

Date: 9-9-11

### Historic Marker Inspection Report

Marker Name and Number: Edward Redfield SC-200

Location: In Historical Society Park near corner of Delaware Ave. and Williams St. Bridgeton 19933

GPS Coordinates: 38.74250278 -75.60105556

General Overall Conditions: Good

Wear/Damage on Marker: None

Wear/Damage on Pole: None

Any Active Verdigris Visible on Marker: No

Additional Notes:

## DELAWARE'S REDISCOVERED ARTIST

*Born on a small nursery farm outside of Bridgeville in Delaware's Sussex County, Edward Willis Redfield went on to become one of the founders of the impressionistic art movement in the United States. His works are now on display at the Corcoran.*

BY ELLEN J. BERLOW

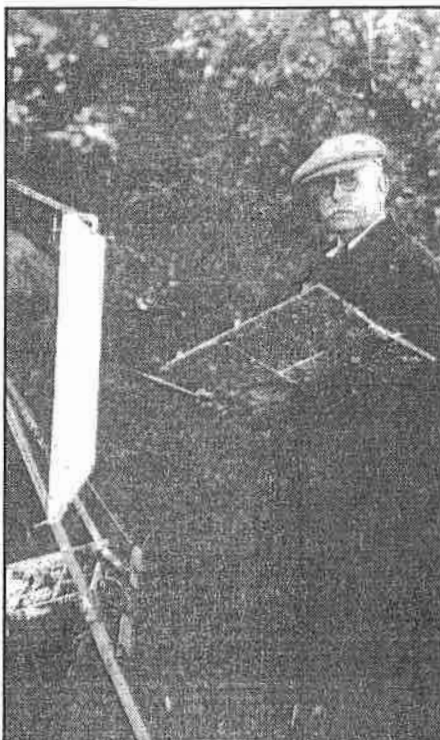
**F**our miles north of Bridgeville in Delaware, past flat corn and soybean fields bordering Route 404, a blue-and-white wooden sign once stood at the intersection of the highway and a country road. ONE MILE - an arrow on the sign pointed - BIRTHPLACE OF EDWARD W. REDFIELD - 1869-1965 - RENOWNED IMPRESSIONISTIC ARTIST OF AMERICA.

The faded sign, erected by the Bridgeville Historical Society, no longer stands. But if you follow the narrow road past farms and fields dotted with bales of hay and turn down a private lane, a white wooden farmhouse stands starkly against the rural landscape. Attached to the farmhouse is a low, tin-roofed white building - the birthplace of Edward Willis Redfield, the artist whom critics called "the master of American landscape painting."

Even though Redfield was well known in the art world during his lifetime, he is not a widely-recognized name today. "Nobody had heard of him when the sign went up several years ago," says Bridgeville Library director Carol Gasior. "A local painter and collector of Redfield memorabilia discovered him."

In recent years, however, Redfield's canvases of the snow-covered villages, hills and streams of the Delaware River Valley have been rediscovered. The Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. is currently exhibiting "The Impressionist Tradition in America" - works from the museum's permanent collection. The exhibit highlights landscapes by Redfield in the group show of Pennsylvania Impressionist artists. A major retrospective of Redfield paintings, spanning the entire creative career of the artist's life, will go on exhibit at the James A. Michener Art Museum, Doylestown, Pa., in May, 2004.

The artist whom critics of the day described as a "great American landscape painter with a strong sure painterly style and an excellent sense of color" and "the



**The artist is shown working at an easel outdoors - his favorite studio. Redfield worked very quickly, trying to capture the light of his scenes in one pass.**

first native-born painter to bring the techniques of the French Impressionists to America" was born on the Bridgeville farm on December 19, 1869.

Redfield was the youngest of six children of Bradley Redfield from Boston and Frances Gale Phillips of New York. His father, a Quaker, owned a wholesale nursery and flower and fruit business at the Dock Street Market in Philadelphia. According to one biography: "As a child, Edward rose early before dawn to accompany his father to the market watching the farmer's wagons roll in from the country. He worked in his father's nurseries as a boy and then briefly as a young man before

deciding to paint full time." Known for his out-of-doors paintings, "on his father's large nursery in Bridgeville, the artist acquired a love for the country and nature that he never lost."

During the 1900s and up until World War II, Bridgeville, Greenwood and other Sussex County towns had large fruit and flower nursery operations. This was due in large part to the county's rail and truck access to major markets in Philadelphia and New York, according to Bridgeville Historical Society President Howard Hardesty. "Bridgeville had train service at least three times a day and also a truck terminal," he noted. The Redfield farm was one of several successful nursery operations in the area.

When he was a young boy, the family moved to Camden, N.J. where Redfield first attended art classes. His formal art training began at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts - at that time the center of American art education - where he was influenced by the realist school of American painting taught by famed Philadelphia artist Thomas Eakins.

As was expected of accomplished 19th century artists, Redfield made the required pilgrimage to Paris in 1889 to study portrait painting at the Academie Julian. During his stay in France, Redfield became familiar with the works of Monet, Pissarro and other French Impressionists and their use of color and light in outdoor scenes reflecting the seasonal rhythms of nature. "He was particularly interested in the anatomy of snow and its receptivity to light in the brilliant sun of midday," noted Michener Art Museum curator Constance Kimmerle. While staying in a small village near Fontainebleau, Redfield painted his first outdoor snow scene in the *plein air* tradition - "Canal in Winter" - which was exhibited in the 1891 Paris Salon.

Redfield returned to America with his French wife, Elise, and in 1898 settled on a



ELLEN BERLOW PHOTOGRAPH

**Edward Willis Redfield was born in the back section of this farmhouse near Bridgeville in 1869. At the tin Bridgeville was the center of a thriving nursery and fruit business.**

farm in the rural village of Center Bridge, Pa. by the Delaware River where he lived with his family the rest of his life. "Bucks County was a place where an independent, self-sufficient man could make a living from the land, bring up a family and still have the freedom to paint as he saw fit," he wrote. It was in the Bucks County village of New Hope that a thriving art colony - the Pennsylvania Impressionists - flourished at the turn of the century. Landscape painters were drawn to the Delaware River valley for many reasons. Two major cities, New York and Philadelphia, were only an hour or two away by rail and had schools, galleries and museums where artists could teach and exhibit their work. Another reason for settling on the shores of the Delaware River was the natural beauty of the river, rolling hills and picturesque villages with old stone farmhouses and bridges.

Redfield was the first of the New Hope painters to settle in the area and to paint the landscape of the region. He was acknowledged as the artistic leader of the group which included artists Daniel Garber, Robert

Spencer, William L. Lathrop and Walter Schofield, many of whom had studied and taught at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. As viewed in the Corcoran Gallery exhibit, there was no single recognized style among the artists of the New Hope School. Redfield's dense white snow scenes are vigorous with lush, heavily-painted brush strokes while Garber's spring landscapes and interior scenes are serene and finely detailed; yet all the artists found inspiration in the light and atmosphere of the natural landscape and many worked outdoors - *en plein air* - for much of their creative lives.

