

VICTORIA MANSION

A National Historic Landmark



ANNUAL REPORT
2014-2015

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Letter from the Director

Annual Reports are always an opportunity for reflection – to take stock of where we’ve come from, where we are, and where we are headed. 2015 marks our seventy-fourth anniversary as a historic house museum open to the public. I think it is common to our human nature to not only look back, but to simultaneously plan for our future at the same time.

It might seem strange to us today that in 1941 the house we so prize now had just emerged from the very real threat of its demolition, and that it was not a groundswell of public enthusiasm that saved it, but rather the actions of a private individual, Dr. William H. Holmes. It was his timely purchase of the house and eventual transfer of it to the non-profit group “Victoria Society of Maine Women” that finally preserved the Mansion. It was a time in which Victorian architecture, especially “brown” Victorian architecture, was held in low regard, and in the context of the times one had to be truly visionary to appreciate any of the charms for which the building is now celebrated.

It was only in the 1970s, with the approach of the nation’s bicentennial and an attendant surge in interest of American history, when the Mansion started to find its true popular cultural niche and the first crucial restoration projects were undertaken. In the 1980s interest in Victorian design and art grew and the important connections to the nineteenth century cabinetmaker and decorator Gustave Herter were at last identified. It was only in the mid-eighties that a nascent endowment was established and a first professional director hired.

Over the course of the ensuing thirty years, we’ve witnessed critical major restoration projects to the perimeter fencing and tower, and several important interior projects. Major pieces of our Herter furniture have been exhibited in museums across the country and been featured in numerous publications. Visitation has grown ten-fold, support and endowment have grown, and the Mansion now garners national and international interest in its extraordinary state of survival. We’ve come an awful long way in what is really the average life span of an individual.

It’s important to recognize that we enjoy the Mansion today because of the efforts of the many who have come before us and devoted their time and energies to ensure that they passed it on better and more secure than they found it. As we enter a new year it is instructive to acknowledge what has been accomplished over the past several decades, but even more salient to reaffirm the importance of preserving and sharing this National Historic Landmark with the present and future generations. In this Annual Report you’ll see what is being done right now to accomplish these goals, and how it will inform our future plans and activities. As a member, your support helps to make sure that this will all happen. I thank you for being a part of this exciting and ongoing project.



Sincerely,
Thomas B. Johnson
Executive Director

By the Numbers

April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015

Victoria Mansion had **25,030** visitors. They came from all **50** States. Foreign visitors came from **104** countries. There are **59** Mansion docents. The most hours given by a single volunteer docent is **193.25**. Volunteers gave a total of **3,335** hours. **672** school students toured the house. Victoria Mansion has **342** members.

Treasure Underfoot: The Reception Room Carpet

by Arlene Palmer, Curator



Fig. 1

The critical work of replacing rotten flooring in the reception room has drawn attention to the rare, original wall-to-wall carpet in that space (see curatorial report). It is one of three examples in the Mansion of the sumptuous Patent Axminster carpets manufactured to order in Glasgow, Scotland, by James Templeton & Co. The others are in the parlor and in the small room off the reception room. It is highly likely that Templeton & Co. provided all the carpets that were originally installed throughout the Mansion in 1860.

The reception room and parlor carpets are exceptional for their large sizes and seamless construction. Traditionally, the only means of producing wide polychromatic pile carpets like these was by hand-knotting in the manner of oriental rugs. European versions – laborious to produce and extremely costly as a result – were generically known as Axminster or Aubusson after their respective original British and French manufacturing centers. With his Patent Axminster, introduced in 1839, James Templeton offered a somewhat less expensive woven alternative, but by including “Axminster” in the name, Templeton cleverly associated his product with the quality and hand-craftsmanship of earlier luxury carpets.

The pile of the Glasgow carpets is composed of strands of chenille – the French word for caterpillar and so named because of the fuzzy appearance [fig. 1]. James Templeton & Co. could manufacture chenille carpets in various depths of pile, and in heavy or light fabrics. The firm produced three kinds of chenille goods: large rectangular and custom-order carpets up to thirty-four feet in width; carpets woven in strips twenty-seven inches wide that could be sewn together; and hearth and other small rugs. As seen in the parlor and reception room, the company’s large carpets frequently featured a central medallion. The manufactory would adjust the pattern to fit the shape of any room and to accommodate bay windows or other recesses. The elaborate patterns of Templeton & Co. carpets were rendered in a remarkable number of hues: it was not unusual for a Patent Axminster to have over two hundred colors.

