American Paintings
from the
Widener University and Alfred O. Deshong Collections
January 12 to March 26, 1988

CLIFFORD WARREN ASHLEY (1881-1947)

LePanto, 1571, 1925
oil on canvas, 38" x 83"
Widener University Collection,
Gift of Mr. A. Felix duPont
Lent by Brandywine College Library

Clifford Ashley was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, on December 18, 1881. He studied art in Boston at the Eric Pape School, which N.C. Wyeth, Sidney Chase, and Ashley's cousin Henry Peck also attended. These four also studied under George L. Noyes in Annisquam, Mass., during the summer of 1901. That fall Ashley moved to Wilmington to study with Howard Pyle. After 1904 Ashley usually spent winters in Wilmington and summers in New Bedford, when he was not traveling elsewhere. (It was Ashley's glowing accounts of Howard Pyle that convinced N.C. Wyeth to come to Wilmington to study.)

During 1908-09, Ashley was occupied buying mahogany furniture in Jamaica and selling it in Rhode Island. In 1913 he settled in New Bedford but returned to Wilmington in the summer of 1915. He and Stanley Arthurs traveled to California, then returned to Wilmington, where Ashley remained until the summer of 1916. He moved his permanent residence to Fairhaven, Mass., near New Bedford, often returning to Wilmington during the winter. In 1932, he married Sarah Rodman Scudder Clark and began to renovate a farmhouse he had long owned in Westport, Mass., and the couple moved there. They had two daughters, Phoebe and Jane.

By 1904, Ashley's illustrations were appearing in many important magazines such as Collier's, Success, and Leslie's Monthly, and more commissions were to follow. He also spent a good deal of time on his marine paintings. Brought up on stories of the whaling
trade, he spent a great deal of time painting the sea and the New England shore. He exhibited his work several times, including a two-man show with Stanley Arthurs at the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts in 1934. He also exhibited at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts between 1911 and 1922.

In later life he wrote books about seafaring, including Yankee Whaler and The Ashley Book of Knots. The latter is filled with drawings of whaling scenes and knotmaking and contains about 3900 different kinds of knots, many invented by Ashley.

Ashley was associated with many clubs and organizations including the Author's League of America, the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, the Wilmington Society of the Fine Arts, the Explorers Club of New York City, and the New Bedford Yacht Club. He was also a trustee of the Swain Free School of Design in New Bedford. Ashley died on September 18, 1947 at Westport.

The Battle of LePanto

In 1570 the Ottoman Turks invaded the island of Cyprus, then owned by Venice. The Venetians, weakened by years of fighting the Turks, appealed for help. Possession of Cyprus would allow the Turks to dominate the Mediterranean. So Pope Pius V assembled a fleet of 208 galleys (oared warships) and six galleasses (huge oar-driven ships with 44 guns), from the navies of Venice, Spain, and the Papal States, under the command of Don John of Austria. This fleet met 230 Turkish galleys, under the command of Ali Pasha, off LePanto, Greece, on October 7, 1571. The fight lasted 3 hours. All but 40 of the Turkish galleys were destroyed or captured; the Christians lost only 12 ships. The battle of LePanto was the last great naval engagement in which galleys played a major part, and it was the end of the Turkish threat to Europe from the sea.

MARY BUTLER (1865-1946)

Seascape
oil on board, 28" x 36"
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Landscape
oil on board, 27" x 34"
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Mary Butler was born in Philadelphia. She was a pupil of William Merritt Chase, Robert Henri and Edward Redfield. (In 1902, Redfield accepted students for a summer of sketching and landscape painting at his home in Center Bridge, Penna.) She was a member of the Fellowship of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA), elected secretary of that organization in 1909. A prize in her memory is presented at each Fellowship Annual exhibition. Her paintings are in the collection of PAFA, among others.
WILLIAM WORCESTER CHURCHILL (1858-1926)

The Model, 1914
oil on canvas, 45" x 31"
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson
and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

The Painter, 1913
oil on canvas, 45" x 31"
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson
and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

William Churchill was born in Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts in 1858, but grew up in Boston. He was the son of William Worcester and Caroline (Woodman) Churchill, and a descendant of John Churchill, who came from England in 1640 and settled at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Churchill was educated in private schools in Boston and attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology briefly. He went to Paris where he was a pupil of the painter Leon Bonnat.

