

# VICTORIA MANSION

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK



ANNUAL REPORT  
2013-2014

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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

## *Growing Things*

In 2013, elm trees returned to the perimeters of Victoria Mansion's property (see story, p. 13). While this project might seem like a small thing in the scope of our restoration, I like to think of the trees as metaphors for the larger work we do to preserve this National Historic Landmark and make it available to our members and the public.

When it was built, and throughout much of its existence, Victoria Mansion was framed and shaded by elegant, lofty elm trees. Early photographs show that they were an integral part of the overall impression the house conveyed to the public. The health of these original trees uncannily parallel that of the Mansion itself. They remained vigorous into the 1920s, but by the 1930s they were dying from Dutch Elm Disease. Likewise, after the deaths of J.R. Libby and his wife in 1917 and 1923 respectively, the departure of their children to homes of their own, and the national financial reverses of the Great Depression, the fortunes of Victoria Mansion declined. By 1936 it was an empty and out-of-fashion relic that seemed destined for demolition for the site of a gas station. While the trees did die and were swept away, the Mansion was rescued from a similar fate only by the slimmest of chances.



Although the Mansion was saved from destruction, its owners, first Dr. William H. Holmes and then the Victoria Society of Maine, struggled with the relentless maintenance and infrastructure needs of an aging house in a marginal neighborhood. By the early 1970s its condition was dire and it was only through the award of public funds by the recently established Maine Historic Preservation Commission in 1973 that the important work of restoring the house began.

In the forty years since that work commenced, the house once more stands secure in its role as a stately landmark in Portland. The early reactive work to such problems as leaky roofs, rotten cornices and porches, and water infiltration of the brownstone has advanced to pro-active maintenance and the ability to undertake projects that also increasingly include aesthetic components – both outside and in. While we still have a “must do” list, we can increasingly begin to look at our “want to do” list and select modest projects from the latter. In the case of the elm trees, it was a gift from a visitor that spurred the replanting of disease resistant “Princeton” specimens and allowed us to move forward.

Arriving at work each morning, I derive great satisfaction from their presence. To me they symbolize an aspect of the ongoing restoration of the Mansion as a living and vital component of Portland and the region. As they grow, so too will the Mansion develop and, hopefully, flourish. I'm happy I was here not only to see this project accomplished, but also to recognize those many individuals whose commitment, efforts, and energy have resulted in the gem we oversee today.

Sincerely,  
Thomas B. Johnson  
Executive Director

# ARTIST GIUSEPPE GUIDICINI: FORGOTTEN NO MORE

by Arlene Palmer, Curator



*The recent restoration of the wall and ceiling paintings of the Turkish room, the bathroom suite, and the vestibule has focused attention on Giuseppe Guidicini, the artist who originally painted Victoria Mansion. Guidicini did not autograph any of his wall or ceiling decorations but his name was written on the architectural plans. The plans are as yet unlocated; in 1936 they were in the possession of Mary Libby Chamberlain. Walter Goodwin Davis examined them that year prior to writing a brochure that he hoped would engender interest in saving the Mansion from demolition. In the brochure Davis identifies Henry Austin as architect and "Guidirini" as artist. Among the papers of Mary Chamberlain that were donated to Victoria Mansion by her granddaughter Susan O. Marcell is a list of names taken from the architectural plans. Again, "Gi. Guidirini" is named with an address of 29 Irving Place, New York: city directories prove that the artist who resided at that residence was Giuseppe Guidicini.*

*Through extensive research in nineteenth-century newspapers I have pieced together the history and extraordinary career of this talented but forgotten artist. My quest for information about Guidicini and my interest in understanding him in context have taken me in surprising directions. Because he immigrated as an artist with an Italian opera company, I have been exploring such topics as the evolution of opera house and theatre architecture, scene painting and set design, and opera productions in early America. What has emerged is that Giuseppe Guidicini, together with a small coterie of fellow Italian scenic artists, defined what would become the standard ornamentation of opera houses and theatres in nineteenth-century America. Through their decoration of these and other commercial and religious structures the artists disseminated their distinctive Italian style and created a taste for sophisticated painted decor in private homes. Guidicini's work at Victoria Mansion is the sole example of the skill and imagination of these Italian artists known to survive in the United States.*

*So much material has emerged about Giuseppe Guidicini and his decorative commissions that we feel his story deserves its own publication. The proposed book will be written by Charlotte Brown, Gianfranco Pocobene, and myself and will have chapters on Guidicini's history, his wall and ceiling paintings in the Mansion, and the technical aspects of his work. What follows here is an extremely brief summary of my research of Guidicini's life and the major commissions of his career.*

Giuseppe Guidicini (1806?-1868) traveled to America from Italy in 1832 as a scenic artist with an opera company organized by impresario Giacomo Montresor. Mario Bragaldi (1805-1893) was apparently the lead artist; Guidicini and Gioachino Albe were his assistants, although all three had been students in the same period at the Accademia dell arti di Bologna.

According to Guidicini's obituaries, he was born in Bologna in 1810 or 1812, but records of the Accademia dell arti di Bologna cite Milan as his birthplace and state that he entered the school in 1823 at the age of 17, which puts his birth date around 1806. He continued his studies of architecture, perspective, ornament, and the figure through 1827, and took prizes in the ornament and architecture courses. Where Guidicini worked or studied between 1827 and his departure for New York in 1832 is not yet known. Playbills prove that from 1829 to 1831 Bragaldi was painting scenery for operas and ballets staged in Bologna.

It was Lorenzo Da Ponte, the poet and librettist of Mozart's most famous operas, who negotiated with Montresor to bring an opera company to New York. Da Ponte lived in New York from 1819 until his death in 1838 and was a tireless advocate of the Italian language and culture. An organization of wealthy opera aficionados worked with Da Ponte to raise funds to support Montresor's endeavor. When the opera company finally arrived only the ill-suited Richmond Hill Theatre was available to them. Guidicini's first tasks included revamping and enhancing this space for operatic performances, and creating sets and scenery for the four operas Montresor presented there through the end of 1832.

Montresor's supporters were sufficiently impressed by Italian opera that they decided to construct a purpose-built opera house — the first in this country. Inexplicably, Montresor was not chosen to be its manager, so in the summer of 1833 he left the country and took singers with him. Guidicini, Bragaldi, and Albe, however, stayed in New York because they were hired to advise on the interior plan of the new opera house, execute the painted decorations, and prepare sets for the operas. Construction proceeded apace and the Italian Opera House opened November 18, 1833. No images are known of its interior but by all accounts it was magnificent. Bragaldi left a detailed description, in which he called the style of painting "Raphaelic." The ceiling featured the nine muses around a central figure of their father, Apollo, as well as allegorical figures relating to the drama. On the proscenium the artists painted the American eagle flanked by Fame and Victory. They decorated the drop curtain with a scene of a chariot race from the Circus Maximus, while the act-drop depicted a rural dance in the Italian countryside.

