

Not a Foot of Land Podcast Docuseries

Megan Scarborough, The College of New Jersey

Summary

In 1910, The College of New Jersey commissioned a mural by Philadelphia artist Richard Farley depicting a scene from the 1758 treaty with the Governor of New Jersey and the Lenni-Lenape tribe. It now resides in the vacant part of the Roscoe West Library building on TCNJ's campus. (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2) Due to our modern knowledge of the colonization of North America, we can recognize that the mural perpetuates racist stereotypes and inaccurate beliefs about this history. In my podcast, *Not a Foot of Land*, through in-depth research and interviews with professionals, I provide a summation of the contextual information needed to understand the mural and formulate opinions about its future.

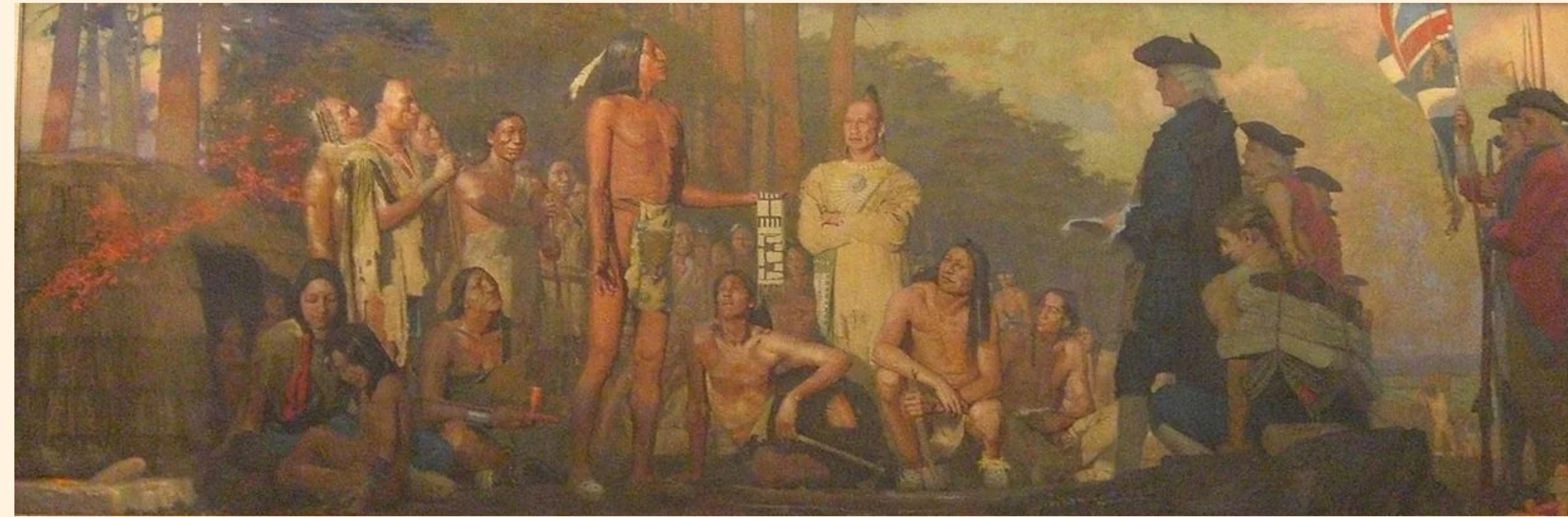


Fig. 1 *The Peace Council of New Jersey and the Indians, 1758* by Richard Blossom Farley (1910) as it sits today, in the Roscoe Library building at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ (image courtesy of Margaret Pezalla-Granlund)



Fig. 2 *The Peace Council of New Jersey and the Indians, 1758* as it was in 1910 in the auditorium on Clinton Ave (Image from the Fifty-Sixth Annual Report and Catalog of the State Normal School at Trenton, 1910, from the TCNJ Archives and Special Collections)

