

THE GATES MILLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

THE MUSEUM AT THE SOUTHWICK HOUSE

7580 OLD MILL ROAD, GATES MILLS, OH. 44040



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Village photos are on
our Facebook page.

The Museum
is open by
appointment.
440-423-1040

SECURING A GATES MILLS LEGACY

by Cooper Hansen

From seemingly time immemorial, visitors and residents alike have regarded the street sign depictions of Gates Mills life as unique as the village's natural beauty and Western Reserve architecture. It was in the late 1930s that industrialist, horseman, and Gates Mills resident Crispin Oglebay commissioned British sporting artist W. Smithson Broadhead as the resident artist on his estate. Broadhead (1888-1960), whose equestrian pictures regularly appear in Christie's auctions, painted the hunters, jumpers, and racers that Oglebay bred. During Broadhead's stay in Gates Mills, he also applied his artistic talents to drawing silhouettes of village scenes to adorn street signs. In the early 1940s the black wrought iron silhouettes we all know and love began to mark village roads and intersections. Driving down Gates Mills streets almost eighty years later, one realizes the endangered state the Broadhead silhouettes are in today. They are being removed because of the deterioration wrought by Ohio winters, and the time-worn silhouettes that remain face a similar fate. I am certain it would be a shame to watch these pieces of art and our history vanish completely before our eyes. The Broadhead silhouettes have been synonymous with Gates Mills for decades. How can we make them last?

PRESERVATION



In partnership with the village and fellow resident Mark Saltzman, the Gates Mills Historical Society has begun investigating ways to preserve the Broadhead silhouettes for the next eighty years. The Society has Broadhead's original ink drawings and plans to recreate the black metal rural scenes and have the village mount them once again atop the street corner signposts.

Stay tuned for updates regarding the preservation of this slice of village history.

Editor's Note: Cooper Hansen is a senior at Hawken School and a lifelong Gates Mills resident.