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UPPER LEFT:

The circa 1930s stone farmhouse holds an outstanding collection of Americana.

LOWER LEFT:

The heart of the house is the keeping room with its large fireplace that dominates much of one wall. Period pots and kettles, iron and copper cooking utensils, peels, candle molds and early lighting surround the fireplace, which houses a beehive oven that the wife has used to bake as many as sixteen loaves of bread at a time. Elaborate cranes facilitate cooking. Combware, Delft chargers, and pewter measures are arranged across the mantel.



the History Within

ABOVE:

A tavern bar opposite the great fireplace in the keeping room is stocked with leather and ceramic Toby jugs as well as pewter tankards and early dated bottles. A pipe box with several pipes, several with whimsical bowls, hangs nearby. An example of early filigree work, circa 1720, hangs to the right of the bar. A New England William and Mary armchair hides part of an early Boston William and Mary dressing table with strong turnings and a bold overhanging top. A carved Hadley chest supporting a grand silver monteith — used for rinsing glasses between dinner courses — provides a focal point at the end of the hall.

For one mid-Atlantic couple, collecting is “a pleasure you can count on for a lifetime.” The success of that philosophy is evident in every nook and cranny of their home. In over forty years of collecting, the couple has gathered the best of the best in their stone farmhouse built in the 1930s in strict adherence to eighteenth-century building techniques. Later additions have been subject to the same precision. For the architect, it was a labor of love; for the

couple it’s a lifelong love. The house and its treasures bring each other to life. The wife says, “It is a teaching house, one in which the objects are never through talking to you.”

The couple’s primary area of interest is Colonial America, and they have immersed themselves in the period. No detail has been overlooked, and the strength and density of the collection is stunning and at times overwhelming.

The keeping room is the heart of the house



just as it would have been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Created to imitate a room in a typical Pennsylvania house in the colonial era, it was crafted by a carpenter skilled in the technique of re-creating such regional structures, using period materials such as rough hewn beams and old brick flooring. The large fireplace that dominates one wall is hung with period pots and kettles that are used by the collectors much as they were in the eighteenth century. A favorite room, the couple uses a William and Mary, turned gateleg table (not shown) for their daily meals. They cover it with a carpet as was done in fashionable homes of the period

PREVIOUS PAGE:

The three-part kas in the New York Dutch room was made in Kings County, New York. The use of applied mahogany panels in conjunction with primary wood of red gum is typical of Kings County kasten; it has ebonized turnip feet. The kas descended in the Dirck Jansen van Sutphen family of New York and New Jersey. The Philadelphia drop-leaf gate leg table has exquisite ball-and-baluster turnings and is of an extraordinary size. It is able to accommodate at least ten diners. The table is set with Delft months-of-the-year plates, silver flatware, stoneware, and silver canns and tankards. A very large Delft bowl is positioned in the center of the table.

Beside an elaborately turned storage rack is a portrait by Dutch baroque artist Thomas de Keyser (1596–1657) of eight members of one family, some alive, some dead. The three putti, each the symbol of one of the souls below, fly easily up to God through a sky opening just for them. The painting, dated “anno 1634,” shows how close heaven and earth seemed to the seventeenth-century mind.

THIS PAGE, TOP:

A pair of portraits of New Yorkers Jeannette van Egmont Schermerhorn and husband John Dunbar, from the first half of the eighteenth century, hang above an elaborate, miniature baroque bombé combination chest and linen press. On the top are miniature Delft ceramics. The carved six-board chest is attributed to William Searle (1634–1667), an important carver who emigrated from Devon, England, to Ipswich, Massachusetts, in the seventeenth century.

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM:

In the New York Dutch room, the high chest from New England, with a molded cornice incorporating a linen or manuscript drawer, has trumpet-turned legs and dates from about 1735. It is one of two japanned high chests in the house. The English harpsichord/spinet, with ebonized natural keys and white sharps, is marked “Richardus Hesey 1602.”





lifestyle

The red chest with white painted vines is a rare survival and may be associated with the work of Robert Crossman (1707–1799) of Taunton, Massachusetts. The small English box contains a hidden wood lock to protect valuables by stopping the fall-front from dropping down. The brass candlestick to the left was made in North-West Europe in the 1550s. The stoneware pitcher has medallions on the body and a mask for a spout.