James Templeton & Co. issued only one trade catalogue of its medallion carpets with a selection of patterns shown in brilliantly colored lithographs. This catalogue includes both the parlor and reception room carpet designs, suggesting that client Ruggles Morse or designer Gustave Herter selected the carpets from this book. They probably saw the catalogue at A.T. Stewart & Co., because from 1853 that firm was the sole representative of James Templeton & Co. in the United States [fig. 2]. Located at Broadway and Chambers St., this vast department store also kept Templeton carpets in stock so customers could examine them firsthand.¹

The reception room carpet is number 2200 in the catalogue where it is shown in a strong palette of emerald green and deep reddish brown [fig. 3]. If a client required a different color scheme, he was instructed to provide a “rough penciling of the sketch...on which the alterations should be written.” Herter, perhaps with Morse’s input, chose to retain the reddish brown areas of the illustration but substituted shaded blue scrolls on a blue-gray ground for the green scrollwork panels. They also selected a uniformly light ground for the central area of the medallion instead of the white and gray tones of the pattern. These color choices perhaps were dictated by the “never-to-be-forgotten consideration” that carpets for reception rooms must be “warm and cheering by artificial light.”²

The design features a quatrefoil-shaped medallion with a colorful, exuberant bouquet of realistic flowers in the center within a gold and tan scrolled framework, delicate floral garlands, narrow borders of architecturally inspired details, and a wide outer border of four floral

**PATENT AXMINSTER
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A. T. STEWART & CO., of NEW YORK, we beg to notify that
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best designs, in medallion centres and borders, woven in one
piece, and also in breadth goods, parties ordering will have an
opportunity of seeing samples at their establishment.
JAMES TEMPLETON & CO.,
Carpet Manufacturers, Glasgow, 31st May, 1853.

**THE SUBSCRIBERS RESPECTFULLY CALL THE AT-
tention of their friends and the trade in general to the above
notice from Messrs. TEMPLETON & CO. They have now in
store, and are receiving by every steamer, a full supply of the
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They are also ready to take orders for future delivery.**
A. T. STEWART & CO.,
Broadway and Chambers street, New York, July 12, 1853.
151 & 2nd ed. no.

Fig. 2

Fig. 1. Chenille strand from Victoria Mansion parlor carpet by James Templeton & Co., Glasgow, c. 1860. Photo by J. David Bohl.

Fig. 2. Advertisement of James Templeton & Co. and A.T. Stewart & Co., *Evening Post* (New York) (September 12, 1853).



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

photographs reveal that the carpet originally followed the shape of the carved marble mantle supports and covered the original marble hearth [fig. 6].

Herter and Morse were very *au courant* in their choice of James Templeton & Co. The firm's luxurious Patent Axminster carpets were displayed not only in the 1851 Exhibition of the Arts of All Nations held in London's Crystal Palace, but also in the New York fair it inspired two years later. In describing the Templeton products shown in London, a writer observed that "the softness, beauty, and richness of these fabrics are all that the most luxurious can desire."³ Referring to a pattern extremely close to that of the Mansion's reception room carpet, the writer said he "had never seen any fabric of this description richer and more elegant than this: the pattern is full of 'subject,' displayed with exceeding taste and judgment, – groups and wreaths of flowers, scrolls, and border-ornaments, presenting a combination of beautiful forms."⁴

James Templeton & Co. included that same carpet in its display at the New York Crystal Palace in 1853 [fig. 7], but American reviewers were less comfortable than the English critics with its lavish and realistic pattern. To the editors of the 1853 exhibition catalogue, the multiplicity of motifs in the carpet were drawn from furniture and architecture, as well as nature, and so created a "confused and indiscriminate intermingling of the ornaments of different arts." They were also uneasy because the flowers and fruits appeared so realistic and seemed to stand out in such high relief that "one is almost afraid to walk here, lest his inadvertent foot should crush the delicate beauty of the roses, or tread out the purple juices of the grapes."⁵ An 1852 article in *Scientific American* also questioned the appropriateness of naturalistic imagery for floor coverings, stating "It is a mistake to put flowers, trees, or figures of birds or animals into a carpet, for we do not walk on such things."⁶ In Ruggles Morse's summer home, however, resplendent with Giuseppe Guidicini's masterful *trompe l'oeil* wall and ceiling paintings, Templeton carpets with

garlands tied with blue bowknot ribbons [fig. 4]. Large scrollwork cartouches stretch from each side of the medallion to the carpet perimeter and each bears a different floral cluster. Shaped panels between the outer border and the cartouches are filled with blue, leafy arabesques. The border is composed of a wide floral band within molding-like framework.

Measuring approximately twenty by fifteen feet, the carpet was customized to accommodate the deep bay of the front façade. The section in the bay is now quite fragmentary on account of roof leaks that probably started with the 1938 hurricane, but early photographs show how the manufactory adapted the pattern to the space [fig. 5]. That same variation was used in the small adjoining room. Historic



Fig. 5

Fig. 3. Pattern No. 2200, James Templeton & Co., *Patterns of Medallion Carpets* [c. 1860].

Fig. 4. Detail, Victoria Mansion reception room carpet by James Templeton & Co., Glasgow, c. 1860. Photo by J. David Bohl.

Fig. 5. Reception room, 1895 photograph. Collection of Victoria Mansion, gift of Marie Larrabee Stoops and Janet Larrabee Jones.



Fig. 6

The reception room carpet was included in the sale of the property to J.R. Libby. It was valued for fifty dollars in the inventory – half the amount of the parlor one – and was enjoyed by the Libby family throughout their residency. Because they used the house primarily as a winter residence, the Libbys upgraded the heating system. When they added a rectangular grate in the corner of the room they merely cut the carpet and folded the rectangular piece under. This was discovered in 2005, and we carefully removed the flap as a document of a color scheme that is closer to the original than the rest of the carpet, which has faded over time.

