



Gratz Insider, March 2012 - Story Continuation

[To return to the newsletter, close this page.]

Gratz Family History

The Gratz name certainly resonates with all of us as beneficiaries of the breadth and scope of Gratz College programming. However, the significance of the Gratz name in Philadelphia extends beyond the College walls and back in time to the American Revolution. The Gratz Family's history is one of patriotism, economic success, philanthropy and support for Jewish causes. Given this history, as well as the long-standing relationship between the Gratz and Rosenbach Families, it is not surprising that Philadelphia's Rosenbach Museum & Library contains an extensive Gratz Family collection.

What is surprising, though, is how a Thomas Sully portrait - long thought to be lost - of Maria Cecil Gist Gratz surfaced and is now hanging in the Rosenbach Museum gallery with other Gratz family portraits. The story began when museum curator Judith Guston, in a last-ditch attempt to locate this portrait, initiated a blog post that was fortuitously seen by a descendant of the Gratz Family - who just happened to own the sought-after painting. What began with a blog post ended with a ceremony at the museum on Sunday, March 4th in honor of the Gratz Family and in recognition of the new portrait. Also, officially acknowledged were paintings of the siblings Rebecca and Joseph Gratz, which were acquired by the museum in 2010. For more on the fascinating discovery of the Maria Gratz portrait, view the recent article in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* at www.philly.com/philly/entertainment/140977803.html?viewAll=y.

The Gratz exhibit at the Rosenbach Museum & Library not only contains an extensive collection of family portraits, but also displays some of the family's personal items, as well as silver, furniture and books. In fact, the museum will be holding two upcoming hands-on guided tours of the Gratz collection and other early American Judaica: the first on Friday, March 23rd from 3 to 4 p.m. and the second on Sunday, April 15th from 3 to 4 p.m. For more information, consult the Rosenbach Museum & Library website at www.rosenbach.org.