One of the first comprehensive studies of the Bucks County art colony, including biographies of over 80 New Hope artists, is the lavishly-illustrated book *Pennsylvania Impressionism*, edited by Brian H. Peterson, Senior Curator of the James A. Michener Art Museum which has the largest public collection of their art works. Peterson points out that 19th century impressionist artists rejected the academic traditions of their time and set out to record direct scenes of

the natural world before them. The development of fast-drying paint in tubes for painters from the studio and allowed them to work out-of-doors in all weather conditions. As artists brought their canvases, easels, brushes and palettes outside, they were able to respond on-site to the natural effects of light and color.

Redfield, in particular, was a rugged outdoorsman who daily braved the elements in winter to make his paintings. "Sometime I stood for hours in knee-deep snow and would even strap his canvases to a tree during a winter storm," Peterson notes. Describing a typical snowscape painting by Redfield, he says "the artist really concentrates about the direction of the light, the texture of the snow, the particular blue of the sky on a particular day.

In the well-documented reference book "Edward Willis Redfield, An American Impressionist, His Paintings and The World Behind the Palette" by J.M.W. Fletcher, the artist tells about his working methods. "I am what is called a 'one go' artist," Redfield said. "This means that I go into the field



my 50 pounds of equipment and a 50x36 canvas and do not leave until I have completed my work. Except for possible touch-ups required by working in bad weather, I never lay a brush on the canvas after I return." It was not uncommon for Redfield to leave his house in the morning, work all day and return in the evening with a finished painting.

Over four decades, Redfield painted several thousand canvases. According to Fletcher's research, there are 1,090 known Redfield paintings in museums and private collections. One of Redfield's most famous oil paintings is "The Burning of Center Bridge" painted in 1923, now owned by the Michener Art Museum. The village of Center Bridge where Redfield lived was named after a covered wooden bridge spanning the Delaware River. In July 1923, the bridge was struck by lightning and destroyed by fire. Redfield's dramatic painting depicts the silhouettes of firemen battling the burning timbers against a background of smoke and orange flames in the night sky. It was one of the few paintings by Redfield that depicted human figures and one of the few canvases completed in his studio. (A smaller version of the painting was sold at auction in 1988 for \$93,500).

Redfield was Bucks County's most famous artist during the peak years of the New Hope art colony. "No one is more characteristically American than Redfield," said a Pennsylvania Academy exhibit notice in 1909. "His landscapes represent climatic and atmospheric conditions particularly our own." The Corcoran exhibit highlights Redfield's well-known snow-and-river scenes including "The Mill in Winter" and "Overlooking the Valley" painted in the early 1920s.

Redfield won significant national and international art awards for landscape painting and was honored with an exhibit at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco commemorating the opening of the Panama Canal. He exhibited at major museums around the country including the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh and the Art Institute of Chicago.

In October, 1965, Edward Willis Redfield died at the age of 96 at his New Hope home in Center Bridge, Pennsylvania. The *New York Times* obituary called Redfield "a pioneer among the artists who settled along the Delaware Canal. He is credited with

starting an American trend in direct outdoor landscape painting at the turn of the century and was best known for his snow scenes of Bucks County."

Once known as major American landscape artists in the early 1900s, Redfield and the New Hope painters slipped into obscurity in later years. The famous 1913 Armory Show in New York introduced European abstract expressionism to the U.S. The realistic landscapes of the Pennsylvania impressionists – once considered avant garde – seemed old-fashioned and out-of-date. It has only been in the last decade that Pennsylvania impressionism – and the artistry of Edward Willis Redfield – is beginning to be recognized again as a significant American art movement. **DQ**

*"The Impressionist Tradition in America" on exhibit at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC until April, 2004, includes landscapes by Edward W. Redfield and the Pennsylvania Impressionists.*

*"Edward Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing" will open at the James A. Michener Art Museum in New Hope, Pennsylvania, in May, 2004. The exhibit is a major retrospective of the artist's career including over 50 art works.*



**The artist painted this oil on canvas around 1921 and titled it *Overlooking The Valley*. It is among his paintings on display in the Corcoran exhibit "The Impressionist Tradition in America."**

# Redfield: An artistic outsider

## FROM PRECEDING PAGE

Ashcan painters moved to New York and focused on gritty urban reality, Redfield moved to New Hope in 1898 and never left, except for a few years in Pittsburgh where his son was a college student.

This exhibition includes one of his Pittsburgh paintings, a cityscape that captures the sooty atmosphere of the Steel City.

By the early decades of the 20th century, Redfield had become one of the most popular artists in America. Impressionism, no longer on the cutting edge, was by then the style of choice for many Americans. And he was painting American scenes, not French ones.

Redfield made sure not to go over the audience's head. He spoke of his intention to see landscape in "clear and immediate terms."

As Schmiegel put it, "His pictures make you feel good when you look at them."

But Redfield was no photographic realist. He wanted to convey the moods inspired by nature.

"Real art comes from feeling," he once said.

## Macho vs. not so

Redfield sounds like Howard Pyle and N.C. Wyeth, who also stressed the importance of internalizing what was observed in the landscape.

While Redfield and other American impressionists were painting the landscape around New Hope, another impressionist group was centered on Boston.

Critics at the time contrasted the macho approach of the Pennsylvanians with the more effete work of the Bostonians, who focused on portraiture. This made the Pennsylvanians seem more American and democratic, the Bostonians more ef-

fete and European.

"Some people may think macho means insensitive or having no sort of feeling or gentleness or sentiment," Schmiegel said. "But I don't think being active and physically strong says you can't also be a sensitive, caring person."

"On the other hand, it's very nice for people who still have the attitude that all artists are effete to realize they certainly weren't. Well, some were, but Redfield was really an outdoor person who could carry 50 pounds of stuff out into the snow or build a house."

Indeed, the restless and energetic Redfield also was an enthusiastic gardener, furniture-maker and rug-maker.

He was not inclined toward the social whirl that some artists get caught up in. He was a gruff, independent fellow who had no inclination for small talk.

He once wrote a letter explaining why he would not attend a social function at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; it is included in the show catalog:

"I confess that I am not overly brilliant but most times I can forget it, it's only at these functions that the appalling truth reaches out, grasps my hand, ties my feet and salutes me as the champion all around idiot - so I'm off - for life!"

Redfield, who died in 1965, lived to age 96. His work was considered passé in the later decades of his life, but has undergone a resurgence in recent years. Redfield paintings reportedly have sold for as much as \$600,000.

The folks in Bridgeville would appreciate Redfield's "return" even if he sold for much less than that. But he is not the artist residents have closest to their hearts.

Jack Lewis moved to Bridgeville in the 1930s and es-

tablished himself as one of the state's most important artists. And he stuck around, at least until recently moving to Maine to be closer to family.

"We all love Jack," Hardesty said. "He had personality and he fit in well."

Of course, Lewis is an artist, and Bridgevillians know what that means.

"He was an unusual person," Hardesty said with a laugh. "You know how artistic people are. They're a little off the norm."

Contact Gary Mullinax at 323-3388 or gmullinax@delawareonline.com.

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# Edward Redfield: Working man

Edward W. Redfield completed this pencil- and-chalk self-portrait in 1890, while he was still a student in Paris.



Biggs Museum spotlights an artist who painted the world as he saw it



Redfield's oil painting "The Upper Delaware" (circa 1918) typifies his outdoorsy themes. Redfield was not a man to go inside until he finished work. Photos: Biggs

By GARY MULLINAX  
The News Journal

Arnold Schwarzenegger should have met Edward Redfield. Redfield was a manly man.

