

VICTORIA MANSION

A National Historic Landmark



ANNUAL REPORT

2016-2017

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Cover: Mansion Conservator Siobhan Lindsay cleaning a wall painting in the Reception Suite.

Above: Executive Director Tom Johnson and Victoria Mansion's senior staff gathered in the Front Vestibule (first row left to right) Museum Shop Manager Patti Chase, Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind, Development and Communications Coordinator Torie Levesque, Curriculum Development Specialist Stacia Hanscom; (rear, left to right) Collections Conservation Technician Harper Batsford, Johnson, Director of Development Sam Heck, Assistant Director Tim Brosnihan. Absent: Director of Education and Visitor Services Lucinda Hannington, Conservator Siobhan Lindsay. Photo by Gail Dodge.

Letter from the Director



2016 was an exciting and fulfilling time to be at Victoria Mansion.

Often the perception of historic house museums tends to be of a static entity that after an initial visit rarely warrants the effort to return, because it will probably just be the same experience once again. In no way does that typify Victoria Mansion, where our ongoing restoration activities always provide a new experience while bringing the Mansion ever-closer to historical accuracy. In this vein we bring our restoration and conservation efforts to the fore this year with a look at two of the largest and most complicated projects undertaken to date.

Inside, conservators have been at work revealing the fresh original colors of the walls and ceiling decorations of the Reception Room Suite, obscured by 157 years of the buildup of surface grime. While the space has always been impressive, what is emerging has enthralled everyone who sees it. The rich palette of saturated colors and glittering gold leaf accents again appear as the room's creator, Italian artist Giuseppe Guidicini, intended. For those who knew the dimmed magnificence of the room before, the effect is breathtaking. And there is more to come – subsequent phases will conserve and reinstall the extremely rare original James Templeton & Sons chenille carpet, the French gilt bronze gasolier will be cleaned and re-hung, and the original blue damask fabric and trimmings will be reproduced for new upholstery on the original

Herter furniture, as well as elaborate drapery treatments that will replicate the long-missing originals. When completed, the room will once again appear as it did in the 1860s when Ruggles and Olive Morse first enjoyed the Mansion as their new summer home.

On the exterior, a project second only in scope and complexity to the restoration of the tower in 2004-2005 will be the rebuilding of the severely deteriorated brownstone structure of the Reception Room bay. Planning for this work has taken several years of engineering studies and sourcing of brownstone. The now lost crisp lines and delicate egg-and-dart molding so evident in nineteenth century photographs of the house will replace the greatly eroded elements surviving in place, and finally bring the main facade of the house back to its original appearance.

It takes a dedicated group of craftsmen, artisans, and contractors to do these projects to the high standards we adhere to. Throughout this Annual Report, we introduce you to a number of these talented individuals and their contributions to our ongoing restoration and conservation work.

Meanwhile, the other yearly functions of the museum continue apace. We completed a professional storage facility for our textile collections (see story, page 15). Our education and programming offerings, special events, lively and informative daily tours led by knowledgeable docents, and our annual Christmas at Victoria Mansion continue to draw visitors who are always amazed and delighted by the visual feast around them.

I hope you will take a moment to visit us in 2017, experience our latest work, and see how truly engaging a historic house museum can be.

Thomas B. Johnson
Executive Director

Letter from the President



As you will see in this annual report, there are many working parts to Victoria Mansion and its operations. Perhaps most important to all of our work in preserving the National Historic Landmark is the role of the Board of Trustees in ensuring the funding it takes to continue critical conservation and restoration activities. 2017 will see a focus on a major exterior project (see Tim Brosnihan's article on the Reception Room bay, page 5) and the ongoing interior conservation of the Reception Room Suite (see related story by Arlene Palmer Schwind, page 16). The Development overview in this report shows that we are successfully meeting the challenge of raising the finances needed to date for this work to be undertaken. It is an effort that will continue in the coming year.

We take very seriously our core mission to conserve, maintain, and restore the Victoria Mansion property and collections to the highest standards, and to interpret them in their social, historical, and art-historical context to a broad local, state, national, and international audience. That said, Victoria Mansion is an enormously complex structure, and to fulfill this mission we rely on the expertise and support of a widely diverse audience. Our members are a crucial component in that.

As a member, you are likely aware that Victoria Mansion is widely considered as the most important historic house museum of its period in the nation. The building, designed by Henry Austin, is one of the greatest examples of American residential architecture from the immediate pre-Civil War period. The interiors by Gustave Herter are unmatched for their quality and completeness, and artist Giuseppe Guidicini's genius continues to be rediscovered as conservators remove layers of grime in the Reception Suite conservation project.

But the significance of Victoria Mansion is more exciting and complex than just these facts. The museum is also an irreplaceable historic and educational resource that inspires great loyalty and affection, and it serves both residents and visitors as a center for art and culture, for enlightening education about the past, and for socializing in the present. The contents of this annual report chronicle the many recent activities and projects that go into saving this special place and sharing it with the public.

As our new fiscal year commences, we look back in gratitude to those who have helped us in getting to where we are today. In 2017, we will be moving forward with determination to protect and enhance the physical structure of the Mansion, its unparalleled interiors and collections, and its reputation in the community.

