two threads in the standard fabric of house museums. First, preservation of women's history occurs when women are involved in the decision making process. Second, the politics of the time and place are integral to the shape of the resulting museum. For its first two decades, women were equally present in the creation and presentation of history by the Jacobsburg Historical Society. As the number of men on the board increased, and the executive committee shifted entirely to a

male team, the themes of domestic life and women's history were relegated to specific spaces and deemphasized.⁵¹

Some political actions are more blatant than others. The penultimate example at Boulton of the political power of an object to define the presentation of history is the recent Pennsylvania State Legislature Resolution naming the Pennsylvania Longrifle as significant to the state's history. At the same time that the Homestead became the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum and the name Boulton was reserved for only one side of the road, a resolution was championed by specific members of the core and passed in the State House of Representatives. Acts "designating the Pennsylvania Rifle as the official firearm of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania" are before the Senate and the House now, in May of 2012.⁵²

The Pennsylvania Longrifle is not, despite its centrality to the mission of the organization, the only object of note at Boulton. First and foremost is the J. Joseph Henry House, a Type 1 site based on John M. Groff's integrity scale.⁵³ As I say frequently to visitors, the magic of the Henry home resides in its contents, the result of generations of

⁵¹ Dubrow, "Restoring women's history," 3.

⁵² House Bill 910 can be viewed at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&sessYr=2011&sessInd=0&billBody=H&billTyp=B&billNbr=0910&pn=3202>. Senate Bill 607 at <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/CFDOCS/Legis/PN/Public/btCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&sessYr=2011&sessInd=0&billBody=S&billTyp=B&billNbr=0607&pn=0611>.

⁵³ "Type 1 are sites of the highest integrity--a completeness of well documented and preserved historical buildings, at least partial furnishings that are original to the house, some survival of the historic landscape, and documentation whether from family papers or local histories." John M Groff, "To Thine Own Self Be True: The Small Historic House Museum in the Twentieth Century," in "American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998."

one family deliberately collecting family stories and related objects and storing them in one place. Moreover, Boulton is a phenomenal example of the appeal of preserving the synergy of space and object. The metal lamp on a metal chain and pulley system that hangs in the front hall of the J. Joseph Henry House would have scant appeal if displayed in a box without its mechanics. Seeing it hung and in a tall case would help understand its presence, but to comprehend its function, you need to see the chain pulled, watch the bottom of the lantern separate from the shield as it is lowered, and witness the action of lighting the candle or lamp within. What cannot be gained at all by the static display is the vision of how the flickering light illuminates the dark hallway.

CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSION: TELLING A COMPLETE STORY;
TEACHING A COMPELLING HISTORY

The Boulton Historic site is uniquely situated to teach modern public history, possessing a rich collection of artifacts, an inherited tradition of melding history with story and memory with information, and a physical plant that begs to be preserved, both architecturally and ecologically. All serve as tools for engaging the public in an exploration of how the past is constructed and of what role we as individuals play in that formation. If the JHS wishes to pay due diligence to the Henry family legacy and Mary Henry Stites' bequest intent, it must choose to move beyond recitation of dates and occurrences and wrestle with issues. This can be done by strategizing how the four elements of strong public history - people, place, content, and community - can best be combined to present an interpretive message that emphasizes, preserves, and examines the three core components of Boulton - the place, the family, and the rifle. If done successfully, Boulton can be an example of how a 21st century historical society presents a museum experience that both captures the magic of stepping through the doors of a family's private past and opens a window of understanding about how we construct our own history.