A century ago, he would trudge through snow past ice-encrusted trees to a place in the frozen landscape he wanted to paint.

He sometimes had to strap the large canvas – and he was a large-canvas kind of guy – to a tree to keep it anchored in the bitter wind.

He would not leave his frigid perch until the painting was

complete. He championed what he called an "in one" approach.

The public loved it. Redfield was the most popular, and one of the most critically acclaimed, of the Pennsylvania impressionists who had gathered around New Hope. He achieved a national reputation as well as a regional one.

His fans saw in his landscapes the vital energy of a young nation flexing its muscles.

You can see 20 examples of Redfield's work in "Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing," a smallish exhibition that begins Wednesday at the Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover. Most are on loan from the Michener Art Museum of New Hope and Doylestown, Pa. Both Michener locations are important centers of Redfield's work.

The show includes several snow scenes, for which Redfield is best known, as well as some spring paintings, a personal journal, early figure drawings and late craft work.

The exhibition will also be a homecoming of sorts. Redfield was born a Delawarean in 1869, in a small house a few miles outside of Bridgeville off Sussex 404. He moved as a child with his family to Camden, N.J.

That's enough to fire up residents of Bridgeville. "It's nice somebody had their roots here and went off in the world and made a success of himself," said Howard Hardesty, president of the Bridgeville Historical Society. Even though, Hardesty added, "he never came back."

The week of March 14 has been declared Edward Redfield week in Bridgeville. The Biggs will present a special Redfield program in Bridgeville March 15.

The museum is excited about the exhibition, too. "Anytime we can feature a Delaware artist it really helps us expand our audience and make people aware we're a good museum and value the heritage our artists

Redfield sometimes turned his talents to surfaces other than canvas, such as this painted tray (date unknown).



## IF YOU GO

**Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing**

**WHEN:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Wed.-Fri.; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sat.; 1:30-4:30 p.m. Sun. Through April 26

**WHERE:** Biggs Museum of American Art, 406 Federal St., Dover

**TICKETS:** Free

**INFORMATION:** 674-2111 or [www.biggsmuseum.org](http://www.biggsmuseum.org)

have given us," said Karol Schmiegel, director and CEO of the Biggs.

It's equally important that Redfield is a Delaware artist who succeeded on a national level.

"We have not had an exhibition for one artist who had as much of a national reputation as Redfield, other than the Frank Schoonover shows we've done," Schmiegel said.

## Bridgeville to Camden to Philadelphia to Paris

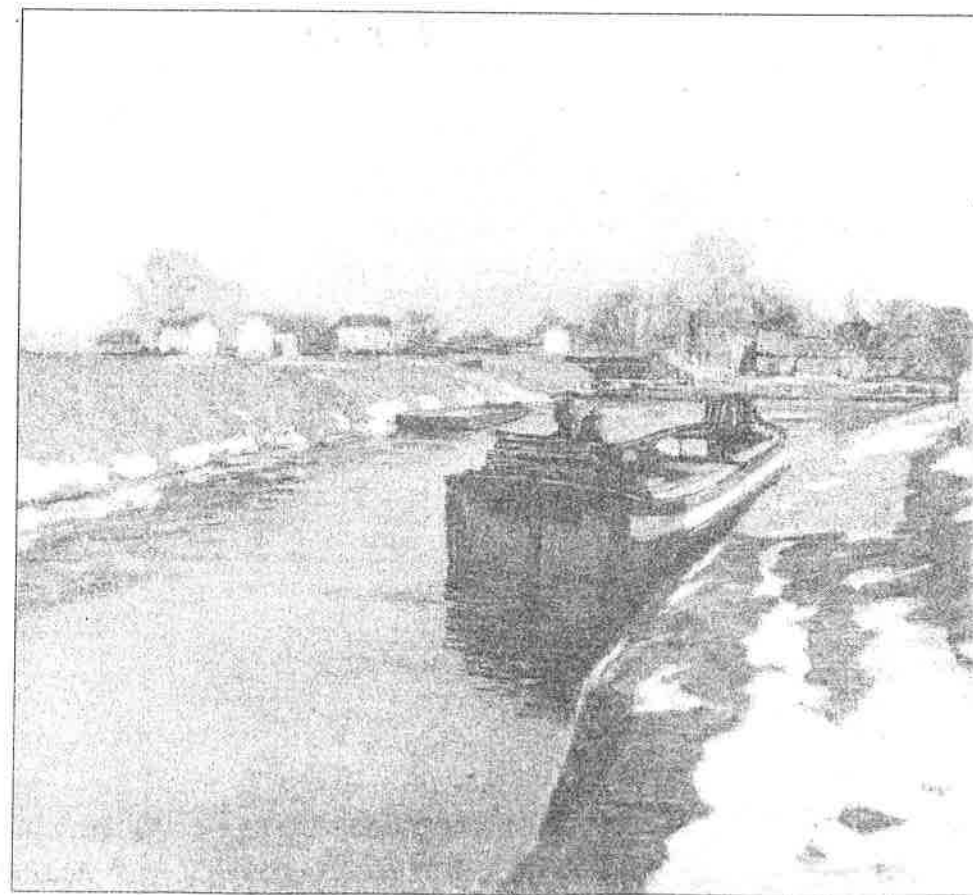
Redfield's Quaker father was a nurseryman who sent his produce to Philadelphia for sale. The Bridgeville house they lived in still stands on farm property. Hardesty said the building is sometimes used to house summer employees.

Young Edward Redfield studied art in Camden and then as a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia.

In 1890 he visited France, where he learned techniques of the impressionist painters who had emerged as an avant-garde group two decades before. The impressionists avoided academic realism for a style that seemed shocking at first with its short, hasty brush strokes that built up images capturing the moment of perception, including the transient effects of atmospheric conditions.

Redfield also spent time as a young man in Philadelphia discussing art with Robert Henri, John Sloan and others who would form the Ashcan School of painters. But while the

Continued on next page



Redfield exhibited his "Canal at Lambertville" in many major art shows between 1906 and



# Bridgeville Historical Society

102 William Street Bridgeville, Delaware

Spring 2006

DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES  
2006 APR -4 PM 12:53

## Historic Marker Unveiling

The Delaware Public Archives will be placing an historic marker for **Edward Willis Redfield** at the corner of Delaware Ave. and William St. The unveiling ceremony is tentatively scheduled for June 13, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. A reception will follow in the Parish Hall of St. Mary's Episcopal Church on William Street. The Bridgeville Historical Society is sponsoring this event and the general public is invited to attend.

## Volunteers Needed at the Museum

The collection of local historical archives is growing and is in need of reorganizing. Our catalog list needs to be updated and refined and the new displays arranged for the general public.

It will be a big mission and will most likely take several months to complete. It is important that we properly clean, preserve, and restore those items for future generations to see.

If you would like to participate in this task, please contact Howard Hardesty at (302-337-8595.)

## In Memoriam.....



**Robert J. Bennett (1929-2006)**

Bob served the Society as Past President and was a member of the current Board of Directors. He will be sorely missed.

**Mrs. Mabel J. Clifton (1916-2006)**

She was an active member for many years.

## Book to be on Sale

According to the printer everything is on schedule for the release of the second printing of our book, **Bridgeville: A Nineteenth Century History**. The book should be available in May of this year at a cost of \$35.00. Place your order by picking up an order form at Layton's Hardware, the Bridgeville Public Library, or by contacting Howard E. Hardesty (302) 337-8595.

