What Can A Broken Plate Tell Us?

METC’s newest exhibit, *Uncovered: Hidden Treasures from METC’s Permanent Collection*, situates historic objects and documents at the forefront of the exhibit’s narrative.

The cream-colored earthenware shell-edged platter pictured here is one of the many objects featured in the “Construction & Process” case. Cream-colored earthenware is a type of ceramic body with a transparent lead glaze that was developed in England around the second half of the 18th century. Shell-edge decoration is characterized by a molded border on a scalloped rim with either blue or green underglaze decoration. Occasionally, overglaze enamels of purple, green, red, black, and brown were featured on shell-edged ceramic wares and vessels. Later in the 19th century, the rim is no longer scalloped and eventually the shell-edge decoration fell out of favor in the market. METC’s shell-edged plate likely dates from the early 19th century, ca. 1800 - 1830. The scalloped rim includes green underglaze decoration. Underneath, the platter is stamped with the number “14” which likely refers to the mold used to create this platter. Molds offered more standardization and efficiency in manufacturing ceramic vessels. Molding was the process of shaping ceramic objects by pressing soft clay into molds made from hand-modelled prototypes.

What is unique about this object is that it is broken. It might be assumed that broken objects shouldn’t be in museum collections or that they hold no historic value or insight to the curator; however, broken objects in fact show the construction of an object, the process behind the creation of the object, or the materials used to create the object. Visit METC’s newest Main Gallery exhibit to see this object up close. *Uncovered: Hidden Treasures from METC’s Permanent Collection* will be on view until March 2022, come in and find your favorite object from METC’s permanent collection!
As Autumn approaches, we are excited for our students to begin another academic year, but we are also cautiously optimistic that New Jersey schools will once again be able to return to the museum for exciting and educational field trips. With the resurgence of the Delta variant of COVID-19 and new safety mandates changing daily, we will have to wait and see as we get ready to welcome kids back to METC. Fortunately, one of the many lessons learned over the past year and a half is that flexibility and innovation are possibly the most important qualities we possess. In 2020, physical closures and capacity reductions forced museums and galleries to find new ways to showcase content and programming to audiences, accelerating the shift towards digital. METC’s ability to quickly transition to all digital programming enabled us to serve the community in a way we never imagined—reaching twice as many students as in previous years. The flip side of that, of course, is that most of this programming was provided at no cost to the schools, which meant we had to find new and creative funding. Like other museums, we were eligible for certain COVID relief grants, and our donors and members stepped up to help us fill the gap, and for that we are extremely grateful.

During this crisis, we saw many museums rise to the occasion, emerging as extremely resilient, vital, and dependable institutions; and providing their respective communities with access to information, historical perspectives or simply a much-needed connection to other people. While this did not surprise those of us who work in museums, it encouraged others to recognize that museums are, indeed, essential community assets. And as we gear up for the new school year, and we recognize more than ever, the critical importance of digital content and engagement tools to engage, educate, and inspire audiences.

One of the best ways we can ensure that our educational programming continues to reach students in all schools throughout New Jersey is through our fundraising efforts. This fall, we are excited to host our Annual Gala Event on October 14, 2021. Make Magic Happen will be raising funds to provide free access to all students throughout the state and we will also be honoring NJ Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver for her work in education and historic preservation. Education has always been METC’s overarching goal, but this year your support means even more as we continue to navigate the uncertainty and the disruption that has impacted all our lives.

I hope you can join us on October 14 to support METC and all the students, families, older adults, people living with disabilities and everyone else who relies on METC to provide unencumbered access and community service.

Thank you all for your continued support and encouragement.

- Deborah Farrar Starker

Members Online Exclusive!

METC Members now have exclusive access to METC Digital Library! This Members Only webpage has videos of our many virtual programs including “Conquering Everest,” “Behind the Scaffolding with Evergreene Architectural Arts,” and our virtual architecture tour! We’re also launching a new video series called “Conversations with the Curator!” Our Curator of Collections & Exhibits, Shelley, will share the stories behind five very unique objects! Members will also have the opportunity to learn about the people behind the scenes at METC with fun blog posts written by the METC Staff. Discover some museums that have made it to the big screen, staff book recommendations, and more!

Members! Be sure to check your emails soon for information on how to access this site!
Calendar of Events

For more information on these events or to register please visit www.metc.org.

Lenape Lifeways
September 25, 2021
2pm Meet & Greet, Lecture begins 2:30pm
Free with Regular Admission
Carla Messinger of Native American Heritage Programs will present this program at METC which explores the life and times of these peaceful, progressive people, comparing and contrasting their social customs, history, religion, family life, agriculture, hunting, healing practices, arts and crafts.

Annual Benefit Dinner
Make Magic Happen
October 14, 2021, 6:30pm
$150 per person
Be a part of the magic that brings history to life at METC by supporting our educational scholarship fund at our Annual Benefit Dinner! We invite you to join us for an enchanting and magical evening on October 14, 2021 at the Park Avenue Club in Florham Park.

Bottle Hill Day at METC
October 2, 2021, 10am – 4pm
FREE
Celebrate Bottle Hill Day at METC where the past meets the present! Join us on the front lawn for traditional woodworking demonstrations and learn some modern home repair hacks from Tyler Merson of Merson Home Consulting Service. The whole family will also enjoy playing some historic lawn games. Admission to the museum is free to all!