As Victoria Mansion looks forward to the full restoration of the reception room, the conservation of this remarkable carpet – the second largest object in the collection and one of the most fragile – will be a challenging but vital component of the project.

their bold three-dimensional effects and close imitations of nature were perfect choices.

The superior quality and attractive designs of the Templeton carpets, combined with the company's custom-order services, ensured a favorable reception by discriminating American consumers. In 1853 President Franklin Pierce ordered five medallion-patterned chenille Axminster carpets from Templeton's for the White House, including what was, at seventy-two by thirty-one feet, purportedly the largest ever produced by the firm.⁷ The expense of the carpets – the largest one cost about \$2,500 – as well as their foreign origin provided political fodder for the administration's critics who wondered why "American workmen could not produce a carpet of American wool sufficiently 'gorgeous' for a plain American President," and lamented the administration's "willingness to sink all the industrial arts of this country in a state of vassalage to foreign manufactures."⁸ Still, the cachet of presidential patronage doubtless encouraged buyers like Morse.

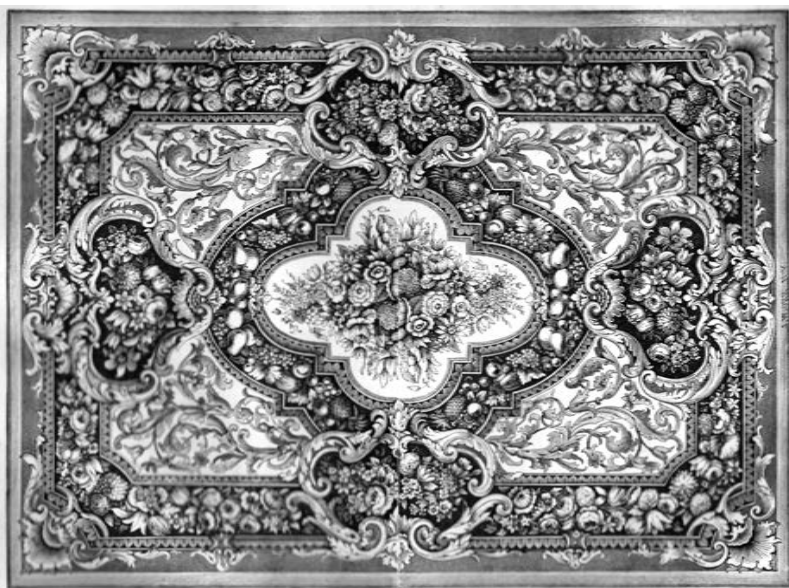


Fig. 7

Fig. 6. Reception room, 1935 photograph, Historic American Buildings Survey.

Fig. 7. Carpet very similar to that in the Mansion reception room. Made by James Templeton & Co. and displayed at New York Crystal Palace, 1853.

¹Copies of the trade catalogue are in The Athenaeum of Philadelphia; the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; and the Templeton Archives, Glasgow University. I am grateful to Guy Evans who first identified the Mansion carpets as products of James Templeton & Co. and to Ellen Krucker Blauer who told us about the trade catalogue.

²"Carpet Manufacture, by Hand Labour and by Machinery," in *The Crystal Palace and Its Contents,....1851* (London: W.M. Clark, 1852), p. 38.

³*The Industry of All Nations 1851: The Art Journal Illustrated Catalogue* (London: George Virtue, 1851), p. 89.

⁴*Ibid*, p. 153.

⁵B. Silliman, Jr. and C.R. Goodrich, eds., *The World of Science, Art, and Industry Illustrated from Examples in the New-York Exhibition, 1853-54* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Co., 1854), p. 167.

⁶*Scientific American* 7, no. 30 (April 10, 1852): 235.

⁷Sewn onto the woven part was an eight or nine foot border, making the overall dimensions of the carpet some eight by forty feet. "Carpet for the President's House," *Evening Post* (New York) (October 20, 1853), p. 2. The story, quoted from the *Edinburgh News*, was carried in a number of other American newspapers.

⁸*Milwaukee Sentinel* (November 21, 1853).

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Roselle Johnson
Carlene Magno
Maine Mead Works
Andy & Betty Mandeville
Nancy Marino
Cheryl Martel
Old Port Wine and Cigar
Andrea Pastore of Etiquette Solutions
Portland Safe Company
Portland Trading Company
Rainbow Toys
Vesta Rand
Bob & Sandy Riley
Judi Roche
Pat Russes
Marianne Russo
Patti Sangillo
Sawyer & Company Florist
Arlene Palmer Schwind
Peggy Scott
Sterling Publishing
Talbot's
Valet 4 ME

Christmas Designers

Blossoms of Windham
Blue Elephant Events and Catering
Broadway Gardens
The Christmas Light Pros
Dodge the Florist
Emerald City Gift Shop
Dan Gifford Designs
Harmon's and Barton's