Henry's Woods are at the heart of the Boulton tract and integral to the essence of the place. Fifteen thousand people a year walk past JHS buildings because they are drawn to the woods and the water; William of Nazareth bought the land to capitalize on both. While "being green" is no doubt one of the political issues at the beginning the 21st

century, and like to become more of one, the importance of green space - both open and wooded - also has an emotional element. In a community where hundred year old Pennsylvania farms have been replaced with standard American tract homes, where tree lines and open pastures are now covered with cement, the visual and visceral effect of seeing stately old homes set on acres of pasture along miles of tree line is critical to remembering who we are, and to staying healthy. Our society is only just truly understanding the importance of spaces to run, to lose oneself in nature, to sit and be contemplative. Boulton can meet this need, just by being itself. The Society can leverage the natural attraction of the site by reinvigorating its partnership with the State to once again create interpretation and programing that uses the environment as a lens for approaching history and history as a lens for engaging environmental education, a practice that has lapsed in recent years.

Mary Henry wanted a house museum. For that dream to survive, the J. Joseph Henry House must be more than a beautifully presented collection of items, connected by family stories. What it can be is the space in which the family history is celebrated, examined, and yes, even questioned. Themed guided tours, website pages, Woods Walks, and other innovative programming can all be used to teach a Henry history encompassing all seven generations, all three tracts of the historic district, both genders, and even expanded to address questions of labor and class. While an ambitious goal, it is attainable.

Continued exclusion of the Jacobsburg and Benade tracts and sole focus on the Boulton tract by the JHS fails the intent of the original goals of the organization and diminishes the impact of the overall story, in terms of both the extended community and the Henrys themselves. The organization should strive to be Boulton-located without being Boulton-centric. Especially since including the family history relevant to the other tracts means sharing the history of earlier generations of Henry women. Creativity and technology will need to be maximized to do this economically. While adding the Benade house to list of facilities maintained by the JHS is not currently financially or geographically practical, nor within the terms of the lease from the State, re-introducing the occasional walking, or even driving, tour of the Jacobsburg and Benade tracts would allow a more complete Henry story and an wider industrial complex story to be told.

The ideologies of American patriotism, exceptionalism, entrepreneurship, and environmentalism have been, and continue to be, constants in the lifecycle of the canon at Boulton. These must be conserved. The Henry family constructed its own patriotic, patriarchal history and passed it down through the generations with the family papers and artifacts. Some stories and objects were woven together, such as the Henry family ring being carried out of Glencoe and across the Atlantic, and the lore that it was bequeathed “only to Patriots.”⁵⁴ Mary Henry Stites and William Henry Atherton were both responsible for the versions transmitted to volunteers at the Jacobsburg Historical Society. Charles Sandwick, Hope Luhman, James Wright, Don Repsher, and Scott Paul

⁵⁴ Oral history with William Henry Atherton, (Archival document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, June 2010).

Gordon all worked with original documents and added to the written record. This process was not always welcome.⁵⁵ Proof as to whether this tendency will change in the period “after the family” is yet to come. Gordon’s thorough research and excellent use of Moravian church documents has provided solid documentation that clarifies, and sometimes outright refutes, constructed memory. A necessary step moving forward will be for the current and future directors of the JHS to have the courage to adapt the cannon to include this information. We must also remember, however, that the community will be served not by “correcting” the history, but by interweaving it in such a way that the visitor learns about both memory and history.

In the evolution of the Boulton historic site, and within the goal of smoothing the lines between House and Homestead, parlor and factory, piano and gun, Henry and Stites, the unity of the site would be strengthened if links from the guns to the family were added to the interpretation. For example, sharing that the number one gun in the collection was made during the era of James Henry and passed through the descendants of William Henry of Scranton until William Henry Atherton loaned it to the fledging Pennsylvania Longrifle museum accomplishes several goals. Doing so places James in context as a gunsmith and shows the movement of the family outward from Boulton

⁵⁵ Luhman, “Moravian Industry.” Luhman wrote of her efforts to consult historical documents, “While I have tried to be as thorough as possible in my pursuit of the academic source material, there remain a few privately held collections that were not available for study. Although many attempts were made to communicate to the owners my research objectives, I discovered that sentiments concerning the local history of the area ran very deep; countless materials remain closely protected.”

while underscoring the continued ties, and frequent returns, to the family base.

(Atherton's heirs gifted the gun to the JHS following his death in August of 2011.)

Sharing Charles Sandwick's tale of how Mary Adelaide Henry Stites (Miss Mollie) showed him, in the early 1970s, the gun her grandfather Granville Henry made for her would accomplish even more. In addition to placing Granville in context as the last of the gunsmithing Henrys, it validates the generation of Henrys represented by Mary Adelaide and Thomas (Henry) Atherton Stites as part of the family fabric and part of the gun story. It also does the reverse in establishing the guns as a core part of the family story at the time that the JHS was founded. Telling this vignette could help the current generation of "the core" realize the division between House and gun was not intended, did not exist in the beginning, and is only as sharp as we make it to be. Visualizing an almost 100 year old Miss Mollie holding her gun gives those of us building interpretation a window through which we can ask questions about who made the guns, who used the guns, and who cherished the guns, both when made, and when saved.

There is no doubt that the Pennsylvania longrifles and other guns are a critical part of the museum collection, even though they numbered very few in the beginning. The purpose of the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum is to explain three aspects of history: the evolution of the Pennsylvania longrifle, its role as a vital frontier tool and its significance as a piece of fine art. Because of this focus, Boulton is specially positioned to engage one of the touchiest "hot button" topics of our generation: firearms. If you follow the evolution and history of the gun in America, you reach a modern political and

cultural divide. Teaching the importance of the longrifle as a tool and a collectable piece of art is critical to placing the object in context, both historically and modernly.

Interpretation at Boulton does this now. But by leaving off any discussion of the current politics of gun use and ownership, Boulton fails to form a link between past and present, and misses an opportunity for engaged dialogue.

Think of the conversations that could be had and the energy that could be generated if Boulton were to approach the topic of firearms as Cliveden has approached slavery. I've heard the comment that half of our potential audience won't even consider a trip to Boulton because half of the American public is anti-gun. What if programing and interpretation met that concern head on? Imagine a marketing campaign for an exhibit on the art of the longrifle that proclaimed, "Art or Weapon?" Carefully constructed, an exhibit that explained the craftsmanship of the artifact and its use as a tool in period, but also carefully and deliberately talked about the power the topic of firearms has within American society could move the visitor from a position of observer of the past to that of participant in the present. Visitor as actor, not observer is something that Boulton strives for in its Early American Craft Education program, where one can learn the art of making a long rifle or a powder horn, but it is not something that has been consistently attempted with interpretation.

I am not suggesting the guns or the history presented in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum be de-emphasized. I'm professionally demonstrating that it is in the JHS's best interest to expand how it interprets the history of the longrifle and the Henry

gunsmiths. Simultaneously, other elements of the family history must be given an equal amount of attention. The simplest reason for this is institutional survival. Visitors are both male and female, gun enthusiasts and gun detractors. Boulton has the amazing benefit of “having it all” in terms of historical content. Making women’s history as accessible as men’s - opening the J. Joseph Henry House for the same number of hours and at the same times as the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum - will allow visitors choice and broaden the appeal of the site.

One way to integrate the histories taught at the Boulton site is to include the history of the Society. Recent history can teach us as much about ourselves as distant can. Sharing my research on the influences gender has had on the Society in its first forty years might not only help explain past choices but could influence future ones. If a group of high school students took a tour designed to look at gender influence at Boulton over the decades, they might look differently at the choices they make, and the choices they encounter which are made by others.

Similarly, what if we confront the aging of museum audiences by giving younger audiences something juicy to talk about? What if we built interpretation for the same group of high school students predicated on a discussion about the gender of objects? Are there men’s objects and women’s objects? What makes an object gendered? Its production? Its use? How it is perceived by society? Are guns male objects? Are houses female? What is a gender line? Is Henry Road one? Inclusion of a tour that engaged these

questions would raise Boulton to the rank of a best practice museum, a place where one can wrestle with complicated issues and teach complicated concepts.

