

A close-up photograph of a hand painting a decorative ceiling medallion. The hand, wearing a red sleeve and a blue ring, holds a small paintbrush and is applying white paint to the intricate, carved details of the medallion. The medallion features a central floral motif surrounded by swirling acanthus leaves and scrolls. The background is a soft, out-of-focus view of the same ceiling, showing the top of the medallion and other architectural details.

VICTORIA MANSION

Annual Report
2021-2023



VICTORIA MANSION STAFF

Timothy Brosnihan, *Executive Director*

Ann O'Hagan, *Director of Development*

Stacia Hanscom, *Director of Education & Public Programs*

Brittany Cook, *Development & Communications Coordinator*

Molly Kingsbury, *Museum Shop Buyer & Merchandiser*

Sue Flaherty, *Visitor Services Coordinator*

Siobhan Lindsay, *Staff Conservator*

Elena Popov Savchenko, *Museum Housekeeper*

Gina Platt, *Graphic Designer*

Michelle Josephson, Nik Josephson, Sue Flaherty, *Site Managers*

Abbey St. Clair, Alicia Harding, Bob Parker, Charisse Gendron,
Erich Chase, Hannah Marcel Field, Jessie Horn, Jim Colby, John
Babin, Judy Scott, Gina Platt, Gloria Corsini Pollock, Mike Eling,
Kimberly Niles, Jennifer Halm-Perazone, Michelle Regan, Nate
Hanscom, Pat Thatcher, Sarah Coughlin, Solange Carpenter, John
Pollock, Lauren Grant, Maggie Ellis, Mira Horn, Molly Rose
Kingsbury, Patti Lacombe, Vivian Cunningham, *Museum Guides*

Above: Detail from French porcelain vase with flaring neck and polychrome flowers, one of a pair donated as part of the Greenberg Collection.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Drew Oestreicher, *President*
Sue Nutty, *Vice-President*
Robert J. Ayotte, *Treasurer*
Robin Webber, *Assistant Treasurer*
Sarah Newick, *Recording Secretary*
Thomas L. Hinkle, *Chair of Restoration Committee*

| | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Elizabeth K. Astor | Mary C. Doughty | Marian Hoyt Morgan |
| Stephen S. Barton | John Hatcher | Kathie Propp |
| Reuben Bell | Dan Hatt | Randal Rucker |
| Jonathan Carr | Cynthia P. Macdonald | Anne Ryan |
| Holly Doggett | Carlene D. Magno | Sue Sturtevant |

VOLUNTEERS

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Alessa Wylie | Holly Doggett | Michelle Kew |
| Amanda Cyr | Jamie Johnson | Nick Luoisos-Daniels |
| Amanda Edwards | Jeanne Charles | Nora Hanscom |
| Andrea Krasker Gavin | Jim Hiltonsmith | Oliver Tatro |
| Angie LaChance | Joan Austin | Olivia White |
| Anne Ryan | Joe McKenna | Pat Allen |
| Breda White | John Aden | Patti Chase |
| Brenda Jordan | John Corbett | Paul Fields |
| Brenda Wendel | Judy Johnstone | Peg Puza |
| Carina Walter | Julie Bartage | Penny Webster |
| Caroline Stevens | Julie Tselikis | Phoebe Horn |
| Celia Visteca | Karen Pride | Riley Glickman |
| Cynthia Douglass | Katherine Morris | Robin Webber |
| Cynthia Macdonald | Kathie Propp | Rosanne Sheridan |
| David White | Kaye McDevitt | Sandy Pablo |
| Dawn Gay | Knox Johnstone | Sarah Terriciano |
| Debra Gorneault | Kristin Redpath | Seamus Devon |
| Deb Moulton | Kylie Josephson | Sheila McGarr |
| Debra Sawtelle | Larry Perkins | Sophia Gavin |
| Dennis Pachulski | Linda Boentgen | Star Pelsue |
| Dianne Kidder | Linda Boynton | Sue Ellen Kelso |
| Elena Lippolis | Linda Levesque | Susan Lyons |
| Elissa Pintauro Brewster | Linnell Hilton | Susan Meibaum |
| Elizabeth Hope | Lisa Joyce | Susan Vayda |
| Eric Grimes | Lisa Schinhofen | Suzanne Bruno |
| Eunice Wilcox | Lynn Underwood | Tatyana Herron |
| Fritz Weiss | Mark Ferrence | Teddy Duffy |
| Gina Keller | Mary Anne Wallace | Tom Lafavore |
| Hannah Grassman | Mary Doughty | Trudy Brown |
| Harriett Mishkin | Mary Lunt | Vicki Sullivan |
| Heather Shannon | Mary Spugnardi | |
| Hillary Cantwell | Matthew Barker | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Letter from the Executive Director | 2 |
| Collections/Curatorial | 3-7 |
| Buliding/Architectural | 7-8 |
| Education/Social History | 9-13 |
| Institutional | 14-15 |
| Volunteers/Docents/Guides | 16 |
| Christmas at Victoria Mansion | 17 |
| Our Supporters | 18-20 |
| In Memoriam | 21 |

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



An interesting paradox lies at the center of Victoria Mansion's existence as a modern-day museum. The house, which retains over 90% of its original contents, represents an amazing survival of antebellum art and architecture, the tastes of its original creators frozen in amber to intrigue and delight its 21st-century visitors. But despite the appearance of time arrested, the Mansion is truly an active and vibrant place, a place of teaching, social connection, and cutting-edge conservation work. The pages ahead attest to the challenging and joyful work of keeping this house alive and relevant in the present.

