What You See Here

An Illustrated Guide to the Furniture, Art, Decorative Objects, and Finishings of a Greek Revival Parlor

Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences

What You See Here

Like the ancient Greek concept of the *lyceum* as it evolved and blossomed in the United States in the early-to-mid 1800s, the home parlor of those same years was a place for spending time in a pleasant but productive way: by sharing knowledge and discussing interesting and important topics among a group. At a lyceum, the intended group was an entire community. In a parlor, this group was the home's family and its visitors.

Parlors were filled with furniture, art, and objects intended to spur thought and spark conversation while inspiring artistic appreciation and demonstrating the family's prosperity, good taste, education, and travel. This guide shows and discusses how every item in this room—from a grand painting or carved and capacious sofa, to items as everyday as flowerpots and even forks and spoons—communicates histories, stories, and ideas.

The Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences is housed in a handsome mansion that is nearly 200 years old. James (1809–1875) and Harriet Haines Langstaff (1805–1882), built this house, which they named *Langeland*, a Dutch word meaning *a foot of high ground*. Completed in 1830, when James was only 21 years old and already a successful farmer and businessman, the mansion is a good example of the taste and lifestyle of wealthy industrialists in the early-to-mid 1800s. Its exterior—especially its *portico* (a porch with a roof supported by columns)—and interior are in the Greek Revival style of 1820 to 1850.

The Lyceum and Its Parlor

Greek Revival Architecture, American Classical Furnishings

After winning independence from England, the founders of the new United States looked to the ancient Greeks and Romans for inspiration. The Greeks were admired for developing democracy—"rule by the people"—as were the Romans for establishing the first republic, in which the people are represented by elected representatives. The influence of these ancient civilizations extended to art, architecture, and design.

Most of the furniture in this room was described in the early-to-mid 1800s as *Grecian*, later as *American Empire*, and now as *American Classical*. American Classical furniture, along with Greek Revival architecture, dominated design in the United States from 1820 to 1850. The paintings, prints, pottery, silverware, and lighting seen here were made in the 1800s or are in the style of the time, and reflect the influence of ancient Greece and Rome.

Not a Classics Scholar? Not to Worry!

In the 1800s, education in the United States had a strong focus on Classics: the study of the history, literature, philosophy, myth, and art of ancient Greece and Rome. Therefore, those who spent time in a parlor like this at that time would have been better able to recognize, say, what is shown on the two terracotta jugs on the stand in front of the side window (see pages 6 and 7). If you have not had a "Classical education," don't worry! This guide shares key Classical information. We hope its words and images help you see, in full, the stories and meanings embodied in the Langstaff Mansion's architecture—inside and out—and in the furniture, art, decorative objects, and finishing touches such as carpeting, draperies, and decorative painted treatments that grace the Lyceum's front-parlor.

Left Wall

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Classical Worktable with Scroll Feet
American, c. 1820–1840
Mahogany
28.5 × 17 × 15 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0024

Worktables such as this were popular items in 19th-century parlors and other rooms where—most typically—a household's women spent time doing needlework, reading, writing, and receiving visitors. Those visitors, in turn, used worktables in the way we use the end-tables placed beside sofas in our living-rooms—as places to rest their bags and other personal items, along with cups and glasses for tea and other drinks. Classical influence is seen in the pedestal, which is in the shape of a tapering *pilaster* (square column), and its *volute* (scroll-shaped) feet.

While preparing this worktable for exhibition, Victor Rossi—the master cabinetmaker who restored it—determined that its top and base were made at different times. The two-drawer top was likely made between 1820 and 1830, while the pedestal-and-volutes base is in the *Pillar and Scroll* or *Plain Grecian* style of 1830 to 1840.

Lekythos (Oil Flask)
Greek, 19th century
Painted terracotta
11.8 × 4.25 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0007

Lekythos is the Greek word for *oil flask*—specifically, ones used by women to hold perfume and scented oils. While this lekythos and its partner in the parlor (see facing page)—a wine jug (*oinochoe*)—were made in Greece in the 1800s, they were inspired by pottery made in Athens between 600 and 500 BCE that featured black figures on red backgrounds. Vessels like these were decorated with scenes from myth and daily life.

Lekythoi (plural) were women's objects in both life and death. Vessels holding fragrances enjoyed by the living, they also carried anointing oils used in the funerals of unmarried women. Depicted on this lekythos are Persephone—the wife of Hades, king of the underworld—and Sisyphus, a violent trickster who tried to escape death. Persephone is shown seated, holding a cluster of flowers—she was kidnapped by Hades while gathering flowers. Sisyphus is shown in the eternal labor to which he was condemned by the gods—rolling a boulder up a hill, only for it to fall, requiring him to roll it uphill again—for the sin of tricking Persephone into releasing him from Hades, the realm of the dead.

Oinochoe (Wine Jug)
Greek, 19th century
Painted terracotta
10.5 × 6 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0006

Oinochoe is the Greek word for *wine pourer*. Befitting a wine jug, this one depicts Dionysus—the god of wine (Bacchus in Roman myth)—shown, characteristically, riding a donkey and flanked by two *satyrs*: rowdy, half-man, half-horse nature spirits who were Dionysus' male followers (a female follower of Dionysus is depicted in the painting *Maenad with Lyre*, page 23). Both satyrs carry a *rhyton* (a cone-shaped drinking cup) with one holding a wine flask, as well.