Presenting a gendered history is not just about adding in women's stories and history, its about exploring where dividing lines were, and weren't. Were guns the products, tools, and collectibles of just men? Clearly not. Introduction of threads of interpretation exploring labor and class at Boulton will expand coverage of the human element and also provide additional opportunities to discuss gender roles. Workers are mentioned only in passing. We have no faces and tell no names. Who lived in the Workers' House and walked across the street to jobs at the factory? Which families did the filing piecework and lived in Filetown? Who cleaned the Homestead and the House, who cooked the meals, who mowed the lawns? Who ran the factories? Who taught in the school? Who attended the school? The answers to these questions will expand the story beyond Henry family objects - be they guns or grandfather clocks - to information that will permit discussions of lives lived and thoughtful exploration of the composition of a community.

Regardless of whose history we are transmitting, we must do a better job of using objects as documents. Within the story of the Christmas China being used on both sides of the street for different Christmas celebrations, the china and the House have a symbiotic relationship. When we focus on the preservation aspect of the house, we risk loosing sight of the china, or even loosing the china, if the House were ever to be sold into private hands. Without the treasures, the house is just a house. We need to heed Bill

Hostley's reminder that the preservation, presentation, and promotion of the objects, a house museum's treasures, must be a priority. We then need to use the objects to build conversations between our visitors and those who lived and worked at Boulton.⁵⁶

Better use of objects for interpretation is not limited to the House. The concept of tools can be shared beyond the longrifle. What tools did people use to live and to work? What things did they make with those tools? What items represent how they lived their lives, and what were the shapes and forms of those lives? Who they were within their community? What items and spaces are familiar to us today, and which are not? By making the most of an object's ability to serve as a document and represent relationships, we can use the many objects at Boulton to encourage visitors to engage these questions and actively experience the Boulton of the Henry family, not just Boulton today.

Finally, interpretation at Boulton needs to be integrated and seamless, in composition, but most imperatively in presentation. There are two needs here. One is to tell an over-arching message, using different spaces and voices to tell individual stories and speak on specific themes. The second is for all who interpret to know the whole story. The docent in the Pennsylvania Longrifle Museum needs to know the goals of interpretation within the House, and how those themes relate, or don't, to the topics he is teaching. The docent greeting guests at the House must understand the information presented on the way signs throughout the Park, most especially because her visitors have just read those signs. All staff needs to tie what they have to share into what visitors have

⁵⁶ William Hostley, post to Historic House Museum listserve, August 8, 2011.

learned elsewhere on the site, while correcting or adapting that information to introduce new themes or reflect recent research. We also need to remember Anita Nowery Durel's advice stressing the importance of being a good host and reminding modern museum makers to be hyper-aware of customer service and visitor experience. Being a good host, in the simplest forms of the phrase, is part of being true to the essence of Boulton, especially the House.⁵⁷ The site should continue offering living history, in focused, deliberate ways, especially ones that tie into the mission of the Early American Education Center. Providing hands-on demonstrations of period crafts and trades can provide many of the advantages of living history, and is eerily close to one component of the 1985 strategic vision.⁵⁸

Untangling the thread of gender from the fabric of the American house museum cannot - and should not - be done. Gender influence is not a negative; it is a building block. Societal opinion of gender roles and spheres affects how individuals and communities act and react. How women perceived their place and the acceptance of their voice in the mid eighteenth century resulted in the morphing of the most private space, a home, into an accepted public access point, a museum. As such, it is more than a

⁵⁷ Anita Nowery Durel, "Broadening the Relevance and Reputation of Museums and Historic Sites," *Forum Journal* 23, no. 4 (2009): 28.

