

New exhibition to open at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center on April 1, 2016

“From the Ground Up: Archaeology, Artisans, Everyday Life”

MILLVILLE, NJ (February 17, 2016) – On April 1, 2016, The Museum of American Glass at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center will open “From the Ground Up: Archaeology, Artisans, Everyday Life.” On view until December 31, 2016, this is the first major exhibition of artifacts excavated in conjunction with the Interstate 95 Improvement Project which began in 2009 in Philadelphia. The ongoing dig, undertaken by PennDot and the Federal Highway Administration and executed by AECOM Cultural Resources, has recovered nearly one million artifacts from the Northern Liberties, Kensington-Fishtown, and Port Richmond neighborhoods.

When the excavations began, no one expected to find so much evidence of the past remaining in an urban industrial area. Among the biggest surprises was the discovery of nearly a dozen Native American sites, the earliest dating to about 3,560 B.C. The excavations also included a portion of Dyottville Glass Works that remained deeply buried beneath the roadway.

The majority of the artifacts were recovered from backyard privies (outhouses) in the neighborhood adjacent to Dyottville and other waterfront glass factories. These discarded household goods dating from the late 18th to early 20th century tell how families living along the waterfront prepared and served their food, lit their homes, cared for the sick, fed their children, and addressed personal and social issues that are still relevant today.

Many of the artifacts that will be displayed were made in glass factories and potteries that were established in the area to take advantage of the region’s sand and clay. The excavations have recovered an exceptionally large amount of early glass ranging from bottles and whimsical creations to blown, pressed, and cut tableware. The glass offers insight regarding the ties between the South Jersey glass industry and the glass factories that once stood along the Delaware River waterfront in Kensington.

AECOM’s historic glass specialist, Mary Mills, is heading up this effort to bring artifacts from the 195 dig to South Jersey. “Early American glass scholars are very excited about our project because we’re excavating where glassworkers lived in the 19th century. We’re recovering a vast amount of glass, including unique pieces that were never mass marketed to the public. As we analyze what the glassworkers had in their homes, we realize that glassmaking was an important part of Kensington’s identity, just as it was in Millville,” said Mills.

From the Ground Up will offer WheatonArts visitors the opportunity to learn about the lives of the people that lived in the Delaware Valley in recent centuries, while paying special attention to the glass and

pottery industries. The objects and what they represent will be explored and interpreted in this special exhibition. Visitors are encouraged to visit both the Glass Studio and Ceramics Studio while at WheatonArts to experience artists at work employing traditional and contemporary artistic process techniques, which is designed to further understanding of all the temporary and permanent artifacts housed in the Museum collection. Visitors will be able to learn about these artifacts in a self-guided tour of the permanent collection and the special exhibition and/or participate in a docent-led tour that is offered daily at 2:30 p.m. As of April 1, 2016, WheatonArts will be open Tuesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Admission prices and additional information for planning a visit to WheatonArts can be found by visiting wheatonarts.org or by calling 1-800-998-4552 or 856-825-6800.

More information on the I95 dig can be found at diggingi95.com/.

WheatonArts strives to ensure the accessibility of its exhibitions, events and programs to all persons with disabilities. Provide two weeks notice for additional needs. Patrons with hearing and speech disabilities may contact WheatonArts through the New Jersey Relay Service (TRS) 800-852-7899 or by dialing 711.

Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New Jersey Cultural Trust. WheatonArts receives general operating support from the New Jersey Historical Commission, Division of Cultural Affairs in the New Jersey Department of State, and is supported in part by the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.

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