Drew Oestreicher
Board President

Above: At 2016's annual Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere held on the Mansion's west lawn, Allagash Brewing founder and Victoria Mansion Finance Committee member and former trustee Rob Tod presents President Drew Oestreicher (right) and Executive Director Tom Johnson with an \$11,000 donation in support of our work at Victoria Mansion.

Timothy Brosnihan, *Assistant Director*



Fig. 1

Over the decades, coastal Maine's weather has not been kind to Victoria Mansion's reception room bay, one of the most prominent features of the Mansion's principal façade. The earliest known photograph of the Mansion, taken about 1870, shows the bay in all its former glory, with crisply carved moldings ornamenting a pleasingly-proportioned classical composition. Five tall, polished plate-glass windows encircle the bay, setting up a lively rhythm as they alternate with piers and corner pilasters. A rooftop balustrade crowns the bay and ties it visually to the other projecting elements of the principal façade. Today the balustrade is missing, taken down decades ago as the brownstone balusters split and failed. The bay itself, while still intact, has lost much of its original brownstone fabric to spalling and erosion. Complex runs of molding have melted away under the weather's onslaught.

The bay's deterioration is all the more noticeable because of its juxtaposition with the front parlor piazza and front portico, two major elements of the Mansion's composition which carry identical entablatures. Both structures were restored in the 1970s and 1980s, the former under the direction of Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities' (now Historic New England) Morgan Phillips, a pioneer in the field of preservation who took tremendous pains to get the details right. A lack of suitable stone led Phillips to replicate the front piazza in sand painted wood, a technique originally used on the Mansion's rear porches. When R. E. Wengren Associates, Architects, restored the front portico in 1986 they followed Phillips' lead, creating a harmonious run of faux brownstone structures across two thirds of the Mansion's front elevation. The bay, however, remained unrestored, in part because its precious painted interiors posed unique challenges to those looking to repair and replace the exterior masonry.

Victoria Mansion has been carefully planning a complete restoration of the bay for nearly seven years. While this may seem like a long time, the stakes are very high. A successfully restored bay will be safe and structurally sound and sufficiently weather tight to protect the plastered and painted interiors of the Reception Room. It will also match the look of the 1860 bay with the greatest fidelity possible. This will not only entail choosing materials that convincingly resemble Portland brownstone at close range, but also producing carved or cast runs of molding that match the form and finish of the originals perfectly.

Preliminary work began two years ago with the rebuilding of the interior floor structure, a project that could not be safely delayed. The removal of badly deteriorated flooring fortuitously exposed details of the exterior masonry construction of the bay that had lain hidden for over one hundred and fifty years. Mansion staff and consultants carefully photographed and documented the back side of the bay's brick, stone, and wood structure.

Last year, Alfred Hodson III (*see pg. 19*) of Resurgence Engineering, Portland, Maine, and Ivan Myjer (*see pg. 6*) of Building and Monument Conservation, Arlington, Massachusetts, began producing detailed construction documents that will guide fabrication of the individual masonry units needed to rebuild the bay. The choice of material is still an open question. Genuine Portland Connecticut brownstone, the material used in the Mansion's original construction,



Fig. 2

Fig. 1. Earliest known photograph of Victoria Mansion, circa 1870. The Reception Bay, still in pristine condition, is at the right-hand side of the image. Courtesy of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Fig. 2. The badly weathered Reception Bay presents a sharp contrast to the crisp colonnades of the restored front portico and piazza.

Fig. 3



is preferred, but it is difficult if not impossible to obtain stone units in the sizes necessary to fabricate the bay's larger elements. During the Mansion's tower rebuild (2004-2005), the Mansion acquired newly-quarried brownstone from a small outfit opened in the 1990s to provide stone for restoration work. Unfortunately, this quarry closed in 2012. Some stone from this quarry remained unused and is still in circulation. Salvaged Portland brownstone is available as well. Nonetheless, some of the stone units in the bay are truly massive, so large that suitable pieces of stone may not exist.

Cast brownstone, a concrete product with pigments and other additives used to mimic the appearance of brownstone, is another viable option. The Mansion has a handful of cast stone elements installed in 1988 as part of a pilot project to test options for dealing with deteriorating brownstone masonry. While the results were variable, cast brownstone technology has come a long way in

the intervening 30 years. In the summer of 2014, members of the Mansion staff toured several buildings in the North Shore of Massachusetts with brownstone consultant Ivan Myjer and were impressed with the quality of state-of-the-art cast stone.

There is still much to be done. Behind the scenes, the Mansion staff and Restoration Committee have been at work identifying potential sources of brownstone and developing plans for casting the bay's largest elements. The drawings produced by Resurgence Engineering will be used to refine preliminary cost figures for the project as a whole.

The fundraising challenge will be significant. The project will entail the most complex and costly work undertaken on the building since the restoration of the tower in 2004-2005, and will dovetail with the complete interior restoration of the Reception Suite already underway. But the end result will be extraordinary, the final piece of a nearly four decades long campaign to return the Mansion's foremost façade to its 1860 appearance.

Fig. 3. A richly carved capital on one of the Reception Bay pilasters. These are the last fragments of this type of molding left on the building.