**PREVIOUS PAGE,
CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:**

A portrait attributed to the Chinese artist Spoilum (active ca. 1770–1805) depicts a Western gentleman involved with the China Trade.

“Leo Belgicus” depicts the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands low countries as one huge lion, a beast not to be tampered with. The map was first published in 1583 by Baron Michael Atzinger. This issue by Pieter van den Keere is dated 1617.

This needlework casket is a tour de force of silk, silver, and gold threads and wire. The heavy silver wire called “purl” is couched down and resembles the work on church vestments. The images of Christian virtues of faith, hope, and charity cover the box. St. Anthony with a boy on a crutch is a rare icon for faith. Adam and Eve on the top are drawn from a seventeenth-century bible frontispiece. The casket was owned by English diarist John Evelyn (1620–1706). The family coat of arms of both his parents is stitched inside.

In a German bottle from the 1740s a tea party is in progress. Fashionably dressed figures sit facing each other at the table; a dog with a blue silk bow sits beside them. A large teapot sits on stand. The coffeepot is being poured.

The dated 1763 portrait of Margaretha Sigelin shows off her crewelwork dress, her red shoes with silver buckles, and her pet lamb. When the owners had the painting cleaned, the lamb became a unicorn, perhaps a religious icon that insures the sitter a place in heaven.





A period tavern bar on the opposite wall is stocked with leather and ceramic Toby jugs, pewter tankards, dated bottles, and clay pipes. Lighting here and throughout the house represents an earlier time. Some of the period candles are composed of materials, such as bear fat, that were available to country households; because of their originality and rarity, these are for display purposes only. One of the choice fixtures in the room is a rare Boston filigree shadowbox made of shells, silver wire, and mica. Besides displaying the creativity and talent of the maker (a young lady educated at a private finishing school), shadowboxes sometimes reflected and enhanced the light from a candle; important in an era when light sources were otherwise from windows and fireplaces. In keeping with the spirit of one of the finer eighteenth-century taverns, seating is comprised of “sausage” turned Brewster and Carver type chairs, William and Mary cane chairs, and joint stools.

As a counterpoint to this Pennsylvania room, a recently added New York Dutch room was designed with fifteen-inch-deep finished beams and a black and white marble floor found in elite Dutch homes of the seventeenth century. This room illustrates a formality known to early upper-class New York households but rarely seen in New England and the Middle Colonies.

The living room is given over to superb high-style Philadelphia Queen Anne and Chippendale furnishings. A scroll-top high

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The pair of Queen Anne side chairs have shell-carved crests and shell-carved and ruffled knees. A pair of New York portraits of Jane and David Edgar (circa 1760), by New York artist Thomas McIlworth, hang on opposite walls in the dining room. Mr. Edgar, shown here, was a fur trader from Albany. He married Jane in 1753. The carved frames from Boston are attributed to John Welsh, perhaps the city's finest frame maker at the time.

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This sideboard was the work of Annapolis cabinet-maker John Shaw (1745–1829). Among his signature designs were the cut-out hearts in the sides of his sideboard bottle drawers. The sideboard is set with matching shagreen knife boxes, English silver, and a rare glass sweetmeats pole.



ABOVE:

The Philadelphia Chippendale walnut dining table descended in the family of William Logan (1718–1776). It is set with early trifold spoons and agateware handled forks and knives with pistol-shaped handles. A handsome monteith on the table was made in London by William Denny between 1690 and 1710. It includes two rows of fluting and a detachable scalloped border. The set of six transitional walnut side chairs are carved with shells along their serpentine crest rails and have stocking trifold feet. On the marble-top table in the window alcove, a glass tazza is filled with sweetmeat dishes and syllabub glasses. To one side is an enameled teapot-on-stand. English salt-glaze teapots, two commemorating the Battle of Portobello in 1739, can be seen in the cupboard, one of two in the room that hold a collection of important Whieldon type wares.

chest with a swan neck pediment, floral rosettes, flame finials, and pierced cartouche, stands opposite a bonnet-top Philadelphia or Lancaster, Pennsylvania, desk and bookcase. Both were made in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. A superb Philadelphia Queen Anne/Chippendale carved mahogany easy chair is identified by its C-scrolled arms, carved cabriole legs, and elegantly raked rear legs. An intricately carved Philadelphia card table is set for play, with period cards, spectacles, and candlesticks. The Delft tiles in the fireplace are from a house in the Netherlands. The windows are hung with damask curtains designed by Ernest La Nano in the 1930s for the Governor's Palace at Colonial Williamsburg; they were deaccessioned when a new furnishing plan was introduced.