Annex Sidewalk Art Show
Opens October 27, 2021
View banner artwork by New Jersey artists from the sidewalks of the METC Education Annex. Each banner will be a one-of-a-kind work of art using any medium of the artist’s choice reflecting the theme of “Hope.”

METC Partners with Book Arts Roundtable

The Museum of Early Trades & Crafts is happy to announce an exciting new partnership with the Book Arts Roundtable (BAR)! BAR is an organization of book and paper artists and enthusiasts from New Jersey and the surrounding area. Through meetings, instructional workshops, exhibitions, information exchanges and collaborations, the Roundtable encourages play, exploration, growth and creative expression in the areas of book and paper art.

The BAR will now meet once a month in METC’s Education Annex. The members of BAR will also be partnering with METC for hands on workshops throughout the year. The first of these many workshops will be just in time for the holidays in December. Check our website soon for more information!

METC last collaborated with the BAR in 2015 for the Art of Books exhibition. Several BAR members showcased their unique artwork thematically based on some of the James Library Building’s many literary quotes.

Those who are interested in joining BAR, please visit https://www.bookartsroundtable.com for information on how to get involved!

“You Scared the Dickens Out of Me!”
Ellie Wasserman
New Acquisition

METC recently acquired a historic document connected to D. Willis James, the wealthy businessman and philanthropist who funded the construction of the James Library Building. METC not only collects objects related to the home, shop, and farm trades of the 18th and 19th century, but also artifacts related to the museum’s building, the James Library Building, and D. Willis James.

This document outlines the “Explanatory List of the Powers of Valves on Water Supply and Gas System of Building and Grounds at Madison, New Jersey D. Willis James, ESQ., Owner.” The document provides a quick look into D. Willis James’s Madison, NJ home, “Onunda,” originally located in what is now Giralda Farms, which is no longer intact, while also offering a glimpse into engineering in the late 19th century.

This object is featured in METC’s new exhibit Uncovered: Hidden Treasures from METC’s Permanent Collection. Visit METC and our newest Main Gallery exhibit to the museum’s newest addition to the permanent collection!
Summer Internships Wrap Up!

METC had a very special group of students assisting us this summer with various activities! Read on to learn more about our summer interns and their projects!

My name is Rachel Tramposch and I am a rising senior at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. I am a prospective Religion and Art History double major. Since starting my internship at METC, I have done a variety of jobs across collections management, curation, and education, including updating object locations in the museum’s database, scanning and transcribing archival photos, and even painting the cases for the *Hidden Treasures* exhibit. One of my favorite experiences was being able to go into the collection rooms and see all the objects in storage. I loved being surprised by what amazing objects are stored together, how many great artifacts the museum has, and learning how they should all be properly stored. There are some beautiful combs that I hope get displayed soon! I have enjoyed my summer at METC and I look forward to putting my new skills and knowledge to use at museums in the future!

My name is Christina Cannilla and I am an intern at the Museum of Early Trades & Crafts, working specifically with Marketing and Education. I am a rising senior at Salve Regina University with a Major in American History and a Minor in Theatre Arts. Over the course of the summer, I have taken part in a variety of programs and activities. I have helped work at the museum’s family day and the summer concerts. For the marketing department, I helped collect research ways to utilize social media for effective forms of outreach. Additionally, I helped create, schedule, and produce an Alice in Wonderland themed series. But my favorite experience was working with the education department to design and work drop-ins and programs. I really enjoyed the program we did where we went to the South Mountain Annex School to run a program with them. I loved working with the kids and hearing them speak about what it would have been like to live life two hundred years ago. This coming year, I will be entering my senior year of college and following graduation I am looking to go on to grad school in order to get my masters to become a teacher.

My name is Kathryn Vaillancourt. I go to Sacred Heart University and am double majoring in History and Art with a minor in Writing. This summer at METC scanned and catalogued documents, helped set up the main gallery exhibit, wrote social media posts, and helped with drop-in days. Setting up the exhibit was really cool, there were a lot of small details that go into making the exhibit function. While setting up the exhibit I got a chance to really learn how to properly handle objects, how to classify them, and how to organize the system. I also really enjoyed learning about how to write social media posts, how to talk about different items in the posts and the right pictures to use. Since I am a junior I hope to get another internship at a museum to continue my education on museum studies!
Summer Drop In Crafts at METC

This summer, METC hosted five successful drop-in crafts and activities. These varied programs included Drop-in Day in Wonderland, with Alice in Wonderland-themed crafts, a scavenger around the museum, hot air balloons and a chance to experience how children went to school and had fun in the 19th century. These hands-on programs all offered a range of activities and brought in children of all ages – as young as 2 and even some adults got in on the fun! The drop-ins allowed families to experience some hands-on fun, while limiting their contact with others. The drop-in activities were accompanied by related activities on METC’s website and Facebook page, from excerpts of the original Alice in Wonderland story to videos showing how to do the crafts, as the METC Education Department continues to provide multiple avenues to engagement for people of all ages.
Thank you for Your Support

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*From 5/13/21 through 9/1/21
Museum of Early Trades & Crafts
founded by Edgar & Agnes Land in 1969 with their original collection of over 8,000 artifacts.

Our Vision
Sharing the past, imagining the future.

Our Mission
To inspire a connection with New Jersey’s history, culture, trades, and crafts.

Acknowledgements
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