Gianfranco Pocobene

Chief Conservator

I've always been blown away by the top level of artwork in this house, which compares to anything you would find in Europe at the same time. It's astonishing that it's still here. I've been involved with various conservation projects at the Mansion for over two decades now, and I'm constantly impressed by the brilliance of the original artists who created this.

Ivan Myjer

Stone and Masonry Conservator

Victoria Mansion is the living laboratory for progress in brownstone restoration technology. Much of what has been discovered during work on this structure has gone on to inform techniques now considered mainstream in the field. I've been honored to have consulted on Mansion projects for close to twenty years now, and every time I visit I still find awe in the craftsmanship that went into the original construction of this masterpiece of Italianate design.



Events Report

This past year the Mansion held several new events along with annual favorites. To kick off the 2016 season and celebrate our 75th anniversary as a museum, Broadway on the Staircase on April 30 featured wonderful performances by Julia Furtado, Thomas Smallwood, and Jennifer Miller accompanied by Jason Weber on piano, filling the Mansion with the sounds of the best-loved tunes from *The Great White Way*. Just this past March, we also held A Victorian Sampling, a special members-only nineteenth-century food tasting accompanied by a lecture on Victorian epicure from Director of Education Lucinda Hannington at the Maine Irish Heritage Center.

Our annual events throughout the year didn't disappoint either. At the Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere on June 17, over 300 guests enjoyed great local drink and food with live music from the Jason Spooner Band. The Mansion was awarded a check for \$11,000, raised by Allagash Brewing through sales of their signature Victoria Ale, to support our ongoing preservation efforts. The sixth annual Opera at the Mansion, held on July 11, once again proved to be an evening of extraordinary singing from the cast of PORTopera's (now called Opera Maine) production of Bizet's *Carmen*.

225 guests attended the annual Christmas at Victoria Mansion Gala held on November 30. Attendees enjoyed food generously donated by the Cumberland Club and fabulous raffle prizes, including a cashmere throw from Dino International Furs, as they took in the beautiful decorations created by our skilled team of designers for 2016's theme of A Currier and Ives Christmas at Victoria Mansion.

In addition to these and other quarterly members' events and lectures, it was also a busy year for private event rentals, as the Mansion hosted several weddings and corporate parties in 2016. We look forward to welcoming members and non-members alike for a wide variety of events and special gatherings in the coming 2017-2018 season!



Top right: Mansion members Elena Vandervoort and Gary Duford mingle with Trustee Tom Hinkle at the annual Christmas Gala on November 30. Photo by Cortney Vamvakias. Above left and right: Opera at the Mansion, singer Robert Mellon. Photo by Martha Mickle Photography.

Museum Shop & Visitor Orientation

The past year saw many physical changes in Victoria Mansion's Carriage House. The Museum Shop space was reconfigured for better traffic flow and merchandise display, and the visitor orientation area was moved to the space directly opposite the admissions and sales counter, with updated interpretation displays on the house's history and added seating for visitor comfort. After purchasing an admissions pass, visitors may introduce themselves to the Mansion's history before their tour or while making shop purchases that help support our education programs, restoration, and operations.



The book section was greatly expanded to include more subjects and titles in a display reminiscent of a gentleman's library of the nineteenth century. This was the first of many changes undertaken by our new Museum Shop Manager Patti Chase, who assumed the position in March. Her work has already refined the shop's Victorian-themed offerings and added unique and hard-to-find gifts and souvenirs, varied signature gifts for men, seasonal decorative ornaments, and a new line of items incorporating Mansion-specific designs and technology.

The creation of the newly-enhanced orientation area fulfilled a goal of providing up-to-date information and added comfort for our visitors. With coach tours up 40% from 2015 our existing comfort facilities were found wanting, and two new restrooms were added to alleviate lines that had previously formed for use of the existing amenity during periods of high visitation.

As shown in the Financial Report, Museum Shop revenues have continued to climb over the past several years and continued to do so in 2016. With additional visitor-oriented changes and new merchandise lines, we expect this trend to continue.

Robert and Sebastian Cariddi

Conservators of Wooden Elements and Technology

My interest in the art of woodworking has always moved between the worlds of architecture and furniture but was piqued the first time I took a good look at Victoria Mansion. The wooden elements of both the building and its fine furnishings were given equal attention from the people that created them. The whole idea of integrated design is exemplified in this one focused example. It is also where we see the transition from all hand work to the industrial age power that would forever change the way woodworking had been done for hundreds of years. It has been an ongoing tutorial about the very best methods and skill that can be achieved.

This study has been enriched by sharing it with Sebastian for more than twenty-five years now. It has been a great joy to watch his skills go beyond my own. We are now witnessing another quantum leap in the way wooden objects are made. The machines that were first being employed in the mid nineteenth century, are now being controlled by computers. Today, with one very expensive CNC machine, a single operator can manufacture five hundred doors a day. This is opposite of the formula that created the Victoria Mansion. A small army of highly skilled wood artists took a long time to produce the amazing work we see today. Progress. Oh, to be a fly on the wall of the workshops of C.H. Blake or Herter Bros. where these things were made.