Over the last year the easing of pandemic-related restrictions has allowed us to welcome the visiting public back in numbers not seen since 2019. Providing guided tours for over 30,000 guests and hosting educational events, from lectures to themed presentations, we conducted the essential alchemy of museums, where encounters with physical things are transformed into experiences of learning, meaning, and beauty. I feel so lucky to work with our terrific staff, board, and volunteers to make this magic happen day after day.

It has been an eventful couple of years. Conservation and restoration work, both inside and outside the building, has accelerated dramatically. With the help of generous private and foundation support, careful planning by the staff, board, and consulting partners, and the highly-skilled, hands-on work of conservators and tradespeople, we have launched three major initiatives for the coming years: the restoration of missing rooftop balustrades on the front facade, the conservation of decorative finishes in the grand central Stair Hall, and the reconstruction of the Mansion's deteriorated front brownstone bay. All this in addition to numerous smaller but nonetheless important projects detailed ahead.

Our collections (*see highlights throughout this report*) have grown significantly over the last two years, a somewhat rare thing for the Mansion. An important group of original objects has moved us closer to the elusive goal of completing the Morse interiors. In addition, our first-ever donation of objects associated with the working part of the household was received in 2021, a major milestone for the institution. More recently, a beautiful collection of 19th-century glass and ceramics, on loan to the Mansion for the last 20 years, was donated and received into our formal collections.

The intellectual work of learning about and making meaning from the Mansion and its inhabitants has grown and taken on new dimensions as well. Fueled by our Docent Research Committee, which formed in 2020, staff and volunteer researchers are building on a solid foundation of knowledge to explore new themes and topics. A broader look at the human history of the house has led to new discoveries about the working part of the household, as well as new connections to descendants of domestic servants who worked at the Mansion. A closer look at the activities of the Morses in New Orleans gave rise to the Unwilling Architects Initiative, an effort to uncover details about the lives of the more than two dozen individuals that they enslaved during the 1840s and 1850s. The latter has been a difficult journey, but one that we have tried to approach with openness and intellectual honesty.

We've always taken the Annual Report as an opportunity to take stock and share news about our work with our members, supporters, and friends. It's amazing to me to see how much we've been up to over the last two years! I hope that you will read on and get caught up. More importantly, I hope you will visit the Mansion this coming season and see the results of all this work firsthand.

-Tim Brosnihan

COLLECTIONS/CURATORIAL

Libby Family

2021 was a remarkable year for Victoria Mansion's collections, with 37 small but exquisite objects from the house's original contents returned after nearly a century away, and more than 100 additional objects ranging from photographs to portraits to ephemera, all connected with the Mansion's inhabitants, added to our archives.

We have the Libby family to thank for most of these donations. Almost 100 years since they last lived in the Mansion, the Libbys maintain an affection for and loyalty to this museum that has persisted through the generations to J. R. and Louisa's great-grandchildren and beyond. In July of 2021 Ralph Libby, grandson of J. R. and Louisa's oldest son Ralph, called to say that he had uncovered a number of important objects in preparation for a move from Maine to Florida. Among these were two cut-glass decanters and four cordial glasses from the Morses' original table service, all

marked with an engraved gothic "M". The decanters represent entirely new forms for our collection, listed in an 1893 inventory of the house's contents but undescribed and undocumented in any of our earliest photographs. The donation also included 28 pieces of original sterling silver flatware and a large, sweeping sterling silver ladle, all engraved "Morse" on the handles. Included with this gift was a large, early-20th-century scrapbook filled with various materials relating to the Libby department store, including photographs, newspaper clippings, telegraphs, and other pieces of correspondence, a treasure trove of information for researchers. We enlisted the help of the Osher Map Library to create high-resolution digital images of each page, allowing the book to be studied without handling its fragile pages.

In the fall of 2021 we received a visit from Arthur Chamberlain, grandson of J. R. and Louisa's daughter Mary Libby Chamberlain. Arthur brought another group of important objects, including a beautiful pitcher with floral decoration from the Morses' table service as well as a ruby-to-clear cut and engraved white wine glass bearing the Morses' "M" cypher. Objects from the Libby family occupation of the house were included as well, most notably an elegantly-carved ivory fan once belonging to Louisa Libby.

While we will likely never reach the elusive goal of recovering every object present in the 1893 inventory of the house, our progress over the last four decades has been remarkable, allowing us to present the Mansion's interiors much as they would have been in 1860. Our thanks go out once again to the Libby family for bringing about this steady transformation.

Shine Family

New avenues of research sometimes bear unexpected fruit. As part of the Mansion's Backstairs Lives Initiative, volunteer researchers Michelle Josephson, Hannah Field, and Matt Barker have uncovered a wealth of information about the women and men who worked as domestic servants for the Morse and Libby families (*see write-up page 12*). One of the most fascinating parts of the journey has been making connections with living descendants.

Hannah Shine (*see also page 12*) worked for the Libby family, and was in residence at the Mansion when the census taker came knocking in 1910. In 2022 we connected with several members of her family. To our delight, her granddaughters Anne Parra and Teresa Barron Keahon offered to donate several of Hannah's possessions. These included the type of items that would have been used in the working part of the Mansion household: a pastry rolling pin, a darning egg, a cloth sewing tape (*page 7*), and a pair of celluloid knitting needles which, by family tradition, came over with Hannah from Ireland in 1900. As ongoing research continues to shed light on the individuals who worked behind the scenes to keep the Morse and Libby households running, we are delighted to have this collection of objects to help tell their stories.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



These cut glass decanters and cordial glasses, attributed to the New England Glass Company in East Cambridge, Massachusetts, were part of an extensive set that once graced the Morses' dining room table. They came "home" in 2021, the gift of Libby descendant Ralph G. Libby III. Like other pieces in the set, they are decorated with tiny, wheel-engraved vignettes depicting animals. They are also personalized for the Morses, with engraved gothic "M"s surrounded by leafy wreaths. The honeycomb pattern cut into the decanters' necks is not found in any other pieces in the Mansion's collection.

