

**Robert Rush Memorial Cabin Exhibition, Warren County Arts**  
A Review by Anthony C. Pasquini, Founder, Pohatcong Native Arboretum  
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Warren County, New Jersey was inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years. Many native peoples were still living in our vicinity in the early 1800s and thereafter. That's not very long ago. At Washington Township's Pohatcong Creek Natural Area on Mine Hill Road, Anthony Pasquini, a native of Washington, and "Seneca Jeff" Stevens, a Native American, followed the age old "Plunging Ceremony", every morning going into the freezing cold waters to get in tune with nature and connect with the ancient surroundings. Being present with the mountain, valley, and river guided the design of Pohatcong Native Arboretum, Native Tree Museum of Northwest New Jersey, with a collection of 143 species of trees and shrubs in 38 families.

The Robert Rush Memorial Cabin Exhibition by Warren County ARTS opened August 15th at Oxford Municipal Building in Oxford, NJ.

The Robert Rush show has several pieces that focus directly on this ceremonial place on Pohatcong Creek. Let's take a tour of the show. In Pat Olds' view upstream from the bridge, in all its stillness, the sacred plunging hole, is just there. In her doggy with boy painting the animal is bigger than his best friend, junior. Olds' doe and fawn at the entrance of the exhibit, speaks mother and child, as in Florence Schuman and her son Robert Rush.

Jean Marie Perry's Log Cabin and Pohatcong Creek watercolor paintings summarize nicely Robert Rush and his love for the environment. Includes kitty cat lounging on porch.

The Morse paintings in their elegance, graininess, and subtleties, resemble Native American cave paintings. It's as though the plants underneath are still trying to grow somehow. Grounded particles of trees are the artist's materials. Morse's other paintings have shadowy enlarged Blueberry leaves ready for the plucking even though the fruits haven't quite yet formed.

Gorden Perry's split wood sculpture photo is like a Picasso double-eyed horse just a little shy. The Perry's Button Bush photo series features fancy coat buttons that flower like antennas sending out signals for butterflies to come.

Cshee is the artist with the most entries in the Robert Rush Exhibition. These works in diverse styles and mediums are sprinkled around the whole show. Her triple decker luscious pink flowers are interspersed with little twirlies. And the rainy summer green farmstead scene with the tilted red barn. The bright winter landscape with grey birches, and the gnarly autumn tree, give a whiff of the season. And that blue sky! Then, if that's not enough, her happy maples and pines needles, and the red, red, red shaped hearts!

The Southerland photos of the Native American medicine wheel by "Seneca Jeff", bridge leading to true wilderness, and angelic deer, gives the viewer a sense of what's really here.

Tivnan's photos on canvas evoke the fragrance of lilacs (even if we missed them this year), the creek's luminous wetness, and the dragonfly who blesses everything. Patti's forest understory ferns and wood asters would be lovely to see repeated all over the forest floor.

WCARTS members collaborated on themes and techniques they call "spray paint art". The members laid out actual leaves and stems on canvas, and then sprayed! The images were produced during WCARTS annual picnic on the arboretum grounds.

Gelsomino's little quadrants have "to die for" bright purple that almost doesn't even hurt. Eden's green and tan leaves if pressed in a book, would stay that way forever. Eden's other set of red and gold paintings elevate these plants to the highest status in the kingdom. The Spangler painting in between seems like the ferns and leaves may scatter with the very next wind.

Oh that Warren County poem. Home sweet home. In the Hills of Warren loved best. And the love for the Morris Canal. The canal came through in the 1820s. Only a half mile from the arboretum.

The Rush cabin is built specifically as an exhibition center. The first cabin show held in 15 years, currently on view, is entitled, Villages and Hamlets of Washington Township, Bowerstown: A Morris Canal Port. The local historical commission's show of 65 period photographs has been on display since May 29, 2014. The panels of interpretive information face out from the cabin's windows for public viewing anytime of the day.

Our Pohatcong Watershed alone has rocks colored orange and light green. In Patti's photos, two women wade through this eternal stream. They seem to be saying, "Hmmm, what have we found. The waters are so good". They are standing right in the center of the "Ceremonial Place" where Jeff and Anthony plunged. In the river known to the "Pohatcong Indians" for centuries. Native Plants. Native America.

Life is meant to be celebrated and enjoyed. Florence, Robert, and Anthony's reverence for natural beauty connect to the Love of the Ages.

I wonder what the native people called Warren County? They called the River - Pohatcong. Which some say means, The Mountain Dividing Stream, or Beautiful Place Between Hills, or Where the Mountains Open Wide.

Everyone has the opportunity to experience, explore and discover for themselves this extraordinary municipal park in Northwest New Jersey. Please visit Pohatcong Creek Natural Area, Pohatcong Native Arboretum, and Robert Rush Memorial Log Cabin.