Heather Caron Floral Designs
O'Donal's Nursery

Morse Associates

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

Nancy Armitage
Elizabeth Astor
Helaine Ayers
Steve and Ellen Barton
Charlotte F. Brown
Jonathan Carr
Maddy Corson
Jack and Noreen Evans
Brenda Garrard
John Hatcher and Dan Kennedy
Thomas Hinkle and Gary Duford
Doug and Sharyn Howell
Lynne Jackson
Thomas B. Johnson
Harry Konkel
Candice Thornton Lee
Carol and Rick Malone
Nancy and Mike Marino
Manny Morgan and Chris Corbett
Aaron Morris
Jean Nishiyama
Drew and Alexa Oestreicher
Sally W. Rand
Carla Rigby
Sandra and Bob Riley
Hannah Russell
Harry and Jane Sawyer
Bill and Arlene Schwind
Tim and Howsie Stewart
Gene and Ruth Story
Katharine Watson

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 or 207-772-4841 ext 102.



Christmas Gala

On the evening of December 3, over 150 guests filled the Mansion's rooms during the 2014 Christmas Gala. This year's sold-out soiree featured catered hors d'oeuvres compliments of the Cumberland Club. We were pleased to see so many new friends among the familiar faces, further proof that the Mansion's popularity continues to grow.



A Child's Christmas in Wales

Trustee Andrew Harris once again provided a crowdpleasing Christmas performance in the Mansion's stair hall on December 13. This year he brought to life the magic of *A Child's Christmas in Wales* in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Dylan Thomas' birth to correspond with the theme of *Christmas 100 Years Past*.

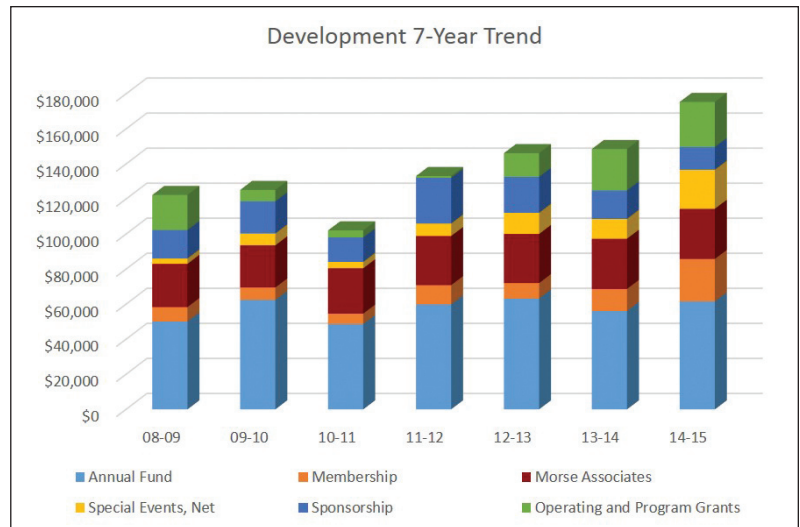
Development Report

Over the last several years, Victoria Mansion has enjoyed steady increases in overall raised funds. Following on the prior year's modest growth, donations and grants during 2014-2015 were up an impressive 18.1%, allowing us to continue expanding our restoration efforts and educational programming.

Of particular note this year was the increase in net revenues from special events and fundraisers, which were up 97% from the prior year. This success is in large part testament to hard work by the members of the Christmas Gala Committee, who worked tirelessly to solicit in-kind donations and reduce event-related expenses.

Another area of substantial success was the Mansion's membership program, led by the formation of a new membership circle, the Gaslight League. A social group formed for young members, the Gaslight League brought in over \$7,000 in membership dues, nearly all of it from new members. This, together with healthy organic growth in existing membership levels resulted in an overall increase in membership of 92.5%, more than \$10,000 above budget.

An area of decline was revenues from corporate sponsorship, which decreased for the fourth consecutive year. This decrease is partly attributable to changes in the Mansion's business relationships, which precipitated the loss of one major sponsor. More importantly, though, the reduction in corporate sponsorship revenues reflects a business reality in which businesses prefer to invest smaller amounts in a greater number of organizations. Thus as sponsorship has contracted, we have seen a corresponding increase in earned revenue areas such as rental events and ads in our Christmas program. With the annual fund and operating grant revenues showing strong organic growth of roughly 10% each, the overall financial picture for the year was extremely positive, and we have confidence in strong continued growth in the coming year.



Gaslight League

Starting in July, Victoria Mansion launched its newest membership effort: a young donors' circle called the Gaslight League, designed to attract young professionals, long an underrepresented demographic in historic house museums. Members may pay \$200 per year or \$20 per month, and they receive tickets to the League's events, an exciting and diverse combination of holiday parties, Mansion-focused educational presentations, and community outings.

In October, the League held its first major event, a Steampunk Masquerade on Halloween night. Members and their guests dressed in retro-futurist costumes that reflect the works of nineteenth-century authors like H.G. Wells, Jules Verne, Bram Stoker, and Mary Shelley. Subsequent events on

New Year's Eve and Mardi Gras proved equally popular. The League has already exceeded its initial goal of 25-30 members. As of the end of March, more than 50 supporters have joined, raising more than \$7,000 for the Mansion.

