

A Joint Effort to Save "Atalanta's Race"

By DiAnna Tindell

I work with client requests of all sorts, and reviewing their damaged pieces is sometimes the most intriguing part of the task. There are often sentimental links or historical paths that brought the piece to us. These can sometimes determine what restorative steps to consider.

For "Atalanta's Race" (see photos), the determination to restore this wonderful print and frame took almost three years (a transfer of interest and ownership transpired within the client's family). It was first presented to us by the father for an estimate. He could not decide what steps to consider, and eventually his son took a personal interest. He requested background research, which resulted in a better appreciation of the piece and the decision to save it.

The print was published June 1, 1881 in London and scrolled "To the Right Honourable The Earl of Wharnccliffe". The story of "Atalanta's Race" is about Atalanta and Hippomenes racing to collect 12 golden apples. Hippomenes wins and is rewarded with Atalanta as

his wife. Atalanta was known as the fastest runner. Any man who could beat her would be rewarded with the right to marry her.

The print and its frame had suffered during various storage environments. There was much deterioration of the wood frame and staining of the print. For this project, I enlisted the aid of Christine Young, a conservationist, to complement my artistic talents. We carefully extracted

Some large areas had old yellowed plaster fills that had to be removed.

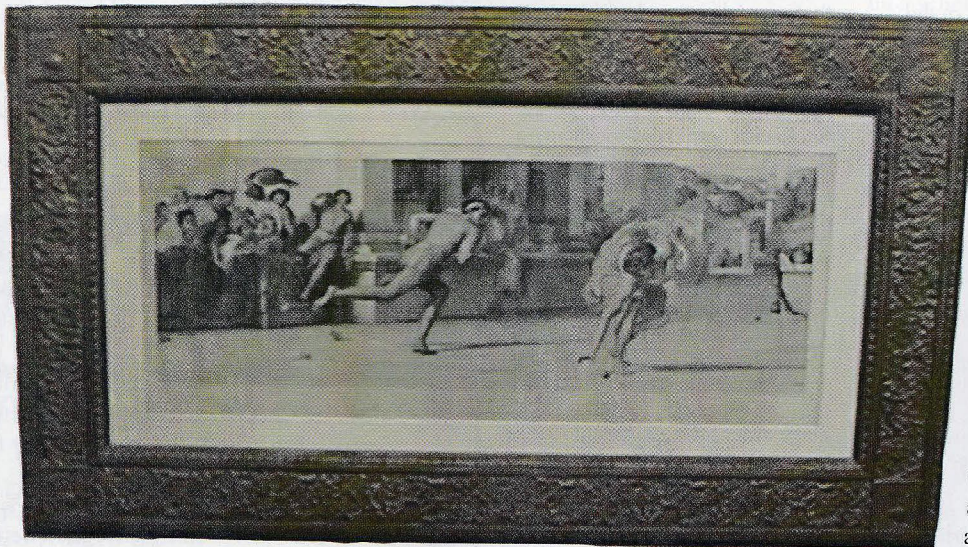
The design work on the frame required that precise matches be lined up for replacement of many missing sections. To accomplish this, we carefully removed any yellowed or foreign filler materials. We marked off the exact flow from start to finish of design to be copied on existing areas of the frame that remained in good condition.



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We had several moulding compounds to consider.

We chose one that would provide the right precision of details, remain semi-stiff to support a medium-weight casting material and allow easy removal from those sections without harming the frame. With the moulding material ready to be placed on the original marked sections of the frame, we gently applied it to those areas marked start-to-finish for any sec-



"Atalanta's Race" before restoration (at right) and after (above). The determination to restore the print and frame took nearly three years.

the print to avoid any further damage within its worn frame and placed it in a protective case.

The frame required careful cleaning that revealed an unusual patina of mixed gold hues. Unfortunately, many large areas of the intricate floral design work were missing from sections of the frame.

