

An introduction to the Goleman Collection

By Patrice L. Jeppson

I am here today to tell you about a rather unique, recent development in Philadelphia archaeology. It involves a story from the past that also offers to enrich the future of the public's engagement with Philadelphia archaeology-- a story that contributes to our understanding of both the history of archaeology in Philadelphia, and the history of historic preservation in the city of Philadelphia.

12/02/2016 1:31PM



is the Philadelphia Archaeological forum interested in about 10 boxes of pottery & porcelin sherds from Colonial Philly circa about 1760's ?

12/02/2016 11:13PM

Hi Myla, any peaks at the past material world are important. Do you know where the materials come from originally? Patti Jeppson

It begins one day last December when an intriguing message arrived at the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum's Facebook page. I am the PAF webmaster and I answered the post, written by Myla Rogers, who had asked whether PAF had any interest in some boxes of pottery and porcelain sherds. (above)



In follow up communications, photographs of some of the boxes were sent. Information was asked for and answered in emails and by phone providing background explanations about the who, what, when, where and why – through recollection's and stories about Myla's father collecting materials from construction areas near Old City while working with a man at the University of Pennsylvania who was named perhaps Cotton.

A request was made to take a first look at this surprising possible peak at the past. This took place on a day when Myla and her sister Caren were clearing out their late father's house prior to putting it up for sale.



The boxes, which the sisters remembered from their youth, were stored in their father's garage on robust shelving purposely constructed to support the weight of collected ceramic fragments. Our preliminary survey, on a day when it was 22 degrees outside and maybe 21 degrees in the garage, found that the almost 50 year old boxes, many in a decomposing state, were actually

stacked two deep on the shelves. The number of boxes presumed present increased to an estimated 40 if re-boxing was done to lessen the weight and mass of each box.



That month's meeting of the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum included in its agenda a discussion and debate on the pros and cons of PAF taking on such a collection. This included archaeological research and collection ethics considerations as well as the unusual and unknown possibilities of having a collection that could be open access to the public.



In the US, archaeologically recovered artifacts belong to the land owner and archaeologists usually only have access to excavated objects while the evidence is under study, after which the materials are turned over to their owner, and often are put in a museum or another kind of officially dedicated repository or storage center. It is not usual for archaeologists to have available for public use objects that are not controlled by that structured process – which this collection offered. On the other hand, was it archaeology? Could archaeological studies be done with the collection if it cannot be determined not just which well and or privy but what house lot or even block the material might come from.



Waterfront development in the late 1960s

May 14, 1969

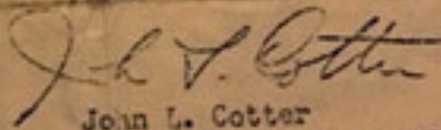
Mr. James Di Biase, Chief of Constr. Div.
Design and Construction
General Services Administration
2nd and Chestnut Sts.
Phila., Pa. 19106

Dear Mr. Di Biase:

In accordance with our telephone conversation of yesterday, and with my subsequent meeting with Mr. Stevenson on the Federal Building job, I should like to recommend that you notify the contractor that I have delegated Mr. Joel Goleman of [redacted] and Mr. Albert Bauer, [redacted], Philadelphia 19124, to assist me in salvaging data and objects which may still be observed in the excavation.

These gentlemen have agreed to do this work when the job is not operating and on their own time. The objective is to salvage data in an effort to meet in some degree the terms of the Federal 1906 antiquities act which provides for the safeguarding of antiquities such as the wells and cisterns that extend into the earth at the Federal Building site.

Sincerely,



John L. Cotter
Chief of Archeological Research
Philadelphia Service Center

"...I have delegated Mr. Joel Goleman...to assist me in salvaging data and objects....