Events planned for the spring and summer include a whiskey tasting in collaboration with George Washington's Mount Vernon, a train trip to Old Orchard Beach, a Midsummer Night's Soiree, and an afternoon of croquet on the Mansion's lawn. Anyone wanting to know more about Gaslight League membership may visit www.gaslightleague.com/join.html or look for Gaslight League on Facebook, or contact Director of Development Sam Heck.

Education Report



In the past year, great headway has been made to expand and improve the educational offerings of Victoria Mansion. *Victorian Portland: A Century of Change* has finished its pilot phase and is now available to elementary schools in the greater Portland area. In addition to the interdisciplinary lessons designed for elementary students studying state and local history, we are expanding the program to include middle school lessons. Within two years we plan to have a selection of lessons prepared for middle and high school students similar to those we presently have for younger grades.

In June 2014, the Mansion became an official Community Partner of the Girl Scouts of Maine. As such, we offer activities and tours designed to work in conversation with lessons that girls participate in while earning badges. We have programs available for all levels of Girl Scouts and look forward to maintaining this active partnership in the future.

The coming year will highlight many exciting educational programs and opportunities. A new exhibit *The Way We Wear: Fashion and Industry in the 19th Century* opens on May 1st, and a corresponding lecture and event series will run through October. On September 13, the Mansion will host its second Victorian Fair on the lawn with exhibitors, demonstrators, and performers all celebrating the 19th century and its culture and technological innovations.

Above: Lucinda Hannington leads Ocean Avenue Elementary students on a walking tour as part of the architecture unit of Victorian Portland.



Creating Neighborhoods with USM's Osher Map Library

On October 4, the Mansion played host to a unique collaborative event called *Creating Neighborhoods with the Osher Map Library*. Maine State Historian and Victoria Mansion Trustee Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. and Osher Map Library Acting Director and Cartographic Reference and Digital Projects Librarian Ian

Fowler led a lively discussion centered on some of the more unusual aspects of Victoria Mansion's neighborhood through the lens of architecture and early maps.

Above: Osher Map Library's Ian Fowler



Stories on the Staircase

Stories on the Staircase continued this year with great success. Every Saturday morning during the Christmas season, preschoolers and their parents filled the staircase to listen to stories read by Mansion staff and volunteers. Guests also took advantage of the opportunity to view two rooms each week, seeing the Mansion's Christmas decorations in a child-centered atmosphere.

Restoration Report



Over the past year a group of talented craftsmen helped Victoria Mansion tackle a number of intractable problems that have been the cause of much handwringing over the years. Bob and Sebastian Cariddi removed a column base from the rear porch that had settled in a rainwater-catching depression in the decades since the porch was rebuilt. The base took weeks to dry before it could be repaired with epoxy and mahogany infills. The bulkhead roof upon which it sits was raised slightly to provide positive drainage, ensuring decades of continued service from a humble but beautiful element of the Mansion's original construction.

We again enlisted the help of painter Peter de Paolo, who worked in consultation with preservationist John Leeke and conservator Ron Harvey to develop a system to renew the paint coating on the Mansion's rusting perimeter fence. Peter treated eight balusters, using a variety of paint removal

techniques and paint coating systems, all of which were carefully documented. The results will be scrutinized this spring after a harsh winter of weathering and be used to develop a protocol for treating the remaining balusters in the coming years.

Bob and Sebastian Cariddi began major structural repairs to the floor system beneath the Mansion's reception room. We have known for years that the floor was compromised, the victim of major roof leaks corrected in 1978. Recent structural investigations of the bay revealed that the work could no longer be deferred. The project necessitated removal of not only furniture, but also the room's c. 1860 carpet, carefully rolled by six staff members in preparation for conservation in Massachusetts. This project will pave the way for a complete interior/exterior restoration of the Reception Room over the next several years.

Other noteworthy maintenance projects over the last season included epoxy repairs and sand painting on the rear kitchen porch and the upper balustrade of the side ell porch, all ably carried out by Peter de Paolo. Bob and Sebastian Cariddi also restored the elegant arched-top window on the second floor of the Mansion's ell. Victoria Mansion first hired Bob to work on its windows exactly thirty years ago.

I am happy to be able to report once again that the Mansion is tackling its most pressing maintenance problems head-on and is making great strides. It is always gratifying to be reminded by those who have been working on the building for decades about how far we have come and to hear that house has never looked better. The snows are finally receding and we are already gearing up for another busy season.



Above left: Sebastian Cariddi trims repairs to rear porch column base. Above right: Tim Brosnihan and Siobhan Lindsay with the reception room carpet.

Curatorial Report

Accessions

Gifts

- White damask tablecloth, 1880-1900 (71 by 216 in.) History in the Libby family. *Gift of Emma F. Willman*
- White linen tablecloth with scenes from Lohengrin, c. 1902 (76 x 124 in.) History in Barbour family of Detroit. *Gift of Ellie Asherman*
- Photograph of tomb of sculptor Edward Russell Thaxter, outside Florence, Italy. Early 20th century. *Gift of Ellen Libby Lawrence*
- New Year's greeting postcard and four newspapers: three *Portland Transcripts* (1838-1840) and a *Youth's Temperance Visitor* (1862). *Gift of Arlene Palmer Schwind*
- Postcards of singers Alma Gluck, Mary Desmond, and Marie Rappold, from the 1910 Maine Music Festival. *Gift of Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.*
- Numerous papers, restoration reports, and other archival material from the Victoria Society of Maine. *Gift of the Maine Charitable Mechanic Association Library*
- Victoria Society of Maine archival material. *Gift of Martha Timothy*

Conservation and Care of Collections

Reception Room

Conservators Gianfranco Pocobene and Siobhan Lindsay completed their extensive analysis and documentation of the ceiling painting in the reception room bay. Regrettably, the extremely deteriorated condition of this feature precludes its restoration; when work begins on the interior of the room, that ceiling decoration will be re-created, probably as a mounted canvas painting.

During February Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind and Siobhan Lindsay prepared the reception room for structural repairs. It was not known how far the rot that caused the sinking of the bay floor extended into the room proper. Because we did not wish to cut any original floorboards unless absolutely necessary, the room was stripped of all its furnishings so the entire flooring could be examined. The sofa, Madonna sculpture, mantel vases, and portraits of Ruggles and Olive Morse have been temporarily relocated to the parlor. This provides an unexpected opportunity for visitors to see Olive Morse's image far more clearly than they can when it hangs in place on the reception room hearth wall. We removed the curtains and valances, covered the overmantel mirror, and bagged the chandelier for protection during restoration activities.

The most daunting part of this project was the removal of the original Templeton's wall-to-wall carpet. (see feature essay). With the advice of conservator Deirdre Windsor who had examined the carpet last year, staff conservator Siobhan Lindsay engineered a solution. After she carefully cleaned the carpet front and back with the new museum quality Nilfisk vacuum cleaner, Siobhan enlisted all members of the senior staff. Because the carpet had to be rolled with the pile side out, it first had to be "flaked," that is, repeatedly folded back onto itself. Siobhan had prepared sonotubes on which the carpet was to be rolled. As we began, we covered the upper surface of the carpet with sheets of Tyvec (*see page 13*) to protect the fibers but also allow them to breathe. In unison, we slowly began to roll the carpet in an awkward, backwards motion. The difficulty of the process was compounded by the wall-to-wall size of the carpet which left no wiggle room, and because the process had to be repeatedly stopped and adjusted to accommodate moldings and radiators. Siobhan periodically had to crawl under the Tyvec to make sure the carpet was not getting creased. She calculated the process carefully so that the extremely tattered and fragmentary section from the bay was the last part to be rolled. Fondly remembered as "the Great Rug Roll of 2015," the task was completed in a bit under two hours.

Later, a steel tube was inserted in the sonotube to provide extra strength and enable us to move the carpet roll out of the room. Perennial problem-solver Caleb Hemphill was enlisted to devise a method for the temporary storage of the carpet roll in the parlor, which is a space that is wider than the reception room. The carpet roll had to be elevated, not only to keep weight off of itself, but also to protect the even more fragile parlor carpet. Small jack devices were placed on the black linoleum edges of the parlor to support each end of the metal tube. An ethafoam cradle has been placed under the center of the roll for extra good measure.

Parlor

Last spring Siobhan Lindsay discovered paint flakes on the parlor carpet, the ceiling, while in poor condition for many years, were now actively disintegrating. Too fragile to be conserved in situ, the canvases were carefully removed by Conservator Gianfranco Pocobene (*right*) assisted by Siobhan. Close examination of these paintings of Venus, Juno, and Jupiter in scenes from the Iliad, showed them to be skillfully executed in a lovely soft palette, with the deterioration caused by some inherent and as yet unknown technical flaw in the pigments; fortunately none of the other canvases seem to be similarly afflicted. The paintings are in the Pocobene studio in Massachusetts; conservation will get underway when the necessary funds – \$25,000 – are raised. Please contact Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind if you are interested in helping financially with the conservation of these works of art that are so critical to the interpretation of the parlor.



Putting our best foot forward!

Before the Mansion opened for its thousands of annual Christmas visitors, we acquired new protective carpeting for the visitor viewing areas of each of the rooms. The old carpets were not only extremely worn and unattractive, but they also fit poorly and created a hazard for visitors. We purchased heavy-duty carpeting which Siobhan Lindsay custom-cut to fit the moldings of each space. She glued conservation-quality pads to the underside of each carpet. The result is that we are now protecting the precious Morse and Libby carpets in a far more satisfactory manner and are providing a more attractive and safer entrance in each museum room.

Textiles storage

The Mansion received word in the fall of 2014 that it had been awarded a grant of \$24,122 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to create a textiles storage room and rehouse, according to conservation standards, the incomparable collection of original silk trims (*passementerie*) and other textile items. The collection of nearly 1000 items includes dozens of tassels, yards of fringe and edging, ornamental floral drops and medallions, and original curtain panels.

The space selected is on the third floor and was originally a trunk room. The Libbys added two closets to the space, and during their residency a “handyman” occasionally slept in the room. In recent years the museum has used the room to store Christmas decorations; those items have been relocated to the basement. Work began in November to make the room a viable space for its new purpose. Several shattered walls and the damaged ceiling were sheet-rocked and painted. The floor was patched and painted. Electrical capacity was expanded.

Supplies and equipment have been purchased, including the Nilsfisk vacuum cleaner. A newly donated camera will be used to document each item as it is cleaned and prepared for storage. The storage methods we will be following are based chiefly on the model of the Ratti Textile Center of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The curator and the conservator will be devoting much of their time to this textiles storage project, which has a completion date of October 31.

Research

Guidicini Book Project

Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind spent two days at the Boston Athenaeum and the Boston Public Library studying the work of Antonio Basoli who had trained artist Giuseppe Guidicini at the Accademia di belle arti di Bologna. Chapter one of the Guidicini book is completed and work is proceeding on the remaining two chapters. Publishing details have yet to be worked out.

As part of the research for his chapter on the technical aspects of Guidicini’s work, Conservator Gianfranco Pocobene spent a day taking infrared photographs of Mansion wall paintings, chiefly in the hall and reception room, in order to determine if there were any underdrawings. While a few pencil marks were discerned that would have served merely as placement guides, nothing else was found to suggest that Guidicini pre-sketched any of the decoration. When he traveled to Portland, probably in the late fall of 1859, Guidicini would have brought drawings on paper with him to serve as design models, but he apparently copied them freehand on the walls and ceiling.

Lectures

The curator delivered two lectures about Giuseppe Guidicini, the Italian artist responsible for the elaborate wall and ceiling decorations at Victoria Mansion, and his history of wall paintings to the members and to the Board. In March 2015 she gave a presentation to Mansion members entitled “Curator’s Choice” in which she spoke in detail about three major works of art in the mansion’s collection.

Special visitors

Last May the Mansion was privileged to host the William Cullen Bryant Fellows of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. They enjoyed a special reception and examples of the original *passementerie* fabric trims were displayed for their viewing. Leading the group were several curators from the American Wing, including Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen, a long-term member of our Professional Advisory Committee.



Greendrinks

On July 8, the Mansion hosted a gathering of Greater Portland Greendrinks, a group that hosts networking events for creative professionals and nonprofit organizations. More than 600 toured the Mansion and socialized on the lawn, enjoying drinks from local brewers. For many attendees, this was their first visit to the Mansion, making it an exciting opportunity for us to reach out to a wider audience.



Mansion as Muse

Mansion as Muse: Contemporary Art at Victoria Mansion, was a memorable exhibition on view from April 3 to May 21, 2014. The Mansion’s Art Advisory Committee, composed of distinguished artists and museum professionals, selected three artists and one collaborative team to create works of art inspired by the Mansion’s incomparable interiors and collections. Andrew Mowbray, Amy Yoes, Justin Richel, and the team of Dana Sherwood and Mark Dion enthusiastically rose to this unique challenge and conceived stunning site-specific works. Their creative interventions within the Mansion rooms presented a thought-provoking alliance of contemporary vision and nineteenth-century splendor that delighted hundreds of visitors over the course of the exhibition. Copies of the exhibition catalogue are available from the Museum Shop.

Above: Andrew Mowbray, Reception Room Cabinet. Amy Yoes, Reflector, in the Turkish Smoking Room. Photos by J. David Bohl

Morse Associates



The Morse Associates, a convivial group of Victoria Mansion's upper-level donors, enjoyed their traditional late summer outing with a journey to Augusta and Hallowell. This trip opens doors to historic sites and private spaces rarely if ever accessible to the public, and is a special feature of this membership level. The day started with a catered luncheon and tour of the historic interiors and grounds of the Viles Estate; moved onto a special tour of the home of Maine's governor, Blaine House, and its gardens led by State Historian and Victoria Mansion trustee Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr.; then continued with a private curator's tour at the Maine State Museum; and wrapped up with a visit and cocktail reception at Hallowell's historic eighteenth-century Vaughan estate with spectacular views of the Kennebec River. In recent years the group has been to Rockport, York, and Bridgton. Where will they go and what will they see in 2015? Join and find out!

Above: Victoria Mansion Director Tom Johnson and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr. discuss the historic Blaine House with Morse Associates in the solarium of the governor's residence.

Victorian Doll Tea

The ninth annual *Victorian Doll Tea* on Sunday, May 19 brought sellout crowds once again. Brian Callaghan's classical guitar playing welcomed guests to the lavishly decorated Maine Irish Heritage Center where students from Portland Ballet provided educational entertainment. Trustee Carlene Magno provided lessons on tea etiquette while those attending enjoyed a full tea service. Following the tea, partygoers took a brief walk to the Mansion where they toured the house and saw an exhibit of handmade dolls in the Carriage House gallery.