The colonial portraits in the living room and elsewhere are stellar. Charles Willson

Peale's (1741–1827) portrait of the raven-haired Jane Hunter who married Maskell Ewing hangs above the Philadelphia camel-back sofa. A pair of portraits of Susanna Stuart Fitzhugh Knox and her husband William Knox of Culpeper, Virginia, was painted by the artist John Hesselius (1728–1778) who gave Peale his first painting lessons; they are located in the living room. Ralph Earl's (1751–1801) images of his patron Jared Lane and wife Apphia Ruggles Lane dominate the staircase. The Lombardy poplars painted into the background of Jared Lane's portrait were not merely artful devices. Lane introduced the Lombardys as ornamental shade trees to New Milford, Connecticut, and raised them to plant in the town.

The husband admits to "a great affinity for my clocks!" He acknowledges that pieces with excellent workmanship are of particular





interest and has taken each of his twelve clocks apart to unravel some of their history. One example bears the mark of the maker on the gears of the works; another retains the label of a craftsman who repaired it fifty years after it was made. An early Pennsylvania tall clock made by Jacob Godshalk of Towamencin County, Pennsylvania, has an indentation made over the years by a betty lamp that hung to illuminate the dial. James Warne, a London Quaker who crafted clocks for Philadelphia cases, made the clock in the front hall.

In the dining room the couple's taste for fine workmanship is evident in the superb sideboard by Annapolis cabinetmaker John Shaw (1745–1829). A cabinetmaker by trade, Shaw also pursued other interest; it was he who designed the flag with the distinctive eight-point star that flew over the Annapolis

LEFT: A Philadelphia high chest, circa 1770 and attributed to David Evans, stands on claw and ball feet against one wall. It is liberally carved with c-scrolls, fluted sides, intricate bottom drawer, and a swan-neck pediment with a large peanut cartouche touched off by flame and urn finials. The ball-and-claw foot Boston firescreen retains its original needlework panel worked by Patty Reed. The easy chair boldly displays the "C-scrolled" arm supports typical of Philadelphia's best examples. The John Hesselius (1728–1778) portrait over the fireplace is of John Knox, the husband of the young lady in a portrait above the pianoforte elsewhere in the room.

ABOVE: Signed on the back by Edward Hicks (1780–1849), "David and Jonathan at the Stone Ezel," is the only known example of his work using this subject. This painting incorporates themes from both the Old and New Testaments. The figures on the left, David and Jonathan, are taken from Samuel 20:19. The Good Samaritan on the right is from the New Testament. The Samaritan was inspired by an engraving of C.Tiebout after an etching by James Aiken after an oil by William Hogarth.



State House when Annapolis was America's capital. The sides of the bottle drawers are fashioned with grips in the shape of hearts, which facilitates the lifting of the drawers with their contents for ease of distribution during dinner parties. Its bottom is still lined with hay and covered with canvas to protect the bottles from breaking. An exceptional pair of shagreen (fish skin) knife boxes with marked silver claw and ball feet and side handles, made in London during the second half of the eighteenth century, houses elegant pistol handled knives. An elaborately wrought silver cruet stand by Samuel Wood (circa 1704–1794) of London, which the owners describe as “gutsy, like a piece of Chippendale furniture,” boasts compelling casters character-

istic of Wood's pieces. It shares the space with a rare surviving glass sweetmeat pole with silver mounts for twenty original etched glass arms and corresponding baskets. The Philadelphia Chippendale walnut dining table descended in the family of William Logan (1718–1776), son of James Logan, William Penn's secretary and purchasing agent. The table remained in the family for six generations. The table is similar to ones made by cabinetmaker David Evans (1733–1817). Its “WS” stamped hinges are found on several other regional tables of the same period and likely refer to a British brass manufacturer

The owners are careful stewards of their collection and maintain meticulous records, which they continually update. As the wife

ABOVE:

Charles Willson Peale's (1741–1827) portrait of Jane Hunter hangs over the Chippendale camelback sofa and between a pair of early mirrored sconces. It was painted after her marriage to Maskell Ewing in 1787. She holds a favorite book of Peale's, *Thomson's Seasons*. A Philadelphia Chippendale tea table with coffeepots of circa 1740, rare in brass, is set for prospective guests who might sit in the two Queen Anne balloon-seat armchairs. A swinging silver teapot is to the right of the sofa. The sofa and chairs are dressed in period-style striped slipcovers inspired by a mid-eighteenth-century English engraving.