⁵⁸ Kathryn Boardman, "Revisiting Living History: A Business, An Art, A Pleasure, An Education," summary of panel session presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Public History in Albany, New York, on May 3, 1997, accessed January 21, 2011, <http://alhfam.org/whitepapers/alhfam.revisit.html>, for a solid summary of living history, its challenges and its benefits is presented. John D. Krugler, "Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America," *The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History and Culture*, (1991): 347-386, for or an examination of the quality and depth of historical research achieved by living history museums in the period of time when house museum viability began to be questioned.

building, it is an object in a deliberately constructed collection of personal items representing a life lived. Regardless of the gender of the primary individual represented, the totality that is a historic house museum is defined by the gender of those who make the choices about which objects to display, which stories to tell, and whose history will be presented. As such, they are and must remain a unique access points for audiences to engage gender history, and we as historians must create engaging, evocative interpretation that stimulates such engagement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

“Boulton Facilities Master Plan, Jacobsburg National Historic District.” Archival Document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, June 2000.

Eighteenth Century Vital Records from the Early Registers of the Moravian Congregation at Schoeneck, Northampton County, Pennsylvania, compiled by Charles M. Sandwick, Sr., M.A. Chairman, Historical Research Society, Easton, PA, 1978.

Easton Express, March 24, 1973 & March 28, 1973. From 1973-1976 Newspaper Articles, Index Request Form, http://www.eastonpl.org/NewspaperArticles/1973_1996.pdf Accessed February 5, 2012.

Final Will and Testament of Mary Henry Stites, Archival Document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, May 1989.

Harry, Rich. “Gun-making Revival Will Help Re-Make History.” *The Morning Call*. September 13, 1984. http://articles.mcall.com/1984-09-13/news/2428047_1_gun-aficionado-gun-factories-rifle Accessed February 5, 2012.

Hay, Brian. “Area gun-making Family Featured Keepsake Book Details History of the Henrys,” *The Morning Call*, November 25, 1994. http://articles.mcall.com/1994-11-25/news/3004277_1_henry-family-civil-war-book.

Historic Structures Report: The Henry Homestead, Boulton, Pennsylvania, Prepared by Reed Laurence Engle. Archival Document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, October 20, 1978.

Homestead Development Proposal. Archival Document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, April 5, 1984.

“Jacobsburg May Change Format for Encampment.” *The Morning Call*. November 21, 1985. http://articles.mcall.com/1985-11-21/news/2497772_1_encampment-state-parks-education Accessed February 5, 2012.

JEEC Park Management Plan, Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Obtained from Michael Jones, Manager. October 5, 2011.

National Registry of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form for the Jacobsburg National Historic District. Archival Document, Jacobsburg Historical Society, 1974.

Schenck, Helen and Jeff Kenyon, Principal Investigator. "The Jacobsburg Tract Traced Through Time," prepared for the Jacobsburg Historical Society. Museum Historic Research Center. March 1977.

"The Jacobsburg Record," newsletter of the Jacobsburg Historical Society, multiple editions, Archival Documents, Jacobsburg Historical Society.

Weil, Lorna, "Historical Society Given \$1 Million Bushkill Estate," *The Morning Call*, April 4, 1990, http://articles.mcall.com/1990-04-04/news/2750255_1_henry-gun-works-henry-family-granville-henry.

Secondary Sources

Arato, Christine. "This House Holds Many Memories: Constructions of a Presidential Birthplace at the John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site," in Seth C. Bruggeman, ed., *Born in the USA: Birth and Commemoration in American Public Memory*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

Barrientos, Tanya. "Houses, Histories and the Future." www.pewtrusts.org

Boardman, Kathryn. "Revisiting Living History: A Business, An Art, A Pleasure, An Education," summary of panel session presented at the annual conference of the National Council on Public History in Albany, New York, on May 3, 1997. Accessed at <http://alhfam.org/whitepapers/alhfam.revisit.html> January 21, 2011.

Bruggeman, Seth C. ed. *Born in the USA: Birth and Commemoration in American Public Memory*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

Bruggeman, Seth C. *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

Butcher-Youngmans, Sherry. *Historic house museums: a practical handbook for their care, preservation, and management*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Cabral, Magaly. "Exhibiting and Communicating History and Society in Historic House Museums," *Museum International* 53, no 2 (2001): 41-46.