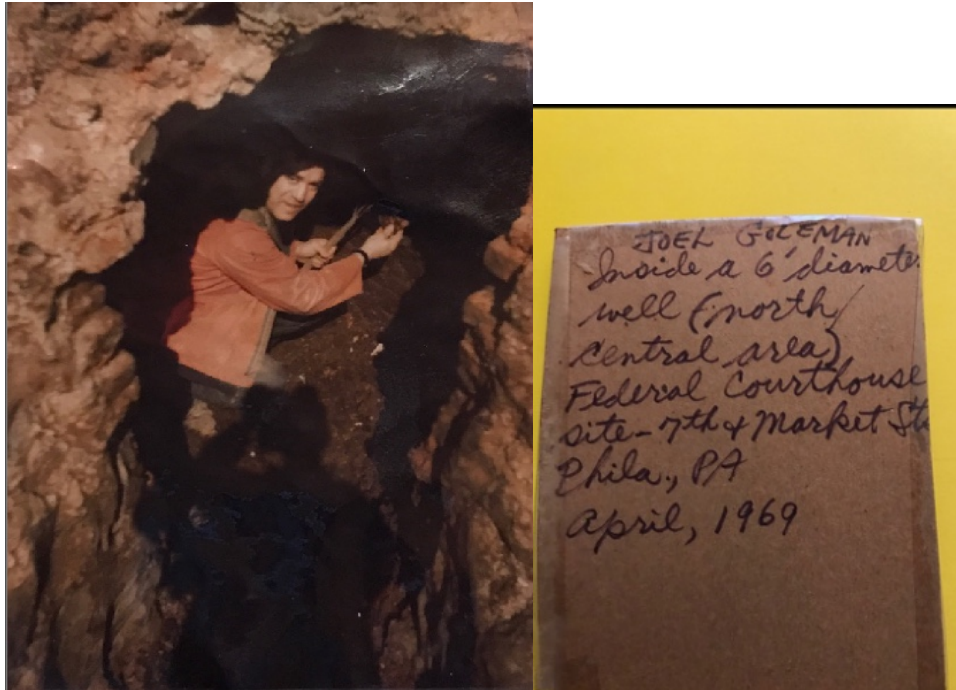
The objective is to salvage data in an effort to meet in some degree the terms of the Federal 1906 antiquities act which provides for the safeguarding of antiquities such as the wells and cisterns that extend into the earth at the Federal Building site. "

Correspondence, from John L. Cotter, Chief of Archeological Research,
to James Di Biase, Chief of Construction Division, Government Services Administration, 1969

In going through their father's papers at this time, Myla had come across a few documents relevant to the collection including this 1969 letter (above) written by John Cotter --a National Park Service archaeologist who was also a professor of archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania and who, for this story, is notable as the Associate Director of archaeologist for the Pennsylvania Historical Salvage Commission-- and it was in all three of these capacities that Cotter, not Cotton, interacted with Joel Goleman.

Cotter's correspondence indicates that he had delegated Mr. Joel Goleman...to assist him in salvaging data and objects with the objective being to' salvage data

in an effort to meet in some degree the terms of the Federal 1906 antiquities act which provides for the safeguarding of antiquities such as the wells and cisterns that extend into the earth at the Federal Building site. (A location identification for at least some of the collection IF it could be figured out which of the boxes came from that site.)

