

July 11, 2013

News Release

For Immediate Release

Art Museum reunites couple after 100 years apart

On July 27, the Springfield Art Museum will reunite a pair of portraits by artist George Caleb Bingham after a century-long separation.

The portraits are those of prominent Greene County businessman Lewis Allen Dickens (L.A.D.) Crenshaw and his wife, Fanny Smith Crenshaw. According to the Crenshaws' descendants, the couple was personal friends with Bingham, who painted them as a pair circa 1869. They are buried in Maple Park Cemetery.

L.A.D. was one of the earliest settlers of Greene County and Springfield, moving to the area from Nashville in 1841. By 1848, he had acquired 1,200 acres of land and was considered one of the community's most prominent citizens. His wife, Fanny, characterized her husband as "a warm friend and a fearless enemy."

Fanny, also from Nashville, moved to Springfield in 1855 and married L.A.D. in 1867. Crenshaw family history describes her as a 'strong-minded character' and talented in music and art – creating oil paintings into her later years.

The portrait of Fanny has been with the Springfield Art Museum since 1990, when her daughter, Clara Crenshaw Early, donated it. The portrait of L.A.D. remained in the possession of the Crenshaw family and is currently on loan to the Springfield Art Museum from Rachael Cozad Fine Art in Kansas City. The portraits will hang side-by-side in an upcoming exhibition of the museum's collection titled, *Creating an American Identity*, which will open July 27 in the Musgrave Wing.

"These are significant paintings for so many reasons," says Sarah Buhr, Springfield Art Museum curator of art. "They are historically significant as portraits of Springfield's first settlers and early city leaders; artistically as examples of George Caleb Bingham's late works, and also for the museum as we complete a pendant pair – husband and wife portraits. We hope this installation will give the Crenshaws time to 'catch up' from their century-long separation."

Visitors may view the portraits starting July 27 when the reinstallation of the museum's permanent collection opens to the public. Admission to the Springfield Art Museum is free. The Springfield Art Museum is located at 1111 E. Brookside Drive. For more information, call 417-837-5700 or visit www.springfieldmo.gov/art. Hours are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 9 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursdays; 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Fridays and Saturdays; and 1-5 p.m., Sundays. The museum is closed on Mondays and on national holidays.

For more information, contact: Curator of Art Sarah Buhr, sbuhr@springfieldmo.gov, or Director Nick Nelson, nnelson@springfieldmo.gov, at 417-837-5700.