By 1835 Guidicini and Albe had formed a partnership. They were joined by Giovanni Chizzola, a scenic artist who had trained under Alessandro Sanquirico of Milan's La Scala opera house. In their partnership notice the Italians offered their services "in every branch of the art as practiced in Italy, viz., in 'chiaro scuro' painting, imitations of bas reliefs, or in colors, 'a fresco' painting on the walls or ceiling of any public or private building, painting of scenery, decorations, drop-scenes,&c." <sup>1</sup>

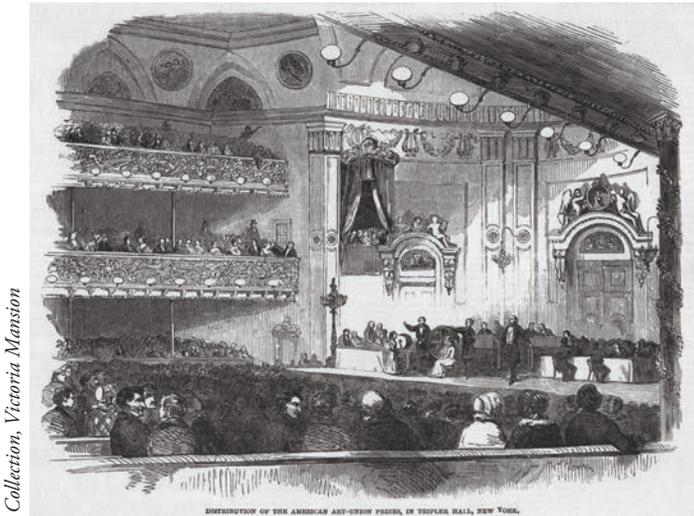


Chiaroscuro refers to the technique of achieving three-dimensional effects with highlights and shadows, as is seen throughout the Mansion (*left*). This was also the way in which Guidicini painted his 'imitation bas reliefs' on flat surfaces so as to appear to be palpably sculptural. "Fresco" painting was a term loosely used in the nineteenth century and does not always describe the traditional technique of true frescoes, that is, painting on fresh wet plaster in a limited area that could be executed in one day. An 1836 advertisement in which the three artists say they would take orders to paint in "buono fresco," signifies their ability to make true frescoes.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, this time-consuming technique was not feasible for theatrical interiors where speed was of the essence. Victoria Mansion contains no true frescoes but rather what is best described as "fresco-style" decoration.

In the late 1830s Guidicini decorated the Olympic Theatre in New York and the ballroom of dancing master John Charraud. He traveled to Richmond with Bragaldi to decorate the Marshall Theatre. For an elaborate fiftieth anniversary celebration, the New-York Historical Society commissioned Guidicini to illustrate the 1789 inauguration of George Washington at Federal Hall. The four-by-six-foot painting was rendered on fine linen so it could be dramatically illuminated from behind. It is the only work of Guidicini's besides Victoria Mansion that is known to survive. For this commission he received \$20.

After the Italian Opera House burned to the ground later in 1839, Guidicini and Bragaldi were hired to plan and execute the decorations of its reincarnation. From all accounts it, too, was a glorious temple to the performing arts,

but after only eight months, it was destroyed by fire in May 1841 and was not rebuilt. New York's second opera house, opened in 1844, was the vision of restaurateur Ferdinando Palmo. He converted what was Stoppani's Bath Arcade into a small but charming theatre space and had Guidicini and Bragaldi decorate the interior. Three years later Guidicini helped decorate the Astor Place Opera House, designed by architect Isaiah Rogers. In that opera house all of the painted decoration was executed on canvas that completely covered wood-paneled walls. Besides these theatrical projects of the 1840s, Guidicini also received critical acclaim for his decorative painting of churches in Philadelphia and New York.



Collection, Victoria Mansion

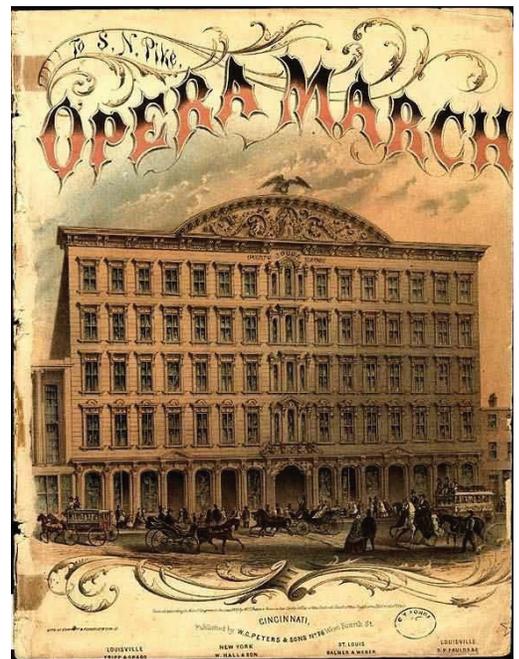
Guidicini's decoration of Brewster Hall in New Haven in 1850 may be what brought him to the attention of architect Henry Austin, architect of Victoria Mansion. During the 1850s the Italian artist was busy with theatrical commissions in New York. In 1850 Guidicini also supervised the decoration of Tripler Hall, later known as Metropolitan Hall, a large new music hall designed by John M. Trimble. For the ceiling Guidicini revisited the familiar theme of Apollo and the muses, but he also included other allegorical figures and putti (*left*). The theatre went up in flames in 1854 and was immediately replaced by Metropolitan Hall that Guidicini also decorated, with the assistance of Felix Dorigo. Besides Apollo and the muses and a figure of America, this Metropolitan Hall had bas relief portraits of

poets and composers. In 1856, for impresario and actress Laura Keane, the team of Trimble, Guidicini, and Dorigo created a theatre that was constructed and decorated in a mere four months. Another commission for Guidicini in the late 1850s was the decoration of the publication office of the *New York Times* company building. He completed the embellishment of this sixty-by-eighteen-foot space in a mere four weeks, incorporating arabesques, cyphers of the company, and portraits of Franklin and Faust into the design.

