



Archives Report

A second reminder to patronize those suppliers who contributed so generously to the Eakins Exhibition framing project. When buying mat board or having your art framed, ask for Crescent mat board. They contributed 50 sheets (wholesale value, \$350.00) of archival mat board. They also did the same for our Horter Show. Also The Frame Fit Company who contributed 400 feet of picture frame moulding (wholesale value \$350.00). Phone for their catalog (1-800-523-3693) and mention the Sketch Club. They are a local Company and offer 24 to 48 hour service for all your framing needs. Work on Archives continues – call me if you wish to help. **Dick Cohen**, Archives (610) 352-3692.

Art Collection

As previously reported, the painting "In the Studio" by **Hugh Henry Breckenridge** (1870-1937) was donated to the Sketch Club by Breckenridge's grand-daughter and great-granddaughters. **Terry Newman** has generously offered to have it restored by Newman Galleries. Due to the painting's size (5' x 6') and its poor condition, restoration will take considerable time. Progress on this work is continuing. Newman Galleries will also be restoring two of the **William Thomson** portraits in the foyer that have some chipped paint. One of these, a portrait of **Earl B. Milliette**, is completed and has been hung on the wall above the bulletin board.

There are painters who transform the sun into a yellow spot, but there are others who, thanks to their art and intelligence, transform a yellow spot into the sun.

– Pablo Picasso

Who's That? Adam Pietz

Once again my work is made easy because **Willard G. Myers**, who was the Club's Secretary from 1945 to 1949, and eventually the Club's President in 1950, was kind enough to write the following biography of Adam Pietz in 1962, shortly after Adam's death. I provide his piece in its entirety.

One of the most remarkable geniuses among those who have belonged to the Sketch Club was Adam Pietz, who died early in December of last year. Adam was a sculptor, a medalist, an engraver, and an etcher. He was born July 19, 1873, in Offenbach, Germany. He studied art in Germany and, after coming to America as a youth, he studied at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and at the Art Institute of Chicago. He joined the Philadelphia Sketch Club in 1900, and was a member continuously until his death, December 6, 1961.

He joined the Sketch Club when the club rooms were on the top floor at Eleventh and Walnut Streets, and there is still around the Club an old steel letterhead die, with the Club seal and the words "11th and Walnut, Phila., Pa." on a ribbon, which Adam engraved shortly after he joined. He designed and cast many medals and plaques for the Club, as the Club history testifies; for the monthly painting contests, for the Annual Outing competitions, etc. In recent years he engraved and presented the dies for the Distinguished Service Award, in 1948, first presented to Nicola D'Ascenzo, and since then to six others. In 1960, a labor of love in his 87th year, he designed and executed the Sketch Club's Hundredth Anniversary Medal.

The bronze plaque of Thomas Anshutz in the Library was modeled from life, as was the bas-relief of Joseph Pennell, now over the mantelpiece in the Library. The latter, which Adam presented to the Club at our Hundredth Anniversary Dinner on November 21, 1960, was exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1921, and was always considered by Pennell as his best portrait.

Adam Pietz was a prodigious worker and made busts, plaques and bas-reliefs of many of the important personages of the city and nation. Examples are to be found in the permanent collections of the Pennsylvania Academy, the Philadelphia Art Museum, and the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as in the Franklin Institute, the Philadelphia Academy of Music, the Philadelphia Institute for Medical Research, and many other societies and institutions.

Sculptor / Medalist / Engraver/ Etcher – 1873 - 1961

In 1927, he was made Assistant Engraver at the United States Mint in Philadelphia, a position he held for nearly 20 years. During that time he engraved dies for many U. S. coins and medals, including the Iowa Centennial commemorative half-dollar, commemorative coins for France and Belgium, the first 5¢ airmail die for stamped envelopes, coinage for the first Republic of China, and many others. He designed a special gold medal awarded by Congress for the first flight over the North Pole. Portrait plaques of Mauritz Leefson and August Heinze are in the Academy of Music and a striking medal of Stephen Decatur is in the U. S. Navy Yard at Philadelphia.

There was a warm friendliness and comradeship in Adam Pietz, despite the reports of quarrels of historic proportions that seem to have occurred in his younger days.* But he loved the Sketch Club, and of late years seemed happiest under its sheltering roof. Those of use who knew them best think of him fondly as the smiling, genial German who was so much a part of the Club he loved for over 60 years. His work will live after him, for truly "the bust outlasts the throne, the coin, Tiberius."

* With regards to quarrels of historical proportions, I refer the reader to the Club's September 1909 mock trial of John Williams versus Adam Pietz. It would appear that these two bet each other \$5.00 who could drink the most and stay sober back in April in that year, and Mr Pietz, who had a reputation for being a bit miserly, might have welched on his bet.

To be sure, despite his trial, it is obvious that Adam was much devoted to the Club and was an active participant. In 1909 he was one of the chief actors in William Wood's production of an "Irish Wake" at the Club's St. Patrick's Day Party. He made a gift of a dozen Baedeckers to our library in 1917. The decorated bulletin board over the steps leading to the rathskeller was another gift in 1925.

It is to be noted that the Philadelphia Sketch Club has always had organized subcultures that coexisted within it. Such a group was "The Hairy Apes" to which admission was difficult. "No member can be proposed unless he possesses an unusually high order of intelligence, a calm well-balanced, impartial judgment and No Hair." Adam was a member. I wonder if I would have been considered a viable candidate.

Compiled from the PSC Archives by **Bruce H. Bentzman**