

How a haunted Mount Joy house produced an artist

The architecture of Lancaster and surrounding areas at the turn of the century, as captured by Mount Joy watercolorist David McNeely Stauffer, is featured in one gallery of the Heritage Center's current exhibition at Center Square, Lancaster.

A certain mystery exists as to why Stauffer (1845 - 1913), an engineer known primarily for his design of bridges, produced his meticulously detailed paintings and sketches of buildings. Were they done for a book that was never published? with the idea of an exhibition like the Heritage Center's? simply as a pastime? to preserve the details of buildings before they were lost to history? No one knows for sure.

RAISED IN A HAUNTED HOUSE

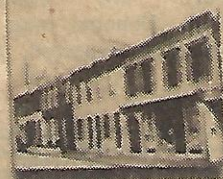
Stauffer was born in Mount Joy. His mother died when he was a year old and he was raised by his stepmother, who was concientious by unaffectionate. The young Stauffer attached himself to his father, who helped the boy develop his talents. His childhood home, by his own de-



A Stauffer watercolor

scription, "was built in the last quarter of the eighteenth century by a seafaring man, who was reported by the neighbors to have once been a pirate... He lived here a lonely life, cared for only by an Indian woman as housekeeper. Finally becoming tired of himself and life, he hanged himself in his bedroom on the first floor, and he was buried in a tomb he had prepared for himself in the yard of the old 'Bell Schoolhouse.' "

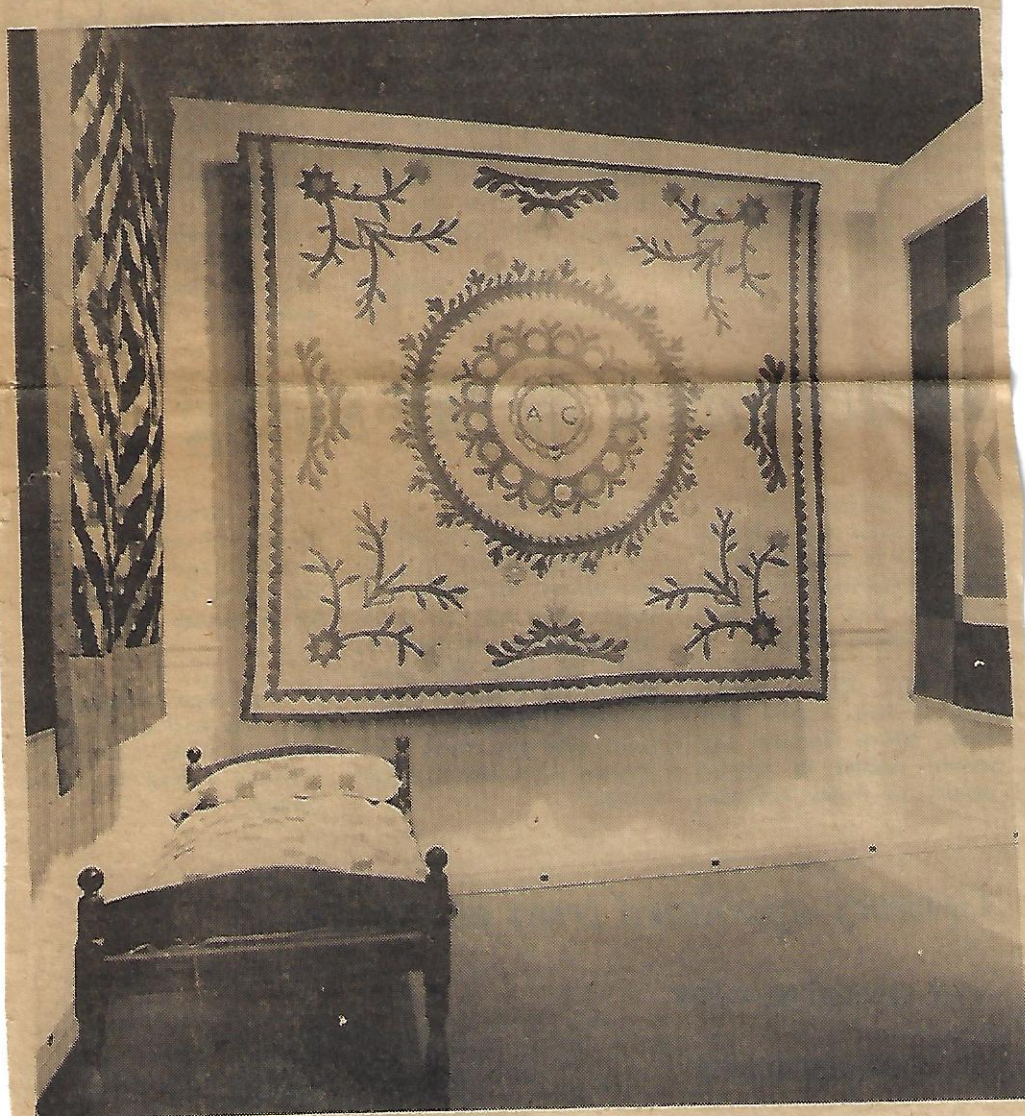
Later, the house was believed by some to be haunted, and reports circulated about about a small black pyramid that was said to float from room to room. Perhaps the eerie quality of his boyhood surroundings influenced Stauffer's life



another Stauffer watercolor

and the strange but undeniable talent he poured into his works of art.

used in furniture-making, and other examples of the early arts and crafts of Lancaster County.



One of the most valuable collections of Lancaster County-made quilts ever assembled is on display in the Heritage Center's current exhibition of early arts and crafts, open to the public in Lancaster's Old City Hall building. Here is one portion of the quilt gallery.

The cotton quilt at center was made

by Annie Garber, who created its design before her marriage while living at her parent's home in the Donegal Springs area. An adaptation of the central medallion form used in quilt design, it features calico appliques on a plain-colored, textured background. A scalloped border adds interest to the design.