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Morse Associates



Named for Victoria Mansion's first owners, Ruggles and Olive Morse, the Morse Associates is a society of loyal donors who support the Mansion at the highest level with an annual membership gift of \$1,000 or more. Each year the Morse Associates enjoy numerous events and gatherings, including the Board President's holiday reception and the ever-popular Late Summer Outing, which offers exclusive tours of privately-owned historic homes. This year's summer outing took the Morse Associates to the historic summer community of Small Point in Phippsburg, where they toured several historic summer cottages and enjoyed lunch at the Small Point Club. For more information on the Morse Associates or how you can join this elite group of Mansion supporters, visit the *donate* page of victoriamansion.org

As of April 2017, the Morse Associates are:

Nancy Armitage	Cynthia and Bob Macdonald
Elizabeth Astor	Carol and Rick Malone
Steve Barton	Nancy and Mike Marino
Charlotte Brown	Manny Morgan and Chris Corbett
Jonathan Carr and Todd Greenquist	Aaron Morris
Jack and Noreen Evans	Tinker Newick
John Hatcher and Dan Kennedy	Jean K. Nishiyama
Tom Hinkle and Gary DuFord	Drew and Alexa Oestreicher
Doug and Sharyn Howell	Tim and Kathie Propp
Lynne Jackson	Carla Rigby
Thomas B. Johnson	Sandy and Bob Riley
Harry W. Konkel	Ruth Townsend Story
Candice Thornton Lee	Katharine J. Watson

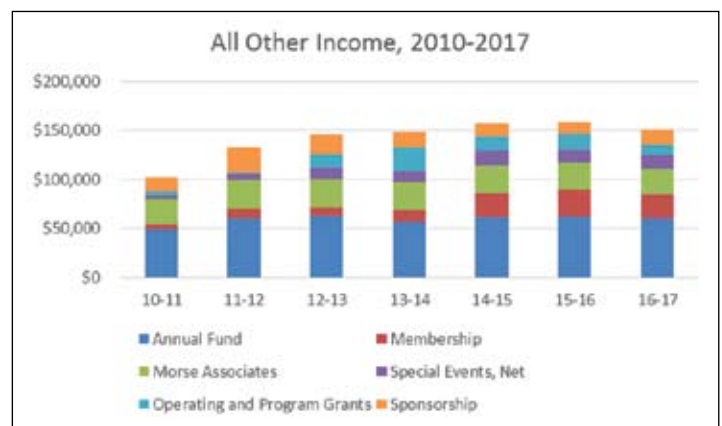
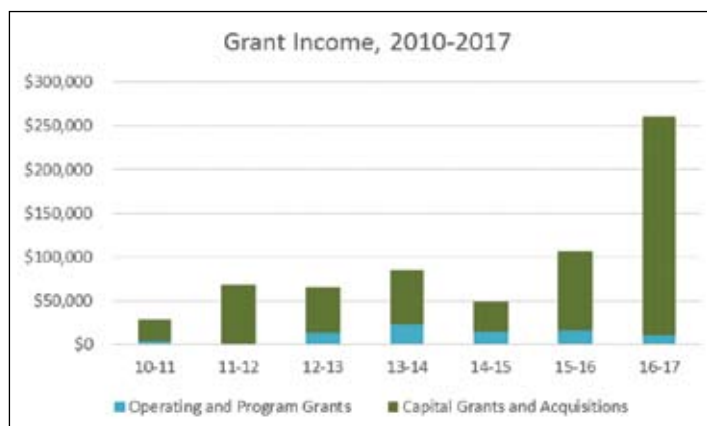
Development Report

Victoria Mansion's development efforts in 2016-17 centered on raising funds for the initiative to conserve the painted wall and ceiling decoration of the Reception Suite. With the support of a \$130,000 matching grant from the Institute of Museum of Library Services, we were able to raise more than \$250,000 in capital grants this year from foundation sources and individual donors. This makes this project the largest single-year capital fundraising effort since a series of major exterior projects a decade ago, and our most ambitious interior conservation project ever. It is expected that this project will be the foundation of a significant capital campaign to be launched in the coming year, an effort that will also support critical exterior work on the structure.

Overall raised funds from non-grant sources were down by just under one percent. Membership revenues contracted slightly from an all-time high last year, but remain more than double what they were five years ago. Some of the retreat can be attributed to the financial and political concerns of a turbulent election year. Annual fund revenues likewise were down roughly three percent, but exceeded the budgeted goal of \$60,000.

Event and sponsorship revenues rebounded well after an off-year last year, with sponsorship growing by 41% and net event revenues growing by 7%, led by the efforts of the Christmas Gala Committee to continue to reduce event expenses.

Areas of focus for the coming year include developing and launching a new business membership program and continuing to build our sponsorship revenues by focusing on early Christmas sponsorship appeals. Additionally, the board plans to focus on strengthening recruitment for our major donor membership program, the Morse Associates.



Caleb Hemphill
Woodwork Conservator

For almost 18 years, I've been privileged to do woodworking conservation in so many places all over the Mansion; literally, from the Tower spire to repairing joists in the basement. The amazing craftsmanship throughout Victoria Mansion continuously provides inspiration to do one's best work and it is always a pleasure to support the work of staff and volunteers to maintain this genuine architectural treasure. The consistently outstanding work demonstrated in projects such as restoring the Tower, the Turkish Smoking Room, the Pompeian Bathroom, and recently, the Reception Room are examples of the very best conservation efforts anywhere. I am so pleased and very proud to be a part of the team of craftsmen and women that help keep Victoria Mansion in ever improving condition.