Churchill's work was exhibited in many important exhibitions in the United States and at the Paris Salon. His portraits of two Massachusetts governors, Winthrop M. Crane and John L. Bates, hang in the State House at Boston. He also painted the portrait of Francis A. Walker, a former president of MIT. His painting Leisure is in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He exhibited regularly in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Annual Exhibitions for a period of 30 years and his paintings were illustrated five times in Annual catalogues. The Painter was shown there in 1914; The Model in 1917.

He became known for his portraits and paintings of idealized nudes, painted in the mildly classical style of much of 19th century academic art. It is interesting that in most of his scenes of artists painting or sculpting nude figures the artist appears to be the same man -- perhaps a self portrait.

Churchill was a member, and one of the organizers, of the Metropolitan Improvement League, Boston; an originator and treasurer of the Guild of Boston Artists; a Massachusetts commissioner of the Fireman's Relief Fund; and, from 1887-98, a member of the 1st corps cadets, Massachusetts Militia. He was a member of the St. Botolph Club, the Bunker Hill Monument Association, and the Bostonian Society. Churchill died in Washington, D. C., in 1926.

* PAUL CORNOYER (1864-1923)

After the Rain - Gloucester, c. 1921
oil on canvas, 32" x 36"
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson
and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

*If biographical information on an artist is not included in the following pages, it is located on cards next to the painting.
Charles Harold Davis (1856-1933)

**Summer Clouds**
oil on canvas, 40" x 50"
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

Charles Davis was born on January 7, 1856 in Amesbury, Massachusetts. His father was a school teacher and librarian and his mother, a cultured woman, included the poet John Greenleaf Whittier among her close friends. Davis developed an early interest in art and, although he apprenticed himself to a local carriage maker at the age of fifteen, he continued to spend much of his free time painting and drawing. By the end of his four year apprenticeship he had grown dissatisfied with the carriage making trade, and decided to devote his entire time to art.

In 1877 Davis left Amesbury to enroll in the newly founded school of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He remained there two years, studying with the German artist, Emil Otto Grundman. In September of 1880, Davis sailed for Paris with the help of a one thousand dollar gift from Jacob R. Huntington, a wealthy Amesbury carriage manufacturer. He enrolled in the Academie Julian and studied under Jules Lefebvre and Gustave Boulanger. Davis did not stay at the Academie Julian for very long after he discovered the Barbizon Forest near Paris. He fell in love with the area and settled in the village of Fleury, near Barbizon. It was here that he met Angele Genevieve Legarde, whom he married in 1884.

Davis spent the next decade painting independently in France where he was undoubtedly brought into contact with the Impressionists. He exhibited regularly at the Paris Salon and, at the same time, sent works home to exhibitions in Boston and New York. Recognition and financial success increased during the time he spent in France.

As the artist's two children approached school age, Davis and his wife decided it was time for the family to return to America. They first went to Amesbury, in the spring of 1891, and finally settled in Mystic, Connecticut early the following year. There were no prominent artists residing in the Mystic region when Davis arrived. Several of Davis's artist friends began to join him in Mystic to paint during the summer months. Meanwhile, the long and costly illness and subsequent death of his wife forced Davis to take on a heavy load of students. As a result, Mystic began to evolve into a summer artist's colony with Davis as its leader. In 1913, the artist along with two of his friends, founded the Mystic Art Association, an organization that is still very active today.

In 1900 Davis married Frances Darby, a former student. He spent his later years painting, teaching, writing and lecturing on art. He died on August 5, 1933.

Davis considered his cloud paintings an important aspect of his work and submitted several of these compositions to major exhibitions. Out of approximately 200 paintings which span the years 1901-1915, 39 were cloud compositions with low horizons.
ADOLPH DIODA (1915- )
Bull, 1959
sandstone, 16" h x 17" w
Widener University Collection,
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Potamkin

JACOB EICHHOLTZ (1776-1842)
Portrait of John Bullock
oil on canvas, 36" x 29"
Widener University Collection,
Gift of Mrs. John Emlen Bullock

Jacob Eichholtz was born on November 2, 1776 in Lancaster, Penna. He became an expert coppersmith but, early on, developed a talent for portrait drawing. Several artists visiting the area encouraged Eichholtz. Thomas Sully, who visited Lancaster on the eve of his departure for Europe in 1809, left Eichholtz his 'half-worn brushes' and directed him to the instruction of Gilbert Stuart in Boston. Eichholtz went to Boston and, as a sample of his work, took with him his best known painting, a portrait of Nicholas Biddle with the U. S. Bank in the background. On his return, he settled in Philadelphia as a professional portrait painter, remaining there for 10 years. Following the style of Sully and Stuart, he painted more than 250 portraits and some landscapes and historical groups, between 1810 and the time of his death in 1842.