Portrait Miniature of a Young Woman
Unknown artist
French, 19th century
Watercolor (pigment and gum arabic) on ivory support, brass frame
2.62 inches (with frame)
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0001

Today, we have dozens of photographs of family, friends—and ourselves—saved on our phones. Before photography became widely used in the mid-1800s, miniature portraits like this allowed people to carry images of their loved ones with them. This young woman is herself wearing a miniature portrait of a man—possibly her husband or fiancé, as these "love tokens" were often exchanged to celebrate engagements and weddings. Her high-waisted, simple white dress is in the *Empire* style of the early 1800s, which was inspired by the flowing belted tunics worn by women depicted in ancient Greek and Roman art.

Empire style was popular in France—and spread across Europe and the United States—in the early 1800s, in conjunction with the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821). Napoleon conquered—at least temporarily—countries in Europe and North Africa to build a new French empire.

Corinthian Column Candlesticks
American, 19th century
Copper alloy, iron alloy
12.25 × 4.5 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0017a-b

Ancient Greek and Roman column shapes were used in many ways in the Neoclassical architecture and design of the 1700s and 1800s. The fireplace on which these candlesticks are placed in the parlor is flanked by Ionic columns, with pairs of *volutes* (scrolls) on their *capitals* (tops). These candlesticks are in the more elaborate shape of *Corinthian* columns, with capitals that combine volutes with decoration inspired by acanthus leaves and stalks. The acanthus leaf was another favorite form in Classical and Neoclassical design: you can see it on the *medallion* (a round or oval ornament) surrounding the parlor's chandelier. Corinthian columns are seen in the foreground of the round painting of *Roman Ruins* hanging above the fireplace (page 12).

Three-Piece Urn Garniture Set
British (possibly Derby, England), early 19th century
Porcelain, paint, gilding
11.75 × 8 × 6.5 inches (large urn); 8.8 × 7.5 × 4.5 inches (small urns)
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0003a-c

A *garniture* set is a group of three matching pieces created to adorn—*garnish*—a mantelpiece. These bright, flower-decorated vases are shaped like urns. While associated with funerals in ancient Greece and Rome, the elegant symmetry and simplicity of the urn's shape symbolized beauty and reason for those who appreciated Classical forms in the 1700s and 1800s.

Classical Balustrade-Form Overmantel Mirror
American, 1825–1850
Giltwood and tin-mercury amalgam mirror
35.1 × 77.4 × 5.4 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0008

Large, elaborate, gilded *overmantel* mirrors like this reflected natural light in daytime and candlelight or lamplight at night. Designed to sit above fireplaces, they literally "elevated" a room's decoration, helping to fill the high walls of elegant spaces such as the Lyceum's parlor with Classically inspired beauty.

This mirror's form is like a *balustrade* (or *banister*), the turned and carved handrail—supported by vertical spindles—that protects staircases, balconies, and terraces. Its corner blocks are decorated with *rosettes*: rose-shaped decorations seen throughout the Lyceum's parlor—at the upper-corners of its doorways, for example.

Roman Ruins
Unknown artist
Italian, 18th century
Oil on canvas pasted on board, original painted wood frame
39.75 × 1.7 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0029

This painting can be described with two Italian words used by art historians: it is a *tondo*—short for *rotondo*, meaning *round*—and a *capriccio* (the root of the English word *caprice*) meaning it presents an architectural fantasy. Shown on this tondo is a capriccio image of an imaginary Roman cityscape, with emphasis on the ruins of the *Roman Forum*—a vast plaza built between the 700s BCE and early 600s CE filled with temples, basilicas, government buildings, statues, and monuments—as they appeared in the 1800s.

The painter did not produce exact renderings of the Forum's buildings and included landmarks found elsewhere in Rome. For example, the *sphinx* (a creature from myth with a lion's body and human head) on the right is reminiscent of 16 identical sphinxes that overlook the *Piazza del Popolo* (people's square), two and a half miles from the Forum. The Piazza del Popolo's sphinxes allude to the conquest of Egypt by Rome in 30 BCE, which established the Roman Empire's rule over the European, Asian, and African lands around the Mediterranean. In the 1800s, when this painting was made, the Great Sphinx of Giza was associated with Napoleon Bonaparte's failed attempt to conquer Egypt for the French Empire in 1799 and 1800.

Federal-Style "Martha Washington" Demilune-Pocket Sewing-Stand
American, c. 1880–1920
Mahogany
28.4 × 27.7 × 14.7 inches
Gift of Stacy Lippincott Moore, Jr., Nanci Lee Moore, Mary Jane Kiefer, and Sarita Virginia Laughlin, great-great-great-grandchildren of Harriet and James Langstaff
LAN.2024.0004

This is the only piece of the parlor's furniture in the light and elegant Federal style of c. 1790 to 1820 rather than the more massive Classical, Grecian, and Empire styles of approximately 1820 to 1840. It's in a form associated with the first First Lady of the United States, Martha Washington. Its deep side-pockets were used to store the sewing and knitting projects worked on by household members (women, traditionally), especially while they were "at home"—ready and waiting to receive visitors in their family's finest room.

Along with the large *Classical Oval Mirror* (page 21) between the two front windows and the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24) and *Classical Side-Stand with Drop-Leaves and Scroll Feet* (page 26) along the parlor's right-hand wall, this sewing-stand once furnished Langeland and was presented as a gift to the Lyceum by descendants of Harriet and James Langstaff.

Classical Klismos-Form Spoonback Chair
American, c. 1825–1865
Mahogany, horsehair
33 × 17 × 20 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0003c

The *klismos* chair developed by the ancient Greeks had sweeping *saber* (sword-shaped) legs and a deeply curving *tablet* (rectangular and horizontal) back, designed to cradle a sitter's shoulders. The klismos form was revived in the late 1700s and early 1800s, inspired by archaeological excavations then taking place in Italy and Greece. These "digs" unearthed pottery showing people sitting in klismos chairs and *klismoi* (plural) carved in marble (those carved in wood didn't survive the many centuries). You can see the classical Greek klismos in *Grecian Woman Sitting with Child* (page 29), one of two prints from around 1850 hanging above and to the right of the parlor's sofa.

Light and elegant, klismos chairs became very popular in the 1800s. The three in the Lyceum's parlor represent a favorite variation, with legs that flare less dramatically than the ancient Greek original and a curved back shaped like the top of a spoon rather than a tablet.

The chairs' back-splats are shaped like *lyres*, stringed musical instruments played to accompany the recitation of poetry (the ancient Greek term for lyre is *kithara*, which became *guitar* in English). Lyres were a favorite form in Neoclassical art and design in the 1700s and 1800s. You can see their shape, simplified but bold, in the *Classical Flip-Top Breakfast-Table with Lyre-Form Base* (page 19) and depicted in a bit more detail in the fabric on the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24) and the other chairs in the Lyceum's parlor.

This chair is upholstered in horsehair, which was valued for its durability.

Charger with Portrait of a Young Roman Man
Italian, 20th century
Glazed ceramic
16 × 2.75 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0008

The laurel wreath on this young Roman man's head—which repeats as a border around this *charger* (especially large and sturdy plate)—was associated with the youthful, athletic god Apollo. Forever green, laurels came to symbolize Apollo because he was the eternal *ephebe*—a male youth of 18 to 20, old enough for military training but not considered an adult, as indicated by his beardless face.

In ancient Greece, a laurel wreath was awarded to the victors of the Pythian Games, held every four years in honor of Apollo. In ancient Rome, laurel wreaths were placed on the heads of generals who led triumphant battles. In Roman myth, the *naiad* (female water spirit) Daphne was transformed into a laurel tree to escape the unwanted advances of Apollo. Obsessed with Daphne, Apollo came to revere laurels. The parlor's carpet (page 44) presents another example of decorative design inspired by laurel leaves.

This charger was made in 20th-century Italy in the style of Italian Renaissance (1350–1600) maiolica. Earthenware pottery with a white tin glaze, maiolica was painted with colorful designs often inspired by ancient Greek and Roman life and myth.

This charger is displayed on a wall, supported by a partially gilded *Wall Bracket* (OBJ.2024.0024) in the style of the late-Federal or early Classical period (c. 1810–1820). It was made in the 20th-century in the Philippines using "Philippine mahogany": shorea or meranti wood.

Center Wall

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Winged Putti
Unknown artist
(signed “XC” on front)
European (possibly German: “München” handwritten on back), 19th century (“1885” handwritten on back)
Oil on canvas pasted on board, original painted wood frame
7.9 × 5.3 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0030

Putti (from the Latin word *putus*, which means *boy* or *child*) are chubby, winged, playful figures often depicted in art from the European Renaissance of the 1400s and 1500s. Their history is deeper, though, going back 2,000 or more years to the god of love in Classical myth: Eros in ancient Greece, Cupid in ancient Rome.

Originally, Eros and Cupid were depicted as powerful young men with wings. Later, especially during the Renaissance, artists made them roly-poly infant angels. Although not the case with these two youngsters, Eros, Cupid, and putti were typically shown holding bows and arrows.

Today, we see images of flying baby Cupids with drawn bows, ready to “strike” a love match, on Valentine’s Day cards. In the parlor, such a matchmaking Cupid is featured in the design of the fancy red and gold fabric on the sofa and most chairs in this room (pages 18, 24, and 32).

Pair of Classical Klismos-Form Spoonback Chairs
American, 1825–1865
Mahogany, viscose and silk fabric ("Lampas Suchet"
by Lelievre/Scalamandré, made in France)
33 × 17 × 20 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0003a-b

To learn more about the set of four *Klismos-Form Spoonback Chairs* in the Lyceum's collection—three help furnish the parlor, the fourth is in the adjoining entry-hall—please see page 14.