Education Report



The Mansion's educational offerings continue to increase with each passing year. This year we expanded our partnership with Portland Ballet, developed new programs with Maine Historical Society, and introduced a new tour series, all while welcoming more school groups than ever before.

The Mansion's signature school program, *Victorian Portland: A Century of Change*, underwent some big changes this past year. We shortened the name to *A Century of Change*, reflecting the curriculum's relevance outside of Portland. Only one lesson is deeply rooted in the city's past; the rest use the Mansion as a jumping off point into a broader history of the nineteenth century. The name change and an increase in advertising across the greater Portland area worked to our advantage. Classes from Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, and two grade-levels from Windham-Raymond all signed on for the program, as did Levey Day School in Portland, the first private school to participate. All school visits in the offseason were free of charge,

which allowed schools that had never been to the Mansion in the past the opportunity to schedule field trips with us. We anticipate that the coming year will bring even more students to the Mansion, up from our record setting year with over 800 in 2016-17. We are currently seeking underwriting in order to continue expanding our free education programs.

In 2016 the Mansion welcomed Portland Ballet for two events. *Mourning in the Mansion* featured dancers from *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, bringing a creepy bit of entertainment to the evening's educational tour. On three nights in December, dancers brought the magic of *The Victorian Nutcracker* to life in the stair hall. Each night highlighted different vignettes from the ballet, the sets of which are based on the Mansion's interiors. Director of Education Lucinda Hannington also spoke to a sell-out crowd at Merrill Auditorium about the significance of the Mansion's interiors and their influence on the ballet's sets prior to performance.

A longstanding relationship with Maine Historical Society grew stronger this year as the Mansion and MHS embarked on a new summer camp offering for students grades 3-6. The camp gave participants the opportunity to explore two of Portland's landmarks and learn about nineteenth century life, art, and food through a variety of activities and field trips. Due to its popular success, we have already planned to repeat the program this coming summer. In addition to the week-long summer camp, the Mansion and MHS have also started offering one-day History Adventures during school vacations. These mini-camps explore one topic in greater depth. At this time, we have developed three units, but hope to increase these offerings moving forward.



In an effort to appeal to returning visitors and to contextualize the Mansion in a larger historical narrative, we introduced theme tours in the 2016 regular season. These specialized tours, led by members of staff, delve deeper into one specific aspect of the Mansion or nineteenth century history and provide a new perspective on a familiar structure. Tours were given about the Libby family, servant life, the Mansion's history as a museum, brownstone, technology, the Parlor paintings, and the craftspeople who built the Mansion. Each of these tours inspired new questions and conversations about the house and the context in which it was built, as well as its contemporary significance as a cultural institution in a changing city. Because of the tours' popularity, we will continue this series into the coming year, offering one theme tour each month throughout the regular season.

Top left: Curriculum Development Specialist Stacia Hanscom demonstrates a model steam engine in an eighth grade class.

Bottom right: Director of Education Lucinda Hannington teaches about museum conservation during the Mansion's first Junior Docent Camp.

Restoration Report



In 2016 we carried on with the perennial work of keeping the Mansion's exterior woodwork in good repair. Painter Peter de Paolo (*see below*) sand painted parts of the library bay, which is beginning to take on a uniformity of appearance after a decade of spot maintenance and minor repairs. In the fall Peter tackled the exterior woodwork of the Reception Suite windows. Caleb Hemphill helped remove the exterior storms, which allowed Peter to clean out over thirty years of accumulated debris between the sash and to prep and paint the sills and brickmolds.

In the fall Caleb Hemphill (*see pg. 12*) removed all of the interior wooden blinds from the Reception Room and transported them to his shop in Falmouth, where he carefully hand-sanded hundreds of individual slats to prepare them for refinishing. Peter de Paolo applied several coats of UV-inhibiting varnish, bringing them back to their original, glossy appearance. These

will be reinstalled when paint conservation wraps up in the Reception Suite.

Bob and Sebastian Cariddi (*see pg. 8*) continued to address windows in the Mansion's ell. In the spring they restored the rear entry windows, recreating the transom light over the door and restoring the sidelight sash. In the fall they removed the sash from one of the second story office windows, which have undergone a complete restoration and will be reinstalled soon. Bob began restoring the Mansion's windows in the mid 1980s. His work in the ell over the past couple of seasons has finally brought him full circle around the building!

A great deal of attention was directed towards the Reception Room Bay. Engineer Alfred Hodson (*see pg. 19*) of Resurgence Engineering completed a series of construction documents that will guide an upcoming project to fully restore the brownstone masonry of the bay and its adjacent facades. Consulting stone expert Ivan Myjer (*see pg. 6*) of Building and Monument Conservation visited in the early spring to review the drawings and to take the planning for this complex project to the next level.

Year by year, the craftsmen who work on Victoria Mansion bring us closer to our goal of a completely proactive maintenance regime, which will catch minor problems before they cause damage to the building's historic fabric. While wood is much easier to care for than brownstone, we are nonetheless steadily tackling all of the buildings problems with the thought and care that this National Historic Landmark deserves.

