

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2023

PAHERITAGE.ORG

The Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation is the nonprofit partner of the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. Governed by a volunteer board, PHF helps preserve the commonwealth's rich heritage through charitable funding, membership, grant management, and community engagement.

Curators Highlight Maritime Objects in PHMC Collections

In this installment of the newsletter's continuing series on PHMC's collections and the curators who work with them at Pennsylvania Trails of History museums and historic sites, Erie Maritime Museum curator Linda Bolla examines a preserved portion of the U.S. Navy's first iron-hulled warship and State Museum fine arts curator Amy Hammond discusses a work by a prominent Pennsylvania painter of the 19th century.

Linda Bolla on USS *Michigan*/Wolverine Prow

At the Erie Maritime Museum, I assist with exhibits, research and curatorial matters. In my long affiliation with the U.S. Brig *Niagara*, and with the museum since its inception, I have assisted with design, fabrication and development of permanent exhibits and interpretive programs, as well as educational outreach and public events.

One of the highlights of the museum is the prow of the USS *Michigan*, renamed *Wolverine* in 1905, the U.S. Navy's first iron steamer. Designed by Samuel Hart and fabricated in parts in Pittsburgh in 1842, the ship was assembled in Erie and launched in December 1843. It was commissioned on September 29, 1844, and made Erie its home port for its entire career. Originally a sleek black, *Michigan* was repainted white in winter 1892–93. As *Wolverine* it was decommissioned on May 6, 1912, and turned over to the Pennsylvania Naval Militia, remaining in service 11 more years.

On August 12, 1923, a connecting rod on the *Wolverine*'s port cylinder broke, ending its active career of 80 years. After various attempts to preserve the ship, it was sold for scrap in 1949. Only the prow remained as a city monument until it was moved to the Erie Maritime Museum, on display since the opening in 1998.

Having *Wolverine*'s prow on exhibit represents for me the generations of men who served with honor aboard the ship—ordinary men who enlisted, many from Erie, or some who found their sweetheart and made a home here. Many were new Americans, or the first generation born in America, and several would be awarded the Medal of Honor: Patrick Murphy, William Young, Cornelius Cronin and Andrew Forbec. Some were African American men, one of whom was documented to have been born in a slave state before the Civil War: Henry C. Thomp-



Photo, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

son who was transplanted in Erie through his Naval service and later founded the Booker T. Washington Center in the city.

When the nation entered World War I, it was the men of the Pennsylvania Naval Militia who were the first Pennsylvanians to go on active duty—within 24 hours of war declared. *Michigan*/*Wolverine* sailors served in three wars, and in peacetime shaped the character of Pennsylvania's only Great Lakes port city.

Trails of History Sites and Museums

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conradweiserhomestead.org

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cornwallironfurnace.org

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thedanielboonehomestead.org

DRAKE WELL MUSEUM
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drakewell.org

ECKLEY MINERS' VILLAGE
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eckleyminersvillage.com

EPHRATA CLOISTER
Ephrata, 717-733-6600
ephratacloister.org

**ERIE MARITIME MUSEUM
AND FLAGSHIP NIAGARA**
Erie, 814-452-2744
flagshipniagara.org

FORT PITT MUSEUM
Pittsburgh, 412-281-9285
heinzhistorycenter.org/fort-pitt

GRAEME PARK
Horsham, 215-343-0965
graemepark.org

HOPE LODGE
Fort Washington, 215-646-1595
historichopelodge.org

Amy Hammond on Edward Moran's *Moonlight and Steamboat*

As fine arts curator at The State Museum of Pennsylvania, I have the opportunity to share 360 years of Pennsylvania art and history through artists' stories and creations. The State Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, research and interpret the cultural and natural history of the state. Pennsylvania's artists have a significant role within this mission because art, as a form of communication, documents the people, places, events and ideals that make Pennsylvania so unique.

I have always been fascinated with artists' ability to translate ideas into a visual language. Each compositional choice, line, brushstroke, mark, medium and angle has an important function. Sometimes the smallest details change the meaning of a work. In one example, *Moonlight and Steamboat*, artist Edward Moran (1829–1901) made a series of compositional decisions that highlighted the power and majesty of nature during a time of increased industrialization. As a maritime painter, Moran usually focused on ships and sailors within contemporary and historic scenes. *Moonlight and Steamboat*, painted in 1874, is unique because Moran centered the moonlight within a vertical canvas. The steamship, an important symbol of technology, is almost lost in the clouds and waves.

Edward Moran and his family had first-hand experience with the impact of industrialization. While in England, the Moran family worked as handloom weavers. After the mechanization of the weaving industry decreased the amount of work available, the family immigrated to the United States and settled in Philadelphia. The city's burgeoning art community was the perfect location to nurture Edward's artistic interests. He studied under artist James Hamilton (1819–78) and established a studio where he taught generations of family members to paint. While Edward dedicated his career to maritime scenes, each artist in the Moran family chose a different genre. Edward's brother John was a photographer in the early years of the medium. Their younger brother Thomas was a renowned landscape artist. Another sibling, Peter, chose to become an animal painter. Many members of the subsequent generations followed in their path.