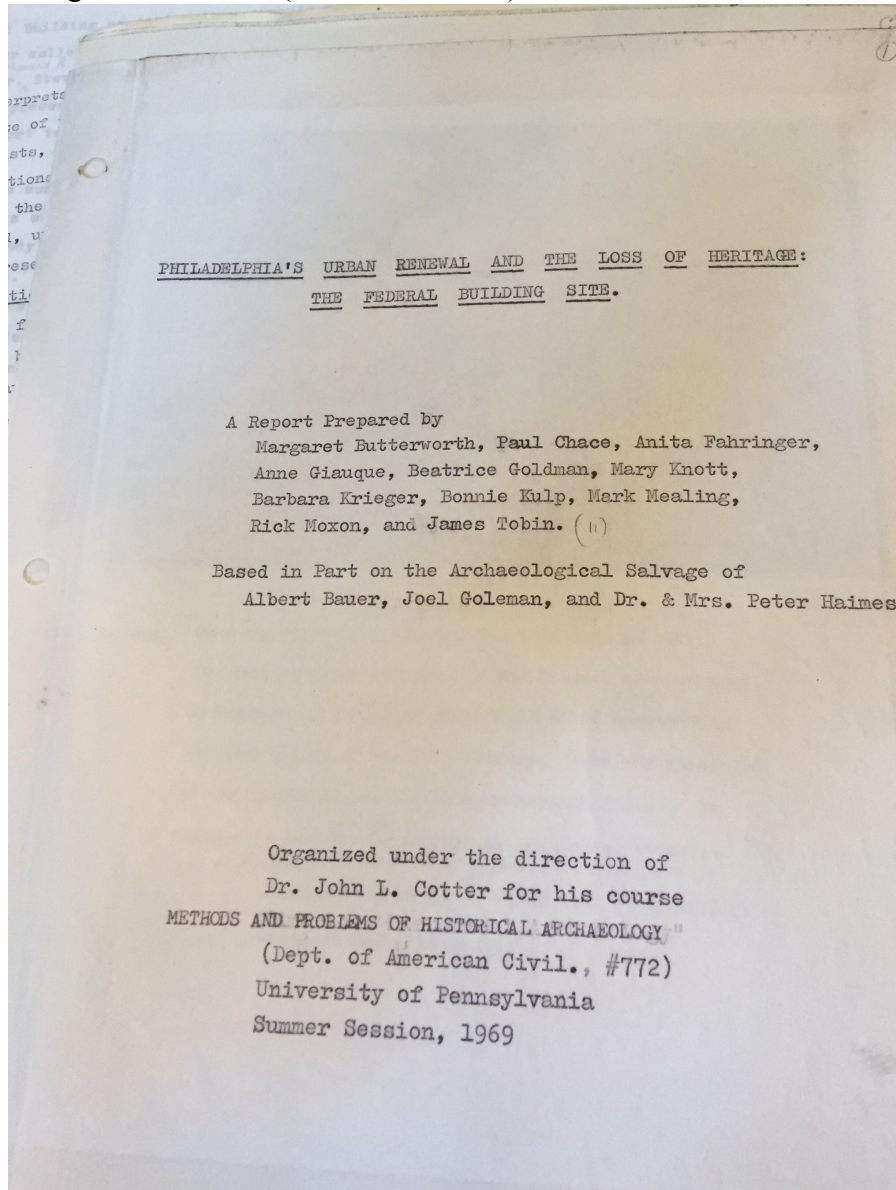


Goleman was one of several citizens who cooperated with the Pennsylvania Historical Salvage Commission — a group of history, archaeology, and architectural professionals outraged at the loss of the city's historical fabric due to the development of I-95 and several federal building projects in Old City -- and who were scrambling to record and collect what information could be 'salvaged'. Extensive blocks of long-time residences and many workplaces were being demolished, permanently dislocating inhabitants, neighborhoods, and businesses. Major cries for historic preservation were raised as a result.



Goleman's participation in this preservation mission is recorded in other documents that Myla has come across in her father's house and in the John Cotter collection of archaeological records

in the University of Pennsylvania Archives where I recently undertook some preliminary background research (above and below).



This includes at least one archaeological report produced by students at the University of Pennsylvania in 1969.

When Penn students in a summer course mapped the spots where Goleman and four other members of the public performed the salvage in cooperation with Cotter who (I quote) enlisted the collectors' cooperation and labor in assembling an organized, unified collection from the various features" (below).

Map 1
Map Showing the Approximate
Locations of the 7 Wells
Noted on November 8, 1970

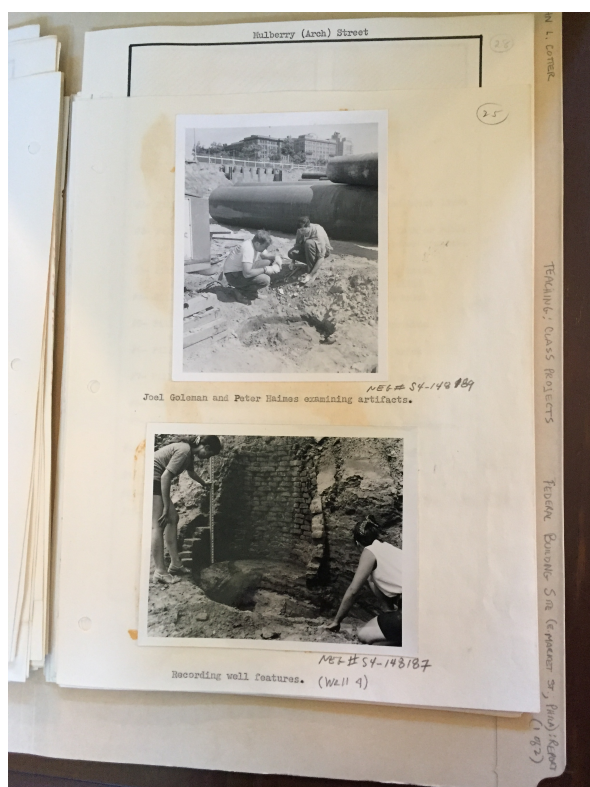
WELL #1 Depth: 13.8
below sidewalk "sidewalk"