Peter de Paolo

Preservation Painter

I have worked at the Victoria Mansion for the past 10 years, doing various painting and refinishing jobs, mainly the application of the sanded paint coating on the exterior wood trim and balustrades. If you come by on a nice weather day in the summer or fall, you're likely to find me outside on a ladder shooting sand into fresh paint. I appreciate the opportunity to work on this historic building and am happy to be a part of the effort to preserve it.



Top: Sebastian Cariddi works on the rear entry sidelight.

Curatorial Report

Accessions

Arlene Palmer Schwind, *Curator*
Siobhan Lindsay, *Conservator*
Harper Batsford, *Collections Conservation Technician*

- Large framed photograph of the five Libby children
- Framed photograph of the Larrabee homestead, Limington
- J.R. Libby Co. wrapping paper, Biddeford store
- News clippings including a published letter of J.R. Libby
- Five-piece service, silver-plated ware by Rogers Bros., Hartford, Ct.

Gifts of Deborah W. Pierce and Emma F. Willman

With these generous gifts, Deborah W. Pierce and Emma F. Willman, stepdaughters of J.R. Libby's oldest grandchild, continue to expand our understanding and interpretation of the Libby era of the Mansion. The elaborately framed, charming photograph of the Libby children will be on view for the summer season. The original owner of the tea and coffee service has yet to be identified, but it dates from the 1850s and, considering its provenance, was probably used by a member of the Morse or Libby families.

- Two mid-eighteenth-century Italian prints

Gift of Christopher P. Monkhouse

These prints, depicting putti and motifs reminiscent of some in Victoria Mansion, may be designs from ancient Roman archaeological sites. They were engraved by Giovanni Morghen who is best known for plates in the important *Antiquities of Herculaneum*, published in Naples in 1757. We are pleased to add these prints to our research collections.

Loan

Dress made with silk from Haskell Silk Co., Westbrook, Maine. c. 1916, (2000.50 a,b) Loaned to Maine Historical Society for February-June, 2017 exhibition, "World War I and the Maine Experience."

Conservation and Care of Collections



Fig. 1

Siobhan Lindsay devoted much of her time in 2016 to the textiles collection. As reported last year, Victoria Mansion received a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to create a storage and study room for the nearly 1,000-piece collection of unique textiles and trimmings from the original 1860 window hangings. This

year, the conversion of a third floor room to a professional facility was successfully completed, and many objects, ranging from tassels and tiebacks to ten-yard pieces of curtain fabric, have been numbered, photographed, cleaned, and re-housed in the new space. Curator Arlene Palmer Schwind oversaw the project and worked with Siobhan to prepare the final report for IMLS earlier this year. Because of the meticulous, time-consuming nature of cleaning and re-housing, a number of tiebacks and other items still remain to be processed. We hope to complete that work by early 2018.

Fig. 1 New Textile Storage Facility. Photo by Cortney Vamvakias.

In September we learned that IMLS granted the Mansion the full amount requested to undertake the conservation of the wall and ceiling paintings of the Reception Suite. Work began almost immediately on this exciting project. *See below for full story.*

Harper Batsford has continued on the curatorial team. After the Mansion experienced a record number of visitors over the summer and Christmas seasons, Harper thoroughly cleaned each of the museum rooms and kept careful records of conditions he observed. He will be working year-round to assure that the rooms are kept in first-rate order, to monitor our integrated pest-management system, and to assist in other tasks related to the care of collections.

Lectures, Programs, and Research

In June Arlene presented a talk to museum members in the series, “Curator’s Choice.” In December she gave a lecture, “Giuseppe Guidicini and the Decoration of New York Opera Houses and Theatres,” to the Metropolitan (New York City) Chapter of the Victorian Society in America.

Arlene and Siobhan presented informal programs about the Reception Suite conservation project to Mansion members and students from Maine College of Art. Siobhan was interviewed for a segment aired on WCSH Channel 6 TV.

Arlene is in final stages of work on the book, *From Italian Opera to an Italian Villa in Maine: Giuseppe Guidicini and Decorative Painting at Victoria Mansion*. She conducted additional research in New York and traveled to Bologna, Italy, to learn more about his background and artistic training. She is working with Mansion member and former trustee Charlotte Brown and Chief Conservator Gianfranco Pocobene to finalize the manuscript. Photographer Gail Dodge has been engaged to take images needed for the publication.



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Reception Suite Project

Arlene Palmer Schwind, *Curator*

When Senator Angus King’s office phoned in mid-September we knew it meant good news: Victoria Mansion had been awarded a grant in the full amount requested, nearly \$130,000, to conserve the wall and ceiling decorations of the two rooms that comprise the Reception Suite. In the ensuing months, foundations and individuals have come forward so that at this time we are only \$10,000 short of the required match.

Designed to impress the Morses’ visitors as they waited to be “received,” the Reception Suite has the most ornate decoration in the Mansion. Every surface, whether relief molded or flat plaster, is embellished with paint and gold leaf. The decoration includes medallion paintings on canvas adhered to the walls. In its pre-conservation condition, the room displayed a faded grandeur that fell far short of the original intention of Guidicini, Herter, and Morse. There was active flaking of paint, abrasion, water damage, and some loss, and all was covered with heavy layers of grime that obscured the once-vivid colors and compromised the aesthetics of the designs.