## Summer Benefit Auction

Mrs. Eleanor Bennett has again agreed to take charge of our benefit auction this year. The live auction will be held at the Bridgeville Fire Hall on Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. with plenty of parking and air-conditioning. Food and beverages will be provided. Bid cards will be \$5.00. Keep the date open for a fun night out.

## Looking for old photographs....

Wait! Don't throw those old photographs away just because you cannot identify the people in the scene. Many times the homes and street scenes shown in old photographs can have historic significance. The Society is interested in any items that show how our town looked years ago, especially since many of the older homes have been torn down

We have a small collection of real photo postcards and some nice large photos of homes in the 1930s plus a few pamphlets related to local businesses. If you have some old photographs, please consider donating them to the Society. If you do not wish to part with an item, we would be happy to scan the photograph and return the original to you.

## 2005-06 Officers and Directors

Howard E. Hardesty, II .....President  
Charles E. Hawk .....Vice-President  
Phyllis A. Jones .....2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President  
Sharon W. Hawk .....Secretary  
Pam Slater .....Treasurer  
William Nennstiehl ..... Directors 2006-09  
Robert Slater  
Barbara Cheerix-O'Leary ... Directors 2005-08  
(open position)  
Micheal Curlett .....Directors 2004-07  
John M. Shockley

## Section 15: Edward Redfield, Artist 1869-1965



“Edward Willis Redfield, landscape painter of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was born in Bridgeville, Delaware. As a very young boy his family moved to Philadelphia, the area of his early training. He aspired to a sound academic training and the ability to become a fine portrait painter.

At the age of twenty he made his first trip to Paris, a must as a sort of “finishing school” for American art students. Gradually he became disillusioned with portraits and attracted to the Impressionists and landscape painting, with Degas and Monet favorites according to his own accounts.

By 1899 he settled in earnest at Center Bridge, Pennsylvania and it became characteristic that he would paint his large paintings directly out of doors, lashed to his easel or a couple of trees regardless of weather, demanding he finish each composition in a single day.

This means of working wet in wet was to imbue his work with a vigor and freshness that combined the best observation of Monet with the ruggedness of Van Gogh, a winning and original concept that brought endless recognition and honor the rest of his painting life.

Redfield’s first annual summer in Maine was 1902 and from that time forward the coast of Maine provided subjects second only to the artist’s beloved Delaware River landscapes.



His rule of working on the spot was violated only once, in 1923, resulting in "Burning of Center Bridge," painted from mental notes committed to memory as he watched the fire.

His friend Charles Gadsby has left an unusually fine sculpture bust of Redfield as a young man, and there is an oil of Redfield at work by Wayman Adams. The Thomas Eakins portrait of Redfield is of a live and confident young man done about 1905.

A final note of integrity and suitable closing is to realize some one thousand paintings were burned by Redfield who didn't want to leave any poor Redfield's behind."

In addition to the above notice of his career, which appeared on a brochure issued in connection with an exhibit of his paintings in the Old Courthouse in Georgetown during the Bicentennial in 1976, the **Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptures and Engravers (1960)** emphasized that he was an extremely rapid painter, finishing even a large canvas in a day's time. He received many gold medals and awards. His paintings are represented in the permanent collections of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and Luxembourg Gallery in Paris.

## Section 16: North West Fork Cabinet Makers

When the inhabitants of North West Fork Hundred wished for new furniture or a mantel before the Civil War, they either made it themselves or turned to a local cabinetmaker, chairmaker or joiner. While many such persons can be identified as being connected with Sussex County, it is difficult sometimes to establish in which hundred or town they lived. Among those living in North West Fork Hundred were Charles H. Adams (cabinetmaker, 1834); Elijah Adams (house carpenter and joiner, 1834); Thomas Henderson (cabinetmaker, 1828-1840), and John Willson (joiner, 1795). George W. Adams and Henry Gumby were both apprenticed to Thomas Henderson in 1828. Among the cabinetmakers living in Seaford were Ralph D. Prettyman (1859-1876); James Scott (1872-1874) and John W. Williams (1872-1879). George W. Stradley is listed as a cabinetmaker in Bridgeville in 1872. Presumably the inhabitants of Bridgeville also patronized cabinetmakers in Little Creek Hundred such as James English Ralph (1815-1849) and Thomas Ralph (1785-1815) who were famous for a particular style of corner cupboard, some of which are owned by Bridgeville families.

(Based on Harold Hancock, **Delaware Furniture Craftsmen, 1655-1880: A Directory**)

History of Bridgeville

by: Dr. Harold Hancock

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## Edward W. Redfield

Born in Bridgeville, Delaware, Edward Redfield moved to Philadelphia as a youngster and lived much of his life near New Hope in Bucks County, an easy distance north of Philadelphia. There he became the leader of the colony of artists known as the New Hope Impressionists. In modified Impressionist style and methods, he did many landscapes, especially panoramic snowscenes of the area, and used thick paint applied to large canvases with long brush strokes instead of the feathery strokes of true French Impressionism. He usually finished his paintings in "one go" meaning plein-air, sometimes strapping his canvas to a tree on blustery days and standing knee-deep in snow. In the summers, he painted at Boothbay Harbor, Maine. He was also a teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy and a skilled craftsman who built his own house, cabinets and restored antiques. Redfield took his early training from a Mr. Rolf in order to pass the examination at the Pennsylvania Academy, where he studied from 1885 to 1889 under teachers including Thomas Anschutz, James Kelley, and Thomas Hovenden. A fellow student was Robert Henri, with whom he developed a strong friendship, and with whom he traveled to Paris in 1889. In Paris, he studied at the Academie Julian and the Ecole des Beaux Arts and his teachers were Adolphe Bouguereau and Tony Robert-Fleury. However, he wearied of the pervasive academic styles at these schools, and spent much time painting landscapes in the Forest of Fontainebleau outside of Paris. He also painted at Barbizon and Pont-Aven. Married, he and his wife returned to Pennsylvania in 1898 and decided to settle in Center Bridge in Bucks County near New Hope. His presence in Bucks County was enough to lure many younger artists to the region making it a nucleus for the American Impressionist movement. Holding a special affection for this man, author and fellow-Pennsylvanian James Michener wrote that Redfield "had a cluttered workshop on the canal in which he did large landscapes, especially snow scenes, and made furniture and delightfully designed hooked rugs. I liked his work, and I liked him, a big Russian-bear kind of man." (Folk 10) He exhibited extensively throughout the country and abroad, and won an impressive array of awards, including a Bronze medal, Paris Exposition (1900); Bronze Medal, Pan-American Exposition (1901); Temple Medal (1903), Jennie Sesnan Gold Medal (1904), Gold Medal of Honor (1907), Lippincott Prize (1912), and Stotesbury prize (1920), all from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; Silver medal (1904), St. Louis Exposition; Fischer Prize and Gold Medal (1908) from the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D.C.; Honorable Mention (1908) and Third Class Medal (1909), Paris Salon; Palmer Gold Medal (1913), Chicago Art Institute; Hors Concours Prize (1915), Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco; Carnegie Prize (1918), Altman Prize (1919), and Saltus Medal (1927), National Academy of Design. His paintings are included in numerous museums and public collections throughout the country, such as the Boston Museum of Art, Brooklyn Art Institute, Carnegie Institute, Chicago Art Institute, Corcoran Gallery, Los Angeles Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Towards the end of his life, he burned hundreds of paintings that he regarded as inferior. He died in 1965 in Center Bridge, Pennsylvania, and his work received little attention during the decade following his death. However, he has come to be regarded as a key American Impressionist and appreciated for his influence at New Hope.