WELL #2 Depth: 15.0'

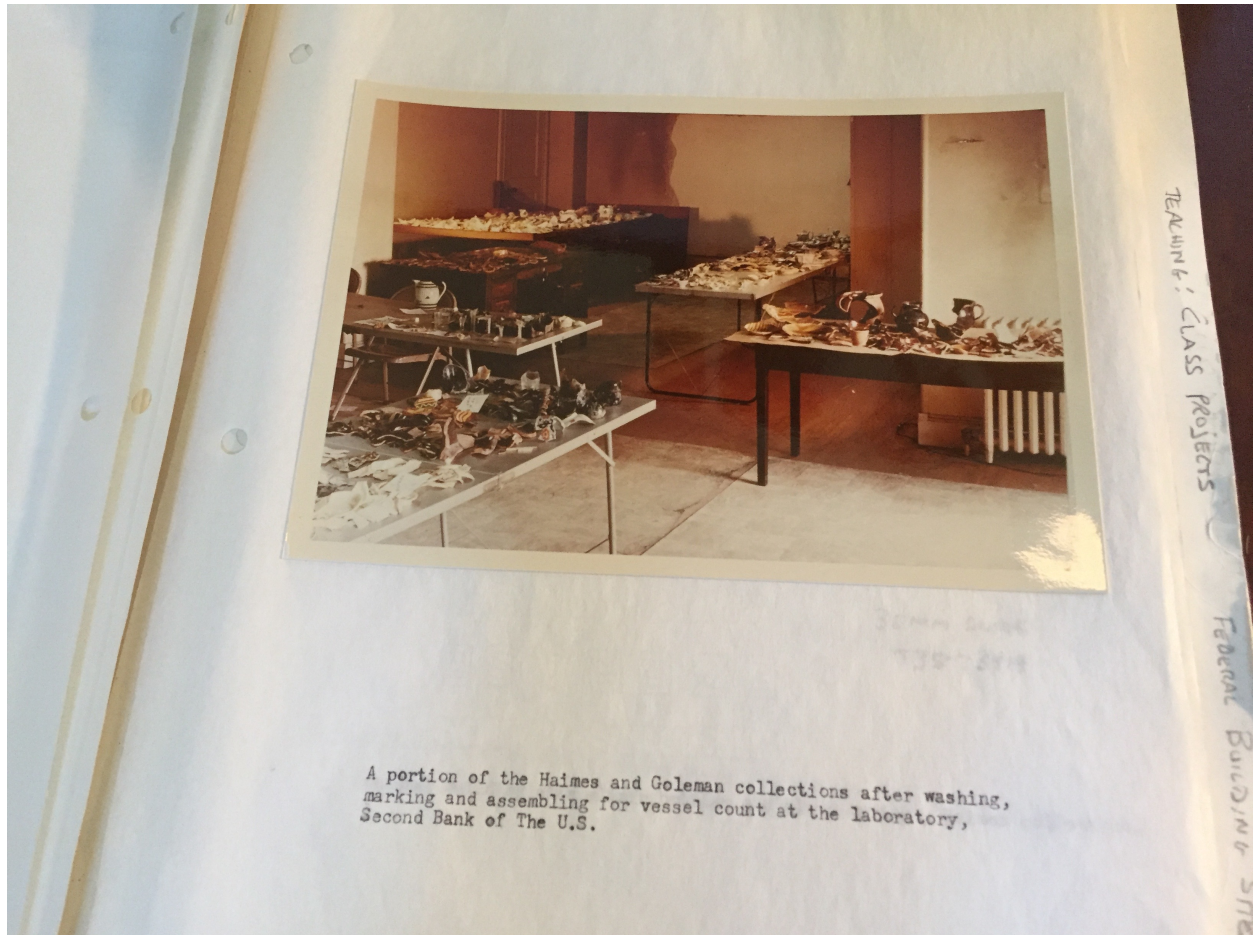
WELL #3 Depth: 15.1' to 15.3'

