

Dear Members of the Environment Committee: I am writing to express my concern that the proposed Ivory Ban in HB No. 5578 not be enacted into law by the Connecticut Legislature.

Examples of objects in museum collections that would be affected by this ban are varied and extensive, but one in the Slater Memorial Museum's collection is a Miniature on ivory watercolor portrait of Brigadier General Moses Cleaveland in the uniform of the Connecticut militia. On the back of the single piece of ivory is another painting of a tombstone with two figures mourning - the tombstone bears the name F.M. Cleaveland, died 5th Feb, 1798.

Moses Cleaveland (January 29, 1754 – November 16, 1806) was a lawyer, politician, soldier, and surveyor from Connecticut who founded the U.S. city of Cleveland, Ohio, while surveying the Western Reserve in 1796.

Cleaveland was born in Canterbury, Windham County, Connecticut. He studied law at Yale University, graduating in 1777. That same year, with the American Revolutionary War in progress, he was commissioned as an ensign in the 2nd Connecticut Regiment of the Continental Army. In 1779 he was promoted to captain of a company of "sappers and miners" (combat engineers) in the newly formed Corps of Engineers. He resigned from the army on June 7, 1781 and started a legal practice in Canterbury.

He was known as a very energetic person with high ability. In 1788, he was a member of the Connecticut convention that ratified the United States Constitution. He was elected to the Connecticut General Assembly several times and in 1796 was commissioned brigadier general of militia. He was a shareholder in the Connecticut Land Company, which had purchased for \$1,200,000 from the state government of Connecticut the land in northeastern Ohio reserved to Connecticut by Congress, known at its first settlement as New Connecticut, and in later times as the Western Reserve.

He was approached by the directors of the company in May 1796 and asked to lead the survey of the tract and the location of purchases. He was also responsible for the negotiations with the Native Americans living on the land. In June 1796, he set out from Schenectady, New York. His party included fifty people including six surveyors, a physician, a chaplain, a boatman, thirty-seven employees, a few emigrants and two women who accompanied their husbands. Some journeyed by land with the horses and cattle, while the main body went in boats up the Mohawk, down the Oswego, along the shore of Lake Ontario, and up Niagara River, carrying their boats over the long portage of seven miles at the falls.

At Buffalo a delegation of Mohawk nation and Seneca tribe Indians opposed their entrance into the Western Reserve, claiming it as their territory, but waived their rights on the receipt of goods valued at \$1,200. The expedition then coasted along the shore of Lake Erie, and landed, on July 4, 1796, at the mouth of Conneaut Creek, which they named Port Independence. The Indians were propitiated with gifts of beads and whiskey, and allowed the surveys to proceed. General Cleaveland, with a surveying party, coasted along the shore and on July 22, 1796, landed at the mouth of the Cuyahoga River. He ascended the bank, and, beholding a beautiful plain covered with a

luxuriant forest-growth, divined that the spot where he stood, with the river on the west and Lake Erie on the north, was a favorable site for a city.

He accordingly had it surveyed into town lots, and the employees named the place Cleaveland, in honor of their chief. There were but four settlers the first year, and, on account of the insalubrity of the locality, the growth was at first slow, reaching 150 inhabitants only in 1820. Moses Cleaveland went home to Connecticut after the 1796 expedition and never returned to Ohio or the city that bears his name. He died in Canterbury, Connecticut. Today, a statue of him stands on Public Square in Cleveland. The statue makes occasional appearances in popular media referencing Cleveland, including the movie *Major League* and the viral video "Hastily Made Cleveland Tourism Video", in which he is credited for "inventing" Cleveland.

The place called "Cleaveland" eventually became known as "Cleveland". One explanation as to why the spelling changed is that, in 1830, when the first newspaper, the *Cleveland Advertiser*, was established, the editor discovered that the head-line was too long for the form, and accordingly left out the letter "a" in the first syllable of "Cleaveland", which spelling was at once adopted by the public. An alternative explanation is that Cleaveland's surveying party misspelled the name of the future town on their original map.