Before conservation could begin, Arlene Schwind and Siobhan Lindsay had to get the rooms ready in the three weeks before the holiday tours—while also seeing that the other museum rooms were readied for Christmas designers to start their work. Arlene and Siobhan oversaw the removal of the Herter furniture from the Suite, mostly to storage, and relocated the portraits of Ruggles

Fig. 2 Reception Room ceiling, partially cleaned.

Fig. 3 Partially cleaned wall painting.



and Olive Morse for display in other rooms. The original Templeton's carpet had already been rolled up the previous year so critical repairs could be made to the flooring. Because of its size and bulk, it is currently stored at one end of the Parlor. The wooden floor—which bears splashes of original 1860 paints—was covered in protective material. The IMLS grant included funds to cover such necessary preparations as the removal of the gasolier and mirror lights, and the removal, cleaning, and repair of the interior wooden blinds by preservation carpenter Caleb Hemphill and painter Peter DePaolo. As soon as the

blinds were removed, Maine Sun Solutions installed new UV film on all the windows. Finally, we purchased and erected new scaffolding, the conservation team ordered the materials they needed, and we were ready for the conservation work to begin.

Conservator Gianfranco Pocobene and his Studio--Siobhan Lindsay, Peggy Waldron, and Corrine Long—who so successfully conserved the painted decoration in the Turkish Smoking Room (2007-2009), Pompeian Bathroom Suite (2010-2012), and the Vestibule (2012), commenced in December as planned. This schedule had the added bonus of giving the thousands of visitors who came to see the Victoria Mansion Christmas the opportunity to see this exciting conservation work in progress.

The paint was very dirty but generally stable, except in the bay of the principal room where it is extremely deteriorated. The first step was to reattach flaking areas with a heat-activated adhesive. As in the Turkish Room, Mansion artist Giuseppe Guidicini used distemper paint on the surfaces of the Reception Suite. Because this paint is water soluble, it can only be cleaned with dry methods. The conservators are using latex sponges and vinyl erasers to accomplish this, meticulously going over each inch as many as five times and aiming to achieve a uniform appearance that meets both conservation and curatorial objectives. They are using scalpels to remove overpaint and areas of water damage.

As of this writing, the ceiling and cove have been cleaned and a barrier material applied. The cleaning of the walls is progressing in the same manner. Once all the surfaces are cleaned and preserved, inpainting will begin.

An important discovery was that the allegorical figures in the lunettes of the cove are painted in distemper on extremely thin canvas, not directly on the plaster as had been believed. While other canvas paintings in the Mansion are painted in oil, two of the four putti rondels on the walls here are rendered in distemper. The removal of over 150 years of dirt has also revealed more details of the designs, dramatically so, in the case of the putto blowing bubbles.

In this Suite, Guidicini painted the main ceiling and several wall panels to look as though they were covered with real silk damask. While we realized he carried this illusion to the extent of evoking the effect of changing light on the patterns, the full impact of this, and how he achieved it, can only now be understood and appreciated. Clearly, as this important project progresses, we will learn much more about the skills and techniques of this master “fresco painter.”



2017 Victoria Mansion Calendar

April

- 18 History Adventures Day Camp
- 26 Annual Meeting at the Cumberland Club

May

- 1 Museum opens for 76th season
- 16 Theme tour

June

- 9 Allagash Victoria Ale Premiere Celebration
- 20 Theme tour

July

- 17 Opera at the Mansion
- 25 Theme tour
- 24-28 Education History Camp

August

- 22 Theme tour

September

- * Annual Morse Associates Late Summer Outing
- 10 3rd Biennial Victorian Fair
- 19 Theme tour

October

- * Mourning at the Mansion
- 17 Theme tour
- 28 Gaslight League Halloween Steampunk Masquerade
- 31 Mansion closes for the season

November

- 24 34th Annual Christmas at Victoria Mansion opens
- 25 Stories on the Staircase
- 29 *Christmas at Victoria Mansion Gala*

December

- 1 First Friday at Victoria Mansion
- * Night of the Nutcracker
- * Morse Associates Annual Christmas Party
- 31 Gaslight League New Year's Eve Soiree
- and... every Saturday: Stories on the Staircase*

January

- 6 Stories on the Staircase
- 7 Last day of *Christmas at Victoria Mansion*

February

- * History Adventures Day Camp
- * Gaslight League Mardi Gras Fete

** Stay tuned for dates and more details on these events and watch your mail and e-mail for announcements and invitations to other events throughout the year. Follow us on Facebook and subscribe to our e-newsletter for the latest news!*

Gaslight League

It was another exciting year for the Gaslight League. Founded in 2014 as a social club that supports the Mansion, the Gaslight League offers people the chance to appreciate the Mansion as a museum and as a venue for gatherings, including annual parties on New Year's Eve and Mardi Gras, as well as the League's signature Steampunk Halloween Masquerade. Though conceived to appeal to young professionals, this tight-knit community includes member of a broad range of ages, from their early 20s to their 60s. Membership dues, which benefit the Mansion's historic preservation and education programs, are \$200 per year or \$20 per month. To learn more about the Gaslight League or to join, visit gaslightleague.com.