This biography from the Archives of AskART:

## DELAWARE NATIVE, PENNSYLVANIA IMPRESSIONIST

By Karol Schmiegel

A retrospective exhibition of works by Bridgeville, Delaware native and leading Pennsylvania Impressionist artist, Edward W. Redfield, opens January 26. *Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing* features 20 works spanning the artist's career. The exhibition runs through April 26, 2005 and includes student drawings, a personal journal, seascapes, a cityscape, as well as the Bucks County seasonal landscapes for which he is best remembered. Craft items produced by Redfield also will be on view.

Born into a Quaker family in Bridgeville, Delaware in 1869, he moved as a youth to Camden, New Jersey. Redfield attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then traveled to Paris with the intention of becoming a portrait painter. He quickly took an interest in painting landscapes directly from nature. He was fascinated with the evanescence of the natural world as it appeared to him and committed himself to recreating the experience of a particular moment or scene, carefully recording the details of light and weather.

Redfield was among the first of the New Hope group of painters to settle in the area and paint the surrounding landscape. In 1898 he and his wife



*The Upper Delaware, ca. 1918*  
Edward W. Redfield  
oil on canvas

purchased a tract of land in Center Bridge, Pennsylvania, by the Delaware River, where they would reside for the remainder of their lives. The Redfield family also spent many summers in Boothbay, Maine, where he explored the forms of nature unique to the Maine seacoast.

Though he preferred not to think of himself as a member of any colony of artists - he worked in isolation and was reputed to be a curmudgeon - Redfield was known as the stylistic leader of the Pennsylvania Impressionist school of painting in Bucks County in the early twentieth century. A rugged outdoorsman, his method of *plein air* painting meant braving the elements on an almost daily basis, often enduring tremendous physical hardship in the process. Redfield was particularly interested in the anatomy of snow and its receptivity to light in the brilliant sun of midday.

By 1910 Redfield was recognized as one of the foremost landscape painters in the United States and was one of the most widely exhibited landscape painters of his era. By the time he stopped painting

in the 1940s - when his failing eyesight could no longer meet the demanding conditions of *plein air* work - Redfield had won almost every significant award available to an American artist, and his paintings were in dozens of major American museums. In addition to painting, his creative output included hooked rugs, Windsor furniture and painted chests. He died in 1965 at the age of ninety-six.

Programs for this exhibition include a talk on February 23 by Michener Art Museum Curator Constance Kimmerle, who organized the show, and focused tours for youth and adults. The exhibition is accompanied by a significant



*The Trout Brook, ca. 1916*  
Edward W. Redfield  
Oil on canvas

new book *Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing*, by Michener Art Museum Curator Constance Kimmerle. The publication contains 144 pages with more than 60 color illustrations and costs \$35.00 (\$30.00 for Biggs Museum members).

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### February 23

**Talk on Edward Redfield. 7:00 Constance Kimmerle, the curator at the Michener Art Museum who organized the exhibition and wrote the accompanying book, will speak about Delaware native Edward Redfield, who was renowned for his landscape paintings of the early 20th Century. For our members, admission is free. For our not yet members, admission is \$5.**



# 'Edward W. Redfield: Just Values And Fine Seeing'

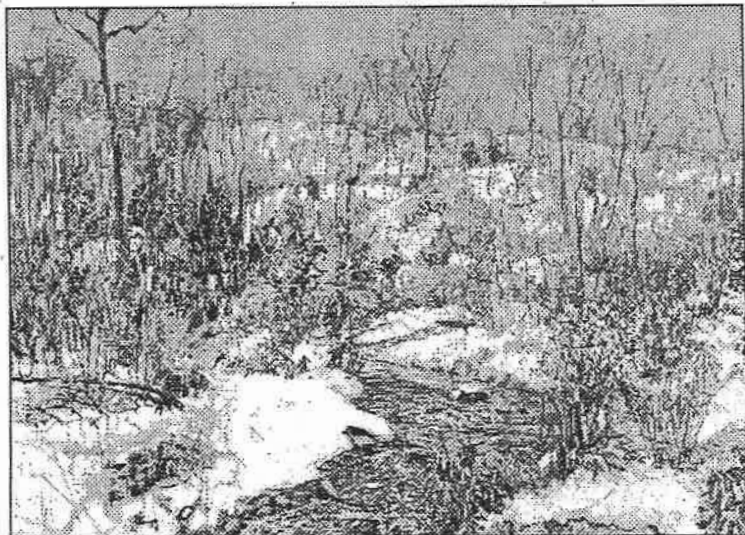
BY STEPHEN MAY

**NEW HOPE, PENN.** — Since the Nineteenth Century, the natural beauty of the Delaware River and the picturesque streams, hills, trees and villages of the countryside around New Hope have captured the imagination of numerous talented artists. The vibrant art colony that formed around New Hope a century ago produced a distinctively rugged brand of Impressionism that pumped new vigor into that fading style in this country.

The revival of interest in recent years in the achievements of the Pennsylvania Impressionists has focused much deserved attention on the work of their leader, Edward Willis Redfield. An exhibition organized by the James A. Michener Art Museum underscores Redfield's talents. This exhibition carries on the museum's efforts to advance knowledge and appreciation for the art of the Impressionists of the Keystone State.

On view at the Michener's new New Hope gallery, "Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing" can be seen through January 9. The exhibition travels to Sewell C. Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover, Del., January 26–April 26.

Redfield's vigorous, expressive depictions of the river, brooks, hills, forests and land around Bucks County, especially in winter, made him a leading American artist in the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. His bold, strongly brushed glorifications of nature were often contrasted favorably with the more decorative, sentimental



Redfield often zeroed in on water flowing over rock-strewn streams under bright sunshine in the midst of winter. In "The Trout Brook," measuring 50 by 56 inches, quick brushstrokes and heightened colors enliven a brilliant wintry setting.

## *Redfield At The James A. Michener Art Museum*

County, away from the noise, bustle and grim of the city, "not for the beauty of the countryside, but because this was a place where an independent, self-sufficient man could make a living from the land, bring up a family and still have the freedom to paint as he saw fit."

Redfield lived up to that declaration. In Center Bridge he worked not in his studio but outdoors seeking, as he put it, "to capture the look of a scene, whether it was a brook or a bridge, as it looked on a certain day."

Redfield committed himself to completing plein air landscapes at "one go" as a means of recording his immediate experience

He often returned to record the same area from different vantage points and/or in different weather conditions or seasons. Fascinated with the evanescence of the natural world, he utilized a vigorous realism in all his works, with special emphasis on the texture of snow and its receptivity to sunlight.

"By 1910," Kimmerle writes, Redfield's "keen ability to capture the ever-changing phases of winter had earned him a reputation as the leading painter of snow scenes."

His palette, muted at first, grew brighter as he matured as a painter. An early winter scene, "Waiting for Spring," 1901,



In his self-portrait at age 21, Redfield presents himself as a resolute young man with a thoughtful expression and intense gaze.

winter scene, "Lumberville in Winter," 1930, sunlight gives the thick mantle of snow a bluish tinge reminiscent of Frenchman Claude Monet's snowscapes.