The upholstery fabric on these chairs, the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24), and the *Classical Klismos-Form Scroll-Arm Chairs* (page 32) is called "Lampas Suchet." The design dates to around 1800, when it was created to honor Louis Gabriel Suchet (1770–1826), a general and commander in France's Revolutionary War (1792–1802) and Napoleonic War (1803–1815). Suchet's family were silk merchants. A *lampas* is a silk fabric that has designs and decorations woven into, rather than printed on, the cloth. Woven into "Lampas Suchet" are lyres (pages 14, 19, and 23), cupids (page 17), peacocks (symbolizing French elegance and refinement), and swans (which were associated with Empress Josephine, 1763–1814, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte).

Classical Flip-Top Breakfast-Table with Lyre-Form Base
American, c. 1830–1840
Mahogany
28 × 36 × 36 inches (open)
Burlington County Lyceum of History
and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0006

In furnishing this room as it would have been in the mid-1800s, the Lyceum staff had strong examples to follow, because 19th-century front-parlors in the United States typically included several "must have" items. One such item was a *pier table*, a console table placed along the wall between the room's front-windows—a space that is called a *pier*—that was used to display beautiful objects. This table serves that purpose while having a top that flips open to form a large square surface for dining or playing games.

The W-like shape that supports the tabletop was inspired by the *lyre*, a stringed musical instrument played to accompany the recitation of poetry (the ancient Greek term for lyre is *kithara*, which became *guitar* in English). Lyres were a favorite form in Neoclassical art and design in the 1700s and 1800s. You can see their shape, simplified but bold, in the parlor's three *Classical Klismos-Form Spoonback Chairs* (pages 14 and 18), in the fabric on the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24), and—in greatest detail—in the painting *Maenad with Lyre* (page 23).

Bust of Clytie
1833–1847
Copeland and Garrett Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent, England
Parian ware (unglazed porcelain)
12 × 8.5 × 5 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0002

Clytie is a figure from ancient Greek myth: a *nymph*—a nature spirit in the shape of a beautiful young woman—who lived in and had power over water. Clytie loved the sun-god Helios, but Helios loved a Persian princess named Leucothoe. Only able to admire Helios from a distance, Clytie transformed into the heliotrope, a violet flower that turns toward the sun. Made in *Parian ware*—a type of porcelain that looks like marble—this Clytie is a reproduction of a Roman marble *bust* (a sculpture depicting a person from head to shoulders) made around 40 to 50 CE in the collection of the British Museum in London.

Classical Oval Mirror
American, 19th century
Giltwood and composition, modern mirror
77.4× 35.1 × 5.4 inches
Gift of Stacy Lippincott Moore, Jr., Nanci Lee Moore, Mary Jane Kiefer, and Sarita Virginia Laughlin, great-great-great-grandchildren of Harriet and James Langstaff
LAN.2024.0005

This large and elaborate mirror is one of four pieces in this room believed to have furnished the Langstaff's home that were given to the Lyceum as a gift by their descendants. Its *floriate* (flower shaped) carving is in *high relief*: the forms emerge at least halfway from the background, with some fully three-dimensional. The Langstaffs must have had a taste for floriate carving—you can see it in the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24), as well—and for flowers generally, as seen in the bouquets painted on the narrow windows (*sidelights*) that flank the Langstaff Mansion's original back doorway and inspired the *frieze*—the deep, hand-painted border—that tops the parlor's walls.

Right Wall

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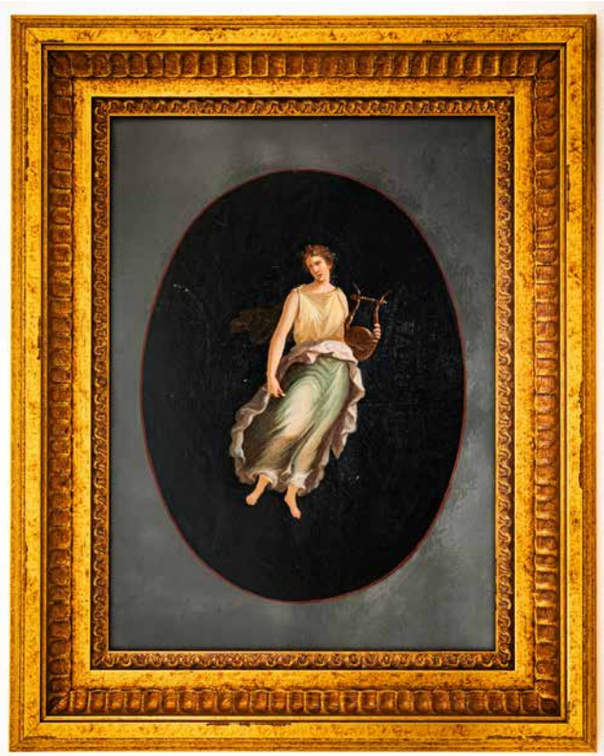

Maenad with Lyre
Unknown artist (in the style of Michelangelo Maestri, Italian, 1741–1812)
European, 19th century
Oil on board, contemporary painted frame
13 × 10 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0031

This figure appears elegant and composed, but she is a *maenad*, which means *raving one* in Greek. In Greek myth, maenads are female followers of Dionysus, the god of wine—along with festivity, ecstasy, ritual madness, and theater. To celebrate Dionysus (Bacchus in Roman myth), maenads danced frenziedly through nature. (Images of Dionysus and two *satyrs*—the god's male followers—can be found on the red and black, terracotta wine jug on page 5).