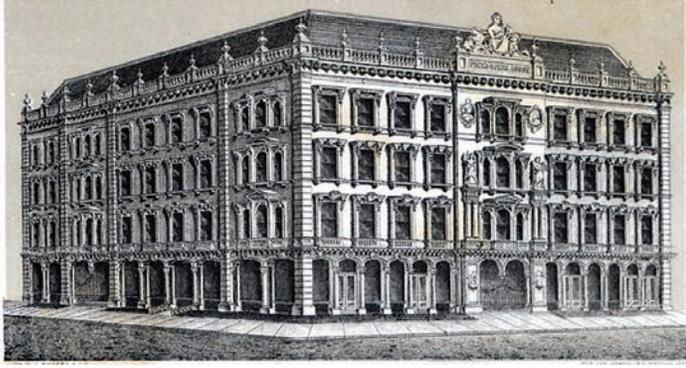
The Italians' painted decorations in private homes are difficult to trace. A strong selling point for a New York townhouse put on the market in 1855 was that Guidicini had painted it with landscapes and medallions. From the daybook of architect A. J. Davis it is clear that Guidicini painted the Italianate home of Edwin Litchfield in Brooklyn which was completed in 1858. The structure still stands but its original decoration is not intact.

Guidicini's previous connections with John Trimble took him to Cincinnati to supervise the decoration of that city's first opera house, the project of Samuel N. Pike, a music lover who made a fortune in distilling liquor. It opened Feb. 22 1859 at a cost of nearly half a million dollars (*right*). Over the summer of 1859 — probably just before starting out for Portland — Guidicini completed a new ceiling for New York's New Bowery Theatre. His decoration of Victoria Mansion was completed by early June 1860.

Guidicini's first recorded commission after the project for the Morses was his 1862 transformation of the ceiling of Irving Hall, another New York music hall. Three years later, when P. T. Barnum's famous American Museum was destroyed by fire, Guidicini painted the museum's new quarters, which included a 2500-seat lecture hall. Guidicini's



Collection, Victoria Mansion



final public commission was an enormous marble-fronted opera house that Samuel Pike erected at 23rd Street and 8th avenue in New York (*left*). The interior of the opera house was decorated in a white and gold palette and had a large dome filled with stained glass. Encircling the dome were muses, cupids, and myriad emblems. Guidicini did not live to relish the accolades that were published about his work in the opera house because he died January 7, 1868, two days before the opening.

As this impressive litany of his major commissions suggests, Giuseppe Guidicini was an admired and sought-after artist for over thirty years. Although he has been long neglected and unheralded, his extraordinary legacy at Victoria Mansion guarantees him a respected position in the annals of nineteenth-century American art.

<sup>1</sup> *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer* (June 25, 1835).

<sup>2</sup> *Morning Courier and New York Enquirer* (May 24, 1836).

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Photo: Marjorie Manning Vaughan

## VICTORIAN DOLL TEA

MAY 19, 2013

On a beautiful Sunday in May, Victoria Mansion hosted the eighth annual Victorian Doll Tea, which was held at the nearby Maine Irish Heritage Center. Classical guitarist Brian Callaghan and ballerinas from Portland Ballet entertained the 135 children and adults who attended the tea. Brittany

Cook, in the guise of a harp-playing fairy queen, presided over the day's festivities. Lessons on tea etiquette accompanied the full tea service. Following the tea, partygoers visited the Mansion, where there was an exhibit of exquisite handmade dolls.

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*(\$75-\$124)*

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## ALLAGASH VICTORIA ALE PREMIERE JUNE 21, 2013

The seventh annual Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere, sponsored by Allagash Brewing Company, Maine Mead Works, 98.9 WCLZ, and Fox 23, was an enormous success. More than two hundred people gathered on the Mansion's lawn to enjoy beer and mead tastings and music by the Pete Kilpatrick Band. The event raised nearly \$14,000 for the Mansion's restoration and education work.



*Photo: Nadra Photography*

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The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors of the National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Maine Humanities Council  
Phineas W. Sprague Memorial Foundation  
The Reny Charitable Foundation  
Wal-Mart Foundation  
Anonymous

### CORPORATE/ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

Maine Bay Canvas  
United Insurance  
Heritage Company Coppersmiths  
BCR Communications  
Lee Auto Group  
Spiritual Workers In A Physical World  
Daughters of the American Revolution,  
Elizabeth Wadsworth Chapter



## OPERA AT THE MANSION

JULY 15, 2013

The third annual Opera at the Mansion, co-sponsored by PORTopera, was an enormous success with close to 100 music lovers in attendance. Opera singers Jeff Gwaltney, Alyson Cambridge, Ben Wager, and José Adán Pérez, all principals in PORTopera's production of Giacomo Puccini's *La Bohème*, performed operatic arias as well as Broadway tunes. With their marvelous voices they proved once again that the Mansion stair hall has remarkable acoustics.

### EVENT SPONSORS

98.9 WCLZ  
Allagash Brewing Company  
Bangor Savings Bank  
DownEast Magazine  
Fox 23  
The Lobster Cooker  
Maine Mead Works  
Mister Sparky  
Saco and Biddeford Savings Bank  
Valet 4 ME  
Verrill Dana, LLP  
WEX, Inc.

### IN-KIND DONORS

#### *Individual*

Lois Allen  
Troy Bennett  
Ann Beote  
Denise Blanchard  
Marian Bunton  
Brian Callaghan  
Zoe Cheever  
Brittany Cook  
Lynne Cullen  
Claude F. Daigle II  
Sandra Harris Gilley  
Erica Glidden  
Ayden Grimm  
Elias Grimm  
Sydney Grimm  
Shawn Gummo  
Andrew Harris  
Elizabeth Janiczak  
Mary Jo Kolkhorst  
Dean Lyons  
Carlene Magno  
Cheryl Martell  
Linda Mozdem  
Vesta Vaughan Rand  
Sandy Riley  
Patty Russes  
Judy Scott  
Peggy Scott  
Marjorie Manning Vaughn

#### *Corporate/Organizational*

3rd Maine Regiment Volunteer Infantry, Co. A  
Allagash Brewing  
Amato's Sandwich Shops  
American Girl  
Blue Elephant Catering  
Buck's Naked BBQ  
Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine  
Coastal Maine Popcorn  
Convention Visitors Bureau of Greater Portland  
Cuddledown  
Dino International Furs  
DownEast Publishing  
The Forecaster/Kidsville News  
Full Court Press  
Harmon's and Barton's Flowers  
Jewelry by Mig Lemire  
Diana Logan, Pet Connection Dog Training  
Maine Irish Heritage Center  
Kim Marie/Pastry Princess  
Nadra Photography  
Nellie's Tea  
Portland Ballet  
Portland's Downtown District  
Edyson Pines  
Time 4 Printing  
Tony Boffa Band  
Trader Joe's  
Victoria and Tea Time Magazines  
Whole Foods Market