John Bullock (1785-1847), Founder of Widener University

John Bullock, a Friend, was a native of Springfield, New Jersey. In 1804, he attended the Westtown School, a Quaker boarding school located in Westtown, Pennsylvania. After completing his studies, he remained there to teach mathematics. John Bullock is also credited with delivering the first lecture on electricity at the school.

Bullock left Westtown in December, 1813, to become a teacher at the Hilles School for Girls in Wilmington, Delaware. (Eli and Samuel Hilles were brothers and Bullock's former classmates at the Westtown School.) He became very active in the Wilmington Meeting and in his community. He was also the Delaware Temperance Society's founding president.

He was issued a certificate of marriage on December 1, 1820 and, shortly thereafter, left the Hilles School to found his own school. According to the records of the Society of Friends, Bullock founded his school on King Street, Wilmington, but soon after moved his school to Ninth and Tatnall Streets. The Ninth and Tatnall location has always been considered the founding location of the University as it housed the Bullock School (for boys) and its successor institutions -- The Alsop School, and Delaware Military Academy -- for 40 years (until the operation was moved to Pennsylvania).

(The above information on John Bullock is taken from Dr. Clarence R. Moll's "A History of Pennsylvania Military College - 1821-1954".)
RICHARD BLOSSOM FARLEY (1875-1954)

 Incoming Mist, 1918  
 oil on canvas, 26" x 45"  
 Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

GEORGE INNESS (1825-1894)

 Woodland Scene  
 oil on canvas, 25" x 34"  
 Widener University Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton B. Parker

DANIEL RIDGEOFY KNIGHT (1839-1924)

 Pot Au Feu, Paris, 1876  
 watercolor, 14" x 21"  
 Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Daniel Ridgeway Knight was born on March 15, 1840 in Philadelphia. He was a pupil at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and, in 1872, he went abroad, studying for some years in Paris at l'Ecole des Beaux Arts and under Gleyre. He was in the studio of Meissonier in 1876. He sent several paintings to the Paris Salons and exhibited frequently at the National Academy, New York. He died in France on March 9, 1924.

JONAS LIE (1880-1940)

 Fishermen's Cottages, c. 1917  
 oil on canvas, 50" x 60"  
 Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

SAMUEL ALOYSIUS M. MURRAY (1869-1941)

 Sorrow  
 bronze, 28" h  
 Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

 Alfred O. Deshong  
 bronze, 26" h  
 Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Samuel Murray was born in Philadelphia in 1869. He was the 11th of 12 children of immigrant Irish Catholic parents. He attended local public and parochial schools and at the age of fifteen he first showed serious interest in art. In the winter of 1886-87, he enrolled in the newly formed, and short-lived, Art Students League.
of Philadelphia, where he studied painting under the director and sole instructor, Thomas Eakins, with whom Murray formed a fast and enduring (30 years) friendship. Murray soon decided to specialize in sculpture and in 1892 he and Eakins began to share a studio at 1330 Chestnut Street which they maintained together for eight years. In 1890, Eakins secured a part-time faculty position for Murray at the Philadelphia School of Design for Women (now Moore College of Art). From that time until the week before his death in 1941, Murray taught modeling and lectured on anatomy at the school.

Murray was well-known in the Philadelphia area for his sculpture of life-size and small-scale portraits of relatives, friends, and patrons. A few of the large scale works by Murray are ten biblical figures of terra-cotta for the eighth-floor ledge of the Witherspoon Building in Philadelphia (his first public commission), a large bronze statue of Commodore John Barry located near Independence Hall, and the marble Civil War monument toped by a 20½-foot-high bronze Winged Victory for Gettysburg National Military Park. More than 40 pieces by Samuel Murray are now in the collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Sorrow is a model for a life-size statue which stands on the Deshong burial plot in Chester Rural Cemetery. The identity of the woman who posed for Sorrow is uncertain. We know that the large figure was modeled in 1910, cast in bronze the following year and erected on the cemetery plot by February 1912, the year before Alfred Deshong's death.