This maenad holds a *lyre*, a stringed musical instrument played to accompany the recitation of poetry (the ancient Greek term for lyre is *kithara*, which became *guitar* in English). Lyres were a favorite form in Neoclassical art and design in the 1700s and 1800s. You can see their shape in the back-splats of the *Classical Klismos-Form Spoonback Chairs* (pages 14 and 18) and the *Classical Flip-Top Breakfast-Table with Lyre-Form Base* (page 19) and depicted in a bit more detail in the fabric on the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24).

Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving
American, c. 1830
Mahogany, viscose and silk fabric ("Lampas Suchet" by Lelievre/Scalamandré, made in France)
37.75 × 90.75 × 24 inches
Gift of Stacy Lippincott Moore, Jr., Nanci Lee Moore, Mary Jane Kiefer, and Sarita Virginia Laughlin, great-great-great-grandchildren of Harriet and James Langstaff
LAN.2024.0001

It is believed that this sofa was purchased by Harriet and James Langstaff to furnish this very room. Its style—with elaborate *floriate* (flower shaped) carving—suggests that it was made by highly skilled craftspeople around 1830, the year the Langstaffs built Langeland. It's adorned with Classical motifs—its arms are ogees, the S-shaped "line of beauty." Its feet are scrolled *volutes.* The abundance of carved decoration that peaks atop the sofa echoes the high-relief decoration of the mirror—also purchased by the Langstaffs—between the front windows.

The scrolling, S-shaped ogees in the carving appear, as well, in the upholstery on this sofa and several chairs in this room. Called "Lampas Suchet," the fabric design dates to around 1800, when it was created to honor Louis Gabriel Suchet (1770–1826), a general and commander in France's Revolutionary War (1792–1802) and Napoleonic War (1803–1815). Suchet's family were silk merchants. A *lampas* is a silk fabric that has designs and decorations woven into, rather than printed on, the cloth. Woven into "Lampas Suchet" are lyres (pages 14, 19, and 23), cupids (page 17), peacocks (symbolizing French elegance and refinement), and swans (which were associated with Empress Josephine, 1763–1814, wife of Napoleon Bonaparte).

Maggio (May)
Unknown artist
Italian, late-19th century
Oil on canvas, original painted wood frame
19.7 × 27.25 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0032

This painting was likely one of a quartet representing the four seasons—its subject is springtime. Made by an unknown Italian artist, this work—like the large, round painting *Roman Ruins* (page 12)—is a *capriccio*: an image of architectural fantasy. Both it and *Roman Ruins* are, in addition, called "Grand Tour" paintings. They served as a mementoes and reminders for wealthy young visitors from elsewhere in Europe and the United States who journeyed through Italy, Greece, and France—often for years at a time—to explore their celebrated art and architecture. *Maggio (May)* combines a variety of the kinds of sites seen on a Grand Tour into one imaginary landscape.

Classical Worktable with Drop-Leaves and Scroll Feet
American, c. 1840–1870
Mahogany
32.3 × 27.75 × 16 inches
Gift of Stacy Lippincott Moore, Jr., Nanci Lee Moore, Mary Jane Kiefer, and Sarita Virginia Laughlin, great-great-great-grandchildren of Harriet and James Langstaff
LAN.2024.0003

This worktable, like the *Classical Scroll-End Sofa with Foliate Carving* (page 24) it accompanies in the Lyceum's parlor, is believed to have furnished Langeland and was presented as a gift to the Lyceum by Harriet and James Langstaffs' descendants. As with the sofa, it features Classical forms—its feet are scrolled volutes, a column supports its two drawers and drop-leafed top—but it has none of the sofa's nature-inspired carved decoration.

When they were made in the 1800s, both the sofa and this stand would have been described as *Grecian*. However, this stand—like several other pieces in this room, including the *Classical Flip-Top Breakfast-Table with Lyre-Form Base* (page 19) between the front-windows—is in what was called the *Plain Grecian* style, also known as *Pillar and Scroll*, which emphasizes the visual appeal of *figured* (highly grained) wood rather than carving.

Cachepot and Base
French, c. 1850
Porcelain with printed decal decoration
Cachepot: 19.5 × 10.5 inches
Base: 11 × 1.25 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0004a-b

A cachepot (pronounced KASH-poe) is a decorative planter that serves as a fancy container for a plainer, purely functional flowerpot. Made in France in the middle of the 1800s, this cachepot features especially vibrant Classical motifs and images. The Greek key pattern that circles the top and bottom of this piece also decorates the parlor's ceiling. This pattern is called *meandros* in Greek, like the English word *meander*, and is a symbol of eternity and of life's twists and turns.