### CHRISTMAS DESIGNERS

Blossoms of Windham  
Blue Elephant Events and Catering  
The Christmas Light Pros  
Dodge the Florist  
Tiffany Elsemore  
Emerald City  
Dan Gifford  
Harmon's and Barton's  
Heather Caron Floral Designs  
O'Donal's Nursery  
The Old Farm Christmas Place of Maine  
S. Scollay Custom Floral Design

### MORSE ASSOCIATES

*Morse Associates are members who have chosen to support the Mansion at the highest levels of \$1000 and above.*

Nancy and Robert Armitage  
Elizabeth Astor  
Helaine Ayers  
Stephen and Ellen Barton  
Jane Briggs  
Cherie Wendelken and Jeb Brooks  
Charlotte F. Brown  
Madeleine Corson  
Mr. and Mrs. John Evans  
John Hatcher and Dan Kennedy  
Thomas Hinkle and Gary Duford  
Lynne F. Jackson  
Thomas B. Johnson  
Stephen and Mary Jo Kolkhorst  
Harry H. Konkel  
Candice Thornton Lee  
Carol Collins Malone and Rick Malone  
Nancy and Mike Marino  
Marian Hoyt Morgan and Chris Corbett  
Jean Nishiyama  
Drew and Alexa Oestreicher  
Sally W. Rand  
Sandra and Bob Riley  
Hannah L. Russell  
Harry and Jane Sawyer  
Wilmington and Arlene Palmer Schwind  
Chris and Anne Smith  
Gene and Ruth Story  
Zareen Taj Mirza  
Katharine Watson  
Jane Costello Wellehan

*We apologize if any name was inadvertently left out of these listings. If you note any errors or omissions, please contact Director of Development, Sam Heck, so that we may correct our records. [sheck@victoriamansion.org](mailto:sheck@victoriamansion.org) or 207-772-4841 ext 102.*



The Morse Associates enjoyed a day outing to the Lakes Region of western Maine in early September with lunch at Tarry-A-While Resort on Highland Lake, visits to the Rufus Porter Museum in Bridgton, historic Deertrees Theater in Harrison, and cocktails at an historic private home in North Bridgton. Special events such as this are a benefit of Morse Associate membership.

# DEVELOPMENT REPORT

The 2013-2014 fiscal year was marked by success in Victoria Mansion's fundraising, particularly in our efforts to widen and diversify our base of support. Growth of the Mansion's membership program was particular noteworthy, led by a 42% increase in non-Morse Associates contributions. This tremendous growth is the result of dramatically improved member retention rates and a marked increase in the average amount of membership gifts. We attribute these gains in part to the quarterly free member events introduced this year in order to provide members with the opportunity to engage with the Mansion on an ongoing basis. Memberships at the Morse Associates level this year were up incrementally.

Total annual fund income contracted somewhat this year, largely due to the fact that several gifts that have historically been made to the annual fund were instead directed to specific Mansion programs. Thus, the reduction in the annual fund is directly related to the corresponding increase in grants for operations and gifts restricted to programs.

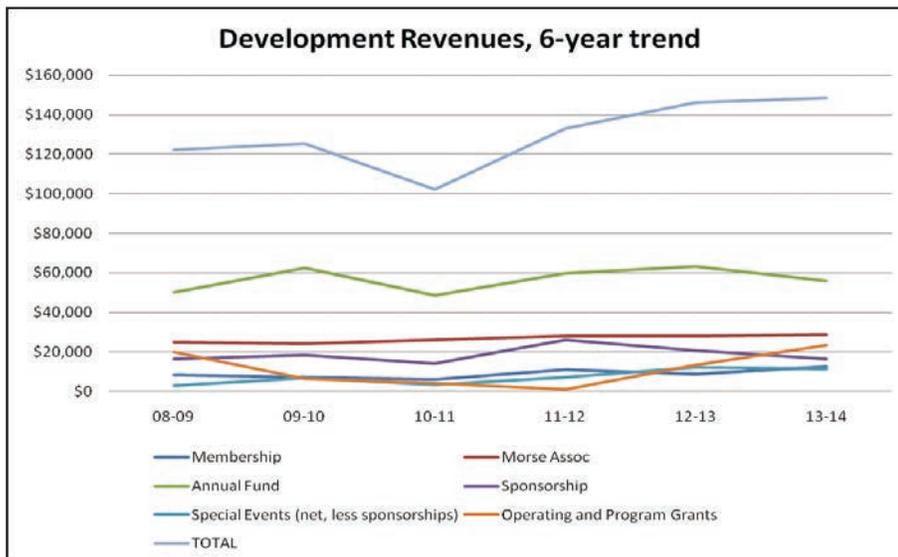
An area of focus for the coming year is corporate sponsorships. On account of the slow pace of the economic recovery, corporate contributions to nonprofits struggled to meet expectations nationally across all sectors. Nevertheless, with the Mansion's growing public profile, and expectations of improved economic conditions in 2014, we are optimistic about the potential for increased sponsorship revenues.

Overall, the Mansion was able to retain the significant revenue gains of the prior fiscal year and realize modest growth in 2013-2014.

	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Membership	\$8,235	\$7,072	\$5,998	\$11,010	\$8,842	\$12,592
Morse Assoc	\$24,634	\$24,057	\$25,845	\$28,000	\$27,995	\$28,654
Annual Fund	\$50,165	\$62,495	\$48,662	\$59,897	\$63,236	\$56,125
Sponsorship	\$16,248	\$18,364	\$14,000	\$26,100	\$20,525	\$16,250
Special Events (net, less sponsorships)	\$3,081	\$6,753	\$3,628	\$7,158	\$12,096	\$11,317
Operating and Program Grants	\$20,000	\$6,500	\$4,000	\$1,000	\$13,500	\$23,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$122,363</b>	<b>\$125,241</b>	<b>\$102,134</b>	<b>\$133,165</b>	<b>\$146,195</b>	<b>\$148,538</b>
Capital Grants and Acquisitions	\$67,500	\$29,170	\$25,000	\$66,455	\$21,858	\$45,132
Number of Members (Incl. Honorary)	114	103	89	152	173	254



Nearly 600 people attended the Victorian Fair held on the Mansion's lawn. There they met a phrenologist, a tintype photographer, and Civil War re-enactors, among others. Visitors dressed up in copies of nineteenth-century clothing, watched a blacksmith at work, and marveled at a cabinet of curiosities. It was a wonderful day and work is already underway to plan another Fair for 2015.



