



NEWSLETTER

VOL. I

"FRIENDS OF RENFRW"

MARCH, 1979

NO. 3

Dear Friends:

April 5th marks this season's opening of Renfrew Museum and Park. We want you to enjoy your Museum and Park this year through the many planned activities or by just paying us a visit. We are always glad to see an old (or new) Friend!

Speaking of planned activitiesThe Curator would like your ideas (and assistance) in developing new programs, exhibits, lectures, tours, etc. at the Museum. This is one way to get involved in the cultural life of the community. Call the Curator at 762-4723 and ask for Jim (p.s. if its Tuesday or Thursday between 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Jim is usually playing basketball at the Y)

Speaking of Jim Koenig, the Curator/Consultant, he now has an expanded role at the Museum and Park. Jim is still the Museum Consultant (with increased work hours) and now the Park Program Director. So, you can expect to find Jim somewhere in the Museum or in the Park (look-out birds!) just about anytime during the week from April to September.

New Directions for Renfrew Museum? Well, not really.

During the past year, one of the tasks of the Curator has been to work with the Board of Trustees to define the purpose of the Museum and its role(or mission) in the community.

In other words: What are we? and what are we trying to accomplish?

A formal written prupose for the Museum has been adopted by the Board:

"Renfrew is a Museum depicting an American home prior to 1830 with a gallery for displays".

Astute Antiquarians and Renfrew watchers will undoubtedly huff: "I already knew that!" Well gang, the secret is out, now everybody knows what the Museum is about!

Defining the Purpose:

Defining Renfrew's purpose was by no means an easy task. Fortunately, we did have a basic guide in the Nicodemus Will. As you know, Renfrew was a gift to the Borough of Waynesboro by the late Mrs. Edgar A. Nicodemus.

The key phrase in the Will concerning the Museum reads:

"It is my intention that said museum shall be illustrative of an Early American Home."

Seems like a clear guide, right? wrong, two important questions had to be asked and answered about the phrase: What- is the date of "Early American?" before 1890? before 1790? before 1865?; and which "American Home." middle class new England? rural Maryland farm? Pennsylvania Dutch?

Lots of questions!!

After several long working sessions, before 1830 was chosen as the date defining "Early American". There was a logical reason for selecting the date: the bulk of the furnishings in the house date before 1830: and decorative arts scholars define the American federal period (ending about 1825-30) as being the transition point between early America and industrial America.

"American Home" was left general in that the Board did not single out any specific geographic location or economic group for exclusive representation in the Museum.

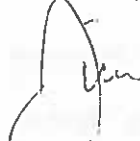
So, in essence, the furnishings and room arrangements at Renfrew should generally resemble an American home prior to 1830. Since most of the furnishings on display date between 1790-1825 (American Federal period), Renfrew should represent an American home in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Whew! the Curator sure is long-winded!

Well, I can take a hint, it's time to close this newsletter. Since I didn't even get to Programs and Exhibits for the new season, I'll send-out another newsletter in mid-April. This should allow you enough time to plan your summer's activities at the Museum and Park.

(Besides, my friends in the Museum world, tell me that frequent contact with "Friends" keeps them interested in the Museum).

For now,



Jim Koenig
Curator/Consultant