



JUNE QUARTERLY MEETING

June 13, 2010, 1:30 P.M.

Kate Ogden,

Associate Professor of Art History at Stockton College, presents...

**George Washington Conarrore
& Other 19th Century Jersey Artists**

Dr. Ogden will discuss George Washington Conarrore's portraits, as well as works by other South Jersey Artists, during a lecture on June 13, 2010 at St. John's Episcopal Church Parish Hall. Conarrore's portraits of Salem residents are currently the focus of an exhibition, *Palettes of the Past: Salem County Art and Artists*, at the Salem County Historical Society's Alexander Grant house.

George Washington Conarrore was one of Salem, New Jersey's first artistic success stories. Born in 1802 in New Castle Hundred, Delaware to Antrim and Margaret Mecum Conarrore, he came to Salem around 1816. In the 1820s the future artist began working in the furniture shop of William Beesley. He must have started painting during this decade, because in 1829 he began exhibiting portraits at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia. Around this time Conarrore married Charlotte Biddle West of Gloucester County.



George Washington Conarrore circa 1860

Conarrore and his wife moved to Philadelphia around 1831. Although the artist would spend his professional career painting portraits in the Quaker City, he maintained ties with Salem for the rest of his life and returned occasionally to paint portraits of local notables. Conarrore also painted religious and theatrical subjects

and an occasional landscape. SCHS owns fifteen paintings by Conarroe, five of which are included in the current exhibition, including two portraits of Alphonso Louis Eakin, a prominent Salem lawyer. The artist's portraits of children, which often contain the child's favorite toy or the family pet, are especially appealing. Portraits of the Hubbell children, Helena and Anne, can be seen in the Legacy Room of the Grant House. A direct descendant of Alexander Grant, Helena Hubbell's bequest to SCHS included these portraits of herself and her sister, as well as the Alexander Grant house.

George Washington Nicholson (1832-1912), another Salem artist, was born a generation after Conarroe. (Like Conarroe he was named for the first American president, a popular icon of the day.) A landscape painter rather than a portrait specialist, Nicholson may have been inspired by Conarroe's example to move to Philadelphia. Professor Ogden will discuss Nicholson as well as other South Jersey landscape painters. One of these is George Emerick Essig (1838-1926), the only 19th century painter known to have lived in Atlantic City. As might be expected of an artist located near the shore, Essig specialized in seascapes and coastal scenes. Morris Hall Pancoast (1877-1963), another landscape painter, was born in Salem and enjoyed a successful career before passing away in relative obscurity. Unlike Essig, whose style was essentially old-fashioned, Hudson River School realism, Pancoast adopted the popular late 19th century style known as Impressionism. He painted numerous views of the New England coast before his death in Rockport, Massachusetts.

A few 19th century women artists of Salem are included in the exhibition and in Professor Ogden's lecture. Lucy Holme, born in Elsinboro in 1848, was the daughter of Benjamin and Elizabeth Dennis Holme. She studied with leading Philadelphia artists William Sartain and Thomas Eakins at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Holme also studied abroad before settling in Philadelphia, where she taught art for many years; she moved back to Salem before her death in 1928. Another woman artist in the exhibition is Amelia Rumsey Patterson, the daughter of a prominent Salem doctor. Patterson worked as superintendent of schools in Salem, but she was also a talented painter. Women artists of the 19th century have not fared as well in the historical record as their male counterparts, but interest in their work has grown in recent years.



Lucy D. Holme

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