For two nights in October visitors shivered with fear while they watched the chilling performances of Lynne Cullen and Brittany Cook in the Mansion stair hall. Under lights dimmed to gaslight levels, Lynne recited works by Bram Stoker and Edgar Allen Poe and Brittany performed an original work drawn from nineteenth-century stories and firsthand accounts of hauntings, pirates, and Voodoo priestesses of New Orleans. The sellout shows of this seventh annual Tales of Terror were tailored to audiences of adults and children with appropriate levels of "creepiness." We eagerly await the announcement of what terrifying tales next October will bring.



# EDUCATION REPORT



In early 2014 Victoria Mansion launched *Victorian Portland: A Century of Change*, our new third grade outreach program. The project came into being after former Director of Education Gina Platt identified a need for a greater emphasis on the historical context of Victoria Mansion in our work with school groups, and more emphasis on the nineteenth century in the studies of Portland students in general. Working with Stacia Hanscom, an experienced museum educator, Gina, and then her successor, Lucinda Hannington, developed the idea of an educational “bridge” that would span the period between the colonial era and the twentieth century and make the nineteenth-century past more relevant to contemporary life. It provides the opportunity for students to consider how Portland, and the world, changed dramatically during the Mansion’s heyday.

Ocean Avenue and Lyseth Schools have been serving as pilot sites. Several teachers served as advisors to the project and offered feedback on the original classroom presentations last spring. Their students have been the first beneficiaries of *Victorian Portland*.

All too often, the nineteenth century is lightly passed over in the third grade curriculum, with lessons moving from the colonial period straight to the twentieth century. *Victorian Portland* fills the gap, concentrating on the lively history of Portland during the Victorian era and using the Mansion as a focal point. The nineteenth century saw huge changes worldwide and Portland, as a vibrant port city, was no exception. By focusing locally, students are able to encounter concrete examples of otherwise largely abstract changes taking place everywhere during this period.

Based on four different subject areas, visual arts, social studies, language arts, and science, *Victorian Portland* offers eight units that are provided free of charge to area schools that schedule tours of Victoria Mansion. The topics include transportation and travel, painted portraits and photography, architecture, and immigration. The aim of the program is to give students a holistic historical experience rather than an isolated field trip; this helps them to grasp the concepts being presented. Each unit consists of an in-class presentation, a docent-led tour, an on-site activity, and an extension activity written by Mansion staff but presented by the teacher. By having four distinct voices all addressing the same general topic with different perspectives, students are able to see more than one side to an issue and the varied effects that it had on nineteenth-century society.

To date, seven third grade classes have come to the Mansion as part of Victorian Portland. Each class has demonstrated a greater level of connection to, and engagement with, the house than those that come without the pre-visit lesson. Immediately upon entering the Mansion students are linking what is in front of them with the lessons they have already had, interacting with the site before the tour begins.

In May we will host a reception for all Cumberland County third grade teachers at Victoria Mansion for them to see firsthand what *Victorian Portland* has to offer and how it can fit into their teaching. This opportunity will introduce more teachers to the Mansion and show them that the Mansion is a perfect site for teaching about the nineteenth century because it serves as a point of convergence for so many topics.

Beyond the launch of *Victorian Portland*, 2013-2014 was a banner year for the Mansion’s other educational programs and endeavors. Two new and highly successful events were introduced: the Victorian Fair (see page 11) and Stories on the Staircase. Stories on the Staircase is a preschool story hour that combines children’s books with child-centered tours of one or two rooms of the Mansion. The goal of this program is to make both children and their parents comfortable in a museum setting. We hope to create repeat visitors who will grow into the next generation of museum patrons.

*Above: Curriculum Development Specialist Stacia Hanscom demonstrates a steam engine to third grade students at Ocean Avenue Elementary.*

# RESTORATION REPORT

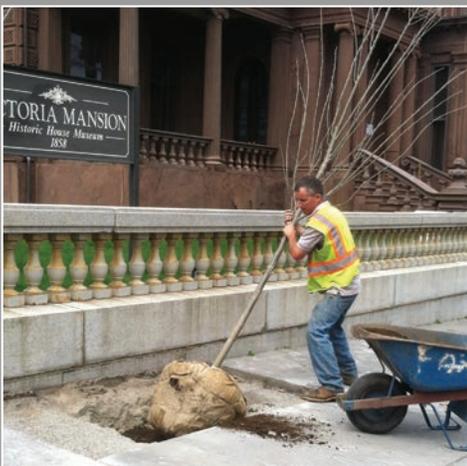
Each year, work on the exterior of our buildings involves a mix of straightforward maintenance and large, complex initiatives. In 2013 artisans and tradesmen carried out nearly a dozen projects large and small, filling the warm months with the sounds of ladders rattling, saws whirring, and hammers pounding. Peter De Paolo continued his annual campaign of exterior woodwork epoxy repairs and painting. This year he focused on the west elevation of the side ell porch, which endures punishing wind and sun exposure, and the west elevation of the rear parlor piazza, a structure that retains significant expanses of woodwork dating to the Mansion's original construction. As usual, we took advantage of Peter's skill in sand painting, a technique common in the nineteenth century but rarely found in the modern painter's "bag of tricks."

This year we celebrated the completion of two long-running projects. Caleb Hemphill fabricated and installed a complex series of boards and moldings at the base of the carriage house cupola. These were built according to designs developed in consultation with John Leeke and based on deteriorated 1980s reproductions and a handful of early photographs. Jon Randall of Accidental Anomalies surmounted the last of the technical challenges involved in fabricating the modern steel handrail running alongside the side ell porch stairs.

The front of the Mansion also received considerable attention in 2013. Caleb Hemphill removed the upper balustrades from both the front parlor piazza and the front portico and began conservation work in his shop. This enabled skilled coppersmiths from the Heritage Roofing Company to replace the flat-seamed, soldered copper roofs and to enlarge the gutter outlet on the front portico. They also added a new outlet and downspout on the main roof, a project that was tabled more than a decade ago due to lack of funding.