This cachepot's two illustrations likely depict scenes from the history-inspired, but not literally historical, legend of the Trojan War, which was narrated by Classical authors such as Homer (believed to have lived in the 700s BCE) in his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. On one side, what looks to be a festive meal or party is actually an abduction: that of Helen of Troy—"the most beautiful woman in the world"—by the Trojan prince Paris who, with his accomplices, wears a soft, cone-shaped *Phrygian cap*. In legend, this abduction caused the Trojan War, as Helen was married to King Menelaus of Sparta. The other illustration likely depicts Menelaus as one of two men driving a *quadriga*, a chariot drawn by four horses, racing to rescue his abducted wife.

Calling-Card Tray with Grapevine Border
Sheffield, England, c. 1850–1899
Silverplated copper alloy
6.75 × .75 inches
Gift of Matthew F. Singer
OBJ.2024.0032

Calling cards, and the trays that held them, were important and practical accessories in upper-class homes in Europe and the United States from the late 1700s to the early 1900s. Especially before the telephone, leaving a card at someone's house was a way to express thanks, to offer condolences, share get-well wishes, or begin a visit with a family when it was "at home" and ready to receive guests in a front-parlor like this one. When the family was not "at home," calling cards were left in a silver tray. The earliest calling-cards were like those you see here—simply handwritten.

This tray is bordered with a grapevine pattern, a popular motif in ancient Egyptian, Greek, and Roman art and architecture. A grapevine-patterned knife and fork (page 34) are used to set the *Classical Round-Top, Pedestal-Base Center-Table with Paw Feet* for tea (pages 31 and 38). The parlor's hand-painted *frieze*—the broad and deep decoration at the top of its walls—features a crisscrossing grapevine pattern inspired by the decoration of the *sidelights* (narrow, vertical windows) flanking the Langtaff Mansion's original backdoor.

Grecian Woman Sitting with Child* and *Grecian Women with Child
Unknown artist
British, c. 1850
Reverse glass print,
painted resin border
10 × 12.25 inches (prints);
11 × 13.25 × .5 inches (with frames)
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0033
OBJ.2024.0034

Ancient Greek and Roman dress, like the two civilizations' art and architecture, had an enormous and lasting influence in Europe and the United States, especially between 1800 and 1820, a period called *Regency* in Great Britain and *Empire* in France (Great Britain was ruled by Prince *Regent* George IV from 1811 to 1820 during King George III's illness; Napoleon Bonaparte reestablished the French *Empire* between 1804 and 1815).

The unknown artist who made this pair of prints of "Grecian" women and children around 1850 may have been looking back just a few decades earlier in the 19th century or 2,000 years earlier to Classical antiquity—or both. Like the subject of *Portrait Miniature of a Young Woman* (page 8), the Grecian women here wear high-waisted, column-shaped dresses with only simple ribbons or cloth strips adorning their hair.

Along with demonstrating inspiration found in ancient Greek and Roman sculptures depicting women in loose, flowing belted tunics, the Grecian style of women's dress popular from 1800 to 1820 was an expression of democracy in the spirit of the American and French revolutions. Gone were the heavily constructed and constricting garments and elaborate wigs of the pre-revolutionary aristocracy.

Center of Room

→

Classical Round-Top, Pedestal-Base Center-Table with Paw Feet
American, likely Philadelphia, c. 1820–1830
Mahogany
30.25 × 37.6 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0005

A must-have item for 19th-century American parlors was the *center-table*, which—like this example—was moderate in size (larger than a stand, smaller than a dining table) with a round top and a pedestal-shaped base. Its circular shape allowed for easy flow of movement through the heart of the parlor, while the table's top was large enough for as many as four to six people to sit comfortably. This table is set for mid-morning or afternoon tea (see page 38), but the center-table was a place for varied activities: reading books, magazines, and newspapers—often aloud, as a family's evening activity; displaying a Bible to indicate morality and piety, or rare books and prints to demonstrate learning and artistic appreciation; playing cards or other games; or simply gathering for conversation.

This table's three feet are in the shape of a lion's paw, an approach to decorating furniture that began in ancient Egypt—in which gods were depicted in animal or half-animal, half-human forms and lions were revered for their majestic bearing, strength, and courage—and spread to Classical Greece and Rome.

Tables such as this one were, in the 1800s, often called *loo tables*, because they provided an ideal place for playing the card game lanterloo.

Classical Klismos-Form Scroll-Arm Chairs
British or American, c. 1830
Mahogany, viscose and silk fabric ("Lampas Suchet" by Lelievre/Scalamandré, made in France)
34.2 × 20.8 × 20.9 inches
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
FUR.2024.0001A-B

This chair is composed of several Classical forms and motifs. Its curved back and saber-shaped back-legs are inspired by the ancient Greek *klismos* chair (pages 14 and 18). Its arms are scrolled *volutes*. A *rosette* (a rose-shaped decoration seen throughout the Lyceum's parlor—at the upper-corners of its doorways, for example) graces the center of the chair's back. Its straight, fluted, column-like legs suggest that it was made in Great Britain or by a British furniture-maker working in the United States.

To learn more about "Lampas Suchet," the historic fabric in which these chairs are upholstered, see page 24.