GEORGE WASHINGTON NICHOLSON (1832-1912)

*Coast Scene
oil on paper, 10" x 14"

Landscape
watercolor, 10" x 14"

River Landscape
oil on paper, 10" x 14"

Landscape with Inlet
oil on canvas, 11 3/4" x 16"

Winter Scene
oil on panel, 12" x 10"

Winter on the Farm
oil on canvas, 18" x 30"

Eastern Scene
oil on paper, 14" x 10"

Approaching Storm
oil on paper, 10" x 14"

Moonlight Harbor
oil on paper, 10" x 14"

Poultry
oil on paper, 10" x 14"

Winter Scene
oil on panel, 12" x 16"

English Town Scene
oil on panel, 19" x 14"

Winter Scene #1
watercolor, 10" x 14"

Storm at Sea
oil on board, 8" x 11½"

*All are Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection.
George Nicholson was born in Salem County, New Jersey in 1832. A landscape and genre painter, his career was spent chiefly in Philadelphia. He travelled extensively, visiting England, France and Egypt. In France, he worked with Louis Gabriel Eugene Isabey. In 1867, he exhibited his work from England at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts including a "Sketch from Nature, Looking Towards Windsor Castle." He was made an Associate of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts as a tribute to his skill and devotion to his art. He was also an associate member of Northwest Gallery of American Art.

Increasingly concerned about the state of his son's health, Nicholson chanced upon an advertisement claiming the curative powers of the pine air in Hammonton, New Jersey. About 1904, he purchased a home there, on Central Avenue, and set up his studios. (His son, George Jefferson, went to work for a local florist and lived a long and healthy life, dying in Hammonton in 1945 at the age of 82.)

It was in the large studio in his new home that the elder Nicholson painted a large picture of Washington crossing the Delaware. This painting, with life-size figures, hangs in the statehouse in Harrisburg.

Alfred O. Deshong, a wealthy art patron and Chester resident, frequently visited Nicholson in New Jersey, purchasing many of his paintings. There are 19 paintings by George Nicholson in the Alfred O. Deshong Collection, several of which appear to be small studies, in oil and watercolor, for larger paintings.

George Nicholson died in 1912 in his home on Central Avenue in Hammonton, and is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery.

GEORGE LOFTUS NOYES (1864-1954)

Meadows in Winter, c. 1910-15
oil on canvas, 33" x 35"
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

XANTHUS SMITH (1838-1929) (Attributed to)

A Cavalier in XVII Century Costume, 1881
wash and ink, 22" x 15"
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Not much is known about Xanthus Smith. He was born in Philadelphia and was a painter of marine scenes, chiefly scenes of naval battles. He died on December 2, 1929.
LILLY MARTIN SPENCER (1822-1902)

Raspberries on a Leaf, 1858(?)
oil on panel, 10" x 13"
Widener University, Alfred O. Deshong Collection

Lilly Martin was born in Exeter, England, in 1822. Her parents, Gilles and Angelique Martin, immigrated to the United States (Marietta, Ohio) in 1830 with the idea of forming a utopian colony of families. They were idealists and reformers, supporting the three main causes of the century: abolitionism, women's rights, and the temperance movement. As a child, Lilly was educated at home and her father strongly supported his daughter's artistic talent. This talent revealed itself at an early age. At seventeen she covered the plaster walls of her family home with charcoal murals that included full-sized portraits of the family, landscapes, and varied domestic scenes. This event was written about in the local newspaper and the murals soon became a tourist attraction for the surrounding area.

In 1841, Lilly held her first exhibit of paintings in the local Episcopal Church, charging a 25¢ admission fee to raise funds for her education. As a result of this exhibition, a wealthy Cincinnati patron of the arts offered to finance her training in Boston and Europe but, for reasons unknown, she refused the offer.

After lessons from local painters, she studied briefly in Cincinnati with James Beard and John Insco Williams. In 1844 she married Benjamin Rush Spencer. Benjamin recognized early on that his wife would be the breadwinner in the family. He took over many of the domestic duties at home and helped to manage the business side of her work. (Lilly Spencer bore 13 children but only seven survived.)

Lilly exhibited her work wherever she could -- from art supply stores to the Cincinnati Society for the Promotion of Useful Knowledge. In 1848 the Spencers moved their growing family to New York City. But Lilly soon found herself competing with the more polished, European trained artists. She began to take night classes at the National Academy of Design to improve her drawing and knowledge of perspective.