Gift of Ralph G. Libby III, 2021

Greenberg Collection

Last month, Victoria Mansion gratefully accepted the permanent donation of 26 ceramic and glass decorative objects collected by the late Morris and Sylvia Greenberg (*see sidebar*) and loaned to the museum by their daughter, Barbara Harrison, for the last 20 years. While not original to the Mansion, these pieces date from the mid to late-nineteenth century and are of a quality that make them feel at home in the museum's rooms. Indeed, since their arrival at the Mansion in 2002, they have served as stand-ins for missing pieces on mantle shelves and in display cabinets throughout the house. A majority of these pieces are now on display in the Sitting Room, whose monumental rosewood cabinet would otherwise be bare.

The collection contains several pieces of Royal Worcester Porcelain, a type of finely-decorated ceramic produced in Worcester, England from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. In 1994 Frances Peabody donated a piece of Royal Worcester to Victoria Mansion which had been given to her by Libby daughter-in-law Harriet Payson Brazier Libby and was likely on display in the house during the Libby occupancy. This connection further reinforces the appropriateness of pieces from the Greenberg Collection as replacements for missing objects we may never identify or recover. We owe a sincere debt of gratitude to Barbara Harrison for her generosity in loaning and now donating these beautiful pieces to the museum's collection.

MORRIS AND SYLVIA GREENBERG

Dedication by Barbara Harrison



Over the course of 40 years, Morris and Sylvia Greenberg collected antiques from many sources throughout the world. Their Royal Worcester porcelain collection was one of their first endeavors. With the help and guidance of a very trusted friend and dealer, their knowledge and collection experiences grew. Every acquisition made had a story, a memory, and an adventure associated with it. The passing of Morris was in 1991 and Sylvia in 2000. The history and legacy of their Royal Worcester porcelain collection continues to live on within the rooms of Victoria Mansion.

Parlor Final Details

Since our feature article on the restoration of the Mansion's Parlor in the 2019-2021 Annual Report, the room has gone from an empty but dazzling showcase of decorative painter Giuseppe Guidicini's talents to a fully-furnished interior revealing the true scope of interior designer Gustave Herter's genius. As soon as scaffolding came down, the Mansion staff teamed up with volunteers John and Eunice Wilcox to reassemble the room's massive gilt bronze gasolier, which had been completely disassembled for conservation. A functional work of art, the fixture had to be rewired and reassembled in stages before it could be hung from the Parlor ceiling. Staff Conservator Siobhan Lindsay cleaned and conserved the room's gilt rosewood mirror surrounds, touching in small losses with gold paint. Bob and Sebastian Cariddi helped with the tricky work of rehangng window cornices, which had been removed to facilitate cleaning of the painted decoration on the walls. Bob also helped shim up the Parlor's marble-topped console table, which had to be in perfect alignment in order to slot into the paneled walls.

Over the summer, we received a visit from textile conservator Deirdre Windsor and her team at Windsor Conservation, Dover, Massachusetts. Deirdre choreographed the delicate dance required to install a high-tech, conservation-grade pad beneath the room's original 1860 carpet. This involved shifting the carpet several times as the two-piece pad, which was constructed off-site, was laid in place and joined with hand-stitching. The pad will not only create a barrier of separation between the fibers of the carpet and the potentially acidic pine floor beneath, but will also allow for some air circulation to prolong its life.

Once the furniture was back in place, the room felt fully complete. It was exciting to see relationships between the now fully cleaned painted decorations and the furnishings reestablished. The use of gilding throughout the room, in particular, was striking, with newly brilliant flashes of gold in the mirror surrounds, gasolier, and ceiling decoration entering into conversation for the first time in a century or more.

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



This beautiful porcelain ewer, produced by the Royal Worcester company in 1884, was donated this year as part of the Greenberg Collection. Note the handle, which takes the form of a lizard that has coiled itself around the ewer's neck. Enamel-painted lily pads and dragonflies round out the decorative treatment.

*Gift of Barbara Harrison, 2023
in memory of Sylvia and Morris Greenberg*

Stair Hall Paint Conservation



In 2021, Victoria Mansion enlisted the help of Gianfranco Pocobene Studio to undertake a paint conservation pilot project in the house's soaring central Stair Hall. This information-gathering phase of work allowed us to identify the decorative finishes used in the space 160 years ago, to understand how these finishes have changed in the years since, and to pinpoint the techniques best adapted to their careful stabilization, cleaning, and restoration. With a wealth of new information in hand, we embarked in 2022 on the most ambitious interior conservation project in the house's history.

For the last 15 years, Victoria Mansion has been undergoing near-continuous paint conservation, room by room. In every project, we learn something new about the array of techniques and materials employed by artist Giuseppe Guidicini and his small troupe of decorative painters in 1860. By working consistently with Gianfranco Pocobene Studio, we have built up a body of knowledge that allows each conservation project to proceed more smoothly than the last.