"Astral" Oil Lamp with Ionic Column Base
American, 1843
Cornelius & Company, Philadelphia
Copper alloy, iron alloy, frosted glass with etched decoration
18.5 × 5.5 inches (lamp); 7.75 × 6.5 inches (shade)
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisition
OBJ.2024.0018a-b

A tall, thin oil lamp like this one was the center-table's most important accessory. A high-topped, centrally located *Astral* (star-like) lamp ensured that maximal direct light shined on the table's top and in all other directions, and was reflected in carefully placed mirrors, such as those above the parlor's fireplace and between its front windows.

This lamp was made by Cornelius & Company in nearby Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which was founded by Christian Cornelius, a Dutch immigrant, in 1827. Cornelius & Company became a leading American maker of high-quality, Classically inspired lighting fixtures. The body of this lamp is in the shape of an Ionic column, echoing the columns flanking the parlor's fireplace and those on the Lyceum's front *portico* (porch with a roof supported by columns; see this booklet's back cover).

Group of Classical Flatware
American, c. 1835–1875
Silver and copper alloy (mostly coin silver, some sterling silver)
Various dimensions
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisitions
OBJ.2024.0022–0027 and OBJ.2024.0035

As Americans prospered and their desire for beautiful and luxurious housewares grew in the mid-1800s, the country's silver industry responded by producing silver flatware and serving pieces in a wide and evolving array of styles inspired by ancient Greek and Roman art. Classical influence is evident in the forks, spoons, and knives set on the parlor's center-table (pages 31 and 38). Their motifs echo those in the furniture, art, and other objects in this parlor, and the interior and exterior architecture of Langeland.

Two spoons and a fork have round *medallion* tops—ancient Romans used the coin-like medallion design to commemorate important events and people or to honor gods. These pieces include *cameos* (a cameo is a profile of a head in an oval frame) of a military general in a helmet, a woman, and a youth with flowing hair topped by an ivy wreath, evoking Dionysus and Bacchus, the Greek and Roman gods, respectively, of wine and festivity. A fork and knife are decorated with a grapevine pattern, as are some of the *jasperware* (unglazed porcelain) plates on this table (page 36), the nearby calling-card tray (page 28), the *sidelights* (narrow, vertical windows) that flank the Langstaff Mansion's original backdoor, and the hand-painted frieze atop the parlor's walls (page 40). An ice-cream spoon has a *palmette* (stylized palm frond) top, like the *anthemion* (honeysuckle) patterns in the medallion surrounding the parlor's chandelier (the fronds of a palmette curl outward, those in an anthemion curl inward). A knife is topped with a *cartouche*, an oval shape with a scrolling floral border.

Most of this flatware is made of *coin silver*, which is 90% silver and 10% copper. Coin silver was used by most American silverware makers before the 1860s, when sterling silver—which is 92.5% silver—became the standard for silverware in the United States. From the late 1700s to the 1860s, the value of American paper money was often unstable, making people more reliant on silver coins that were much more valuable than the "pocket change" coins we carry today, but small and easily stolen. Therefore, it was common for wealthy American families to have their silver money melted down and made into something functional, beautiful, and larger: silverware. To make the resulting "coin silver" flatware and serving pieces identifiable and easy to trace, they were stamped with the mark of the silversmith or manufacturer and, often, the owner's initials or name.

Group of Jasperware Dinnerware
British, 20th century reproductions of c. 1800 designs
Mostly Wedgwood Pottery, Staffordshire, England;
some Adams Tunstall Pottery, Stoke-on-Trent, England
Jasperware (unglazed stoneware)
Various dimensions
Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences acquisitions
OBJ.2024.0010–0014

In the 1770s, Josiah Wedgwood (1730–1795)—who was born into a family of accomplished potters—invented *jasperware*, a type of unglazed *stoneware* (dense pottery fired at high temperatures to make it resistant to liquids). Jasperware takes its name from jasper, a natural mineral that—like Wedgwood's creation—has a *matte* (neither smooth nor shiny) surface.

The decoration of jasperware by Wedgwood and his competitors was called *sprigging*—low-relief (that is, mostly flat or two-dimensional) designs inspired by ancient Roman *cameo glass*, which was developed around 30 BCE and featured classical motifs, including scenes from myth, in white figures on dark backgrounds.

Among the characteristic Wedgwood patterns seen on the parlor's collection of jasperware are "The Archers," "The Three Graces," "Muses Watering Pegasus," and various "Sacrifice Figures" groups: women standing before smokey altars, frequently accompanied by children, cherubs, and the animals—sheep, goats, pigs, and other farm animals—that ancient Greeks sacrificed before festivals to celebrate their gods.

Wedgwood continues to produce jasperware using its original Neoclassical designs from the late 1700s. The parlor's center-table (pages 31 and 38) is set with such both-old-and-new pieces. When it was introduced, jasperware was meant to be used. Today, however—given that it is not microwaveable or dishwasher-safe—Wedgwood is collected for decorative display.

On the Walls, Windows, and Floor

Harriet and James Langstaff built, finished, and furnished Langeland in a rather *high-style* (finest quality) Greek Revival mode, especially inside the home. We can see that in the details of the moulding on the ceilings and doorways of its rooms; in its carved King of Prussia marble fireplace surrounds; in the *églomisé* (EGG-low-mee-ZAY; paint and gilding on glass) decoration in the fanlight above the front door and the sidelights that flank the door in the next room; and in the parlor's richly carved sofa, which was passed down in the Langstaff family and presented as a gift to the Lyceum by Harriet and James Langstaff's descendants.