JRC. 3/3/71

APPROXIMATE
SCALE
1 INCH = 125 FEET

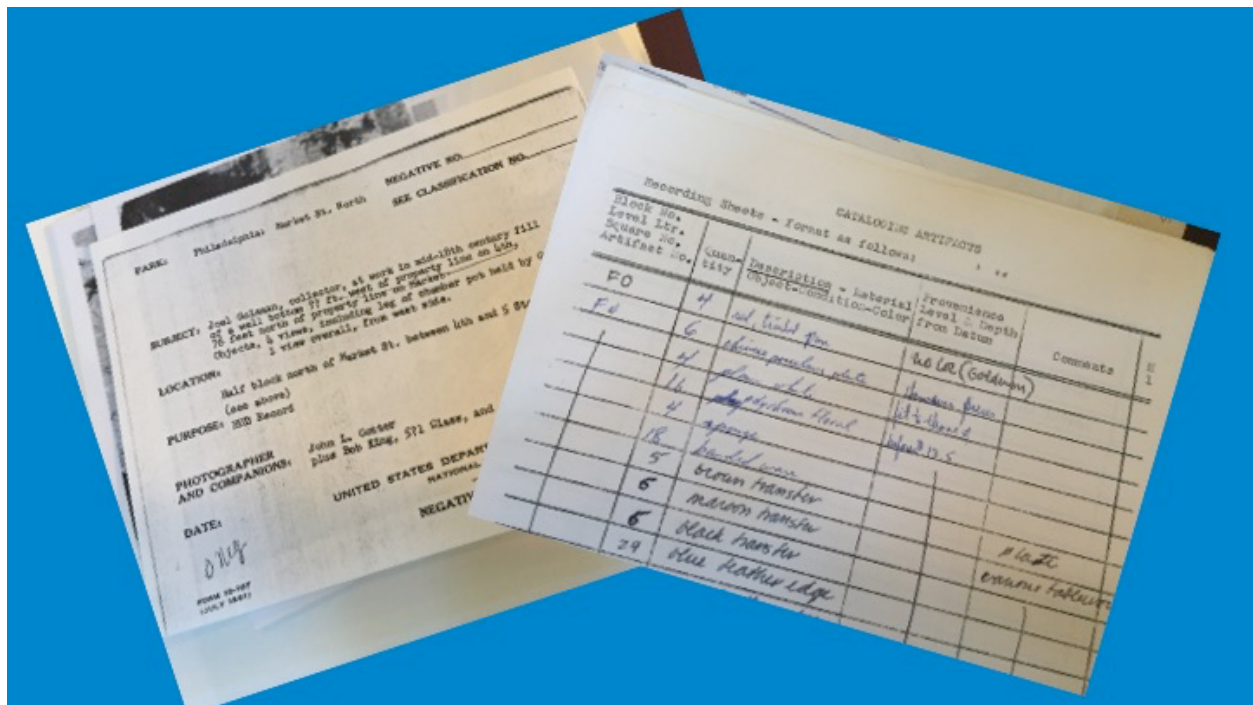


The summer school class also “undertook to clean, accession, restore, study and interpret the collection and produce the historical study” – in a lab Cotter set up in Independence Park (some of Goleman’s materials are pictured here).



A portion of the Haines and Goleman collections after washing, marking and assembling for vessel count at the laboratory, Second Bank of The U.S.

The report and the artifact inventories further report and record the selective nature of the collection-- “whole or numerous, large pieces were salvaged while small sherds were easily ignored.