A masonry "checkup," ably conducted by Ivan Myjer of Building and Monument Conservation, revealed some serious issues that must be addressed soon. Of prime concern is the degree of deterioration in the Mansion's Reception Room bay. A close look at the bay's floor structure led to the emergency removal of a heavy marble statue and temporary under-shoring put in place by Robert and Sebastian Cariddi. In the spring of 2014 we will uncover and investigate a critical second-story timber carrying the masonry above the bay, hoping for the best but preparing for major, costly work should it be found to be rotten.

## *"Restore the Elms" Project a Success*



What began as a 2011 donation accompanying a plea to restore the Mansion's elm trees, came to full realization on a sunny spring day this past April. In collaboration with many governmental and non-governmental agencies, the Mansion was able to procure and transplant three Princeton Elms to the edges of the sidewalks surrounding the museum, abutting the large granite and cast iron perimeter fence walls.

The new trees are planted in the documented locations of the originals, which shaded the property throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These first elms stood tall and vast through much of the life of the Mansion, as is shown in photographic records at the museum. Sadly, the original trees fell victim to the Dutch Elm Disease that devastated most of the city's elms in the mid-twentieth century. The new elms should reach mature height in approximately twenty-five years and will add to their girth for several decades afterwards.

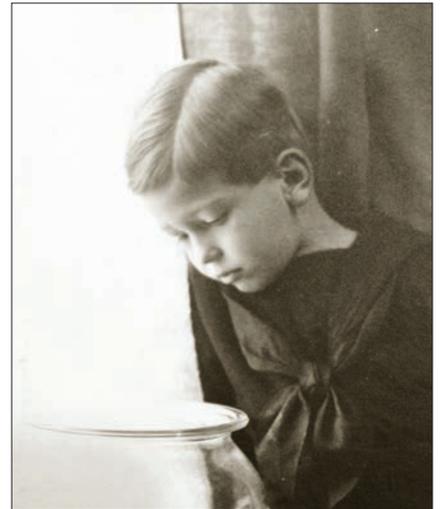
Victoria Mansion is very grateful to donor Penny Jones, City of Portland Arborist Jeff Tarling, and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation, for their support, vision, and assistance in restoring the elms to the Mansion's landscape.

# CURATORIAL REPORT

## Accessions

During the past year Victoria Mansion added several items to its collections through the generosity of donors and friends. One of our long-term docents, Vesta Vaughan Rand, made a remarkable discovery in the attic of her family's Yarmouth property: a Congregational newspaper with its original delivery label indicating it was Olive Morse's own personal copy! The paper also contains a lengthy advertisement of J.R. Libby Co.

We knew little about Merle S. Brown, Jr., (1918-2006) (*right*) who was the son of J.R. Libby's youngest daughter, Alice, and her husband, Merle S. Brown. Thanks to Doug and Nell Martin, who were close friends of Mr. Brown's, we now have a collection of photographs and ephemera relating to the Brown family, and the charming baby book presented to Merle S. Brown, Jr. when he was born in February, 1918. Mr. Brown's cousin, Ellen Libby Lawrence, has helped us identify some of the people shown in the photographs.



A fine Victorian-era cape donated by Charlotte Brown and her late sister Sara Ann Haynes fills a gap in our costume collection. It was displayed in the Red Bedroom during the Christmas season.

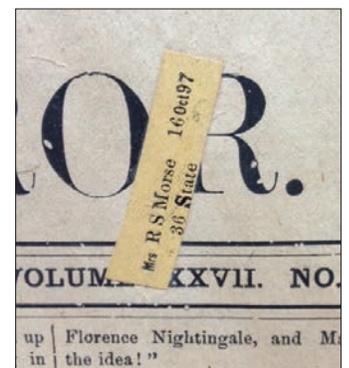


In September the Mansion purchased a parian porcelain figure of "Rebekah." (*left*) Such a statue was originally in the Mansion's Sitting Room, according to the 1894 inventory of furnishings that Olive Morse included in her sale of the Mansion to J.R. Libby. The original example has not surfaced over the years, so when one was offered at auction the Mansion determined to bid on it. Through the generosity of Morse Associates Jean Nishiyama, Charlotte Brown, Sandra Riley, Candice Lee, and Katharine Watson, we were successful. This rare porcelain sculpture was made in 1851 by Copeland in Stoke-on-Trent, England, the manufactory that first developed this special "statuary porcelain" in the late 1840s. The ware was popularly known as parian because of its resemblance to Parian marble. Rebekah is now on display in the Sitting Room.

Another purchase was the sheet music of "The Opera March," the cover of which has a striking image of Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati which opened in February 1859. This is of interest to the Mansion because Giuseppe Guidicini decorated the interior of that opera house not long before he came to Portland to commence work on the Morses' home. (See page 6)

## Gifts

- Thirty-four items relating to Merle S. Brown, Jr. Includes *The New Baby's Biography* by A.O. Kaplan and illustrated by Ruth Mary Hallock, presented to Merle S. Brown, Jr. in 1918 by Miss Gertrude S. Richards, and containing twenty-four photographs and several news clippings. Also loose photographs and ephemera. *Gift of Doug and Nell Martin, in memory of Merle S. Brown, Jr.*
- Woman's cape, 1870-1890, from the Huxley family. *Gift of Sara Ann Haynes and Charlotte Brown*
- *The Christian Mirror*, September 3, 1898 issue that was Olive Morse's personal copy. *Portland Transcript*, November 6, 1895. Fragment from a periodical concerning ladies' handwork. *Gift of Vesta Vaughan Rand, in memory of Virginia W. and Roger N. Vaughan, Sr. (right)*



- Seven acid-etched glass globes for lighting fixtures. *Gift of Florence and Ian White*

## Purchases

- “The Opera March,” sheet music with lithograph by Ehr Gott & Forbriger of Samuel N. Pike’s Opera House, Cincinnati, Published by W.C. Peters, & Sons, Cincinnati, 1858. (see page 6)
- Parian porcelain figure of “Rebekah,” Copeland Factory, Stoke-on-Trent, England, 1851. Purchased with funds generously donated by Morse Associates Jean Nishiyama (in memory of Callie H. Palmer), Charlotte F. Brown, Sandra Riley, Candice Lee, and Katharine Watson.

## Conservation

### Staffing

We are pleased to announce that Siobhan Lindsay (*right*) has joined the mansion’s curatorial department as arts conservator on a part-time basis. Known to many in the Mansion community through her work with Gianfranco Pocobene on the restoration of the Turkish Room, Pompeian bathroom suite, and the vestibule, Siobhan has had broad experience in the conservation of objects, textiles, and wall paintings at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Winterthur Museum, and with conservators in private practice. Besides conserving Mansion objects and wall paintings, Siobhan will supervise the relocation of the textiles collections from the billiard room to the former Christmas room.