Later, as in "Early Spring," 1920, he depicted scenes, such as the Delaware and its banks, in other seasons. One of his most striking fall views, "October," or "Autumn," depicts a solitary figure standing on a narrow country road amidst colorful autumn foliage that nearly obscures a house.

In 1923 Redfield sketched on an envelope the dramatic conflagration that resulted when lightning struck the wooden bridge across the Delaware near

confronting the rocky shoreline.

Redfield contributed to American art history while in Maine when he recommended to his visiting friend, painter-teacher Robert Henri, that he check out the spectacular scenery of nearby Monhegan Island. Henri's enthusiasm about the place was reflected in his vigorous seascapes — and the number of his students, including George Bellows, Randall Davey and Rockwell Kent, whom he encouraged to visit and paint the rocky island.

An aloof figure in rural Bucks County who shied away from social events and shunned publicity in favor of working, Redfield nevertheless achieved wide popularity with critics and the public. Many viewed Redfield as a leader among artists who were invigorating American art, free of European traditions.

He won a boatload of honors — it is said he received more medals and prizes than any other artist except John Singer Sargent — and major museums collected his work. When he became an Academician at the National Academy of Design in 1904, Thomas Eakins presented a fine portrait of his friend.

Redfield was honored with his own gallery, displaying 21 works, at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. Critics hailed him as a strong, virile American painter who created simple, direct and appealing canvases.

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The Redfield perspective, organized by the Michener's curator of collections, Constance Kimmerle, offers more than 50 works from throughout the artist's long career.

Born in Bridgeville, Del., but raised in New Jersey, Redfield (1869–1965) was the son of a successful Quaker nurseryman. Trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and in Paris, Redfield was a rugged outdoorsman and something of a loner.

In 1898 Redfield bought a farm along the towpath of the canal adjacent to the stately Delaware River in Center Bridge, Penn. He said he settled in rural Bucks

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Redfield committed himself to completing plein air landscapes at "one go" as a means of recording his immediate responses to nature. This approach, of course, posed considerable physical challenges to an artist specializing in winterscapes.

"In the midst of a winter storm," according to Bruce Katsiff, the Michener's director and CEO, "...he would strap his large 50- by 56-inch canvases to a nearby tree, thin his paints with linseed oil to keep them from freezing, and use his gloved hands to paint the scene before him. His belief that a painting should be completed 'in one go' caused him to begin work in early morning and stand in the cold until the picture was finished in late afternoon."

Until acquiring a car in 1912, Redfield painted most works within a mile walk of his home.

He often returned to record the same area from different vantage points and/or in different weather conditions or seasons. Fascinated with the evanescence of the natural world, he utilized a vigorous realism in all his works, with special emphasis on the texture of snow and its receptivity to sunlight.

"By 1910," Kimmerle writes, Redfield's "keen ability to capture the ever-changing phases of winter had earned him a reputation as the leading painter of snow scenes."

His palette, muted at first, grew brighter as he matured as a painter. An early winter scene, "Waiting for Spring," 1901, shows a dark, low boat tethered in the canal under a gray, cloudy sky. His use of high-keyed colors and admiration for the beauty and power of the Delaware River are reflected in such wintry views as "The Riverbank, Lambertville, N.J.," circa 1908–10, "The Upper Delaware," circa 1918, and "Late Afternoon," circa 1925–30.

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In 1923 Redfield sketched on an envelope the dramatic conflagration that resulted when lightning struck the wooden bridge across the Delaware near his house. Back in his studio he created a dramatic view of people looking on helplessly as spectacular flames engulf the wooden span. Measuring a sizable 50¼ by 56¼ inches, "The Burning of Center Bridge," 1923, is one of his most memorable images.

During the course of many summers in Boothbay Harbor, Maine, where his house remains in family hands, his works emphasized the beauty of the coastal setting and the power of the sea. Redfield's view of the harbor, replete with fishing shacks, boats bobbing on blue water and the village in the distance, are standouts. Top examples: "Boothbay Harbor," 1915, and "October Breezes," 1927. "Solitude," 1927, captures waves

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By the time he died in 1965 at the age of 96, the art world had passed by powerful, expressive realists like Redfield, and his work had receded into the shadows. This splendid retrospective, with so many beautiful works documenting Redfield's rare gift of evoking nature's most profound moods, should give further impetus to the revival of his reputation and that of the Pennsylvania Impressionists.

The 114-page Redfield catalog, written by Kimmerle, contains more than 70 color reproductions and numerous vintage photographs. Handsomely co-published by the Michener Museum and University of Pennsylvania Press, it is priced at \$34.95 (softcover).

The Redfield exhibition is at the Michener Art Museum at 500 Union Square Drive in New Hope. For information, [www.michenerartmuseum.org](http://www.michenerartmuseum.org) or 215-340-9800.





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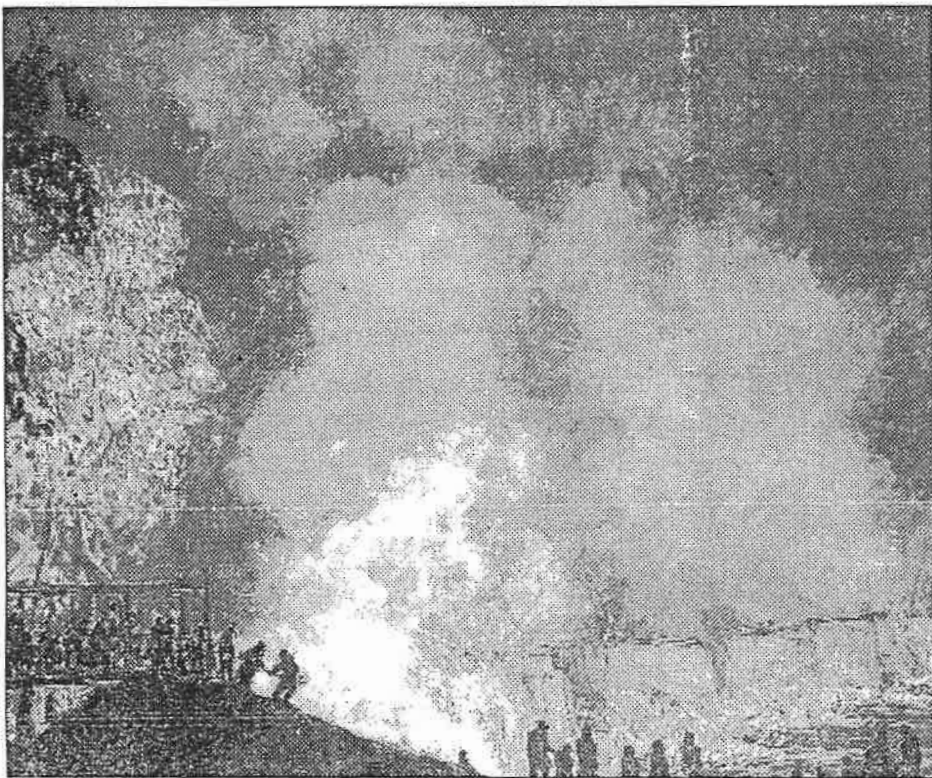
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# TOWN OF BRIDGEVILLE