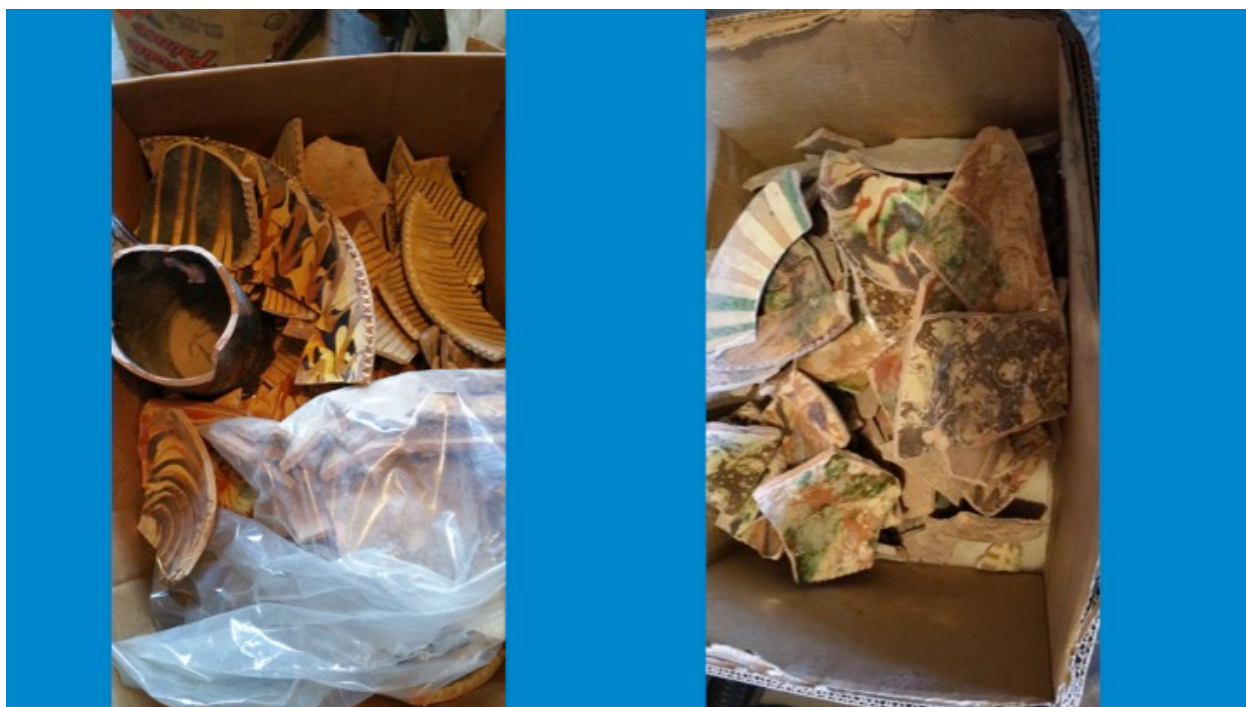
Decorated vessels, unique specimens, and unusual objects tended to be saved and while a really great amount of material was salvaged: only a portion could be processed and analyzed by the class". That unprocessed material is some of what is in Mr. Goleman's boxes.

The report also shows that Cotter went to the various salvager's houses to photograph some of the collected material.



Cotter and his students argued in this 1969 report that urban renewal (the idea behind the federal projects) was destructive of American heritage and, as stated directly in their report, that historical and archaeological salvage should be an integral part of any urban renewal project and as such this report, based in part on Joel Goleman's collected materials, is itself an 'artifact' of the history of archaeology in the city and the history of historic preservation in Philadelphia.

Which brings us back to the Goleman Collection today - the unprocessed, unstudied materials collected 50 years ago in the boxes that Myla Goleman wrote to PAF about.



Myla and her sister, Caren Strong, wish to see the collection used to extend their late father's historic preservation mission and to specifically be used to educate the public about the history of Philadelphia. They have now donated the collection to the Philadelphia Archaeological Forum where it will be used in the creation of programming that will utilize the materials with members of the public to help educate about Philadelphia's early history and about the methods for how this past can be studied.

The collection being moved out of the Goleman garage late this summer – and there are now 53 boxes after re-boxing some of the old boxes. For those not in archaeology, let me assure you that is a lot of material.