### The Vestibule Project

The conservation of the vestibule was completed in 2013 with generous grants awarded by the Richard C. von Hess Foundation and an anonymous New England foundation. The project has transformed the visitors’ first impression of the Mansion and sets the stage for what they will experience beyond the hall doors. Conservators Gianfranco Pocobene and Siobhan Lindsay cleaned and treated the surviving sections of the decoratively painted ceiling. They copied the pattern of colorful arabesques and red and green imitation marble panels onto the half of the ceiling that was damaged beyond salvation and restored the central plaster relief medallion. The result is quietly stunning. After the scaffolding came down, Ivan Myjer was able to clean the patterned marble floor of the space and secure loose tiles. We speculate that the hanging lamp may have been dropped in 1902 when the Mansion was electrified, and that this accident not only broke the fixture’s globe but also damaged its thin inner rods. While we will never know for certain, the trajectory of the falling lighting device might explain how the lower left pane of the decorative window to the reception room was broken. The Libbys replaced the damaged red patterned pane with a plain red one and, in the interest of symmetry, removed the original intact pane from the right side and also installed a plain red pane there. The original intact pane was lovingly saved, however, and in 2009 J.R. Libby’s great-grandchild Susan O. Marcell donated it to the Mansion in memory of her grandmother, Mary Libby Chamberlain. Glass artisan Chris Dennison carefully copied it for the replacement pane, and both were reinstalled in the window last summer.

As part of the vestibule project the original hanging lamp received conservation treatment during the past year. This brass fixture was terribly corroded and discolored; its unusual stag’s head motif near the top was barely visible. Now that the metalwork has been cleaned and treated with the appropriate bronze finish, the importance of the fixture to the aesthetics of the vestibule can be fully appreciated. A particular challenge was the re-creation of a correct glass globe. The original globe was long gone; a hint of its appearance was found in an 1895 photograph in which the edge of the original globe could just be seen. That tidbit of evidence combined with documentation of a related lamp shown in a Parisian photograph of the 1860s led us to the final, egg-shaped form. Fabrication of the globe was undertaken by Pier Glass of Brooklyn, New York. The huge globe is eighteen inches high, twelve inches across its widest point,

and weighs nearly forty lbs; it took a team of four glassblowers several tries to make it correctly to the template that we provided. The result is spectacular –and a perfect fit! Because the interior frame of the fixture had been damaged, extra metalwork was installed to ensure that the massive globe is secure. In accordance with period practice, and based on the evidence of other Mansion lighting devices, the globe is “frosted” on the interior. This enhances its marvelous, glowing effect. We are very grateful to Mansion Trustee Thomas Hinkle for generously underwriting the cost of conservation of this significant object.

## *Other Projects*

Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind spent much of the past year determining what would be entailed, financially and otherwise, in finishing the restoration of the dining room and in undertaking the complete restoration of the parlor and reception room. Victoria Mansion received a grant from the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Fund for Historic Interiors, from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, that enabled us to bring conservators and consultants to the Mansion to help plan the necessary restoration work. Arlene met with Gianfranco Pocobene who assessed the condition of the wall and ceiling decorations and prepared estimates of the cost of treatment. Textiles conservator Deirdre Windsor examined the condition of the original Templeton’s carpets and made recommendations for their care and conservation. Natalie Larson, an expert in historic window treatments, advised us on the re-creation of the original window hangings of the dining room, reception room, and parlor. Collections Committee members Nancy Armitage and Candice Thornton Lee worked with Arlene to resolve the original configuration of the very complex silk festoons from the dining room. In June Arlene took a selection of original passementerie to New York City where she and Collections Chair Carol Collins Malone met at the Prella showroom with Yves Dorget of the Verrier firm in Paris. After examining the unique, flower-laden trims from the parlor, M. Dorget felt that his firm could replicate them. We then shipped examples of all the delicate trims from the parlor and dining room to Paris so M. Dorget could make trials and provide us with cost estimates.

Thanks to Siobhan’s extensive contacts in the conservation field, we have returned to the project of re-upholstering the dining room chairs after a hiatus of several years. The eight chairs that remain to be conserved are currently undergoing structural treatment and re-upholstery and will be reinstalled in the dining room within the next few months. This conservation and re-upholstery project was funded by Bill and Arlene Palmer Schwind.

## *Exhibitions*

Following upon the success of 2012’s *Victoria’s Wonderama*, Victoria Mansion decided to sponsor another exhibition of contemporary art, *Mansion as Muse: Contemporary Art at Victoria Mansion*, that opens as this report goes to press. The curator organized an Art Advisory Committee to advise on the project and select artists, and planning began in earnest in the spring of 2013. During the course of the year Arlene worked with the committee, the artists, a photographer, and the catalogue designer to organize what we hope will become a biennial tradition. Look for more about this exciting exhibition in next year’s annual report.

## *Lectures*

The curator lectured to the Mansion docents on February 24, 2014 about her research of Giuseppe Guidicini, the artist who painted the Mansion interiors. On March 11, 2014 Arlene traveled to Chicago to present a lecture, “Victoria Mansion: European Style in Mid-19th Century Maine,” to the Antiquarian Society of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## Research

Collections Committee member Dennis Crowley researched several sculptures in the collection and unearthed new information about them. As explained in the feature essay, Arlene has been relentlessly pursuing the trail of the Mansion's decorative painter, Giuseppe Guidicini and she is grateful for the assistance of Charlotte Brown, Dennis Crowley, and Carol Malone in this endeavor. Having completed her extensive essay on the history of this forgotten artist, Arlene will be working over the next year with Charlotte and Gianfranco Pocobene to put together a book on the topic.

### • By the Numbers •

April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014

- Visitors to the Mansion: **20,232**
- All **50** States and **6** U.S. Territories were represented
- Foreign visitors came from **87** countries
- Victoria Mansion has **25** trustees
- Number of Victoria Mansion members: **268**
- Number of Mansion docents: **58**
- Volunteer hours given to the Mansion: **3,170**
- Highest number of hours given by a single volunteer docent: **195.5**
- 579** school students toured
- 3** weddings were performed at the Mansion
- Number of designers for Christmas at Victoria Mansion: **12**
- Total number of people involved in presenting Christmas at Victoria Mansion to the public: **207**
- 5** special members-only events held



Long a tradition of Portland's holiday season, Victoria Mansion's gala opening of Christmas at Victoria Mansion was held December 4. The sparkling decorations throughout the Mansion rooms, based on the theme of Joy to the World, served as a festive backdrop for over 150 supporters who sipped wine and signature cocktails and enjoyed catered hors d'oeuvres. Mark your calendars now — 2014's holiday gala will be Wednesday, December 3. Our talented Christmas designers will interpret the theme of Christmas: 100 Years Past.