But every space throws us a curveball or two. On the first floor of the Stair Hall, we quickly discovered that the original painted decoration on the walls was covered by a layer of yellowed varnish. Close inspection suggested that this varnish was a later addition; it was simply too sloppy and uneven to have been done by Guidicini and the master technicians in his employ. A critical question posed during the pilot project was whether or not this varnish could be removed without damaging the original decoration beneath. The answer, happily, was yes, but not without painstaking, inch-by-inch effort.

In 2022, conservators focused on the front and west sides of the first floor, working from the overhanging balcony ceilings down the walls in roughly 8-foot sections dictated by the width of rolling staging. The ceilings and upper sections of the walls were decorated with water-soluble emulsion paints, necessitating dry cleaning techniques (essentially erasing). The lower walls, including their affixed colorful canvases, were painted in oils, allowing for solvent-based cleaning techniques. Swab by swab, conservators lifted away a century and a half of coal dust and grime.

The mystery of the yellowed varnish came one step closer to being

solved with the discovery of a small unvarnished island beside the Parlor door, clearly an area protected by something attached to the wall when the varnish was applied. A search in the archives revealed the culprit: a wall-mounted thermostat present for a time in the early 20th century. This gave us every confidence that the varnish was not original material, and could be removed without hesitation.

Where the Stair Hall is such a public space, the work happens by necessity before the public eye. But we take this as an opportunity for guests to learn about art conservation, another bit of knowledge to take away from the tour. Special narrow scaffolding affords access to high areas (the ceilings are nearly 14 feet high!) while allowing visitors to flow through the house's central artery during tours. Conversations with working conservators open guests' eyes to the work necessary to preserve this one-of-a-kind survival. It is a rare treat to witness high-level conservation in action.

The Stair Hall project, which will ultimately move onto the second floor, will unfold over the course of many years. No area in the house, not even the recently completed Parlor, compares in the sheer amount of surface area requiring treatment. But the very scale of the space is part of its grandeur, and its central location makes it the most public space in the building. In many ways, it is the closest surviving analog to the dozens of grand theaters and opera houses decorated by Guidicini in the 19th century, every one lost to fire and the wrecking ball. The Stair Hall is part of our national heritage, and worthy of heroic effort to ensure its survival into the future.

Stair Hall Graining

Sometimes conservation involves undoing misguided work from earlier days. In the Mansion's central Stair Hall, the first floor walls are anchored by faux wainscoting, beautifully grained to simulate oak. In the early 20th century, some well-meaning soul went around with a pot of tinted varnish, dabbing a loaded brush on little dents and nicks where bare white plaster showed through the grain-painted decoration. These touch-ins darkened over time, eventually becoming disfiguring.



Before conservation



After conservation

As work to clean and restore the painted decoration on the walls and ceilings above unfolded in 2022, it became clear that graining would also have to be dealt with. At first, it wasn't certain that the dark splotches would be reversible. But with careful experimentation, conservator Corrine Long settled on a mixture

of solvents that safely removed overpaint without significantly impacting the original graining below. This past fall, Corrine and Gianfranco Pocobene worked systematically through the entire space, carefully uncovering 1860 decoration hidden from the light of day for nearly a century.

With conservation complete, the restoration phase of the project could begin. A clear, stable barrier varnish was applied to protect the original finishes and separate new work from old. Subtle discoloration in areas of paint removal disappeared under gentle airbrushing with pigmented varnish. Paint losses aside, the graining began to look cohesive again.

Even overlooked elements in the Mansion merit some up-close admiration. While the stair hall graining may not be on par with the tour-de-force performance on the Dining Room ceiling, it was nonetheless beautifully executed by some anonymous decorative painter in 1860. Next time you find yourself in the Mansion, take a minute to admire it.

This spring we'll complete the restoration phase of the project with the help of decorative painter Tony Castro, one of the few people in present-day New England adept at graining. Tony will be touching in the many chips and losses, covering the distracting flashes of bare, white plaster.

Reception Room Fabric

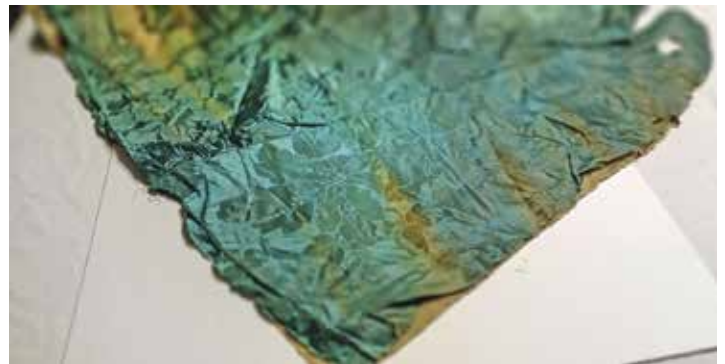


We seldom pass up an opportunity to point out just how intact Victoria Mansion's interiors are: with over 90% of the building's original contents in place and on view to the visiting public, the house represents a unique survival in America. There is one segment of the collection, however, that receives less attention, largely because it seldom sees the light of day. When Victoria Mansion became a museum in 1941, many of its 1860 window treatments, which were

comprised of rich fabrics edged and hung with elaborate silk tassels and trims, were still in place (*above*). Worn and weakened by decades of exposure to the sun, they eventually came down. Thankfully, many pieces made their way up to the third floor, where they were boxed and stored for decades. Today we have fragments of curtain panels and trims from nearly every room in the house, an invaluable archive that provides a huge leg up in our ongoing efforts to restore the house to its 1860s appearance. As helpful as historic photographs can be, they only tell a partial tale. The textiles themselves provide the ultimate level of detail, all in full color.