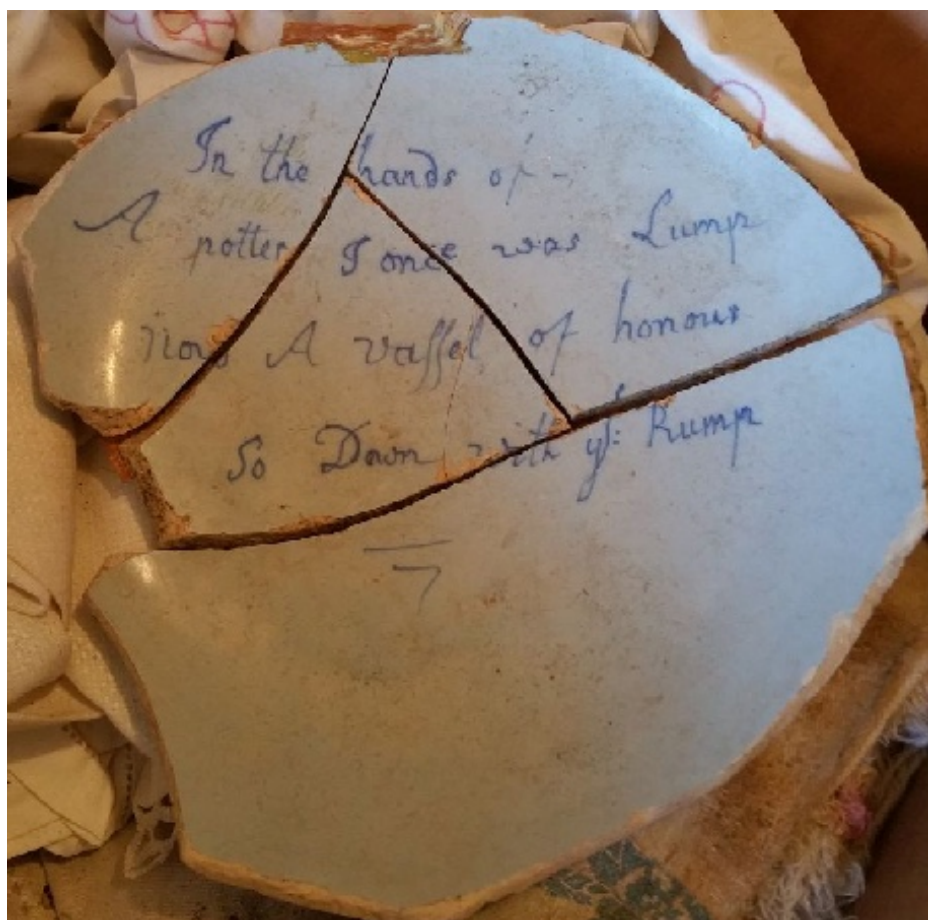


PAF has promised to pursue proposed and as yet unidentified curatorial, research, and public outreach activities with this collection. This will include but not be limited to, community volunteer opportunities in laboratory processing (perhaps, for example, the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation and the Fairmount Park Conservancy would like a summer program), In-service teacher workshops focused on primary history data sets, resources for college student training in archaeological laboratory methods, and the formation of type collections to be used as comparative collections for research and teaching. We foresee the possibility of small temporary exhibits in unexpected venues and PAF-led hands-on annual events where the public helps make history from these fragments from the past. But we don't usually have access to a collection like this so PERSONALLY, I honestly am hoping

that new ideas never thought of before, because we had no reason to think of them, will EMERGE FOR how the materials might be used.



We as yet know very little about the nature of the research potential for the collection beyond the facts that THE BOXES CONTAIN nearly exclusively ceramic fragments, and more specifically the ceramic profile is dominated by redwares – including a partial plate with a sun face spotted in the first look through. A few examples of other items that caught our eye in the initial survey or when reboxing that we took pictures of are shown here...



This bottom of a chamber pot with a painted inscription reading In the Hands of a Potter I once was lump now a vessel of honor so down with your rump



and this stoneware possible tobacco container decorated with columns and an eagle similar to that of the national seal seen for example carved on the 1st bank.

So please welcome what is from here on to be called and known as the Goleman Collection. The membership of the PAF thanks Joel Goleman and his daughters Myla Rogers and Caren Strong and their families for their donation of this most unexpected and unique archaeological education resource that will used to bring Philadelphians into contact with their past.

THE PHILADELPHIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL FORUM

Presents the

Douglas Heller Award

to

**Joel Bernard Goleman, Caren Goleman,
and Myla Goleman Rogers**

For promotion, protection, and preservation of Philadelphia's archaeological heritage

Awarded this 7th Day of October, 2017