

Every Variety Of Painting For Lodges:
At Scottish Rite Masonic
Museum & Library



Andrew Wentworth *Daniel S. Wentworth* *Rehitable Wentworth*

Previous Page: "Andrew, Daniel and Mehitabel Wentworth" by Joseph H. Davis (1811–1865), Berwick, Maine, 1833. Watercolor and ink on paper, 9 by 13 1/8 inches. Davis, who worked in and around Nashua, N.H., and nearby areas of Maine, included Masonic symbols in this family portrait.

By Kate Eagen Johnson

LEXINGTON, MASS. — “As we gathered the objects for the exhibition, it began to look like a folk art show.” This happenstance pleased Hilary Anderson Stelling, the exhibition’s curator and director of exhibitions and audience development at the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum & Library in Lexington. More

Tracing board depicting King Solomon’s Temple, attributed to John Ritto Penniman (1782–1841), probably Boston, circa 1820. Oil on canvas, 65 by 40½ by 2 inches. (Click image to see full size)



than 50 remarkable paintings, painted artifacts and illuminated works on paper dating from the Eighteenth through the Mid-Twentieth Centuries form “Every Variety of Painting for Lodges’: Decorated Furniture, Paintings and Ritual Objects from the Collection,” on view through September 12.



*Bowl decorated by
Hugo A. Possner
(1859–1937),
Waterbury, Conn.,
1906. Paint on maple,
13 by 26 by 28 inches.*



◀ Chest, New England, 1800–1820. Paint, wood; 21 $\frac{5}{8}$ by 37 by 16 inches. The chest's decoration suggests that a Royal Arch chapter used it to store regalia and other objects.

Box attributed to Nathan Negus (1801–1825), ▶ probably Boston, 1814–1820. Wood, paint; 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ by 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ by 6 inches.



What unifies the items on display are wonderfully painted surfaces rendered in oils, watercolor, gouache and/or metallic paints as well as an association with American Freemasonry. This cornucopia of artistic expression includes lodge furniture, tracing boards, aprons, other ritual objects, portraits of Freemasons, watercolored designs of all sorts, decorated manuscripts and other visual delights. To be clear, the exhibition showcases individual gems rather than providing a



Masonic apron by Nathan Negus (1801–1825), Boston, 1817. Paint on silk, cotton; 18 by 17 inches. Along edge of the checkerboard pavement is written "PAINTED by Nathaniel Negus Boston 1817."



comprehensive survey of Masonic-related decorative painting in America. When asked why the institution chose this exhibition topic, director of collections Aimee E. Newell answered, “The category of painted art and objects is a particular strength of the museum and many of these objects had never been on view.”

Zuller-Moyer family record by Henry Moyer (1785-?), Minden, N.Y., 1825. Watercolor and ink on paper, 16 by 12¼ inches.

She further observed that the painted subcollection is indeed a rarity. For example, while the American Folk Art Museum in New York owns similar objects, the Scottish Rite Masonic Museum's concentration is unrivaled. In her exhibition introduction, Stelling provides a succinct overview of Freemasonry. This fraternal organization "teaches a system of ethics using symbols, rituals and ideas drawn from stonemasons' regulations,

Worshipful Master's chair by John Luker (1838-?), Vinton County, Ohio, circa 1870. Wood, paint, 75 by 29 by 31 inches. The armchair is inscribed "Manufact'd by John Luker" on the stretcher and "JHM Houston's" on the left support. From 1867 to 1873, Houston was Master of Swan Lodge No. 358 in New Mount Pleasant, Ohio. (Click image to see full size)



Enlightenment philosophy and Judeo-Christian teachings. Now, as in the past, Freemasonry seeks to strengthen a man's character by providing opportunities for fellowship, charity, education and leadership. Local lodges confer the first three Masonic degrees — Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master

Mason — which are based on the biblical story of the building of Solomon's Temple. Once a Master Mason, a man may choose to join additional Masonic groups, such as the York Rite...

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