Portrait miniatures began to flourish in 16th century Europe and the art was practiced during the 17th century and 18th century. They were especially valuable in introducing people to each other over distances; a nobleman proposing the marriage of his daughter might send a courier with her portrait to visit potential suitors. Soldiers and sailors might carry miniatures of their loved ones while traveling, or a wife might keep one of her husband while he was away.

The first miniaturists used watercolor to paint on stretched vellum. During the 18th century, watercolor on ivory became the standard medium. The use of ivory was first adopted in around 1700, during the latter part of the reign of William III.

Another object in the Slater Museum's collection that would fall into the ivory ban category is a beautiful example of Orramel and John Whittleseys' craftsmanship. It is pianoforte of mahogany with rosewood inlay, ivory keys and is decorated with gilt stenciling in a dolphin motif and brass ornaments. Its seven legs are cut in a rope pattern, and it is signed "J. Whittlesey."

The Music Vale Seminary and Normal School was established in 1835 by piano maker Orramel Whittlesey (1801-1876). It continued in operation at what is now 149 Hartford Road (Salem Four Corners) until he died. An iron plaque issued in 1936 for the state's tercentenary now marks the seminary's location.

In 1936, in celebration of Connecticut's 300th anniversary, the State commissioned and installed markers at sites of historical importance. The Music Vale Seminary is still so memorialized.

Patriarch John Whittlesey owned an ivory factory in Salem and this may have unwittingly and unwillingly been the inspiration for his sons to start the manufacture of fine pianos and pianofortes in the town. In an article appearing May 26, 1928, in The Hartford Daily Times, Vera Lear Grann asserts that the brothers, after buying a piano, begged their dour father for music lessons. Instead, they themselves were forced to pay from their ivory factory earnings for lessons in New London. Later, while John (Jr.) and Orramel went to New York City to seek their fortunes as young men, they left their younger brother Henry behind. Since all three were studying piano at the time, there was a need for an instrument in New York and another in Salem. Accordingly, Orramel disassembled the purchased piano and used it as a pattern to make another, then reassembled the first. Thus, a vocation was born.

For a time, Orramel lived in Buffalo with his young bride, Charlotte Meconda Morgan (whom he called Meconda), and infant second daughter, Sarah. Here, he learned and perfected the craft of making pianos and, from a distance, shared trade "secrets" with his brothers still in Connecticut. Sources differ on the number of years Orramel remained in Buffalo, but he clearly wished to return to his home and did so in 1833. At that time his pianos were selling in New York City for between \$150 and \$250. Deana St. Jean, Salem Town Historian, reported that, as their skills improved, they grew dissatisfied with their early work and wished it all destroyed.

Leaving the manufacture of fine pianos to his brothers John and Henry could not have been easy. The workshop was very well respected, supplying pianos to the best houses around New England. In their museum in Washington, D.C., the Daughters of the American Revolution display "an elegant pianoforte made by Orramel Whittlesey of Salem, Connecticut" in the Rhode Island Room.

The Slater Museum is fortunate to own The piece is currently on display in the museum on the mezzanine level in the northeast corner of the Slater building. It was donated to the museum by Mrs. Sidney R. Burleigh in 1938. Barely a year later, Salem celebrated the centennial of the "opening" of Music Vale, and the event was reported in the Norwich Bulletin, noting the piano in the Slater's collection.

Two pianos on display in the Town House of the Salem Historical Society exhibit the virtuoso woodturning that exemplified the legs of Whittlesey pianos. Remarkably, these two have been restored and are in at least annual use for public performances at the Society's charming museum. A yellow house a bit east of the museum is all that remains of Music Vale. The house is now owned by the first family outside of Whittlesey descendants.

These two objects alone tell a remarkable, and indisputably troubled story of ivory in Connecticut. Were these objects to come on the market today and were we unable to preserve them in institutions like the Slater Museum, as instruments of interpretation and education, it would only be a further tragedy.

I urge you vote HB No. 5578 down. Thank you so much for your attention.

Vivian F. Zoë, Director
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