In 1854 the Cosmopolitan Art Association began to promote her work. Her fame spread and her name became a household word. She was well-known for her domestic sentimental scenes. However, although she was exhibiting at the prestigious National Academy, her work was not selling well enough. As the years passed it became very difficult to provide for her large family. Photography began to replace portrait commissions, and the domestic scene was no longer popular with the art-buying public. Collectors were looking toward Europe for art. Late in her life many of her paintings were auctioned for as little as ten dollars, and at the end she was forced to trade paintings for food. She died in 1902 at the age of 80.
ROBERT SPENCER (1879-1931)

Grey Mills, c. 1915
oil on canvas, c. 1915
Widener University Collection, Gift of A. Carson Simpson and Mrs. Peggy Simpson Carpenter

ALEXANDER CHARLES STUART (1831-1898)

Storm Off Coast of Delaware
oil on canvas, 22" x 36"
Widener University Collection, Gift of the Fine Arts Council

GILBERT STUART (1755-1828)

Portrait of Edward Shippen
oil on canvas, 27" x 21"
Widener University Collection, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. R. Alexander Montgomery. Lent by Delaware Law School

Gilbert Stuart was born in the Township of North Kingston, Rhode Island, on December 3, 1755. The family moved to Newport in 1761 and, about 1770, Stuart became acquainted with the Scottish artist, Cosmo Alexander, his first teacher. In 1772 he went to Scotland with his teacher but, sadly, Alexander died in Edinburgh that same year. Stuart remained in Edinburgh for a short time but returned to his home in 1773. An English sympathizer, he returned to England in 1775 and from 1777 to 1782 painted in the studio of Benjamin West. He opened his own studio in London and became one of the most sought after portrait painters in England. He painted the portraits of such artists as Benjamin West, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Gainsborough and Copley; the actor, John Philip Kemble; the Duke of Northumberland and Admiral Sir John Jarvis.

By 1792 Stuart was working in Ireland. He had been forced to flee debts in London, where he had begun his lifelong habit of living beyond his means. He decided to return to the United States with the idea of increasing his finances by painting the new heroes of the Revolution. He worked in New York City in 1793-94, and in Philadelphia and Germantown in 1794-1803. It was during the latter period that he painted three life portraits of George Washington. He moved to Washington in 1803 to paint the portrait of Thomas Jefferson. He was in Bordentown, New Jersey in 1805 and, thereafter, in Boston where he died on July 9, 1828.

Edward Shippen

Edward Shippen, the subject of this portrait, was born in Philadelphia on February 16, 1729. He was educated in Philadelphia and in 1743 began a five year apprenticeship in the office of Tench Francis (then and for many years afterwards Attorney-General of Pennsylvania) and there acquired a practical knowledge of law and legal forms. After
his apprenticeship he thought that a course of study in London would benefit him and, also, give him prestige in his profession. He sailed from Philadelphia and reached London in February 1749. In the summer he travelled to Versailles and Paris. In addition, he spent a little time travelling in England. He returned home in the summer of 1750, having been admitted to the English bar on February 9 of that year. After his return to Philadelphia, his father gave him a house on Walnut Street in anticipation of his marriage to Margaret Francis, the daughter of Tench Francis. The couple was married on November 29, 1753. They had nine children, one of whom, Margaret, married Benedict Arnold.

On September 25, 1750, he was admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania and soon became one of the leaders of the provincial bar. Shippen was a moderate Loyalist, but maintained a position of neutrality during the Revolution. He and his family were prominent in the social life of Philadelphia during both the British occupation and the military administration of General Arnold. His career was not seriously affected by the treason of his son-in-law.

On September 14, 1784, he was appointed a judge of the high court of errors and appeals, which was at that time the highest appellate court in Pennsylvania and he served on this court as a special judge until 1791. He was a member of the Supreme Court from 1791 until 1805, as an associate justice until 1799 and then as Chief Justice. His health began to fail early in 1805 and later in the year he resigned from the bench. He died at his home in Philadelphia on April 15, 1806.

**UNKNOWN ARTIST (19th century)**

New Jersey Marsh
oil on canvas, 24" x 40"
Widener University Collection,
Gift of Mr. Wesley Dunnington

**NEWELL CONVERS WYETH (1882-1945)**

"I am advertising the Brotherhood of Man, Simplicity, Truth, and Freedom from Possessions."
(American Magazine, December 14, 1914)
oil on canvas, 26½" x 25"
Widener University Collection, Purchase