As of now, there are no records of how this parlor's walls were painted, its windows dressed, or its floors covered. Fortunately, parlors were considered so important that the way they were furnished and finished quickly became very consistent in the United States in the 1800s. There are numerous images—paintings, drawings, and photographs—of other high-style parlors, some of which have been preserved or restored at other Greek Revival homes—including the White House. The Lyceum's staff studied and learned from these many examples before commissioning the hand-painted wall frieze, draperies, and carpet seen here.

While parlor walls could be wallpapered or simply painted, homeowners who had the means might decide to have their parlors decorated with original and unique *murals* (a mural is a painting executed directly on a wall). In creating the parlor's **frieze**—the broad and deep decoration at the top of the walls (OBJ.2024.0037)—Delaware-based muralist Nadia Zychal took inspiration from the églomisé decoration in the neighboring room's sidelights. The frieze, like the sidelights, features bouquets of flowers framed by crisscrossing grapevines. To ensure its longtime safety, Zychal painted the frieze on canvas, rather than on the wall itself.

Conceived and produced by the Pennsylvania-based master seamstress and designer Mary Buckwalter, the **draperies** (OBJ.2024.0038a-c) are made of silk that is loosely gathered and draped in cascading shapes in the manner of ancient Greek and Roman clothing as depicted in sculpture and other forms of Classical art. A heavier drape—bordered with a Greek key (*meandros*) pattern, symbolizing eternity and life's twists and turns—overlaps a sheer curtain, which allows light to filter into the room while maintaining some privacy. Crowning the window treatments are *pelmets*—solid valances (OBJ.2024.0039a-c). Those here are exact replicas made by the Connecticut-based Westmount Group based on digitally scanned fragments of the parlor's original wood pelmets, which were carved with a *floriate* (flower-like) pattern centered on a bunch of grapes, echoing grape and grapevine motifs that grace the frieze and various objects in this parlor.

The **carpet** (OBJ.2024.0036) was made by combining two archival, 19th-century Neoclassical patterns offered by Stark Carpets. The primary motif in both the main portion of the carpet and its border is the laurel vine. This echoes the laurel wreaths crowning the head of the Apollo-like youth shown in, and forming the border of, *Charger with Portrait of a Young Roman Man* (page 15) on the left wall to the far right. This is a wool *Wilton* carpet, meaning the loops of its pile are left uncut, producing a tight, smooth surface that is especially durable and well-suited for incorporating detailed designs (in most carpets, the loops are cut to provide a plush appearance and texture). It was woven by Langhorne Carpet Company in Penndel, Pennsylvania, using period materials and techniques. Langhorne Carpet Company was established in 1930 and closed in 2023.

The Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences thanks the individuals and businesses whose specialized skills, knowledge, products, and services contributed to the beauty and historic authenticity of its parlor and adjoining entry-hall: Debra Breslin Conservation; Mary Buckwalter Custom Interiors (drapery); Ralph Cerino; Green Hill Art Services/Doug Matlaga; Peter Lalor Fine Paperhanging; Lammey+Giorgio Architects/William Lammey; Langhorne Carpet Company; Corine McHugh Conservation; Michael's Decorators/Michael and Steve Tonucci (upholstery); Montani Mountmaking/Matt Gay; Konstantinos Nikoloutsos, PhD (consulting scholar for Classical history, myth, and art); Nathanael Roesch, PhD (graphic design); Alison Rooney Communications; Rossi Brothers Cabinet Makers/Victor Rossi (furniture restoration); Scalamandré (fabrics); STARK Carpet; studioMUSarx/Joseph A. Nicholson and Stephen Zablotny; T & E Glass and Improvements; Westmount Group (pelmets); Virginia J. Whelan Textile Conservation; and Nadia Zychal (decorative painting).

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What You See Here: An Illustrated Guide to the Furniture, Art, Decorative Objects, and Finishings of a Greek Revival Parlor
Text: Matthew F. Singer, PhD, in consultation
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Photography: Anthony Jacobsen
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The Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences

As when it was founded in Mount Holly in 1860, the Burlington County Lyceum of History and Natural Sciences is a forum for ideas and a home for culture, technology, and natural history. It provides opportunities for individuals of all ages to learn, enhance, enrich, and improve their own lives and, in doing so, make positive contributions to their communities.

The Lyceum has been reimagined as a living museum, and it will become more and more so over the course of 2025 as its permanent exhibitions make their debut. It will continue to grow into a space to encounter what we have done, seen, and been here in Burlington County and Mount Holly, the County seat.

Over the coming year, the rooms of what was once an elegant Greek Revival home—the Langstaff Mansion, built in 1830—will transform into illuminating exhibition galleries. These galleries will show and tell the stories of people who have lived on the land that is now Burlington County, of the environment that shaped their ways of life, and of the individuals, businesses, and local governments that have worked to preserve and develop the land over time.

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