The Gaslight League steering committee is:

Misty Coolidge
Chris Haddad
Sharon Hudson
Julie Moulton
Lauren Webster
Bethany Willard
Sam Heck, Director of Development
Victoria Levesque, Development and Communications Coordinator



Financial Report

	FY 16-17 Budget	FY 16-17 Year End Est.	FY 17-18 Budget
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
ADMISSIONS/TOURS	\$260,000.00	\$354,186.13	\$330,000.00
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$63,200.00	\$68,134.18	\$64,500.00
ENDOWMENT	\$45,980.23	\$46,403.48	\$45,871.98
GRANT INCOME (Operations)	\$20,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$16,000.00
MEMBERSHIP	\$57,500.00	\$48,877.06	\$53,000.00
PROGRAMS	\$7,125.00	\$7,183.58	\$8,180.00
MANSION RENTAL (net of expenses)	\$4,500.00	\$4,327.71	\$3,900.00
SHOP SALES	\$89,500.00	\$112,284.51	\$100,000.00
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$36,645.00	\$29,889.49	\$29,950.00
Total Income	\$584,450.23	\$681,286.14	\$651,401.98
Cost of Goods Sold	\$50,000.00	\$64,982.47	\$57,000.00
Gross Profit	\$534,450.23	\$616,303.67	\$594,401.98
EXPENSES			
ADMIN MISCELLANEOUS	\$1,050.00	\$845.69	\$750.00
ACCOUNTING	\$8,800.00	\$8,250.00	\$8,300.00
INSURANCE	\$18,585.00	\$18,515.00	\$18,969.00
OFFICE EXPENSE	\$10,200.00	\$8,261.45	\$9,700.00
REPAIRS/MAINTENANCE	\$9,450.00	\$9,193.48	\$9,700.00
SERVICE CHARGES	\$5,900.00	\$8,252.20	\$7,950.00
UTILITIES	\$23,390.00	\$23,743.76	\$24,390.00
TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	\$77,375.00	\$77,061.58	\$79,759.00
EDUCATION	\$5,000.00	\$1,821.39	\$10,255.00
MARKETING	\$20,610.00	\$24,395.92	\$22,250.00
MUSEUM EXPENSES	\$4,000.00	\$9,053.65	\$9,500.00
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	\$6,500.00	\$15,504.09	\$16,950.00
COLLECTIONS	\$4,684.00	\$11,006.31	\$14,934.00
TOTAL PROGRAMS	\$40,794.00	\$61,781.36	\$73,889.00
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT	\$19,100.00	\$18,517.97	\$19,260.00
TOTAL SALARIES/BENEFITS	\$385,402.44	\$398,362.92	\$420,371.92
Capital Purchases	\$3,250.00	\$3,365.00	\$0.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$525,921.44	\$559,442.14	\$593,279.92
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	\$8,528.79	\$56,861.53	\$1,122.06

Victoria Mansion brought in record revenues this year. Admissions revenues led the surge, surpassing \$350,000 for the first time ever. Group tour sales accounted for over a quarter of admissions revenue overall, a figure that would have been unthinkable only a few years ago. Shop sales set another record, topping \$112,000 for the year.

Pinpointing the reasons for this success is difficult; doubtless there are many factors at work. Where Portland was once a city motorists rocketed through on their way up the coast, it has increasingly become a destination. Buoyed by favorable coverage in national publications for its beautiful and historic downtown, walkability, and vibrant food and craft beer scene, Portland is attracting a growing number of day-trippers and weekend visitors, not to mention thousands of cruise ship passengers who disembark within walking distance of the Mansion's front doors. Visitation at Victoria mansion topped 35,000 this year, up 15,000 from just three years ago!

As a non-profit organization, we of course reinvest these dollars in our core mission: preserving this treasured National Historic Landmark and using it as an educational resource to engage our public. Increased expenses reflect this investment. Beyond covering the inevitable inflation in everything from utilities to insurance, increased revenues have allowed us to grow our staffing budget considerably over the last five years. This, in turn, has allowed us to boost the number of guides and managers working on the front lines, hire a conservator and collections maintenance technician to improve day-to-day care of the collections and building, and hire a part-time Development and Communications Coordinator to service a growing number of members and donors.

Even having taken on these new expenses, Victoria Mansion still managed to produce a healthy surplus during the 2016-2017 fiscal year. While the numbers are still gelling as final bills roll in, our best estimate puts the surplus at over \$50,000. This, coupled with an endowment hovering near the all-time high water mark of \$1.5 million, paints a particularly rosy financial picture as we enter a new fiscal year.



Al Hodson

Historic Preservation Engineer

I have been involved with the Victoria Mansion rehabilitation since 2009, focusing on the front porch marble floor and structure, and on the reception bay. I'm privileged to work with some of the best tradespeople and preservation/conservation professionals in this incredibly well-curated "preservation laboratory." On every visit, I remind myself to stop and admire the craftsmanship and labor that provided such exquisite detail in the home, and I give thanks to the foresight of the earlier stewards who kept and cataloged so many of the crucial building components.



109 Danforth Street
Portland, Maine 04101



Photo by Andrew Davis

www.victoriamansion.org