In 2017 Victoria Mansion was awarded a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to clean and rehouse this important collection in dedicated storage, with appropriate mountings and furniture to allow museum staff and scholars to inspect these delicate objects up close. While the fabrics and trims are in no condition to be rehung, they will serve as models for sensitive reproductions in the coming years.

One such project is on the immediate horizon. In 2018-2019, Victoria Mansion undertook a major paint conservation effort in the Reception Room, recovering the room's vivid painted finishes from beneath a film of soot. As this painstaking work was underway, museum staff began discussing recreating the room's window treatments, now glaringly absent in the newly-colorful space. Delayed by the pandemic, this project came back to life over the last year.



With the help of the Collections Committee and a small, ad hoc group of textile experts and scholars, the Mansion is scouting modern manufacturers capable of producing fabrics similar to the floral silk damasks once used in the Reception Room's curtain panels and upholstery. A close-period pattern will be selected and custom dyed to match the utterly beautiful teal blue remnants in the 3rd-floor archives. Interior decorator Gustave Herter designed each of the Mansion's rooms as a cohesive artistic statement. The reinstatement of window treatments in the Reception Room will be the final flourish in a decade-long effort to return the space to its former glory.

Project advisors include Anne Emlein, Jacqueline Field, and Candice Thornton Lee in consultation with Natalie Larson of Historic Textile Reproductions, Williamsburg, VA.

Institute of Museum and Library Services

Last September, Victoria Mansion received word that it had been awarded funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for a two-year project to organize and digitize the museum's collections records. From the 1940s through the 1970s, records relating to the Mansion's collections were sparsely kept and scattershot. As the museum professionalized in the mid-1980s, Arlene Palmer Schwind undertook the herculean task of cataloging hundreds of individual objects throughout the house, laying a foundation of detailed record keeping that was built upon as the collection grew through the years. Physical numbers were

added to objects as time allowed, often during little “numbering parties” held by the Collections Committee. Large objects, like the monumental pillars carrying bronze statues in the Stair Hall, were numbered during opportune moments when they were displaced during work on the building.

In 2020, all of the museum’s physical collections records were consolidated in the third-floor Billiard Room. In surveying the state of the records, two things became clear. The first was that efforts to physically number objects had to be seen to completion. Objects without physical numbers were difficult to connect with their paper files, and therefore difficult to study in detail. It also became clear that a digital collections database begun in 2005 using PastPerfect software had to be completed. Because collections records are organized chronologically according to the dates when objects formally enter the collection, they are only searchable object-by-object. You can’t, for example, hope to put your hands on all records for silverware without looking up and pulling dozens of individual files. The digital database solves this issue, allowing records to be explored thematically as well as individually.

IMLS funding will allow us to proceed systematically through the entire collection, ensuring that physical numbers, paper files, and digital records are all present and in agreement. By project’s end in the fall of 2024, we hope to provide database access to our docents. Even more exciting possibilities lie ahead, including making our collections accessible online to the general public. Stay tuned!

BUILDING/ARCHITECTURAL

Carriage House Doors



Sometimes we revert to the old way of doing things, not just because we take preservation seriously, but also because we know that people of the past were on to something. Last year, in May, we replaced two 1980s side doors on the Carriage House, which were in the final stages of a losing battle against the elements. The original doors lasted about 130 years. Their replacements were already giving us grief after 20.

For this sensitive project, we called on our friends Bob and Sebastian Cariddi (*above*). We decided straight away that the new doors would share many details with the originals: full mortise-and-tenon joinery with floating panels, and solid wood construction (no more plywood or Medium-Density Fibreboard, thank you very much). While the clear, old-growth white pine of the originals was not obtainable, the Cariddis were able to source stable, rot-resistant African mahogany as a substitute. Once painted, the difference would be invisible.

Beyond providing the museum with smoothly operating doors in an area with lots of visitor traffic, the project afforded an opportunity to get the visual details right. Bob Cariddi and Tim Brosnihan studied two 1970s photos of the original doors carefully, noticing where the 1980s replacements had gone a little astray. Bob’s detailed plans for the new doors carefully reinstated the proportions of the originals, shrinking the top rail slightly and moving the panel arrangement upwards a tad. The difference is subtle, but the results are pleasing. Whoever made the original doors in 1860 paid attention to the details. We were happy to follow their lead.

Front Balustrades

Two significant but currently invisible projects are gaining momentum as we enter the spring. There’s nothing secret about these undertakings -in fact, we’ll need help from the community to see them through to completion. It’s just that all the action is happening off-site and on paper for the time being.

30 miles away, in the Buxton workshops of R. Cariddi Fine Woodworking, Bob and Sebastian Cariddi are hard at work milling, turning, and fabricating a series of balustrades to replace ones that once graced the rooftops of the Mansion’s front portico, bay, and piazza. The original brownstone balustrades deteriorated and were taken down between the 1950s and the 1970s. In the early 1980s, sand-painted wooden replacements were installed on the portico and piazza, but some serious design flaws led to their

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



This cloth measuring tape, made about the turn of the 20th century, once belonged to Hannah Shine, who worked in domestic service for the Libby family and lived at the Mansion in 1910. It is among the first objects acquired by the museum with connections to individuals in the working part of the Mansion household. (*Read more about Hannah Shine on page 12.*)

Gift of Anne Parra, 2022

early failure. The new balustrades are being constructed from rot-resistant African mahogany and will be joined with stainless steel fasteners, details that will ensure a long service life. They will be sand painted before being installed beginning in 2023. Keep your eyes skyward! Once the project is complete, the front façade will be complete for the first time in about 70 years.

