



Museum of Missing History
Have you got a clue?

Museum of Missing History Announces Early Successes and New Initiatives

21 April 2008, Audubon, Pennsylvania – The Museum of Missing History (MOMH) today announced some of its early successes and the launch of a second stage in its growth including a fundraising campaign.

The number of visitors to the MOMH website (museumofmissinghistory.org) has recently been averaging more than 100 per day, up from 62 per day in March. “Our website traffic is tiny by most standards,” says Martin Murphy, director of the Museum, “but we’re very pleased to be drawing this many hits with little promotion and no press.”

Another important measure of success is the connections that the Museum makes. Already the Museum has connected a leading Degas scholar in California with a woman in England who remembers seeing Degas bronzes in Beirut, Lebanon before the civil war there. And a private collector has been able to share some of his most historically important pieces anonymously with scholars.

“It’s like a rocket,” says Mr. Murphy. “The first stage was building the beta version of the website and proving the concept. This was done with just me, a few volunteers, and what money I could afford to put into it. Now that the concept is proven we’re ready to take it to the next stage.”

The first priority of any fledgling nonprofit is fundraising. The Museum is seeking donors, both large and small. “The bottom line here is that we need everyone’s support, whether it’s \$5 or \$5,000. Big donors and foundations want to see that an organization has support before committing their big bucks. To them, 100 small donations can say more to than one large donation.”

MOMH is also reaching out to anyone who has information about which historic objects are missing and their stories. The Museum has only 21 entries in its Catalogue of Missing Objects “out of the thousands of stories of missing historic objects,” says Mr. Murphy. “That’s why we need the help of students, scholars, and enthusiasts to pull together the information about what’s missing.”

The Museum of Missing History is the museum of the mysteriously missing pieces to the puzzle of the past. We tell the stories of missing historic objects and their discoveries. MOMH also offers educational materials based around the quest for and discovery of missing history.

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Overview of the Museum

The Museum of Missing History (MOMH) is the museum of the mysteriously missing pieces to the puzzle of the past. We tell the stories of missing historic objects and their discoveries online at museumofmissinghistory.org.

Primary Goals

- Bring missing historic objects to light so that they can be preserved and studied
- Increase public appreciation of history, art history, and material culture
- Be a resource for scholars and cultural organizations who seek objects for preservation and study

Connections

MOMH is a clearinghouse for information; we open new pathways between people, objects and history. This produces many connections, only some of them expected. We are connecting...

- ...museums/scholars with important objects and information
- ...objects with their history
- ...people with objects and history
- ...people with museums and other resources for learning

Overall Impact

Taken all together these connections feed on each other. They accelerate the pace of discovery and preservation, expand knowledge of the past, and increase the public's appreciation of history, art history and material culture.

Organization and Funding

The Museum of Missing History is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization without affiliation to any particular museum or institution. The Museum is dependent upon donors to fund our work. Most of our funding comes from individuals with the remainder sought through foundation grants.

The Museum of Missing History acts strictly as a conduit for information. The Museum takes no financial interest in any object.



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Background of the Museum

The Museum of Missing History (MOMH) was born out of the realization that thousands of historic objects known to scholarship are missing or “unlocated.” Listening to lectures on history and art history it seems that nearly all mention at least one missing object which could shed important new light on the topic. Speakers often add, “If anyone here knows where it is, please see me afterward.” This line always gets a chuckle, but how often does it actually produce results?

Until now there has been no dedicated place for sharing the stories of missing historic objects even just amongst scholars and enthusiasts; and the general public is completely in the dark. Meanwhile, every day people pass by objects that could open new frontiers in the study of history, art history and material culture if only the right people knew where they were.

Informal discussions with museum curators and other scholars confirm that there are thousands of historic objects that have simply fallen out of sight. The curator of one house museum commented, “I’ve got a whole file drawer of [information on] things that we would like to find.”

Clearly, most of these objects have become separated from their history and the people who own them do not realize their historic importance. It is only by educating everyone, scholars and the general public alike, about what is missing that these things will come to light. Otherwise, many of these objects may be lost to history forever.

MOMH has been developing slowly since 2003. The first entries from the Catalogue of Missing Objects (COMO) were published in *The Catalogue of Antiques & Fine Art* (now *Antiques & Fine Art*) magazine in 2005. In February 2007 the Museum received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status from the IRS. At the end of 2007 work on the MOMH website began in earnest and it went live in February 2008.

Martin Murphy is the founder of the Museum and has a degree in History from Northeastern University in Boston. His career has included public relations, computer systems consulting, and antiques dealing and scholarship. He credits this specific mixture of experiences with making the need for the Museum of Missing History obvious to him.

The Museum’s office is located in Audubon, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia.