

VICTORIA MANSION

A detailed, ornate golden sculpture of a woman's face, likely a Medusa or similar mythological figure, is the central focus. The face is framed by elaborate, dark wood and gold scrollwork. The background shows a wall with vertical wood paneling and a decorative molding at the top.

Annual Report
2018-2019

VICTORIA MANSION AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES GRANT

In October, the trustees and staff were delighted to learn that out of a field of one hundred forty-four applicants nationally to the Save America's Treasures (SAT) program, Victoria Mansion's request to fully conserve the walls and ceiling of the Parlor was one of sixteen projects to receive award funding. Completion of the work is estimated to take two years.

Institutions nationwide vie for these competitive funds and are limited to two individual grants – one for structural work and the other collections related – for their lifetime. Victoria Mansion now joins a small group of museums in attaining that goal. In 2002 we received an award to undertake reconstruction of the exterior of the tower, and the current award deals with the wall and ceiling paintings of the Parlor as components of our collections.

The great success of the conservation work in the Reception Room helped pave the way for this SAT award. That project allowed the conservation team to perfect methods used to efficiently conserve the wall and ceiling decorative surfaces. Given our experience there, we could confidently state the time frame for completion and methods employed in the grant application, an element of the request that worked in our favor. As this report goes to press, scaffolding is being erected, and come opening in May, visitors will be able to witness the transformation of the soot-obscured surfaces to the original freshness of the 1860 colors as the project goes forward.



Above: View of southeast corner of Parlor, showing original Gustave Herter sofa and painting 'The Iconoclasts' by Emanuel Leutze with Herter designed frame of 1860. To the left of the painting between the wall panels can be seen an initial test cleaning of the wall surface, showing the light greys and whites under an obscuring film of accumulated coal dust pollutants. The Save America's Treasures conservation project presently underway will restore the room's original fresh appearance.



The preservation of Victoria Mansion's Parlor has been financed in part with Federal funds from the Save America's Treasures program, administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

This program received Federal financial assistance for the identification and protection of historic properties. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally funded assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity National Park Service 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC 20240.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"The past is always the place to start for inspiration. Its textures, tastes and visions are what shape us"

-India Hicks, British Designer, August 2018

This quote was brought to my attention by one of our Anglophile docents (and there are more than a few of them!), and it immediately struck me – as it did the docent - that it neatly summarizes why Victoria Mansion reverberates with the public today. Hicks is popular for her designs for today's lifestyles, drawing inspiration from the accomplishments of our collective past. The Mansion, though firmly a product of the tastes of the mid-nineteenth century, is remarkable in that it incorporates elements that have remained fresh in their appeal to a large and diverse audience.

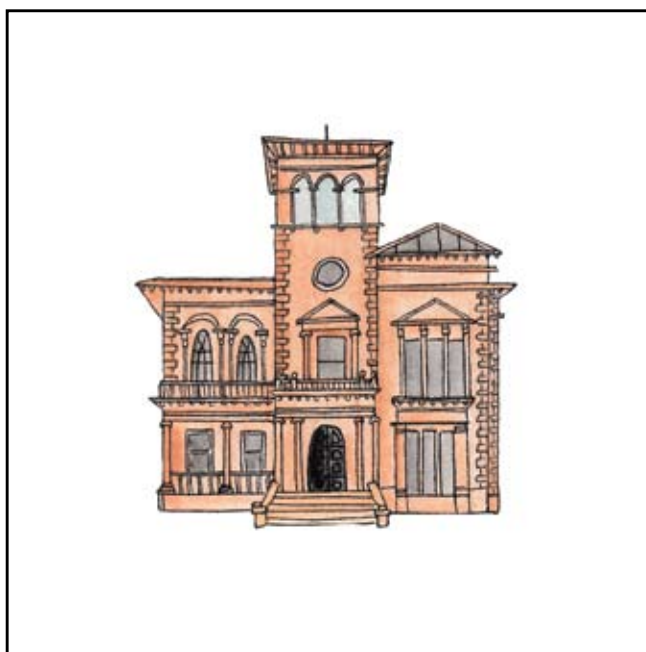
Significantly, the Mansion's creation was itself based on inspiration from the past. Throughout the house there are representations of historic styles of decoration and painting: Islamic-themed imagery based on details from the Alhambra in the Turkish Smoking Room, a Pompeian theme in the Bathroom Suite, the Germanic Gothic of the Library, a cool-pallet Louis XIV revival in the Parlor, sixteenth-century Renaissance in the Dining Room, the luxury of the French Second Empire in the Reception Suite. Ruggles Sylvester Morse sought through this public display to show himself as a man of the world. With Gustave Herter guiding Morse's tastes, interiors of great luxury and sophistication were created, inspired by the past pomp and power of Europe. These trappings traversed the Atlantic Ocean to serve as models and be admired by an America that was rapidly coming to view itself as the logical successor to the culture of the old world. But these interiors are not slavish copies of actual historical antecedent.

They borrowed what was considered the best past cultures could offer, and fused it into a style unique to its time and place. This knowledge of European precedent was emphasized with the inclusion of Ruggles Morse's cipher of initials in cartouche reserves on the ceiling of the stair hall – a clear allusion to the European ciphers of nobility that decorated many European royal and ducal palaces. Nothing at all obvious there! The house is not subtle in its borrowings from the past.

The Mansion continues to inspire today. Our ongoing cleaning and conservation work are revealing a vibrancy of color that belies the oft-held opinion equating the Victorian era with gloominess. The pure joy the painters and decorators of 1860 brought to their work here is being reflected in the reactions of visitors and our burgeoning corps of volunteers. This year, especially, we have seen an uptick in projects being performed by volunteers inspired to undertake these activities. Throughout this annual report we've featured some of these people and the work they've undertaken. Their work is crucial to our ability to share and interpret the "textures, tastes and visions" so evident here to a wide audience. We invite you to come in and experience how Victoria Mansion might inspire you, too.

Tom Johnson

Above: Director of Development Audrey Wolfe, guest Katie Reimann, Trustee Mike Devine, and Executive Director Tom Johnson enjoying intermission during Opera at the Mansion.



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Above: *Illustration by Justine Dutil.*

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fig. 1

Visitors to Victoria Mansion are often curious about the grounds and puzzled by what they find beyond the property's cast iron perimeter fence. "Where are the gardens?" many ask. The answer that there probably weren't any is often met with a bit of skepticism. Visitors are equally surprised to hear that the property as it exists today is not a remnant of once vast landholdings. Like the house itself, the property is a remarkable survival, a largely unaltered example of a compact urban estate beautifully and practically arranged to provide Ruggles and Olive Morse a comfortable retreat for a few glorious months each summer.

The Morses saw potential in the neighborhood well before architect Henry Austin drew up plans for what would become Victoria Mansion about 1857. Despite their rural upbringings, Ruggles and Olive were acclimated to city life by that time, having lived together in bustling, cosmopolitan New Orleans since their marriage in 1851. Piecing together the property for their summer

retreat took a little maneuvering, but in August of 1856 Morse purchased two separate lots on the corner of Park and Danforth Street, one with a standing house and outbuildings that were put up for auction and removed (*see following section*). The result was a blank slate: a clear lot pleasantly situated in an upper-middle class neighborhood, removed from the clamor and odors of the working waterfront but close enough to the Fore River and Casco Bay to provide breathtaking views from the upper stories of their house-to-be.

Archaeology conducted in the late 1990s shed some light on the remaking of the property on the eve of the Mansion's construction. Analysis of soil layers suggested that the property originally canted from west to east, and had to be levelled to receive the Mansion. Workers dug away soil from the elevated west side of the property and combined it with soil from the foundation excavation, evening out the grade to create an elevated plinth for Austin's sculptural masterpiece.¹

And plinth it was, a plain, grassy expanse that set off the Morse's elegant villa without competing for the attention of the viewer. But were there truly no gardens? Local papers gushed over the Mansion around the time of its completion, but understandably focused on the building itself, sparing little ink for the grounds. Photographs provide the most insight into the evolution of the grounds through the decades. The earliest, taken around 1870 and now in the possession of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, offers a tantalizing glimpse through the cast iron balusters of the perimeter fence west of the Mansion. No plantings are visible. Better views are available from a pair of photos taken about 1895. In these, there are woody plantings, perhaps forsythia², against the rear retaining wall (Fig. 1). But the broad expanse between the Mansion and Park Street was clearly lawn. Only by 1936, when a photographer from the Historic American Buildings Survey captured the west lawn, had woody growth filled in the space alongside the Mansion's west elevation. But this growth is rampant and un-manicured, the trappings of a property all-but abandoned during the depths of the Great Depression. Throughout the Morse and Libby occupations, the western half of the property served as a kempt but plain lawn, punctuated only by cast iron planters flanking the sweeping front stair.

So did this lawn serve a purpose beyond backdrop for an architectural masterpiece? The stair running to the lawn from the rear ell porch is a speculative recreation –no early photographs quite caught it- but it makes sense in the context of the property. Like the Mansion itself, with its clear divisions between public, formal spaces and the living and working spaces of the servants, the property was divided between two worlds, which were marked out symbolically through architectural detailing. The stair at the back of the rear ell porch connected the interior world of the Morses and their guests with the formal west lawn. East of this stair a decorative wooden fence, whose final iteration was still standing as late as 1973 (Fig. 2), divided and screened off the working courtyard alongside the Carriage House. Here the staff came and went along the drive, passing horses tethered for feeding and grooming and fellow servants carrying out dirty outdoor chores. The heavy slate paving of the courtyard and granite of the drive prevented this working space from turning into a mire in the spring and facilitated the cleanup of manure. Did the Morses and their guests stroll down the stair and out onto the lawn just feet away? We'll never know how much the lawn was used, but it lay pleasantly groomed and ready, a clearly demarcated formal space alongside the property's less refined working areas.



fig. 2

¹Wheeler, Kathleen and Ellen Marlatt, "Findings from the Archaeological Survey at Victoria Mansion (ME-357-086), Portland, Maine," Unpublished site report prepared by Independent Archaeological Consulting, LLC, March 26, 1997.

²Identifying leafless shrubs from black and white photographs is fraught, but the growth at the rear of the Mansion lot in 1895 appears to be forsythia. Thanks to Muffie Fernald for help with identification. The upright Asian version of forsythia was introduced to England by British botanist Robert Fortune and grew in popularity in America after 1859. See: Tice, Patricia, *Gardening in America, 1830-1910*, (New York: The Strong Museum, 1984), 28.

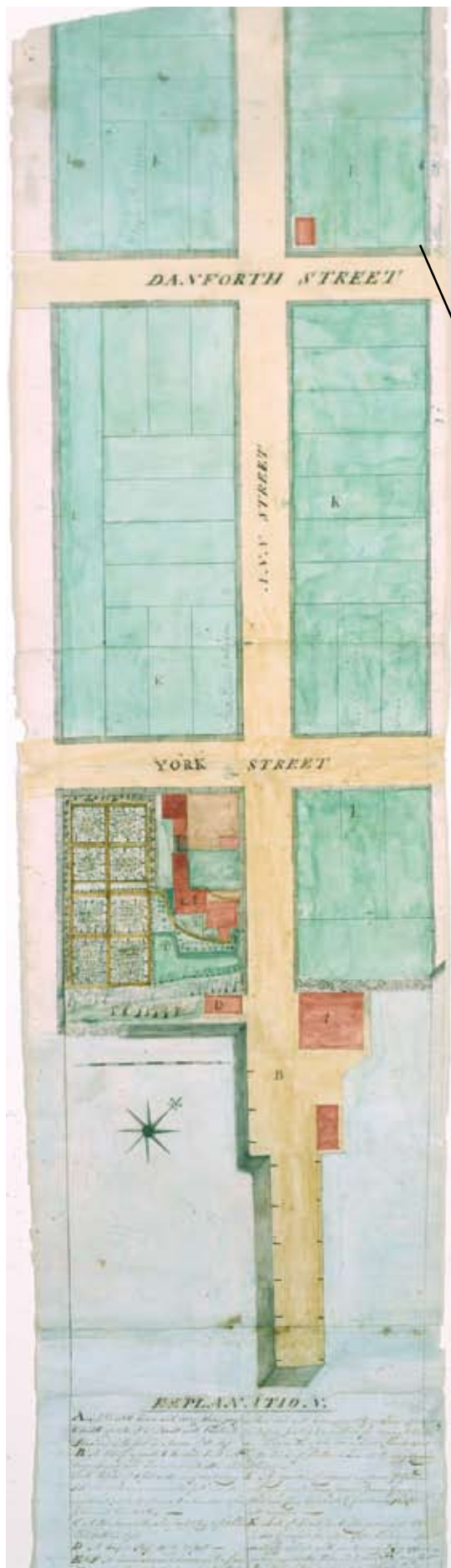


fig. 3

The Mansion property had an interesting past before Morse pieced together his lot in 1856. It was once part of the large landholdings of Scottish-born merchant and distiller Thomas Robison, who left Falmouth (as Portland was then called) for Canada before the Revolutionary War, returning in 1783 to capitalize on the city's rising fortunes as it recovered from the devastating British bombardment of 1775. Robison laid out Ann Street (now Park Street) from the top of his property down to the waterfront, where his stately house and orchards lay adjacent to commercial buildings including a warehouse, distillery, and coopers shop. Near the northern end of his property, at the corner of Ann and Danforth, Robison built a small, gambrel roof house in 1784 that he leased to English-born cabinetmaker John Seymour (Fig. 3)³. Seymour worked at this location until his removal to Boston about 1793, making both plain furniture and high-style pieces for the city's growing merchant elite.⁴ Strange to contemplate that this skilled cabinetmaker, whose work now sits in the collections of the Peabody Essex Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, got his start in the Mansion's front lawn!

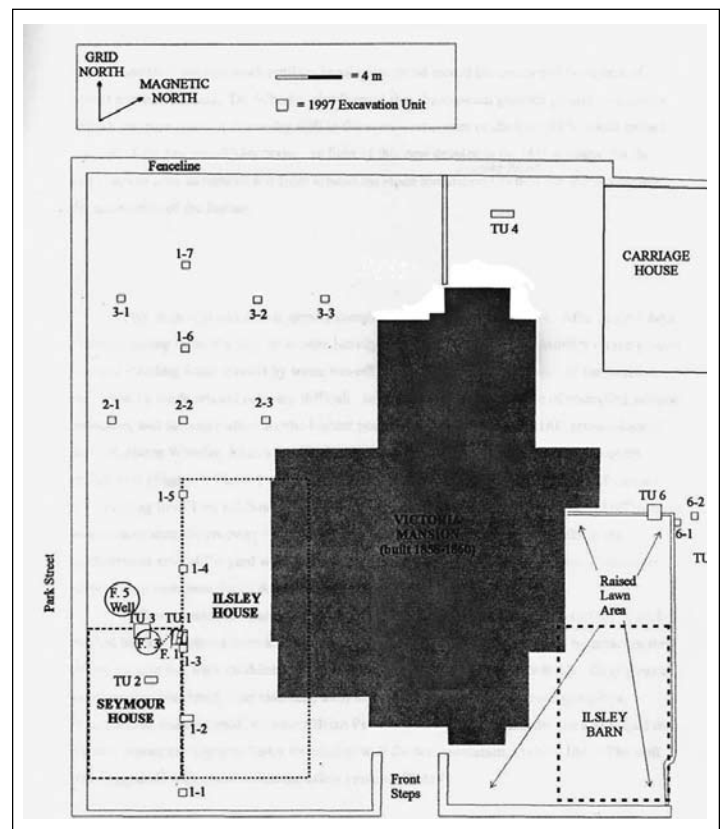


fig. 4

³Sprague, Laura Fecych, *Agreeable Situations: Society, Commerce and Art in Southern Maine, 1780-1830* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), 101-103.

⁴Sprague, Laura Fecych, "John Seymour and Family in Portland, Maine," in Mussey, Robert D. Jr., *The Furniture Masterworks of John & Thomas Seymour*, (Salem, MA: Peabody Essex Museum, 2003), 13-27.

Archaeology conducted in 1997 showed that the Seymour house was located near the southwest corner of the Mansion property (Fig. 4). Over the course of its history, the house passed first to Robison's daughter Jane, then to her husband Robert Ilsley and his second wife Alice Paine Ilsley, who inherited the house in 1832 and ultimately sold it to Ruggles Morse. By that time, the original small house had received a large addition, creating an L-shaped structure whose footprint sits partially beneath the Mansion's Parlor. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some part of this structure was moved to 21 Tate Street in 1856. The City's 1924 tax photos show the building on this location, now lost (Fig. 5). The Ilsley barn, which sat at the foot of the Mansion drive, burned in 1856, perhaps prompting the sale of the property.



fig. 5

Image Captions

Figure 1. Detail of photograph, c. 1895, capturing the west lawn of Victoria Mansion around the time the house passed from the Morse to the Libby family. *Victoria Mansion Archives.*

Figure 2. Photograph showing the view from Victoria Mansion's west lawn towards the carriage house. Portions of the decorative fence visible in the left-hand side are preserved in the Mansion's architectural collection. Wire nails suggest this fence was from the late nineteenth century at the earliest, but it likely replaced an earlier fence in the same location. *Photograph by Morgan Phillips, 1973.*

Figure 3. Plan of Ann Street, Portland, (Portland, Maine: ca. 1802). *Courtesy of the Maine Historical Society.*

Figure 4. Site plan of the Victoria Mansion property, with dashed lines showing the conjectural locations of earlier structures. *Courtesy of Independent Archaeological Consulting, LLC.*

Figure 5. 1924 photograph taken for Portland real estate tax valuation for 21 Tate Street. Anecdotal evidence suggests a portion of this building was moved from the Victoria Mansion property prior to the Mansion's construction. Indeed, the April 20, 1858 edition of the *Portland Advertiser* suggests that the house was to be sold at auction with the stipulation that it be removed in one week.

JOHN AND THOMAS SEYMOUR, CABINETMAKERS IN PORTLAND 1784-1793



Today, one of the glories of Victoria Mansion is the bespoke furniture and cabinetry made for the house by noted American designer and decorator Gustave Herter. However, the site of the Mansion has a much longer history related to the decorative arts. From 1784 to 1793 the noted father-and-son cabinetmakers John and Thomas Seymour lived and worked in a small gambrel-roofed structure that stood hard by the corner of Park and Danforth Streets, on what is now the Mansion's west lawn.

Hailing from Axminster, England, John Seymour moved his family of six to the bustling Port of Portland, then a part of Massachusetts, in 1784. Trained as a fine cabinetmaker, John mentored his son in the craft, and for nine years they produced everything from seating and simple bedsteads to finely crafted chests of drawers, sideboards, and other case pieces for Portland's elite and middle classes.

John and Thomas Seymour went on to greater fame as fine cabinetmakers after moving to Boston in 1793. Long recognized as masterpieces of design and execution, their furniture now graces the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Peabody Essex Museum, the Portland Museum of Art, and the Saco Museum, among others. In recent years, the research of Laura Sprague, decorative arts scholar and Victoria Mansion Collections Committee member, has broadened the interest and knowledge of the Portland period of the Seymours' production. This work was based on original eighteenth century documents that survive at the Maine Historical Society in the papers of Thomas Robison, the Seymours' patron. While their home and workshop here were moved to another site in 1858 for the construction of the Mansion and no longer exists, their connection to the city remains an important link in the history of the development of American material culture.

This piece and others from the Seymour workshop will be featured in the upcoming exhibit *Craft and Comfort: Furniture for the Saco Home*, May 18- September 1, 2019 at the Saco Museum in Saco.

Above: Marble top side table originally owned by the Tucker family of Saco and authenticated to the workshop of John and Thomas Seymour, circa 1793. Photo courtesy of the Saco Museum.



Victoria Mansion Calendar of Events

2019-2020

April

24 Victoria Mansion Annual Meeting

May

1 Mansion opens for the regular season

15 Gaslight League Happy Hour at Victoria Mansion and Little Tap House

24 Queen Victoria's Birthday Bash and Tasting

June

14 Annual Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere

21 Make Music Portland at Victoria Mansion

August

5-9 Adventures in History Summer Camp

11 Gaslight League Summer Garden Party

October

25 Gaslight League Halloween Steampunk Masquerade

31 Mansion closes for the regular season

TBD: Murder & Mayhem and Chilling Celtic Tales

November

29 Opening day of Christmas at Victoria Mansion

December

4 Annual Christmas Gala

6 \$5 First Friday

31 Gaslight League New Year's Eve Soiree

TBD: Night of the Nutcracker and Stories on the Staircase

January

5 Last day of Christmas at Victoria Mansion

Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter and be sure to check the Upcoming Events page of our website throughout the year for up-to-date listings and additional members and public event offerings.



EVENTS & PROGRAMMING

We are always happy to gather supporters and friends of the Mansion and 2018 was a year of many successful public outreach events and programming. Other events offered solely for our Members, the Gaslight League, and the Morse Associates took form in a variety of social, cultural, and educational experiences including behind-the-scenes tours, exclusive talks, and day trips.

90 ACRE THEATRE PRESENTS: ARCADIA AT THE MANSION

11-12 May

The Mansion teamed up with local production company, 90 Acre Theatre for a limited production run of Tom Stoppard's beloved play *Arcadia*. Actors performed in the Mansion's Stair Hall with small audiences of about 30 each night. The proceeds from ticket sales totaled over \$1,800, and were split by 90 Acre Theatre and the Mansion to benefit our conservation initiatives and educational programming.



more event re-caps on the following pages

Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

TRANSFORMING THE CISTERN ROOM INTO ARCHIVAL AND LIBRARY SPACE



Erich Chase

As his project for completion of his Eagle Scout badge, Erich Chase, who began at the Mansion as an Earle G. Shettleworth Junior docent at the age of 12, planned and executed the conversion of the former third floor Cistern Room into a useable space for the filing of the Mansion's voluminous archival collections and study library. Erich and his team of helpers performed wall and ceiling repairs, painting, and carpentry in conjunction with electrical and furnishings updates to dramatic effect. Formerly a dimly lit general storage area, the Cistern Room is now a bright and user-friendly area to access and study a wide range of Mansion records along with primary and secondary source research materials.

Left: From left Scott Chase, Erich Chase, and helpers Nathan Day and Dominique Hopkins in the Cistern Room.



Board member Carlene Magno serves the crowds at *The World in a Cup*.



The beauty of the table settings was surpassed only by the great good, tea, and convivial company.

A WORLD IN A CUP: TEA IN OUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

20 May

This brand new event for the Mansion brought together tea purveyors from around southern Maine to teach and share their passion for the leaf with spring visitors. Marianne Russo from Nellie's Teas, Melinda Thomas from Clipper Merchant Tea House, Eileen Conlon from The Tea Space, and Angela Franklin from Soakology made this event one to remember!



Melinda Thomas of Clipper Merchant Tea House at the ready for table service.

ALLAGASH VICTORIA ALE PREMIERE

29 June

An annual favorite! We hosted almost three hundred attendees on the west lawn, who enjoyed a sampling of Victoria Ale, created by Allagash as a commemorative ale in 2006 - a portion of its sales benefit Mansion activities - and Allagash White. Maine Mead Works was again on hand with selections of Mead, and craft beverages from Green Bee were available as a non-alcoholic alternative. Once again, the Jason Spooner Band provided background music for the convivial evening. New this year was amazing smoked and barbecued foods from Noble Barbeque. Former Victoria Mansion trustee and Allagash Brewing President Rob Tod presented the Mansion with a check for \$11,000, proceeds derived from sales of Victoria Ale. With Admissions added, the evening raised just over \$18,000 to benefit our education and restoration programs.





Allagash Premiere attendees bask in a perfect evening on the Mansion's lawn.



Victoria Mansion Board President Drew Oestreich (left), and Executive Director Tom Johnson (right), accept the "big check" from Allagash Brewing President Rob Tod.



Gaslight League members Amy Fecteau, Shawn Agren, Michelle Santiago, Sue MacArthur, Misty Coolidge, Lauren Webster, and Chris Massaro with guest (far left).



An enthusiastic crowd enjoyed ales, meads, soda, barbecue and smoked oysters while listening to the music of the Jason Spooner Band.

OPERA AT THE MANSION

16 July

A long-time favorite of the opera and Mansion communities, *Opera at the Mansion* once again delighted an audience of over 70 with selections from Opera Maine's production of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Before and after the performances, guests enjoyed fabulous food and libations from the Mansion's preferred caterers, Blue Elephant Events & Catering.



A capacity crowd awaits the entertainment.



Mansion Trustees Ruth Story, Candice Lee, and Elizabeth Astor with Executive Director Tom Johnson enjoying refreshments during *Opera at the Mansion* intermission.



Soprano Hongni Wu performs on the staircase.



Trustees Tinker Newick and Elizabeth Astor join *Opera at the Mansion* attendees Jean Brubaker, Don Head, Robert Brubaker, and Ian White-Thomson on the west lawn.

FROM CALLIOPE TO KOTZSCHMAR: A MUSICAL STROLL WITH VICTORIA MANSION

13 September

Through the efforts of our Education Committee, and particularly Elsa Geskus, The Friends of the Kotzschmar Organ (FOKO) partnered with Victoria Mansion for an evening of music and merriment. FOKO generously brought their traveling organ, as well as the “Kotzsch in a Box” for visitors to hear and to handle. In addition, Peter and Pam Plumb, friends to both FOKO and Victoria Mansion, welcomed attendees into their home on Park Street, where they have an organ built in. It was a beautiful night to be out on the lawn, enjoying music, refreshments, and good company!



A dancer stirs the crowd at *Victorian Murder and Mayhem*.



Peter Plumb plays the pipe organ installed in his house on Park Street as part of the *From Calliope to Kotzschmar* event.



Storyteller Lynne Cullen and musician Kurt Kish in the Mansion's basement at the Celtic Storytelling event.

VICTORIAN MURDER AND MAYHEM

12-13 October

Victoria Mansion has enjoyed a wonderful partnership with Portland Ballet for approximately 10 years now, and we were excited to try a new program, inspired by their choice of ballet (*Jack the Ripper*) and the lurid coverage of murders in the Victorian period. As we have done in past years for our Mourning at the Mansion program, the dancers from Portland Ballet did a selected piece from the ballet, then visitors viewed the house, with storytellers in a variety of rooms, telling tales of ghastly murder in the Northeast. Finally guests were shown to the basement, where author Kieran Shields read from his book, *The Truth of All Things*. The reception to the event was very positive, and we look forward to partnering on this event once again next year.

CHILLING CELTIC TALES

26-27 October

We know very little about the servants who worked “behind the scenes” at Victoria Mansion during the time of the Morses. One thing we can surmise is that most of them were Irish immigrants who had moved to Portland and likely lived in nearby Gorham’s Corner. In a way to connect with those unknown residents, the Chilling Celtic Tales program was started to give our younger guests an idea of the stories that would be told for the Celtic holiday of Samhain. Storyteller Lynne Cullen and musician Kurt Kish welcomed visitors to the basement, where they heard tales such as the Kildare Pooka and the Witches’ Excursion. The program was funded by a grant from the Maine Humanities Council.

CHRISTMAS GALA

28 November

Winter whites and creative black tie set the tone for this year's Christmas Gala, with a sold-out crowd of almost 200 in attendance. Always held the first Wednesday after Thanksgiving, guests enjoyed fine foods from the Cumberland Club, complimentary bar service and, new this year, a cabaret-style area on the second floor of the Carriage House, where the musical stylings of Viva enthralled a large audience. This signature event of the holiday season gives attendees an opportunity to view the spectacular Christmas decorations created by talented local florists and designers while socializing with other members and friends. Also one of the Mansion's largest single fundraising events of the year, 2018's Gala raised over \$17,000. You'll want to get your tickets early for our Gala this year, scheduled for December 4th!

Check the Upcoming Events page of Victoria Mansion's website and subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter for an updated list of current events.



Jeremy Sherman with event co-chair Lauren Webster and her father, Robert Webster. Photo courtesy of Amy Paradysz, Maine Sunday Telegram.



Fausto Pifferrer, Sophia Bell-Pifferrer and Reuben Bell of Blue Elephant Events & Catering at the Gala. Photo courtesy of Amy Paradysz, Maine Sunday Telegram.



Danny Hatt and Don Chouinard of Emerald City, decorators of the Reception Room and Stair Hall. Photo courtesy of Amy Paradysz, Maine Sunday Telegram.



Gaslight League members Michelle Santiago and Shawn Agren.



Dan Kennedy of Harmon's Floral Co., decorator of the Parlor, and Mansion Trustee Candice Lee. Photo courtesy of Amy Paradysz, Maine Sunday Telegram.

Interested in holding a corporate event or private celebration at the Mansion? Contact Events Coordinator Victoria Levesque at vlevesque@victoriamansion.org or 207.772.4841 ext. 111.



Dancers from Portland Ballet at *Night of the Nutcracker*.

NIGHT OF THE NUTCRACKER

2 & 9 December

An annual favorite was back once again! With our continuing partnership with Portland Ballet, we welcomed over 160 children and adults to the four Sunday night performances. This year the performers increased their time dancing, which made the event even more appealing to the attendees. We look forward to continuing to work with Nell Shipman and Portland Ballet in the coming years.

A TASTE AND A TIPPLE WITH MR. DICKENS

8 December

In partnership with Blue Elephant Events & Catering and actor Andrew Harris, Victoria Mansion welcomed guests to the premiere of this tasty and entertaining event! Guests were welcomed to taste modern twists on Victorian classic cuisine, and a holiday punch with a surprising “kick!” Docents were available to discuss the house, and then Andrew, portraying Charles Dickens, talked about Christmas traditions and “his” writings. Guests greatly enjoyed the event, and also appreciated the gift bags, which included a present from the Education Committee and special chocolates from Black Dinah Chocolatier. Due to its great popularity this event will likely reappear in 2019.



Guests mingling in the magnificently decorated Dining Room while enjoying Victorian inspired delicacies (the taste) and a gin punch (the tippie) from an 1860 recipe.



Actor Andrew Harris as Charles Dickens regaled the crowd from the staircase.



Actors from Portland Stage's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* pose in the Mansion's Reception Room.

MEMBER'S RECEPTION AND PARTNERSHIP WITH PORTLAND STAGE

31 January

As a special promotion for our members, the Mansion teamed up with our friends at Portland Stage for a pre-show reception before their production of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The evening included a brief talk by VM Executive Director Tom Johnson and Portland Stage Artistic Director Anita Stewart as they lent perspective on the time period of Oscar Wilde's classic.

Christmas at Victoria Mansion:

CHRISTMAS THROUGH A CHILD'S EYES

The Mansion enjoyed a very active 2018-2019 holiday season overall. With beloved programming like our *Stories on the Staircase* preschool story hour, fantastic evening events like *Night of the Nutcracker* and *A Taste and Tipple with Mr. Dickens* seeing sold out crowds, and over 360 people visiting for the First Friday Art walk (which included an exhibit of Mansion-inspired children's art) on December 7 alone. We ended the Christmas season with an overall increase of 28% in admissions revenue.

In addition, a heartfelt recognition goes to the Christmas Committee members for their contributions to the planning and implementation of our annual Christmas Gala, held on November 28. We would like to extend a special thank you to the Co-Chairs Aaron Morris and Lauren Webster—working within historic spaces is always challenging, but the Gala Committee identified innovative changes and helped broaden the appeal of our Gala, to the success of a 54% increase in support for this critical fundraiser.

We were also popular media fodder over the holidays! The release of the major motion picture *Buttons*, with Dick Van Dyke, Angela Lansbury, Jane Seymour and many other famous faces brought us some great publicity, as *Buttons* director Tim Janis stopped by the 207 show on WCSH Channel 6. We were also featured in other segments on WCSH, WMTW Channel 8, and as part of WGME Channel 13's Hometown Holidays series. In print, the Mansion got mentions in *Forbes Magazine*, *MaineToday*, *Down East Magazine's Maine Homes*, and on Boston.com, among other publications.



"Winter Holidays at Victoria Mansion," 2018. Drawing by JoJo, age 11, part of our children's art exhibit on December 7.



Executive Director Tom Johnson and WGME's Kim Block film a segment for Channel 13.



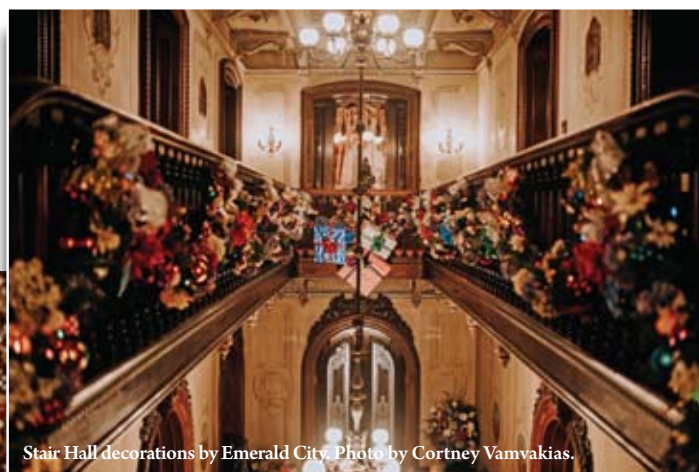
Director Tim Janis and actress Jane Seymour filming *Buttons* at the Mansion.



2018 Christmas Designers

75 State Street Clipper Marchant Tea House
 Dan Gifford KD Cole & D.L. Cole and Associates
 Dodge the Florist Mimi & Mum
 Emerald City Saco Festival of Trees Design Committee
 Harmon's Floral Co.

Special thanks to Broadway Gardens & Event Lighting Concepts



Stair Hall decorations by Emerald City. Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.



Sitting Room decorations by K.D. Cole and D.L. Cole Associates Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.



Library decorations by Clipper Merchant Tea House Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.



Reception Room decorations by Emerald City Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.



Red Bedroom decorations by Dan Gifford



Vestibule decorations by the Saco Festival of Trees Design Committee



Ell Porch decorations by 75 State Street



Parlor decorations by Harmon's Floral Co. Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.



Dining Room decorations by Dodge the Florist Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.

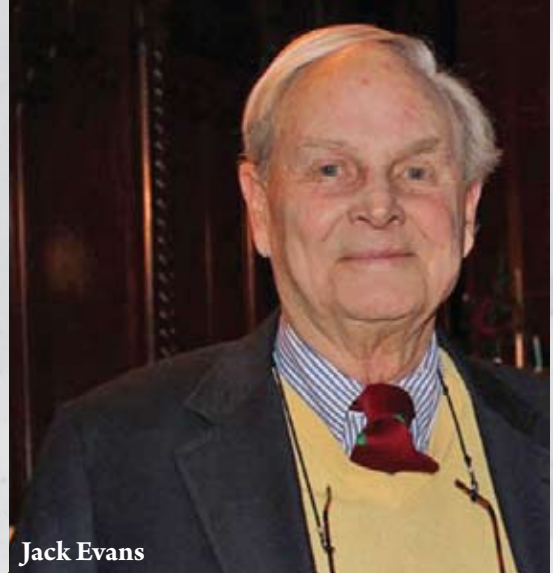


Green Bedroom decorations by Mimi & Mum Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.

IN MEMORIAM

John J. “Jack” Evans III

Jack Evans had a distinguished New York career in finance and non-profit involvement before retiring to Maine in 1990. Retirement was a relative term with Jack, though, as he entered headlong into working with and supporting the non-profits in the Portland area for the next twenty-eight years. He served at various times as a Victoria Mansion trustee, Acting Director, and a valued advisor in fund raising.



Jack Evans

Ellen Libby Lawrence

Last surviving grand-daughter of J.R. and Louisa Libby, Ellen died at her Florida home at the age of 101. She was a long-time Mansion supporter and was the source for many endearing stories of Libby family life in the Mansion.



Ellen Libby Lawrence

Phyllis Price

Few people associated with Victoria Mansion have been involved longer than Phyllis Price, who volunteered as a docent for forty-four years. Phyllis was our “corporate memory” in a sense, and her stories of rushing around with buckets in the 1960s and 1970s when the roof leaked and money was not available for full repairs brought to life the dedication to preserve the Mansion through a parlous period.

Jane Costello Wellehan

Jane was an active presence and supporter of many of Portland’s cultural institutions. A line from her published obituary perhaps sums up her personal impact in the community better than any other statement: “Jane was kind, classy, generous, a fabulous dresser, a fierce game player known to utter an occasional expletive during Skip-Bo or mahjong, and wickedly funny.”



Phyllis Price

We were also saddened to lose the following longtime friends and supporters of the Mansion:

Phineas Sprague
Widgery Thomas
and Jean Whiting

IN THE CARRIAGE HOUSE: VISITOR CENTER AND MUSEUM SHOP



The Visitor Center in the Carriage House is the space that most visitors to the Mansion see first, so its initial visual impression is of great importance. In 2018 we renewed our introductory exhibit and visitor waiting area, and signage behind the ticket desk was replaced by two LED screens that display our admissions prices and have revolving images of current Mansion activities.

We receive regular accolades from visitors as to the selection and display of merchandise in our Museum Shop. The offerings are indeed unique in many ways in that items are largely based on Victorian themes and designs, as befits our mission. A vastly expanded book section offers titles on Victorian era architecture, design, culture, food, drinks, and literature. If there is one disappointment though, it was voiced by a local customer in July: “Every time I see something that I’m interested in and decide to sleep on my decision to buy it, I always come back and it’s gone!”

Behind the scenes work that isn’t often noted by the public is important to the smooth functioning of the Museum Shop takes place throughout the year. One major improvement in 2018 was internet-based credit card processing that sped up the checkout process, which might not be important unless you are in a hurry or your bus is leaving! In February the worn flooring in the space was replaced with new airport-grade vinyl flooring that has the appearance of cherry. It’s made quite a difference already in both the appearance and sound qualities in the space.

Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

GILT METAL CONSERVATION AND REWIRING

John and Eunice Wilcox

After consultation with a professional metals conservator, long-time Mansion members and volunteers John and Eunice Wilcox have undertaken the laborious project of disassembling and reassembling the gilt bronze gas lighting fixtures in the Reception Room and Parlor. They then helped conservators to remove over 160 years of dust and grime to once again reveal the lustrous gilt surfaces. John, an electrical engineer, had earlier rewired the Reception Room mirror sconces to accept low-voltage incandescent bulbs.



Above: Eunice and John Wilcox reassemble the gasolier in the Reception Room.

MEMBERSHIP AT VICTORIA MANSION

Victoria Mansion has a vibrant membership program and its members form a community that is of outmost importance to the Mansion. Members are the Mansion's champions and are elemental to providing core mission support. This past year saw a remarkable eight percent growth in membership revenue and we were pleased to welcome Members from near and far—from over thirteen states!—to interact with the Mansion in more meaningful ways. This year, we offered Members exclusive educational and social events, informative curatorial lectures, receptions and parties to celebrate restoration and conservation milestones, and specialty-themed tours. We deeply appreciate our Mansion Members, and offer all of our Members baseline free admission for regular season tours and Christmas at Victoria Mansion, special rates for ticketed events, and a discount on all purchases at the Carriage House Museum Shop.

The Mansion offers a handful of different membership categories aimed to encourage participation in our various activities. A full list of the Mansion's membership levels are below, but we extend a particular note of appreciation to the Mansion's **Morse Associates**. Eponymous for Victoria Mansion's first owners Ruggles and Olive Morse, The Morse Associates provide the Mansion's highest-level membership support. Loyal and generous, this year our Morse Associates went on the road to visit one-of-a-kind museums, private homes, and preservation workshops. The Mansion's newest membership program, the **Gaslight League**, is enjoying strong support. A social group of young and young-at-heart history buffs, you might see these passionate members out on the town enjoying monthly happy hours as well as educational and social events at the Mansion.

We could not fulfill our mission to conserve, maintain, and share the Mansion's vibrant heritage without our Member's dedicated support. We are honored to have their continued trust and involvement.



The Mansion's beautiful lawn hosted Gaslight League Members and guests for a summer lawn party.



Mansion members enjoy a roster of one-of-a-kind events and opportunities, like the pre-show reception for Stage's production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in January 2019.

THE MANSION IS PLEASED TO OFFER THE FOLLOWING MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

Morse Associates (\$1,000)	Sustaining (\$125)
Libby Circle (\$500)	Supporting/Family (\$75)
Herter Circle (\$250)	Individual (\$35)
Gaslight League (\$200 annual/\$20 monthly)	

We welcome anyone who would like a deeper association with the Mansion to join. For more information, we encourage you to visit the Mansion's website at www.victoriamansion.org.



Photo by Amy Fecteau.



Left and below:
Coolidge Family Farm and Gaslight League Member Misty Coolidge hosted the Morse Associate and Gaslight League's Holiday Party.



tion and talk before Portland



Gaslight League Members and guests Shawn Agren, Adina Bercowicz, Yan Zelener, Jeremy Sherman, Michelle Santiago, and Lauren Webster had fun with this year's Halloween theme 'SciFi meets Steam-punk.' Photo by Amy Fecteau.



THE “CS:” COLLECTIONS, CURATION, & CONSERVATION

Collections and Reorganization

For a museum with noteworthy collections and an important story to tell, Victoria Mansion is focused on our building and collections and the ability to share them with the public. So the “three Cs” – care of our collections, curation, and conservation – play a large part in all of our planning and activities. We do this to ensure that what we preserve today is here to delight generations to come.

A large void came to the Mansion in October with the resignation of long-time Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind, who was the de facto public face of the Curatorial activities at the Mansion for thirty-four years. She helped guide the institution as it transitioned from an all-volunteer organization to a fully staffed professional operation emphasizing sound scholarship and stewardship of the collections.



fig. 1

Yet every change can present new challenges and corresponding opportunities perhaps not previously thought of. The Collections Committee has been working with Executive Director Tom Johnson and Conservator Siobhan Lindsay to embrace a path forward that will honor the legacy of Arlene’s work in an appropriate manner, at the same time ensuring a thoughtful preparation to welcome an eventual successor. With that in mind, a full review of space and interpretive needs at the Mansion has led to a plan to provide more dedicated work room for curatorial and conservation functions, enhanced access to the collections, including those in storage, and a recommitment to the highest professional standards of collections care.



fig. 2

As this Annual Report goes to press, the following work has been instituted:

The curator’s office, housed in the historic housekeeper’s office on the second floor and never before open to visitors on a regular basis, will open in 2019 as an interpretive space to acknowledge the role of housekeepers and servants in the functioning of the Mansion during the Morse and Libby eras.

The Billiards Room on the third floor, largely used as collections storage, has been rearranged to incorporate open storage techniques while concurrently providing dedicated space for a curator’s office and clean-work conservation lab. While this might sound like a lot for one space, it’s a very large room!

The research library has been reorganized and housed in the former cistern room on the third floor, joining institutional archives being organized there, to provide a comfortable and well-lit space for study and research by staff, trustees, docents, and scholars.

Ongoing work has refined the textile storage room, allowing enhanced, yet controlled, access to our unrivaled collection of original 1860 fabrics and *passementerie* by staff and researchers.

Preventive Curatorial Care

Our preventive curatorial care program is now in its fourth year and an integral part of our curatorial functions. It has formalized the practice of controlling environmental factors such as light, humidity, insect activity, cleanliness, and storage and display conditions to lower the speed with which objects deteriorate and minimize the chance of damage. Every year, while the Mansion is closed to the public between January and May, the rooms undergo “deep cleaning (figure 1).” This year, the benefits of this annual activity yielded positive results that are all the more apparent. Insect activity, monitored through the use of pesticide-free traps placed inconspicuously throughout the house, is at an all-time low. Additionally, one hundred and sixty years of accumulated coal and plaster dust has become smaller and smaller each year as the annual deep clean of each room is accomplished. Coal dust, the result of the Mansion’s original coal fired heating system and some other atmospheric pollutants, is a large factor in the discoloration of the house’s painted surfaces, and can take years to fully remove. The recent conservation work in the Reception Room clearly shows how much of this is adhered to various wall and ceiling surfaces (figure 2). Regular cleaning and monitoring of the rooms throughout the year is also the time when any changes in the condition of the rooms and collections are noted. This year we reached a goal of having no new areas of concern as this monitoring took place.



fig. 3

Curatorial care and conservation projects are closely allied, and staff often works in tandem with diverse conservation projects throughout the house. During the early months of 2018 a common project was constructing additional purpose-made mounts to store the delicate passementerie of the Reception Room, the majority of which is now housed in the textile room on the third floor.

The cleaning of the Reception Room’s elaborate gasolier was as intellectually stimulating as it was visually satisfying. For this project we were immensely grateful for help from long-time Mansion volunteers John and Eunice Wilcox, who had previously restored the room’s mirror sconces after conservation training. John and Eunice helped to dismantle and label this elaborate piece, which consisted of over two-hundred pieces and weighed nearly 140 pounds. In addition to our temporary labels, we found that the original craftsmen had stamped each component with the mark “L R” and most had marriage marks consisting of numbers which showed where pieces were meant to match up. A weak, plant-based acidic solution was used to clean years of residue from coal gas and dust, and the result surprised us all. What once was a dulled greenish-gold finish now shone like newly polished gold (figure 3). Re-installation of the Reception Room gasolier coincided with the dismantling of the gasolier in the Parlor to prepare that room for the Save America’s Treasures funded conservation project (*see story inside front cover*). In order to move this even larger light fixture to the third floor for temporary storage the lower of two tiers of arms had to be removed. This revealed a different mark, “A B,” and marriage marks made by grouping gouged dots in a manner similar to that seen on dice rather than using numbers. These markings along with the markedly more robust composition of the parlor gasolier has led to speculation among staff that these fixtures probably have differing origins.

Conservation Accomplishments and Priorities

“A building that has been allowed to grow old gracefully has a certain magic, almost indefinable quality, which we tend to label ‘patina.’ Where patina survives it is something to be cherished and protected... when it is gone, however, it cannot be artificially recreated, and one simply has to wait for the building to grow old again.”

-Roger White, Former Secretary, The Georgian Group, U.K.

2018 was a productive year in our mission to preserve and protect Victoria Mansion, allowing it to “grow old gracefully” while attending to yearly housekeeping and conservation issues. The conservation work at the Mansion allows present and future generations to examine and learn from, as well as be inspired and enlightened by, the beauty of its art and design. We work to preserve the patina of age by the gentlest possible methods of conservation, cleaning, and upkeep. But preserving patina should not imply that an aged surface of beauty comes about through inaction, rather, it is periodic cleaning and care that refreshes



fig. 4



fig. 5

and prolongs the life of the surfaces. The mellowness of age is enhanced through comprehensive care.

This year saw the culmination of our largest conservation project to date. The cleaning and conservation of nineteenth century artist Giuseppe Guidicini's beautifully painted walls and ceiling in the Reception Suite has been completed. The removal of decades of potentially corrosive layers of dirt and soot has revealed the original hues of the colors to be brought back from under what many have termed a "gray veil (figures 4 & 5)." As the brush strokes

began to reappear where dirt had obscured them, Guidicini's high level of craftsmanship and masterful use of color emerged and can once again be seen as intended. The sumptuousness of this interior was further heightened through concurrent conservation of other decorative elements in the space, notably surfaces of gilt metal, varnished wood, and stone.

Following the first phase on conservation, there were several objects that required cleaning before reinstallation. The sculpture of the marble Madonna was cleaned by Boston-area objects conservator Ellen Promise, which required not much more than a careful steam bath. The gilded mirror frame and window cornices were also cleaned. They were found to be in very stable condition and required only very minor repairs. On a somewhat grander scale the five-armed gilt bronze gasolier also required conservation, described earlier in this report.

One of the final pieces to return to the room was the original wall-to-wall chenille carpet. In March, we were finally ready to remove the 16' x 20' carpet from its storage roll, but first a new conservation quality carpet pad was required. Dierdre Windsor of Windsor Conservation Studios in Dover, Massachusetts developed a multi-layered pad that was sewn together by hand. This modern pad accomplishes several things, including securing the carpet in place and adding in air flow and moisture control. It consists of four sections, each 60 inches wide by 185 inches long. As the carpet was unrolled we were pleased to see that its condition was stable after being rolled and stored for five years. Now that it is back in place, the cohesive design of the room worked out by Gustave Herter is readily apparent.



fig. 6

One final missing element to fully complete the design will be the recreation of the blue silk damask fabric and trims for drapes and upholstery. This phase of the project has proven a bit more challenging than first anticipated, because after careful study of the original surviving examples of the nineteenth century fabric it has become apparent that there are actually four slightly differing patterns of the same color that were used in the room (figure 6). Current research is determining what time period and/or which objects each pattern was used on.

The start of 2019 began with extensive preparation for conservation of the wall and ceiling surfaces in the Parlor. A Save America's Treasures grant will help support this two-year project. The work will include finish and structural treatment of the chestnut window shutters and the installation of new UV protective film on the French plate glass windows. To minimize climate shock to original furniture, paintings, carpet, and gasolier these items will be kept on site and distributed throughout the Mansion; an additional bonus will be that they may remain on view for visitors to appreciate (figure 7). Gianfranco Pocobene Studio, which has overseen conservation projects at the Mansion for more than twenty years now, will once again return to undertake this work. An exciting added dimension of the project will be the use of time-lapse photography to document progress from beginning to end.

The conservation of the Parlor will be updated in our monthly e-newsletter, but by far the best way to appreciate the work going on is to visit the Mansion and view it in person. It's a wonderful opportunity to come see the before and after treatment of the two largest rooms in the Mansion. The bareness of the Parlor juxtaposed with the renewed splendor of the Reception Suite is an experience that won't last for long.



fig. 7

Image Captions

Figure 1. Conservation Technician Harper Batsford undertakes “deep cleaning” of the rooms each year. He’s shown here during the laborious project of individually cleaning each of the slats in the shutters of the Mansion’s thirty-four windows.

Figure 2. A rondel of a cherub blowing bubbles in the Reception Room shows the dramatic effect of the cleaned surface (left) compared to the side veiled by a film of soot and dirt.

Figure 3. Components from the Reception Room’s gilt gasolier showing the existing condition before conservation (right) compared to the cleaned and conserved surface. The gilt finish is original.

Figure 4. Survivals from the 1860s: blue silk damask and tassel trim from the Reception Room. *Photos by Gail Dodge.*

Figure 5. The surviving samples of original Reception Room blue silk damask were alike in color but not in pattern. Careful study revealed four distinct patterns were used in the upholstery and drapery treatments. A leaf and vine pattern is shown here with pieces of the 1860 gold and blue trims.

Figure 6. The “grey veil” of soot and dust adhered to the walls came away and revealed the fresh intensity of the original colors without erasing the cracks and patina of age.

Figure 7. A sure hand guided the methodical descent of the great gasolier in the Parlor, orchestrated by Mansion volunteer and engineer John Wilcox (on ladder). Assisting are his wife Eunice (left) and three other helpers.

DEVELOPMENT REPORT



If you've liked reading about the Mansion's progress this past year, there's only one person to thank: yourself. The achievements of the projects and activities highlighted within these pages are a direct result of the personal investment you've made in furthering our work to preserve, conserve, and share this national treasure with the broadest possible audience.

There is a variety of ways to support the Mansion and the work the Mansion undertakes—from our day-to-day operations to our groundbreaking conservation projects—all benefit from your involvement. Every time you attend an event, donate to the annual fund, participate in our membership program, bring friends or family to visit the Mansion, or even share one of our social media posts or news stories, you help raise the Mansion's visibility, enable our continued growth, and ensure our continued vitality.

The impact of a donor's support at the Mansion goes beyond just keeping the lights on (although given the Mansion's prior history that's important, too!). When you invest in the Mansion, you empower us to move our top, mission-centric priorities forward. With your help this year, together we expanded the Mansion's educational programming to more schoolchildren than ever before, bolstered the Mansion's outreach efforts, strengthened our commitment to serving as a resource within our community, and supplemented our mission-critical objectives to preserve and protect this world-class museum for future generations—all while ensuring that those visiting from near and far have a powerful encounter with Victoria Mansion.



Additionally, this past year saw a ten percent increase in new donors, steady membership retention, and continued recognition by both local and national granting organizations—speaking to the power and strength of the Mansion's operations. Our fundraising initiatives aren't without their challenges (we, like other nonprofits, face diminished funding resources in an already competitive environment), but we remain vigilant to these shifting trends.

As you can see, your support has a profound effect on the Mansion. All of us at the Mansion give our thanks to you for being a part of the Mansion's community. We hope you will take pride in knowing that what happens at the Mansion is made possible by your generosity.



Top, left: In August, the Mansion thanked Reception Suite donors, Trustees, and staff for the transformative work undertaken as part of the Reception Suite project. Bottom, left: Victoria Mansion's annual summer fundraiser in partnership with Allagash Brewing Company is not only a fun way to kick off the summer season but also provide community-driven support. Center, right: Your support allows our committed docent corps to inspire minds and ignite imaginations of the nearly 35,000 annual visitors to the Mansion.

A YEAR OF NEW, A YEAR OF OLD

The Education Department was in constant motion this year, with events, school programs, partnerships, exhibits, and docent trainings scattered throughout the 2018 calendar. With a new Director of Education and a great veteran Education Committee, updated spins were given to returning programs and new events were added to diversify the Mansion's repertoire.

At Victoria Mansion we believe some of our best programs come through collaboration. Partnerships with fellow non-profits thrived in 2018. The Maine Irish Heritage Center has, as always, been a strong partner, through hosting lectures and providing space or materials for upcoming programs. Our relationship with Girl Scouts of Maine (GSME) continues through our Community Partner status, with our attendance at a GS leader event in February, and their advertisement of our programs through their social media. GSME is additionally stressing STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) in their programs, and we provided inspiration through a series of stories about women inventors in the 19th century.

We also worked with Maine Historical Society on our weeklong "Adventures in History Camp" for 3rd through 6th graders and our work with Portland Ballet continued both at the returning event, *Night of the Nutcracker* and the new program, *Victorian Murder and Mayhem*. Local author Kieran Shields gave his talents to *Murder and Mayhem* as well, reading excerpts from his book, *The Truth of All Things*, set in Portland in the Victorian period. Thanks to loans from the Saco Museum & Dyer Library, we were able to display a series of 19th and early 20th century dresses from their collection in an exhibit titled *Fashion in the Victorian and Early Edwardian Age*. The Friends of the Kotschmar brought music to the Mansion in our September program *From Calliope to Kotschmar*, along with a Pamela and Peter Plumb, who opened their Park Street home to guests to see and listen to their built-in pipe organ.

We also enjoyed partnerships with long-time Mansion friends and supporters. Storyteller Lynne Cullen and musician Kurt Kish gave their time and energy to *Chilling Celtic Tales*, a new children's program at Halloween. Andrew Harris, a true friend to the Mansion and Artistic and Executive Director at Deertrees Theatre, donated his talents as Charles Dickens to our *A Taste and A Tipple* event in December. Additionally, businesses including Blue Elephant Catering, Soakology, Nellie's Teas, Clipper Merchant Tea House, The Tea Space, Black Dinah Chocolatiers, and Grant's Bakery have helped us make our events memorable.

continued on next page



A day dress, c. 1880s, on loan from the Saco Museum for our Victorian and Edwardian dress exhibit in the Sitting Room.



Director of Education Staci Hanscom gives incoming Portland history docents a tour of the Mansion.



Artist Kevin Tacka instructs the *Adventures in History* campers on plein air painting.



Director of Education Staci Hanscom teaching in-class at Lyseth Elementary School.



Assistant Director Tim Brosnihan teaches students about the conservation project in the Reception Suite.

At the beginning of 2019, the focus of the Education Department is on our school visits and tours. With a new *Century of Change* brochure in the works, teachers from Cape Elizabeth, Windham, and throughout Portland booked for lessons focused on etiquette, immigration, symbolism, and technology. Thanks to grants from the Morton Kelly Charitable Trust and Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust, school programming through the *Century of Change* program remains free for students this year. We continue to see high attendance for our school programs in 2019 as well – over 750 students had an in-class visit, followed by activities and tours at Victoria Mansion. The above-mentioned granting organizations also provided the funds for our partnership with Casco Bay High School in Portland, which will come to fruition in the early part of April in 2019. Additionally, we saw students for tours from many other local schools, including St. Brigid, Edward Little High School, Maine Connections Academy, Southern Maine Community College, Lewiston High School, Westbrook Middle School, and Thornton Academy.

Volunteering at Victoria Mansion

So much of what we do here at Victoria Mansion relies on our wonderful volunteers. The over 80 docents who work at the Mansion are our front line, and we depend on them in so many ways, from giving tours, to helping with archives and clerical work, to sitting on committees. Our volunteers donated over 3,400 hours of their time to this house in 2018, and we are incredibly appreciative. The Mansion offers docents visits to other sites, refresher sessions, feedback sessions, and thank you events. This year the docents visited the Maine Jewish Museum on Congress Street to learn about immigration to Portland, met in and learned about the Scandinavian church that is now Mayo Street Arts, and had an appreciation party at Yarmouth Historical Society, where former Mansion Educator and Site Manager Katie Worthing is now the Director. Staff also offered lectures at Maine Irish Heritage Center on the types of wood used in the Mansion, immigration in the 19th century in Portland, and the Greek and Roman mythology seen in the art throughout the house. We will soon welcome a group of new docents, coming through the Portland History Docent program (PHD), as well as new volunteers who are inspired by the arrival of spring to get out and get involved. We look forward to welcoming new faces to our Mansion family in the coming year!



Above: Volunteer Kristen Redpath reads to little ones during our Stories on the Staircase Preschool Story Hour.

UPSTAIRS / DOWNSTAIRS



Although the chief attraction to Victoria Mansion has been and will doubtless always remain its unique architecture and superb formal interiors, in recent years visitors have increasingly become more interested in what life was like among the servants and service areas of the house. Certainly inspired by the widespread popularity of PBS's *Downton Abbey*, visitor fascination with "backstairs" functions of the house will at

last be addressed in a dedicated space of the Mansion.

Beginning in May, visitors will now be able to see the Housekeeper's Office on the second floor. Long closed to the public and used as office space, the room will not be shown as a period interior as the more elaborate rooms in the house are presented. Rather, it will exhibit the simpler more middle-class station and tastes of the housekeeper and have several didactic panels interpreting what we do know about the housekeeper and servants that were here during the Morse and Libby occupancy. As in *Downton Abbey*, the position of housekeeper was a middle ground between the owners and the servants; she supervised all servant activities and scheduling while answering to the desires and dictates of the owners. In a real sense, the Housekeeper's Office was the nerve

center for the smooth operation of the household, but it was rarely if ever seen by guests to the house.

Befitting her "middle" position, the Housekeeper's Office is an interior with a marble mantelpiece and metal gasolier that while of good quality are far removed from the more elaborate examples in the owner's quarters. There are no elaborate paintings ornamenting the walls or ceiling. But conversely, this interior decoration is noticeably above the quality of the surroundings the servants had in the back wing, where solid utilitarianism reigned.

No original furniture from the Housekeeper's Office is known to survive save a cased marble top porcelain sink cabinet that has been reinstalled after long being in storage. Good quality – though certainly not Herter quality – furniture from storage will be placed in strategic places about the room to evoke the kind of interior the housekeeper might have been used to and serve as inspiration for docent interpretation.

In passing through a small service hallway to enter the Housekeeper's Office, visitors will be able to glimpse the back stair hall with a winding flight leading up to the third floor and other steps leading down to the servant's quarters. As we are constrained by fire code regarding public access to the third floor, we will have an electronic photo frame on a stanchion in this location showing glimpses of third floor features visitors hear about but cannot actually access. It's all part of an effort to tell a more complete, and hopefully compelling, story of life in the Mansion as experienced by those – all of those – who lived here.

Top left: *Marble Mantel in the Housekeeper's Office, likely New York, 1860.*

Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

RESEARCH LIBRARY ORGANIZATION

Candace Hesselbart

The 700+ book research library formerly housed in the curator's office was moved to the third floor over the course of the winter months. Mansion Guide Candace Hesselbart volunteered to undertake the project to reorganize existing books and add new titles to create a readily accessible, more comprehensive collection of secondary source materials including books, magazines, and periodicals related to the Mansion and its collections. Already we have seen a vastly increased interest and use of these sources by our docent corps and staff!



Candace Hesselbart amongst the hundreds of books, magazines, and other publications comprising our research library.

RESTORATION REPORT



Last summer the carpenters and painters who care for Victoria Mansion went aloft to deal with maintenance issues atop some of the building's smaller rooftops. The side ell porch, which runs along the Mansion's ell from the main hall to the rear courtyard, suffered small leaks for decades that could no longer be stemmed through stopgap repairs. Heritage Roofing Company, who have worked on all of the Mansion's copper roofs since the early 1980s, came to the rescue, scrapping the poorly-done 1970s roof and replacing it with flat-seam copper. Caleb Hemphill carefully dismantled and removed the massive rooftop balustrade ahead of this work and returned to put it all back together again once the project was complete. Caleb also helped enlarge an outlet through the porch's cornice woodwork to receive a new, larger gutter downspout that should help prevent gutter overflow during heavy rain events.

Bob and Sebastian Cariddi returned last summer to help repair the balustrade atop the Mansion's rear entry porch. The west section may well have been the last run of 1860 balustrade remaining on the building. Repaired with modern epoxies multiple times over the last three decades, it was holding too much moisture to undergo another round of treatment and so was taken down into archival storage in the Mansion's basement. The Cariddis fabricated an exact replacement from mahogany, carefully fitting it between the corner post and the brick masonry of the ell's rear wall. We hope the result will last another 160 years.

Painter Peter de Paolo followed close behind the carpenters. His work is critical to the protection of both repairs and new work. This year Peter sand painted parts of the balustrade on the rear entry porch, gave a final sanded coat to baluster bases on the front parlor piazza, and carried out spot paint repairs to the re-joined sections of balustrade on the side ell porch roof.

Two of the Mansion's exterior lock sets received an invisible re-tooling this summer to bring them into compliance with modern fire codes. The amazingly versatile Bob and Sebastian Cariddi pulled the lock cases from the doors at either end of the main stair hall, removed the original workings, and designed and fabricated new parts to give them modern functionality. These doors now remain locked from the outside while allowing visitors on the inside to pass outdoors freely with a turn of the knob.

This summer we also achieved a major milestone in our planning for the restoration of the Reception Room Bay. Alfred Hodson and John Turk of Resurgence Engineering, working in consultation with stone expert Ivan Myjer of Building and Monument Conservation LLC, completed construction drawings detailing each of the bay's 38 individual stone units. This marks another significant step forward in what will be the most complex and important exterior restoration project since the rebuilding of the mansion's tower in 2004-2005.



FINANCIAL REPORT

A non-profit, like any other business, must manage its resources carefully to ensure that the money flowing in covers the money flowing out. While the occasional deficit is not a disaster, a series of deficits constitutes a red flag, a signal that some retooling is necessary to bring revenue and expenses back into balance. With equal doses of careful planning and good fortune, Victoria Mansion has managed to close out a series of fiscal years –more than a decade running- in the black. Some years, like the one that closed March 31, 2019, the surpluses are modest. But this is in fact a good thing, a sign that the organization is taking maximum advantage of its revenue without living beyond its means.

For non-profits like Victoria Mansion, every expenditure must either directly or indirectly serve its mission. Spending more means doing more: more educational programs aimed at school children and the general public, more conservation projects returning the building's incomparable interiors to their former splendor, more maintenance projects ensuring that the Mansion's weather envelope is intact and its systems are running smoothly. A quick look through this annual report will show that we have been taking full advantage of the resources at our disposal to preserve this house and use it as an educational resource.

One point that may get lost in the slow, progressive tide of change from year to year is just how much this organization has grown. In fact, in the last ten years Victoria Mansion's annual operating budget has grown by more than 50%! How? Increased visitation has played a major part, but so has our growing pool of increasingly generous supporters. So this report, which marks the eleventh straight year of well managed growth for Victoria Mansion, provides another opportunity to thank everyone who pitches in to make our work possible.

	FY 18-19 Budget	FY 18-19 Estimated Final	FY 19-20 Budget
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
ADMISSIONS/TOURS	\$320,500	\$333,499	\$323,500
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$64,700	\$59,963	\$65,450
ENDOWMENT	\$47,516	\$47,503	\$47,980
GRANT INCOME (Operations)	\$7,700	\$15,000	\$5,000
MEMBERSHIP	\$58,000	\$52,998	\$55,500
PROGRAMS	\$7,000	\$8,019	\$4,850
MANSION RENTAL (net of expenses)	\$1,500	-\$880	\$0
SHOP SALES	\$120,000	\$106,082	\$106,000
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$32,200	\$32,439	\$35,500
RELEASED FROM RESTRICTED		\$5,000	\$0
Total Income	\$659,116	\$659,623	\$643,780
Cost of Goods Sold	\$68,400	\$57,548	\$60,420
Gross Profit	\$590,716	\$602,076	\$583,360
EXPENSES			
ADMIN MISCELLANEOUS	\$750	\$789	\$500
ACCOUNTING	\$8,350	\$9,030	\$9,000
INSURANCE	\$19,515	\$19,101	\$20,080
OFFICE EXPENSE	\$10,300	\$10,682	\$9,850
REPAIRS/MAINTENANCE	\$9,300	\$12,273	\$11,200
SERVICE CHARGES	\$8,400	\$9,682	\$8,400
UTILITIES	\$24,050	\$24,890	\$24,830
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	\$80,665	\$86,447	\$83,860
EDUCATION	\$2,200	\$4,871	\$3,050
MARKETING	\$23,780	\$24,476	\$25,150
MUSEUM EXPENSES	\$7,000	\$6,899	\$5,650
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$13,500	\$12,677	\$8,500
COLLECTIONS	\$15,350	\$10,054	\$12,150
TOTAL PROGRAMS	\$61,830	\$58,977	\$54,500
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT	\$18,600	\$16,247	\$20,000
TOTAL SALARIES/BENEFITS	\$428,981	\$429,313	\$423,242
UNRESTRICTED RESTORATION		\$0	\$0
CAPITAL PURCHASES	\$0	\$8,608	\$1,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$590,076	\$599,591	\$582,602
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$640	\$2,485	\$757

Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

DOCENT MANUAL RECONNAISSANCE

Mary Spugnardi and Linda Levesque

Intrepid volunteers Mary Spugnardi and Linda Levesque have been working on sifting through docent emails from the last several years, compiling new and updated information, and cross referencing it against our current 100+ page docent manual. A major undertaking to ensure our docents and guides have access to accurate and up-to-date information, further enriching their tours and the visitor experience!



Above: Mary Spugnardi and Linda Levesque in the Reception Room.

THANK YOU TO *Our Supporters*

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Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

CURATORIAL FILE ORGANIZATION AND HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH SCANNING

Kathie Propp

With the conversion of the former curator's office space into an area interpreting its original function as the office of the Mansion's housekeeper, the curatorial files amassed since 1940 were moved to a newly-dedicated curatorial records and research space in the recently reorganized Billiards Room on the third floor, formerly only used for the storage of collections not generally on view. Docent and trustee Kathie Propp used her previous curatorial training in bringing existing object files up to date with more recent information intended to be incorporated in these records. Upon completion of this "hard copy" work, additional work will be undertaken on our digital files. Kathie has also been assisting with scanning the Mansion's historical photograph collection to create high-resolution digital copies, allowing us to share these images with the public.



Above: Kathie Propp sifts through the Mansion's historic photograph collection in the Billiards Room

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Board President Drew Oesreicher with wife Alexa and Executive Director Tom Johnson. Photo by Amy Paradysz.

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Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

ARCHIVAL ORGANIZING AND FILING

Angela LaChance, Cynthia Macdonald, Carina Walter

Talk about a big – but nonetheless important – project! While the Mansion had been diligent in keeping its own organizational archives since 1940, for the most part they were stored in boxes in storage areas and closets, and therefore all but inaccessible to researchers. With the updates in the Cistern Room, we were given the opportunity to gather all of these records in one location and start a logical filing system to locate the information stored in them. Angie, Cynthia, and Carina have been unpacking boxes, organizing files by subject and dates, determining needless duplication among the information, and placing all in newly-donated file cabinets and flat file shelving. A huge amount has already been accomplished, but work on this massive undertaking continues!



Above: Angie Lachance takes a break from organizing files to pose in the Stair Hall. Not pictured Carina Walter and Cynthia Macdonald.



Mansion member Cathy Bunton and volunteer Kris Perkins at the annual Christmas Gala.

Gifts Received in Memory

Skillins Greenhouse

in memory of Phyllis Price

Barbara Harrison

in memory of Morris and Sylvia Greenberg

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in memory of Lucille Hatcher

Thomas Hinkle & Gary Duford

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Robert Keith

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in honor of Robin Webber

Jean K. Nishiyama

in honor of Jack Evans

Mary and Martin Gavin

in honor of Andrea Krasker Gavin



Volunteerism at Victoria Mansion

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE VISITOR GUEST BOOK AND FILING

Annemarie Loffeld

Our visitor guest books bring us a wealth of written comments and information that helps us find new members, friends, and volunteers and adjust to changing interests in the public. Besides names, contact information and questions on how they learned of the Mansion, a valuable component is a comment section that gives us a barometer on our guests' visits. In the past, the "mining" of this information was somewhat inconsistent and on an as-needed basis. This all changed with Annemarie's project of systematically quantifying and recording the information in a database that allows easy access for staff use. She has read over and transcribed literally thousands entries, creating a most useful tool that informs us in continually developing methods of staying current and dynamic in the myriad of ways we interact with the public. To this end, Annemarie is also assisting the Mansion's development team in the all-important (yet tedious!) task of filing as we make a crucial transition to a new development database software.

Above: Annemarie Loffeld has transcribed thousands of guest book entries-- no easy task!

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Note: While we aspire to perfection, errors do happen. If any name was inadvertently omitted from this listing, we apologize, and ask that you contact our Development & Communications Coordinator Victoria Levesque at vlevesque@victoriamansion.org or (207)772-4841 ext. 111, so that we can correct our records.





Illustration and photograph by Justine Dutil

VICTORIA MANSION
A National Historic Landmark
109 Danforth Street, Portland, Maine
www.victoriamansion.org
207-772-4841