Another project on the horizon is the restoration of the Mansion's front bay window, a massive brownstone structure that is slowly losing its battle with the elements. In 2019, Victoria Mansion identified and purchased an enormous piece of Portland, Connecticut brownstone containing sufficient material to replace the bay's largest stone units, a huge stroke of luck in an era when this type of stone is no longer quarried. The project is a complex one, requiring thorough planning for the protection of the Reception Room's precious interiors during construction. To see this project along, we are working with Ivan Myjer of Building and Monument Conservation, Boston, one of the country's foremost experts in the preservation and restoration of brownstone structures.

Front Column Restoration



We often put a good deal of thought into developing solutions for seemingly minor problems, with the understanding that finding the “right” fix will save us effort and money down the road. Last fall preservation consultant John Leeke set out to solve a minor mystery: why were small strips of wood beginning to peel away from the columns of the Mansion's front piazza and portico? With the aid of decent documentation from the structures' 1980s construction, photographs from earlier interventions, and careful on-site inspection, the answer slowly revealed itself. The columns were built in the traditional fashion with interlocking wooden staves forming a hollow cylinder, which was then turned on a lathe to create the column's final shape. Some areas, it seems, were shaved a little too thin, leaving little islands of interlocking wood floating free. In time, as the adhesives broke down, these little tabs began lifting away.

With the problem identified, experimentation to identify a suitable fix could begin. Working alongside painter Peter de Paolo, John turned to two modern materials that have become indispensable in the preservationist's tool kit: epoxy and seal-

ants. Both materials are formulated to attach firmly while remaining flexible, accommodating the seasonal movement of wood that is an unavoidable fact of life. Once sand painted, the repairs became all but invisible. Now we wait and see whether or not the repairs will stand the test of time. If they fail, we'll go back to the drawing board and course correct. Carefully-kept records will make this possible. If they succeed, we'll plow ahead: one column down, seven to go.

Brownstone Sand

Victoria Mansion is often referred to as a brownstone structure, and so it is. But the building's visible surfaces are actually comprised of three types of material. Most of what you see, from the smooth ashlar walls to the richly carved window surrounds is, indeed, brownstone. But the rear elevations were covered in tinted mastic, a stucco-like material scored to imitate the joints in stone masonry construction. From a distance, it's tough to tell the difference, at least until the mastic begins to peel away, revealing the brick wall beneath. Another trick used to imitate stone was the application of sanded paint. Originally used on the Mansion's roofline cornices and on the rear parlor porch, this little ruse was adopted in the reconstruction of the front porch and portico in the 1980s, a time when Portland brownstone was essentially unobtainable for restoration work.

For the last three decades, Victoria Mansion has maintained an active sand painting program, one of the few places in the country where you can see this once commonplace technique in action. The sand is not mixed with paint, rather, it is blown into it, and becomes embedded in the finished surface as the paint cures. What you see when you look at a surface treated with this method is sand, not paint. As long as the sand is carefully chosen it can mimic a given type of stone very effectively.

Since 2005, we have been drawing on a supply of sand collected in the Portland, Connecticut quarry that was the original source of the Mansion's brownstone. As you would expect, the match to the Mansion's stone is near perfect. Unfortunately, our sand supply is now dwindling.

Sometimes, the search for solutions to the Mansion's pressing problems leads us on strange and interesting adventures. This winter, with the help of preservation consultant John Leeke and painter Peter de Paolo, we began experiments to make our own sand by crushing, sifting, and washing brownstone. For proof of concept, we began with a few small pieces of stone and a sledgehammer. Happily, the stone crushed readily and sifted down to the desired particle size with minimal waste. The end product, washed to remove fines and carefully dried in an oven, was applied to a couple sample panels and held up to recent work on the building. We're gratified to report that the match was excellent.

Now, with acres of peeling cornices beckoning, we just need to scale up. In a recent stroke of serendipity, a retiring stone conservator offered us a great deal on a stone grinder. He had been using it—of all things—to crush brownstone for monument restoration. So, when you pass the Mansion this summer, lift your eyes skyward. Our progress behind the scenes will soon bear visible results.

EDUCATION/SOCIAL HISTORY

New England Museum Association

As the Mansion was working on plans for reopening, we were also considering how to best present information on the Unwilling Architects-the individuals enslaved by the Morses in New Orleans. Issues around slavery and emancipation are being discussed throughout New England these days, and many sites are grappling with how best to research and convey the information to visitors. In an effort to learn from our peers, staff attended a number of lectures and discussions offered by the New England Museum Association (NEMA). While there was helpful information in these conversations, the Mansion had a unique issue: while our owner was involved in owning enslaved individuals, they were never on-site, since Ruggles and Olive Morse were in New Orleans until after the Civil War.

In spring 2022, Mansion staff were approached by NEMA about presenting a workshop at their Annual Conference, specifically on the unusual issues we were dealing with. With their assistance, we were paired with Meghan Holmes at Gibson House in Boston, Marla Miller from the Porter Phelps Huntington House in Hadley, MA, and Erika Slocumb, PhD student at UMass Amherst to present on “Telling the Story of What Didn’t Happen Here: Interpreting the History of 19th Century Enslavement at New England Sites.” This presentation in November 2022 was well-attended, and afterward the panel was asked to write an article for NEMA’s digital publication, *New England Museums Now*.

Based on the strong feedback, the panel team also approached NEMA about beginning a Community of Practice to help museums and historic sites to work together to figure out how best to interpret slavery and emancipation throughout New England. The first session was held on Zoom on January 31, 2023, and had a whopping 140 participants from around the region! Zoom meetings will be bi-monthly for the foreseeable future, and will allow sites of varying time periods, sizes, and stories to meet and discuss options and opportunities. We are excited to continue this work with the wider museum community as we move forward with our own Unwilling Architects initiative.