*If you lived here, you would be home now.*

## PROCLAMATION

### HONORING EDWARD W. REDFIELD

WHEREAS, Edward W. Redfield was born on December 18, 1869 and lived as a very young child in Bridgeville, Delaware, with the home being located on the outskirts of Bridgeville and still standing today; and

WHEREAS, Edward W. Redfield moved with his family to Camden, New Jersey, where as a youth he demonstrated an extraordinary talent for the visual arts; and

WHEREAS, Edward W. Redfield attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts from 1887 until 1889 and was among the first of the New Hope group of painters to settle in the area and paint the surrounding landscape; and

WHEREAS, in 1898 he and his wife purchased a tract of land in Center Bridge, Pennsylvania, by the Delaware River, where they resided for the remainder of their lives; and

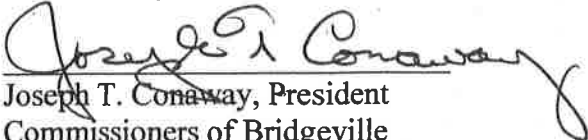
WHEREAS, Edward W. Redfield would arguably become known as the stylistic leader of the Pennsylvania Impressionist School of Painting that flourished in Bucks County in the early decades of the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, during the last of the 1910's Edward W. Redfield began to focus on impressionistic spring scenes, which are among his most beautiful works and reflect the same painterly methods and rapid, spontaneous handling of paint seen in his snow scenes. In addition to painting, his creative output included hooked rugs, Windsor furniture and painted chests; and

WHEREAS, Edward W. Redfield was one of the most widely exhibited landscape painters of his era who won almost every significant award available to an American artist; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Commissioners of The Town of Bridgeville, do hereby proclaim the week of March 14, 2005 as Edward W. Redfield Week. The works of Edward W. Redfield can be viewed through April 18, 2005 at the Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover, Delaware.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 7th day of February, 2005.

  
Joseph T. Conaway, President  
Commissioners of Bridgeville

# Bridgeville Historical Society

102 William Street, Bridgeville, Delaware 19933

February 2005

## Delaware Native, Pennsylvania Impressionist

By Karol Schmiegel

A retrospective exhibition of works by Bridgeville, Delaware native and leading Pennsylvania Impressionist artist, Edward W. Redfield, opened January 26. *Edward W. Redfield: Just Values and Fine Seeing* features 20 works spanning the artist's career. The exhibition runs through April 26, 2005 and includes student drawings, a personal journal, seascapes, a city scape, as well as

the Bucks County seasonal landscapes for which he is best remembered. Craft items produced by Redfield also will be on view.



Born into a Quaker family in Bridgeville, Delaware in 1869, he moved as a youth to Camden, New Jersey. Redfield attended the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, then traveled to Paris with the

intention of becoming a portrait painter. He quickly took an interest in painting landscapes directly from nature. He was fascinated with the evanescence of the natural world as it appeared to him and committed himself to recreating the experience of a particular moment or scene, carefully recording the details of light and weather.

Redfield was among the first of the New Hope group of painters to settle in the area and paint the surroundings landscape. In 1898 he and his wife purchased a tract of land in Center Bridge, Pennsylvania by the Delaware River, where they would reside for the remainder of their lives. The Redfield family also spent many summers in Boothbay, Maine, where he explored the forms of nature unique to the Maine seacoast.

Though he preferred not to think of himself as a member of any colony of artists - he worked in isolation and was reputed to be a curmudgeon- Redfield was known as the stylistic leader of the Pennsylvania Impressionist school of painting in Bucks, County in the early twentieth century. A rugged outdoorsman,

his method of *plein air* painting meant braving the elements on an almost daily basis, often enduring tremendous physical hardship in the process. Redfield was particularly interested in the anatomy of snow and its receptivity to light in the brilliant sun of midday.

By 1910 Redfield was recognized as one of the foremost landscape painters in the United States and was one of the most widely exhibited landscape painters of his era. By the time he stopped painting in the 1940's - when his failing eyesight could no longer meet the demanding conditions of *plein air* work, Redfield had won almost every significant award available to an American artist, and his paintings were in dozens of major American museums. In addition to painting, his creative output included hooked rugs, Windsor furniture and painted chests. He died in 1965 at the age of ninety-six. (Reprinted with permission from the Biggs Museum Newsletter - Jan/Feb 2005 - Dover, DE)

The Bridgeville Historical Society  
and  
The Biggs Museum of American Art  
cordially invite you to  
a reception and presentation by

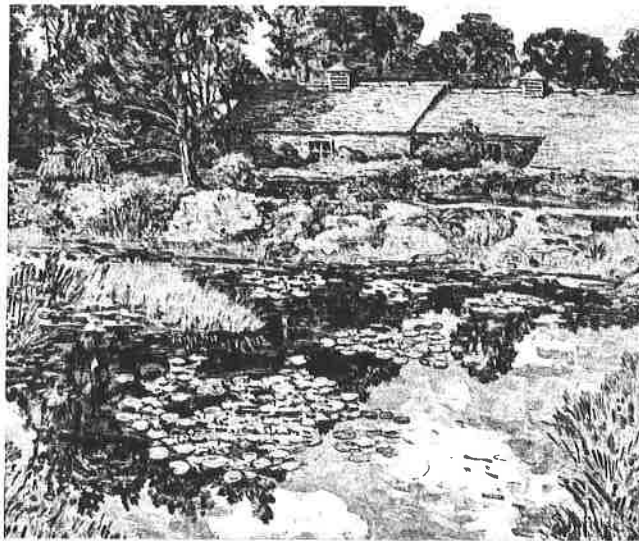
Stephen May,  
Independent arts historian and lecturer,  
on the works of  
Bridgeville native and  
American Impressionist  
Edward W. Redfield

Tuesday, March 15, 2005  
St. Mary's Parish House  
William Street, Bridgeville, DE

Reception: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.  
Presentation 7:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



# Pioneer



# Visions

## The Pennsylvania Impressionists forged a truly American style of painting—one that is enjoying a market upswing.

**T**hough Bucks County, Pennsylvania, was home to a number of important artists early in the 19th century, the area received a major boost as an art center in 1898 when two nationally known landscape painters settled there: Edward W. Redfield (1869–1965) and William L. Lathrop (1858–1938), who were followed a decade later by Daniel Garber (1880–1958). Their presence attracted other artists, and within a few years an art colony, centered in New Hope, began to form along the banks of the Delaware River. Many of these artists went on to have prominent careers and to be known for a distinctive style of landscape painting called Pennsylvania Impressionism. The group was praised by early 20th-century critics for creating a style of impressionism that transcended French influence and was firmly rooted in the American soil; they were associated with a vigorous naturalism, grounded in the love of the land and embodied in America's populist, pioneer spirit.

At the time, Bucks County was a rural, agricultural area with few alternatives for artists who could not make a living from

selling their works. In fact, only Redfield, Garber and Lathrop made substantial amounts of money from their art, and even then Redfield had to make do with fishing, trapping and gardening in lean years, while

Lathrop often found himself in debt while trying to raise five children. "Redfield would hang a large target on a tree by the canal and ask coal boatmen to hit a bull's eye with a chunk of coal as they floated by," notes Paul Gratz, owner and head conservator of Gratz Gallery & Conservation Studio in New Hope. "The next day, he'd go out and gather the coal to use in his stove. Pretty inventive." Other hungry artists traded their works for various goods and services from the business community.