-LEFT: A Philadelphia Chippendale turret-corner card table is set for play with period cards, period spectacles, and mother-of-pearl gaming pieces. The set of ball-and-claw foot side chairs is carved with shells on the knees and has crest rails. The tall clock near the table is inscribed "Willim Huston/Philadelphia" across the silvered dial.

BELOW: The Federal pianoforte or fortepiano was made in 1794 by Charles Taws of Philadelphia for David Rittenhouse, first director of the U.S. Mint. The painting hanging above is a portrait of Susannah Fitzhugh Knox of Maryland by John Hesselius (1728–1778). The two busts on carved, giltwood shelves represent the Reverends John Wesley and George Whitefield. Whitefield brought the spiritual revival of religion known as the Great Awakening to the Colonies in the 1740s. Enoch Wood (1759–1840), one of the finest potters in England, made and stamped these two busts.



says, "You don't always get all the information at once; it frequently appears much later." In their office, located in the two-story library at the far end of the house, are many period books that they use as reference when researching objects or paintings. On the windowsill is a globe made by Gerardus Valk in Amsterdam, Holland, in 1700. Its mate, a celestial globe, sits on another window sill. A doll seated on the hearth in an eighteenth-century, New York, miniature chair was made in about 1710, probably in London. She is similar to one that belonged to William Penn's daughter that was in the collection of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Despite the stereotype of colonial life as dour, collections throughout this house suggest otherwise. In the Dutch room, the owners' colorful circa-1740 Dutch or English birdcage fishbowl—the only intact example known—amused onlookers with the competition between a tormented bird and an anxious fish; the bird, perched in the interior bowl, could only savor the fish swimming around him safely in the exterior bowl. Two bawdy Delft kegs have the forms of a man and a woman respectively. A seventeenth-century harpsichord, also called a spinet because of its small size, would have





provided musical entertainment, often in the bedchambers. White trailing vines painted on a red Taunton chest and leaves and hearts painted on the carved façade of a Hadley chest, both from Massachusetts, provide a sense of energetic liveliness in the same hallway. In the living room a rare large creamware pitcher offers a telling pictorial commentary on the differences between the sexes, at least when it came to furnishing a room. Throughout the house are five rare seventeenth-century needlework caskets. The example with Anglo/Catholic imagery was owned by English diarist John Evelyn.

Wherever the eyes rest throughout the house, the quality and rarity of each object is outstanding. But the house is not treated as a museum. It is a home the owners, their children, and grandchildren have enjoyed over the years. The complexity is labyrinthine, and the best part is that there is no end to it. @



PREVIOUS PAGE:

The plaster walls and exposed ceiling joists lend an early American look to the den. A William and Mary octagonal Boston or New York mixing table is arranged for festivities. The slate top is set with a Delft bowl with silver sieve, ladle, and funnel, and silver tankards by John Coney (1655–1722) of Boston and Edward Gibson of London. A Heemskirt mid-drip candlestick lights the table. To the left is a signed Adam Brant Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, tall clock with carved rosettes and three original tendril-like finials. A Philadelphia Windsor armchair and a William Savery-type Philadelphia ladder-back armchair appear on the left. A Boston or London hatchment, flanked by late seventeenth-century wax figures, hangs over the mantel.

THIS PAGE, BOTH IMAGES:

The library contains many period books the couple use as reference sources for their research. A carpet covers the table in emulation of the colonists who were not apt to place fine carpets on the floor. The globe in the window dates to 1700 and is one of a pair. The salt-glazed bear with her cub was made around 1740. The chairs date from the seventeenth- to the early-eighteenth centuries. The Massachusetts portrait by J. Cooper dates to circa 1712.