Docent Research Committee

The Docent Research Committee has stayed active and continues to work on a variety of projects. All of these projects are providing information that will enhance our interpretation of Victoria Mansion now and in years to come.

John Aden: 3-D model of the Tremont Hotel; Research into marble carvers who might have done Victoria Mansion mantels

Pat Allen: Victoria Mansion Artists in Italy

Julie Bartage: Plantations affiliated with Ruggles Morse and his nephews after the Civil War

Holly Doggett: Manufacturer of the Morse china service

Mary Dougherty, Paul Fields and Mike Eling: Review of the notes

of the Victoria Society

Charisse Gendron: The role of boardinghouses; possible plasterers for Victoria Mansion

Michelle Josephson, Hannah Field, Matt Barker: Victoria Mansion servants

Lisa Joyce: The Rossini Club

Angie LaChance: Louisa Libby; community involvement by J.R. Libby

Tom Lafavore: The Libbys and the Temperance Movement

Linda Levesque & Mary Spugnardi: Women in the Domestic Slave Trade; Calderwood Papers

Susan Lyons: Hotels and Department Stores and Palaces of the People; Charles Alexander & Henry Austin



Virtual Docent Research Committee meeting

Girls Room

In 2019, Victoria Mansion opened a new space to visitors, interpreted as the Housekeeper’s Office. This space, located between the back stairs and the Red Bedroom, had been staff space for many years. Based on conversations with scholars, the use of the space by the Mansion’s housekeeper seemed logical, and the room was set up for that use.

In 2022, research was done by Site Manager Michelle Josephson, Guide Hannah Field, and Docent Matt Barker into the servants who might have worked for the Morses and Libbys (*see page 12*). The information they gathered strongly indicates that there was never a housekeeper here- records show the staff consisted of two maids and a coachman most of the time.

Given the new information, staff went back and re-examined the inventory taken in 1894, the year Olive Morse sold the house to the Libby family. At that point, the room was referred to as “the Girls Room” and was shown to have a chamber set, carpet, crockery, a hair mattress and straw matting. The assigned value of the furnishings was well below that of the Red and Green Bedrooms, but above that of the space labelled The Servants Room, where the offices are today.

So, who were “the girls?” The Morses had no children, but they did take care of some of their nieces on occasion. Or was the term “girls” being used to refer to the female servants? It was a common phrase to describe maids at the time, but then why was there a different servant space above the kitchen?

While we don’t know the answer to these questions, we plan to use the space to interpret the lives of the servants who worked at Victoria Mansion. This research, called the Backstairs Lives Initiative, is helping to round out the stories of the people who lived and worked at the house through the years. We now have photographs, and objects, relating to the servants here, and look forward to displaying them during the 2023 regular season.

School Programming

As we prepared for the 2022 school visit season, Omicron was raging, so we elected to stay virtual for another year. Thanks to Brittany Cook, Michelle Josephson, Hannah Field, and Lauren Grant, we were able to teach lessons on Symbolism, Immigration, and Technology to 23 classes at 5 schools. This year, we are happy to welcome schools back into the Mansion, as well as to send educators to the classrooms. We expect to see 7 schools and 26 classes this year, mostly from greater Portland. Unfortunately, many of our regular Portland schools are unable to visit, given the continuing shortage of bus drivers. Hopefully that situation will be resolved soon, and we will see our local friends back at the Mansion!

Education Events

After a hiatus in 2020, the Education Committee gradually ramped up events in 2021, starting with our “Prohibition Tea” event in August. Docent and committee member Tom Lafavore presented his research into the prohibition movement, and how it relates to J.R. and Louisa Libby, who were the second owners of the house and strong advocates of temperance. In August 2022, we welcomed Anne B. Gass, great-granddaughter of Florence Brooks Whitehouse, well-known Maine suffragette, who spoke of



her ancestor and the battle for women’s voting rights.

In honor of the bicentennial of Maine statehood, and the Suffrage centennial (both in 2020, so therefore missed) Victoria Mansion offered an event (*above*) entitled “And Yet, They Achieved: Eight Maine Women Who Changed our World.” Volunteers portrayed women with amazing stories, from Margaret Chase Smith to Hannah Shine, and from Cornelia ‘Fly Rod’ Crosby to Lillian Nordica. The event was a wonderful way to start our regular season off with a bang.

To take advantage of the need to be outside, we attempted a series of “Stories on the Lawn” for our youngest visitors and their caregivers. Our “Stories on the Staircase” program went virtual this season, due to the inability of preschoolers to receive vaccinations for COVID. The choice was a good one - the videos received hundreds of views through our website, which was well more than could have been accommodated on the staircase even pre-COVID. We had some special guests among the docents and guides who read, including our friend and supporter, Kim Block, and of course a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus! We



COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS

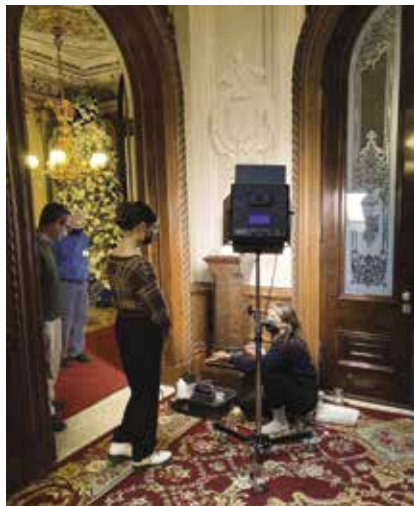
These portraits, painted by Portland, Maine artist J. G. Fletcher in 1872, depict Susan Farley Foss and Alexander Foss, grandparents of Harriet (Brazier) Libby, who married Ralph G. Libby in 1911. Harriet and Ralph moved to Vaughan St. in Portland, where they ultimately relocated many precious objects from the Mansion. Harriet was a champion for returning the Mansion’s original furnishings, a trait she passed along to her children and grandchildren. *These paintings were the gift of her grandson, Ralph G. Libby III.*

thank Islandport Press for allowing us to share their children's books online. In 2022, we shared the previous stories again, and also recorded some "grown-up" stories from Maine authors, to celebrate the belated Maine Bicentennial.