Marjorie Manning Vaughn

2015 *Victoria Mansion Calendar*

April

22 **Annual Meeting** at the Cumberland Club, 5:30 p.m.

May

- 1 Museum opens for 2015 season, daily through October 31
- 1 Exhibit in the Carriage House Gallery: *The Way We Wear: Fashion & Industry in the Nineteenth Century*, free of charge, open daily until October 31
- 17 **Victorian Doll Tea** at Irish Heritage Center

June

- 3 OFF GRID: Electronics and live percussion with Boston-based percussionist Nate Tucker, in collaboration with Oratorio Chorale
- 20 Annual **Allagash Victoria Ale Tasting**

July

- 27 Fifth annual **Opera at the Mansion** with PORTopera

August

- 4 *Lizzie Borden on Trial: Murder, Ethnicity, and Gender* book talk by Dr. Joseph Conforti

September

- 10 Dinner at the Mansion in collaboration with George Washington's Mount Vernon
- 13 Second Biennial **Victorian Fair**

October

- 16-17 **Tales of Terror**
- 31 Mansion closes for the season

November

- 2 **Christmas at Victoria Mansion** opens
- 28 Children's **Stories on the Staircase**

December

- 1 **Christmas Gala**
- 4 **Five Dollar First Friday**
- 6 **Victoria Nutcracker** performance
- 12 Children's **Stories on the Staircase**
- 12 Holiday literary event
- 19 Children's **Stories on the Staircase**
- 26 Children's **Stories on the Staircase**

January

- 3 Last day of **Christmas at Victoria Mansion**

Watch your mail and e-mail for announcements and invitations to other events throughout the year and follow us on Facebook for the latest news!



Opera at the Mansion

The Mansion reverberated once again on July 14 with glorious music performed in the stair hall by PORTopera singers from the company's productions of *Rigoletto* and *Gianni Schicchi*. Soloman Howard, Anthony Kalil, Robert Mellon, Christin-Marie Hill, and Rebecca Kidnie enchanted a sold-out audience with a concert of operatic arias and Broadway show tunes. This fourth annual *Opera at the Mansion* was a successful fundraiser for both PORTopera and Victoria Mansion. Save the date July 27, 2015 for the next *Opera at the Mansion*.

*Far left: Bass Soloman Howard singing
Left: PORTopera Artistic Director Dona D. Vaughn with singers*

Financial Report

During the 2014-2015 fiscal year, Victoria Mansion covered a number of extraordinary expenses with even more extraordinary revenues. Three main factors drove expenses over budget: a major flood in the basement of the Carriage House in July, which was only partially covered by insurance, operating software upgrades for nearly all of the Mansion's computers, and the conversion of the Mansion's heating system to natural gas. Revenues were strong across the board, with record-breaking admissions numbers, particularly during the Christmas season, and very strong annual fund receipts, special events receipts, and gift shop sales. Membership was a particularly bright spot. Membership revenues nearly doubled from last year, thanks in large part to an influx of members to the Gaslight League, our new young donors group. In the end, we were able to weather a number of one-time expenses that pushed us nearly \$50,000 over budget and still turn out a respectable surplus.

During the same period, Victoria Mansion's endowment experienced healthy growth that kept well ahead of the pace of inflation, even after a draw of over \$53,000 for operations and \$12,000 for maintenance and restoration (not reflected in the figures below). As of March 31, 2014 the value of the endowment was \$1,469,019. As of March 31, 2015 it had increased to \$1,492,624.

Ordinary Income/Expense	April 2014 - March 2015	
	Budget	Estimated Actual
Income		
3010 - ADMISSIONS/TOURS	213,700.00	246,558.00
3020 - CONTRIBUTIONS	62,950.00	64,833.41
3030 - ENDOWMENT	55,123.00	55,123.56
3040 - GRANTS	28,500.00	23,000.00
3060 - MEMBERSHIP	42,000.00	52,855.23
3080 - PROGRAMS	7,000.00	9,136.53
3090 - RENTAL EVENTS	4,000.00	1,591.20
3120 - SALES	88,500.00	91,225.52
3130 - SPECIAL EVENTS	26,385.00	35,293.30
Total Income	528,158.00	579,616.75
MUSEUM SHOP COST OF GOODS SOLD	50,000.00	48,117.84
Gross Profit	478,158.00	531,498.91
Expense		
3000 - ADMIN	73,675.00	77,682.00
4000 - PROGRAM	32,184.00	41,391.85
5000 - DEVELOPMENT	10,200.00	16,587.94
5150 - SALARIES/BENEFITS	339,460.00	343,584.83
6050 - Capital Purchases	22,500.00	44,477.00
Total Expense	478,019.00	523,723.62
Net Ordinary Income	139.00	7,775.29



Nadira Photography

Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere

The ninth *Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere* on June 20 celebrated the annual release of Allagash Brewing Company's Victoria Ale, sales of which benefit the Mansion's restoration and education efforts. The 2014 event sold out, with more than 300 people in attendance. We will look to build on this success with the upcoming tenth annual *Victoria Ale Premiere* on June 26, 2015.



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Portland, Maine 04101



www.victoriamansion.org