- Cairns, Kathleen V. and Eliane Leslau Silverman. *Treasures: The Stories Women Tell About the Things They Keep*. Alberta: University of Calgary Press, 2004.
- Carson, Cary. "The End of History Museums: What's Plan B." *The Public Historian* 30 (2008): 9-27.
- Dayton, Maria S. "The Mulford House: A Strategy to Reinterpret a Small House Museum." Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2007.
- Dubrow, Gail Lee, and Jennifer B. Goodman. *Restoring women's history through historic preservation*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Durel, Anita Nowery. "Broadening the Relevance and Reputation of Museums and Historic Sites." *Forum Journal* 23, no 4 (2009): 27-34.
- George, Gerald. "Historic House Museum Malaise: A Conference Considers What's Wrong." *History News* 57 (2002): 21-25.
- Godfrey, Marian A. "Historic House Museums: An Embarrassment of Riches?" *Forum Journal* (2008)
- Groff, John M. "To Thine Own Self Be True: The Small Historic House Museum in the Twentieth Century." Presentation, American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.
- Godfrey, Marion A. and Silberman, Barbara. "A Model for Historic House Museums." *What To Do About These House Museums* (Spring 2008 Pew Trust Magazine briefing) http://www.pewtrusts.org/our_work_report_detail.aspx?id=38618 Accessed January 20, 2011.
- Hyuck, Heather, ed. *Women's History: Sites and Resources*. Santa Cruz, CA: American Graphic, 2009.
- Kanawati, Dina. "Founding or Funding: Are Historic House Museums in Trouble?" Unpublished master's thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2006.
- Krugler, John D. "Behind the Public Presentations: Research and Scholarship at Living History Museums of Early America". *The William and Mary Quarterly: A Magazine of Early American History and Culture*, 48 (1980): 347-386.

- Ossman, Laurie. "Saving the Historic House -While Saving the World." Center for the Future of Museums (blog). February 1, 2011. <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2011/02/saving-historic-housewhile-saving-world.html>.
- Potvin, Ron, Malgorzata Rymsza-Pawlowska and Shana Weinberg. "A Selected Compilation of Historic House Museum Resources." John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, November 2010, accessed January 3, 2012. http://www.brown.edu/Research/JNBC/presentations_papers/A%20Selected%20Bibliography%20of%20Historic%20House%20Museum%20Resources.pdf.
- Rees, James C. "Forever the Same, Forever Changing: The Dilemma Facing Historic Houses." Presentation, American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.
- Risnicoff de Gorgas, Mónica. "Reality as Illusion: The Historic Houses that Become Museums." *Museum International* 53 (2001).
- Rozhon, Tracie. "Homes Sell, and History Goes Private." *New York Times*, December 31, 2006.
- Salzmann, Hal A., bibliography. "Reading Historic Sites: Interpretive Strategies at Literary House-Museums," unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2004.
- Sanchis, Frank E. "Looking Back or Looking Forward? House Museums in the 21st Century," Presentation, American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.
- Sandwick, Charles. *Jacobsburg: A Pennsylvania Community and Its People*. Nazareth, PA: The Jacobsburg Historical Society, 1985.
- Smith, Sabra. "Dead Men Tell No Tales: How Can Creative Approaches to Communication Keep Historic Sites from Going Silent," unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2008.
- Wade, Sarah Lauren. "The Privatization of American House Museums: Three Case Studies." Unpublished thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 2008.

West, Patricia. *Domesticating History: the Political Origins of America's House Museums*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999.

Wright, James. *History of Bushkill Township, Pennsylvania, 1813-2007*. Nazareth: Bushkill Township, PA, 2010.

Williams, Donna. "Great Expectations: Historic House Museums in State History Programs in the 21st Century." Presentation, American House Museums: An Athenaeum of Philadelphia Symposium, December 1998.

Young, David W. "The Next Cliveden: A New Approach to the Historic Site in Philadelphia" *Forum Journal* (2008) Schlereth, Thomas J., ed. *Material Culture Studies in America*. Nashville, Tennessee: The American Associate for State and Local History, 1982.