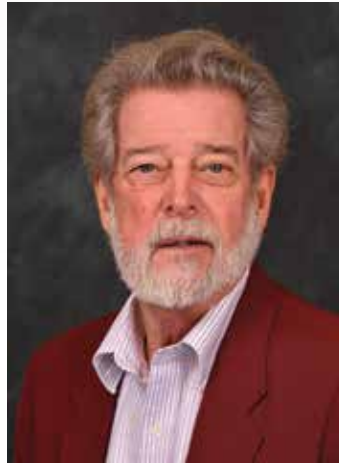
Through their familial relationship and distinctive perspective, Edward Moran and his family documented many facets of Pennsylvania culture and history, making a significant impact on our understanding of the past.



Photo, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

New Board Member

The Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation is pleased to welcome George Lyter to its Board of Directors. Lyter is the retired founder and owner of Lyter's Autoparts Inc. of New Bloomfield and grew his business to include two parts stores and machine shops, while also serving on local, regional and international automotive associations, including the Pennsylvania Automotive Wholesalers Association (president) and the Automotive Service Industry Association (board of directors). A native of Port Royal, Lyter earned his B.S. in education from Lock Haven University. He taught high school mathematics in the Newport School District and was school board president. Lyter has served as board member and chairman for many community organizations and has been the presiding officer of local and national Masonic organizations. In his retirement, he continues to manage his acquired properties, and he established the Auto/Hobby Shop for residents at the Masonic Village in Elizabethtown. He remains active in Masonic Lodges, the Harrisburg Consistory, and Zembo Shrine. He and his wife Carrie, a retired elementary science teacher, travel often but reserve winters for Saint Croix.



George Lyter



Members of the PHF board and staff assemble at a recent meeting: front row, Fred Powell, President Donna Fisher, Past President Glenn Holliman, Treasurer Anne Yellott, Bill Lewis; back row, Jim Newman, George Lyter, D Lockette, Jim Holliman, Cynthia Pritchard, Tucker Hull, Laura Ricketts, and staff members Mary Hull and Jodie Dodson. Board members not pictured: Samantha Freise, Assistant Treasurer Edward Hauck, Nancy Lennington, George Lulos, and Secretary Mark Markosky.

Photo, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission

Every Donation, Regardless of Size, Can Make a Difference

Does your company offer a matching gift program? By exploring and using your employer's matching gift program, you can maximize the impact of your generous support. Many companies double or even triple their contribution to help ensure Pennsylvania's past has a future. Some companies match gifts made by retirees or their spouses.

Check with your human resources department regarding your company's matching gift program. Visit paheritage.org for various ways to contribute to the Pennsylvania Heritage Foundation.



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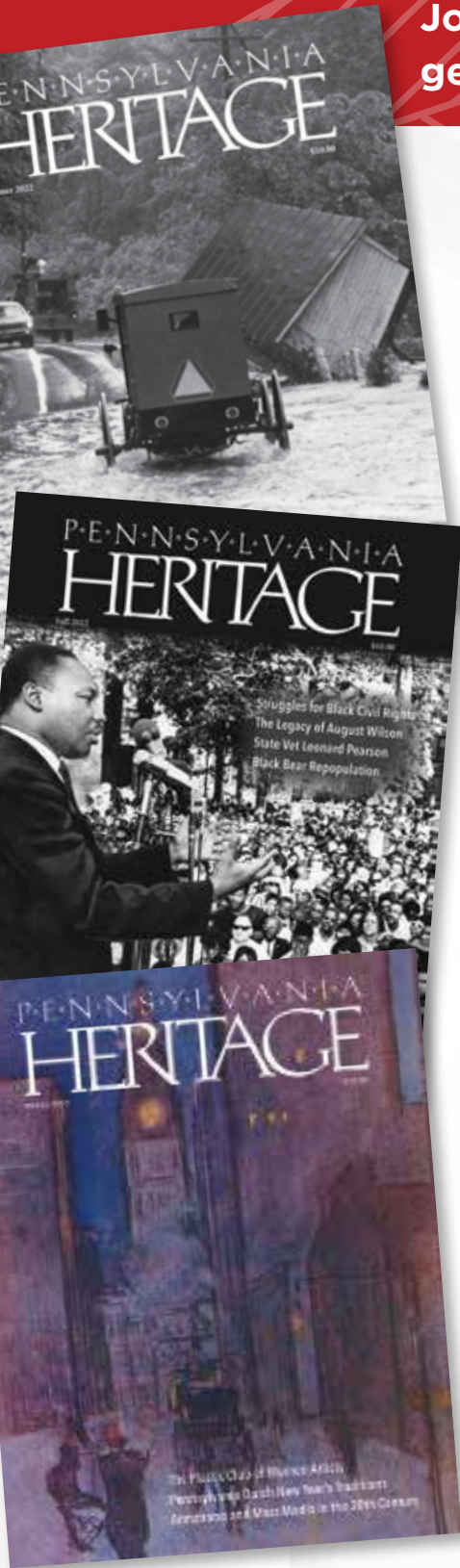
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somersethistoricalcenter.org

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**Some special events and tours at PHMC sites require an additional fee*



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