# 2014 VICTORIA MANSION CALENDAR

## APRIL

3-30 Exhibit: *Mansion as Muse: Contemporary Art at Victoria Mansion*, open Thursday-Sunday

23 ANNUAL MEETING at the Cumberland Club, 5:30 p.m.

28 Childrens' "Stories on the Staircase," 9:30 a.m.

30 Members' Only Event at Mansion

## MAY

1 Museum opens for 2014 season, daily through October 31

1-21 Exhibit: *Mansion as Muse: Contemporary Art at Victoria Mansion*, open daily

5 Childrens' "Stories on the Staircase," 9:30 a.m.

12 Childrens' "Stories on the Staircase," 9:30 a.m.

18 VICTORIAN DOLL TEA at Irish Heritage Center

19 Childrens' "Stories on the Staircase," 9:30 a.m.

## JUNE

20 ALLAGASH ALE TASTING under tent on lawn

## JULY

8 SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENT TBA

14 OPERA AT THE MANSION

## AUGUST

14 Members' Only Event at Mansion

## SEPTEMBER

17 Morse Associates Late Summer Outing

## OCTOBER

17-18 TALES OF TERROR

31 Last day of season

## NOVEMBER

1 Members' Only "Open Shutters" Event

28 Mansion opens for Christmas Tours

## DECEMBER

1-31 Christmas Tours  
(daily 11:00-4:00; Mondays until 7:00)

3 CHRISTMAS GALA

5 FIVE DOLLAR FIRST FRIDAY

7 VICTORIA NUTCRACKER

13-14 Special literary Performances

## JANUARY

2-4 Christmas Tours

## RECURRING MONTHLY EVENTS/MEETINGS:

First Thursday of every month: Executive Committee

Third Wednesday of every month: Board of Trustees (exc. July, August)

Second Thursday of every month: Restoration Committee, 1:00 p.m.

Second Wednesday of every month: Development Committee, 8:30 a.m.

All other Board Committees meet when called by Committee Chair

## *A Visit from This Old House*

This past June, a crew from the Public Broadcasting Service series *This Old House* spent the day filming master carpenter Norm Abram as he toured Victoria Mansion with Assistant Director Tim Brosnihan. The show's current season, *This Old House Arlington*, focuses on the renovation of an 1872 Italianate house in Arlington, Massachusetts. Last year, as producers began research for the series, they realized that a day trip to Portland to see the finest example of Italianate architecture in the country was a must. Norm toured Victoria Mansion both inside and out and met with preservation carpenter Caleb Hemphill and coppersmiths from Heritage Roofing Company to discuss ongoing restoration efforts. The episode, #3310 "Old House Discoveries," originally aired January 9, 2014 and is still available for viewing on the web by typing the following address into your browser: <http://bit.ly/1sRH0lJ>.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

At the end of fiscal year 2012-2013 we were gratified to have enough of a surplus to retire a long-term accumulated deficit of just over \$30,000. While we can't boast the same this year, we are nonetheless pleased to be able to report a modest surplus on our bottom line, despite a number of challenges beyond our operational control. Admissions revenue was strong through most of the year but fell off dramatically in October, a time of great economic uncertainty across the nation that dampened tourism in Maine. The challenges continued in November and December, with a late Thanksgiving date that compressed our normal Christmas season and an unprecedented five days lost on account of inclement weather. With these setbacks, admissions revenue was down over \$20,000 from last year. Although museum shop sales met our budget goals, they were also down slightly from 2012-2103.

The last quarter of the fiscal year, however, allowed us to recover this deficit and a bit more. Bright spots on the revenue side, including strong Mansion events rentals, a pleasing surge in operating grant funding, and steadily increasing membership donations helped to offset the shortfalls. On our operating expense side, we were able to "tighten our belt" in several areas, most notably through the use of free marketing opportunities through sponsorships and social media. We also extend special thanks to the dozens of supporters who stepped forward at the end of the fiscal year to enable us to close the year with a positive balance on the books.

	<b>FY 13-14 Budget</b>	<b>FY 13-14 Actual</b>	<b>FY 14-15 Budget</b>
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>			
<b>Income</b>			
ADMISSIONS/TOURS	\$216,000	\$209,619	\$213,700
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$66,400	\$62,000	\$62,950
ENDOWMENT INCOME	\$51,756	\$51,723	\$55,124
MEMBERSHIP	\$40,000	\$39,246	\$42,000
PROGRAMS	\$6,375	\$9,027	\$7,000
MANSION RENTALS	\$3,900	\$8,486	\$4,000
SHOP SALES	\$88,500	\$88,264	\$88,500
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$33,900	\$27,567	\$26,385
OPERATING GRANTS	\$6,000	\$12,500	\$45,400
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$512,831</b>	<b>\$508,432</b>	<b>\$545,059</b>
<b>Total COGS</b>	<b>\$49,500</b>	<b>\$49,532</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>\$463,331</b>	<b>\$458,900</b>	<b>\$495,059</b>
<b>Expense</b>			
ADMINISTRATION	\$67,420	\$71,152	\$73,675
PROGRAM	\$35,550	\$36,001	\$49,084
DEVELOPMENT	\$9,550	\$10,166	\$10,200
SALARIES/BENEFITS	\$350,064	\$338,919	\$339,460
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	\$0	\$2,290	\$22,500
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$462,584</b>	<b>\$458,528</b>	<b>\$494,919</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>\$747</b>	<b>\$373</b>	<b>\$140</b>

## DICKENS: AN EVENING WITH THE MASTER

DECEMBER 14 & 21, 2013



Victoria Mansion Trustee Carlene Magno and Deertrees Theater Executive Director Andrew Harris shined as Catherine and Charles Dickens in an evening of education and entertainment in the stair hall. They interspersed their readings from letters, diaries, and stories with imaginative dialogue that created an intimacy with the audience and gave a sense of the relationship between the author and his wife. Carlene and Andrew turned their personal research on Dickens into a memorable and highly engaging night of theater.



VICTORIA MANSION

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Photo by Andrew Davis

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