



2024 Exhibits

2024 marked the 200th anniversary of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania! Since HSP’s founding in 1824, we have collected and preserved an astonishing array of documents that bring the people of the past into conversation with us today. As part of our anniversary celebration, HSP teamed up with **partners** to develop **collaborative programming** and **joint exhibits** based on the strategic themes of our collection. View all of our anniversary exhibits below. Support for HSP’s 200th anniversary programming is generously provided by:

The Richard C. von Hess Foundation
Margaret Chew Barringer
J. Lawrence Grim, Jr.

Contents

Public Art in Philadelphia: A Legacy Shaped By Women	2
“All View It As an Object of High Importance”: Banking in the Early Republic.....	3
Cartoons as Political Speech in Colonial and Contemporary America	4
HSP 200 + Taller 50: Uncovering and Preserving Puerto Rican Stories	5
Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affections: Tracing Families in Social Service Records ...	6
Voices, Visions, & Ventures: Recent Acquisitions	8

Public Art in Philadelphia: A Legacy Shaped By Women

On view January 30, 2024 - March 15, 2024

In Collaboration with the Association for Public Art



This display highlighted the historic accomplishments and recent contributions of women who have worked in the public art field as artists, benefactors, and leaders. Exploring the Association for Public Art's archival collection at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, as

well as contemporary materials housed at aPA, the exhibit provides insight into the long-lasting impact of women's contributions to the ongoing public art landscape, both locally and nationally.

Signature Lecture

Artist Talk: Xenobia Bailey

March 13, 2024

In partnership with the Association for Public Art, HSP hosted Xenobia Bailey as its 200th Anniversary signature talk for the theme Soul of America: Literary, Visual, and Performing Arts. Ms. Bailey is a fiber-artist, crocheter, designer, researcher, and cultural activist.

[Watch the video.](#)

“All View It As an Object of High Importance”: Banking in the Early Republic

On view April 16 2024 - May 31, 2024

In Collaboration with the Independence Historical Trust



“All View It As an Object of High Importance”: Banking in the Early Republic highlighted the development of the banking industry in America, from the American Revolution to the 1840s. The battles over how to fund the War for Independence and early government initiative played out through the chartering of national banks . This exhibit will highlight these documents

through the collections from the Bank of North America, and the papers of leaders involved in the First and Second Banks of the United States.

Signature Lecture

Innovator Talk: Richard Vague

May 1, 2024

In partnership with the Independence Historical Trust, HSP hosted author Richard Vague as its 200th Anniversary signature talk for the theme Americans and Innovation: Science, Technology, and Enterprise. Mr. Vague, a businessperson, venture capitalist, and author, shared his research into the financial industry of early America.

[Watch the video.](#)

Cartoons as Political Speech in Colonial and Contemporary America

On view June 11, 2024 - August 2, 2024



Organized by Dr. David R. Brigham, HSP's Librarian and CEO, this exhibit highlighted HSP's strategic collecting theme, *Pennsylvania: Crucible of the Nation*, which traces the important role that the Commonwealth has played throughout American history in shaping our nation's

development. This exhibit touched on Philadelphia's role in late colonial and Revolutionary politics, burgeoning publishing and print culture, and transatlantic commerce and communication.

Brigham says, "HSP's collection of political cartoons is a visually rich and interesting record of the struggle to form the new nation, the emergence of partisan politics, and the dynamic role of Philadelphia at the end of the 18th century. We are delighted that Signe Wilkinson has lent her original artwork to add a contemporary lens on the tradition of cartooning."

Signature Lecture

Can She Say That? Signe Wilkinson Cartoons a Man's World

June 11, 2024

[Watch the video.](#)

HSP 200 + Taller 50: Uncovering and Preserving Puerto Rican Stories

On view August 29, 2024 - October 11, 2024
In Collaboration with the Taller Puertorriqueño



Pulling from the archives of both the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and Taller Puertorriqueño, this exhibit investigates themes of migration and community, culture and identity, and preservation of memory. This exhibit revisits *Batiendo La Olla*, an oral history project produced by Taller Puertorriqueño in the 1970s. The project produced interviews that document Puerto Rican migration to Philadelphia, compare generational value and life experiences, and provide an opportunity for reflection and intergenerational dialogue.

Signature Lecture

From Puerto Rico to Pennsylvania: History, Challenges, and Amor Boricua

September 26, 2024

Journalist Juan González explored the history of Puerto Rican migration from the island to Pennsylvania. This talk delved into the economic, social, and political factors driving these migrations, highlighting personal stories and community impact, and examining Puerto Rico's complex role within the United States and its effects on migration.

[Watch the video.](#)

Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affections: Tracing Families in Social Service Records

On view October 17, 2024 - November 27, 2024

In Collaboration with the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania



Out of the social reform movements of the mid-1800s, thousands of charities, beneficial societies, and mutual aid groups sprang up across America, each aiming to alleviate social ills within their communities. Poverty, child welfare, crime, and public morality were common focal issues, and government-based policy solutions were still far in the future.

Nineteenth-century Philadelphia had its share of crusading philanthropists who sought to improve social conditions across the commonwealth. And while the motivations of these historic organizations and their benefactors might reflect certain beliefs of the time period around gender and race that don't hold up today, the urge to improve the lives of their fellow men is a familiar one to our twenty-first century hearts.

In partnership with the Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania, the exhibit celebrates HSP's 200th anniversary. It will feature stories of real, everyday Pennsylvanians documented in HSP manuscript collections such as:



- The Children’s Aid Society and Orphan Society, both organizations that served children without stable families
- The Magdalen Society, which sought to reform “fallen women”
- The Home Missionary Society, a Methodist group which provided physical assistance to needy Philadelphia families ...and others!

For genealogists and historians alike, these valuable records can fill gaps in family stories and family trees, helping us today understand how past activists worked to address social concerns, while telling the important, heart-wrenching, and often ignored stories of vulnerable communities.

Signature Lecture

Lost and Found: How DNA Helps Rebuild Ancestral Histories

November 20, 2024

This conversational lecture by Blaine Bettinger highlights how genetic tools fill the gaps left by missing paper trails, using relatable success stories to show how DNA brings hidden histories to life. Attendees will gain insight into how DNA connects fragmented families and illuminates ancestral roots, offering a fresh perspective on the possibilities of genetic genealogy without diving into technical processes.

[Watch the video.](#)

Voices, Visions, & Ventures: Recent Acquisitions

On view December 10, 2024 - January 31, 2025



Join us for an exhibit highlighting some of the newest resources acquired by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). From 18th century watercolors to 1970s yearbooks, this selection showcases the dynamic directions in which HSP's ever-expanding collection is evolving. Books,

manuscripts, photographs, posters, art, and ephemera speak to the diverse ways the stories of the American experience can be preserved. As we continue to build our collection, our goal is to inspire storytelling, expand knowledge, and enrich our community.

Support for *Voices, Visions, and Ventures* comes from The Haverford Trust Company.