Episodes

Episode One: *The Peace Council of New Jersey and the Indians, 1758*

- In the first episode in the series, I introduce listeners to the mural, provide a formal analysis of the work, discuss the mural's intrinsic history, and explains its relationship to TCNJ
- Research was conducted during the Fall '19 semester, both independently and in the TCNJ Archives and Special Collections, with permission from and the assistance of David Murray

Episode Two: *Every Foot of Land*

- In the second episode, I provide the historical contexts for the time periods surrounding 1758 (the year of the painting's subject) and 1910 (the year the painting was commissioned) with focus on race relations and indigenous history
- Robert McGreevey, Ph.D from the Department of History at TCNJ and Rev. John Norwood, Ph.D (Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape) are guests in this episode

Episode Three: *The Background Characters of Art History*

- In the third episode, I discuss the painting in the context of art history and museum studies, and more broadly, depictions of BIPOC individuals in art by white artists vs. BIPOC artists
- This episode references the work of BIPOC artists Fred Wilson, Titus Kaphar, and Kent Monkman

Episode Four: *Housetraining Your Dog*

- In the fourth episode, I explore other examples from across the country of institutions who are in possession of problematic artwork and discuss their processes of addressing it, the array of approaches, and public responses
- Students from Colorado College in a museum studies course taught by Rebecca Tucker, Ph.D guest speak in this episode

Episode Five: *The Goad*

- In the fifth episode, I investigate the factors at TCNJ that could contribute to the future of the mural including logistics such as location and money, student activism involvement, and TCNJ's mission and values
- Chris Loos (TCNJ Class of '19) and President Foster are guests in this episode

Responses

- 500+ plays across eight podcasting platforms
- Included in the syllabus for AAH: 370 Decolonizing and Diversifying the Museum taught by Deborah Hutton, Ph.D for the Fall '20 and Spring '21 semesters
- Featured in the Winter 2021 TCNJ Magazine in an article by Kara Pothier (Fig. 3)

References (abbreviated)

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- The Signal, Vol. 18, No. 2 (November 1910), TCNJ Archives and Special Collections, Ewing, New Jersey, USA.
- Lurie, M. N., & Veit, R. F. (2018). *New Jersey: a history of the Garden State*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Waugaman, D. *The Great Easton Treaty of 1758: The 'Unknown' Turning Point of the French and Indian War* (Master's Thesis), Wichita State University, Wichita, KS, USA.
- Lonetree, A. (2012). *Decolonizing museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press.
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Mural of the story
Senior Megan Scarborough draws a new picture of an historic piece of campus art

Megan Scarborough '21 has spent many nights peering through a window at Roscoe L. West Hall, which has been closed to students since 2005 when the library moved to a new building. "When the lights are on, you can see it," she says. That "it" is a mural painting on a wall that has drawn her attention and turned her into a kind of art detective.

Scarborough, an art education major with a minor in social justice, first learned about the painting in professor Deborah Hutton's art history class. "We looked at decolonizing and diversifying museums," says Scarborough, "and that was when I was introduced to this idea of thinking about what representation means for communities of color in museums and art history."

As part of that class, Margaret Pezalla-Granlund from the TCNJ art gallery talked about the mural. The painting, by Trenton-born artist Richard Blossom Farley, was a gift of the classes of 1909 and 1910 and depicts a treaty in New Jersey that

shows a stereotypical white man standing over indigenous people. The scene appears harmonious but in fact documents the all-too-familiar taking of land from Native Americans, in this case the Lenape Indians.

Scarborough has since produced a five-part podcast series that examines compelling questions about how art history has been expropriated to tell only one side of a story. In tracing the history of the mural, Scarborough's podcasts explore the broader topic "of how whitewashed history is, especially art history," she says, not just at TCNJ but in campus museums all over the country.

One thing Scarborough does not address is what the college should do about the mural. "That's not for me to decide," she says, hinting that she hopes members of the Lenape tribal nation will be given a say. For certain, she will teach her own students that representation matters. "This experience has been fundamental to who I am going to be as an educator."

— Kara Pothier

Fig. 3 *Not a Foot of Land* in TCNJ Magazine, pg. 39