Despite such hardships, the generations of Pennsylvania

"Farmhouse and Pond" (top), an undated oil on canvas by Walter Elmer Schofield. FACING: "Winter Stream," 1929, oil on canvas, by Walter Emerson Baum. See Resources, page 120, for dealers.



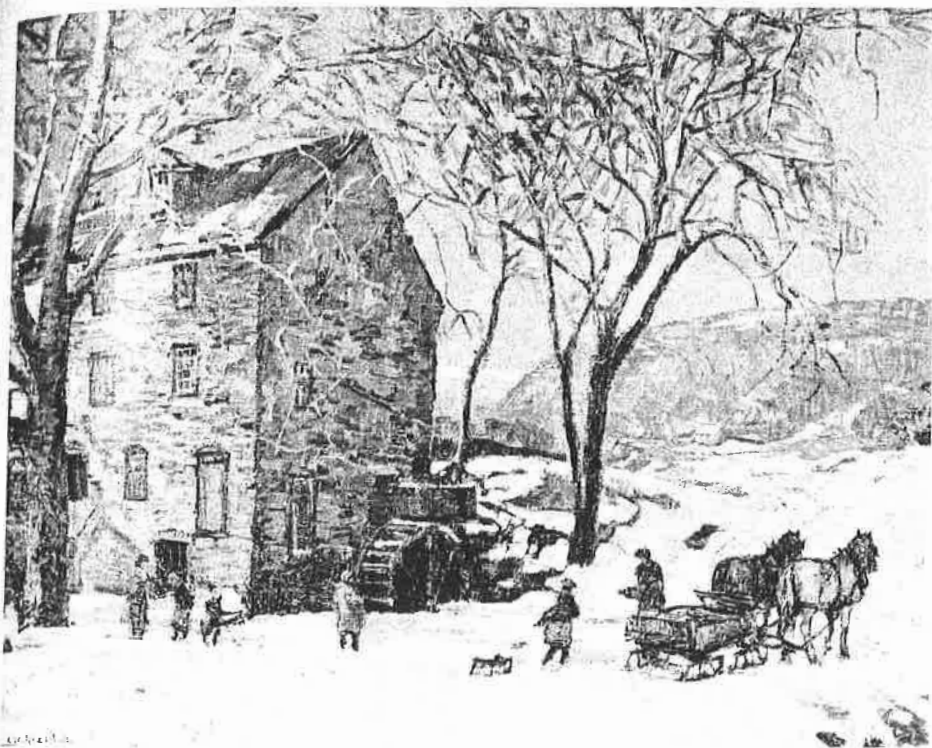
Charles Rosen's "Delaware Thawing," 1906, oil on canvas. "Brooklyn Bridge at Night" (below), 1909, oil on canvas by Edward W. Redfield.

Impressionists persevered, creating unique responses to the region. The resulting legacy includes Lathrop's atmospheric, moody landscapes; Redfield's assertive, rugged "at-one-go" paintings; Garber's refined, atmospheric local scenes; Fern Coppedge's (1883–1951) bold use of color, which focused on the changing effects of light; Robert Spencer's (1879–1931) beautiful village views of ordinary people and their homes; and George Sotter's (1879–1953) realistic depictions of sunlit, billowy cloud formations overlooking quaint villages.

Charles Rosen (1878–1950) began in the tradition of Redfield and Walter Schofield (1867–1944) but by 1910 evolved a style that entailed decorative patterns of color. Also of note are John Fulton Folinsbee's (1892–1972) somber but nonetheless luminous works (most of which he created while battling polio) and Kenneth Nunamaker's (1890–1957) bold, dynamic brush strokes. Walter Baum (1884–1956), the only Bucks County native, painted landscapes with great sensitivity, and in 1928 founded the Baum School of Art in Allentown, Pennsylvania, which is still in operation.

"These artists are all doing very well in today's market, and I don't believe any of





"The Old Mill, Washington's Crossing," 1937, oil on canvas, by Edward W. Redfield.

them have reached their financial peak," says Terrence Newman of Newman Galleries in Philadelphia. "For example, Ffolinsbee is one of the later painters in that group. He's a great artist, but his paintings are still undervalued. Likewise with Walter Baum and Fred Wagner." (A recent sale at Freeman's Auction House in Philadelphia set a world record price for a Baum painting at \$58,750.)

"There's still a big gap between the New England school and Pennsylvania school, and the latter is under-valued," agrees Gratz. "William Lathrop and Henry Snell are cases in point. Leith-Ross, out of nowhere, is suddenly bringing big numbers. George Sotter, at a recent auction, brought \$44,000. Since not many can afford the Garbers and the Redfields, many more people are looking for paintings where artists are starting to come up. A collector looking for investment should buy Antonio Pietro Martino [1902-88] works and just put them away. Though Antonio was not really part of the Pennsylvania Impressionists, he gets associated with them because he painted with them and studied with Redfield."

The New Hope art colony, which was

filled with both artistic integrity and fellowship, was based around Lathrop, Redfield and Garber, who were instrumental in its formation. (The independent Redfield really did not want to be part of it, but his reputation and pioneering landscape style helped put Bucks County on the map.) Garber was a major artist and a highly respected teacher at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and many of his students followed him up the Delaware River to paint and eventually to live. And in nearby Phillips Mill, artists, family members and friends would gather on Sunday afternoons at the home of Lathrop and his wife, Annie. Mrs. Lathrop played a maternal role by housing and feeding students, and her Sunday teas became desirable social events during which artists exchanged ideas. Lathrop, who was largely self-taught, often would meet

"Springtime in the Village," c. 1917, oil on canvas, by Daniel Garber.





FACING: "Evening Before Storm," William L. Lathrop, 1898, oil on canvas.



his students at the train station in nearby New Hope and ferry them up the Delaware Canal in his boat, Sunshine, to painting spots along the river. Many of the Pennsylvania Impressionists were enthusiastic about plein-air painting; Redfield, especially, passionately believed that the essential vitality of a place could only be captured by an artist whose senses were actively engaged, so as to create an entire painting in one sitting.

Though the artists in this group have individual and varying styles, the American tradition is consistently evident in all of their works. "There are two immediately significant things that determine the value of a work of art," Gratz says. "First, what it trades for in galleries and, second, what most appraisers go by, which is auction prices and records." (Redfield's "The Old Mill, Washington's Crossing" set a record when it sold for \$691,250 at Freeman's Auctions in December 2003; the painting was listed as one of *Art & Antiques*' "100 Top Treasures" in November 2004.) Other influences, he continues, include whether a particular painting was done during an artist's best period, whether it is the artist's most popular subject matter and whether it's in good condition. "Factors affecting prices today are pretty straightforward," Newman adds. "The size, the scene itself and the quality of the execution." And with Pennsylvania Impressionists' paintings now selling for six-figure sums, it is incredible to remember how desperately these artists had to struggle to make ends meet every day. ♦

*James McClelland is Art & Antiques' Philadelphia correspondent.*



"Bucks County Snow," John Fulton Folinsbee, c. 1935, oil on canvas. "View of Sellersville, St. Michaels Church" (center), Walter Emerson Baum, c. 1929, oil on canvas. "Canal Below New Hope" (top) John Fulton Folinsbee, early 1950s, oil on canvas.