October brought back an old favorite event, "Victorian Murder & Mayhem." We thank all of the volunteers from our Mansion community and beyond who came and told macabre stories of Victorian crime, as well as Portland Ballet for sharing excerpts from their ballet, *Giselle*. We also introduced a new event, called "The Spiritualist's Toolkit," where staff spoke about spiritualism, and how people fooled the gullible into believing in spirits. We were even visited by one that evening!

Christmas is always an amazing season here at the Mansion, and as usual, we were able to partner with some of our longtime friends to offer holiday programming in both 2021 and 2022. Andrew Harris was able to come back as Charles Dickens and present "A Dickens of a Christmas," and we once again worked with Portland Ballet for our annual "Night at the Nutcracker" evenings. Thank you to both Andrew and Nell Shipman, Artistic Director for Portland Ballet, for their continued support.

Internships



As we have been gaining speed after the 2020 furloughs, we have been fortunate to have interns help with a variety of tasks. In 2021, Lauren Grant, a student at Maine College of Art + Design, settled in to help with the new book, *Images of America: Victoria Mansion*. She tirelessly searched for images and scanned them for the book, making sure the deadline for publication was met.

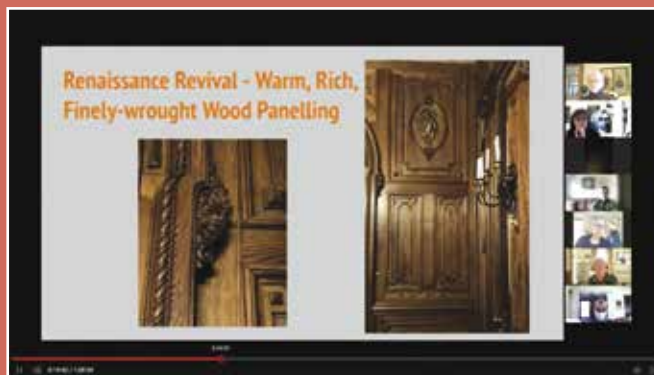
She also acted as a guide for tours, helped with the design of flyers, and sorted research materials. While she has graduated and now works full-time for the Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine, we do enjoy when she stops by to visit and lend a hand!

We also had help in January 2023 from a high school intern Sophia Gavin (*above*). While she was here for only a short time, she was able to work through digitizing an historic document to make the work more accessible. Sophia has asked to come back again in the summer of 2023, and we look forward to having her around once again!

Brown Bag Lectures

Like many museums and historic sites in New England, Victoria Mansion has a seasonal schedule: we are closed from mid-winter through the early spring. For an organization that relies on the

VIRTUAL LECTURES



While not part of the "official" Research Committee, docent Breda White shared her wealth of knowledge about architecture and interior design through a series of virtual lectures for our docent corps. Victoria Mansion is an amazing example of eclecticism, with designs ranging from Gothic to Moorish to Renaissance Revival. Breda's talks broke the styles down and explained the origins and aesthetics for Herter's design choices, and how they fit together.

interest and passion of volunteers, many of whom are seniors, the 4-month hiatus can be a time where docent retention can be a problem, if efforts aren't made to stay connected. To keep our volunteers engaged, Victoria Mansion has instituted a series of off-season programs, which have provided both social and educational opportunities to help us all through the cold, dark months of winter.

One of those programs is a series of Brown Bag Lunch lectures between January and April. Each month, a speaker, sometimes Mansion staff and sometimes from outside the organization, speaks on a topic related to the Mansion or Portland's history. The topics in the 2022 and 2023 season included: Pam Cummings on the Abyssinian Meeting House here in Portland; Alicia Harding, Mansion guide, on the businesses that made money indirectly through slavery; Development and Communications Coordinator Brittany Cook on Morse contemporary James Robb and on the Unwilling Architects Initiative; textile historian Jackie Field on the carpets and textiles at the Mansion; Site Manager Michelle Josephson on the Backstairs Lives Initiative; docent Mary Anne Wallace on 19th-Century Symbolism in cemeteries, and docents Mary Spugnardi and Linda Levesque on Women in the Domestic Slave Trade. In March 2022 we also presented a panel discussion to help new trainees to begin to feel comfortable with giving guided tours. The talk turned out to be helpful to both new and returning docents and guides, who were able to learn some "tips and tricks" from each other. We would like to thank the Maine Irish Heritage Center for once again allowing us to use their space for our in-person lectures—we couldn't do these programs without them.

The Backstairs Lives Initiative



Hannah Shine photo, courtesy of Teresa Keahon

The popularity of *Downton Abbey* has led many guests and docents to wonder about the domestic staff at Victoria Mansion. Unfortunately, neither the Morses nor the Libbys left records of who worked for them. Past research had revealed the names of six servants. A group involved with both Victoria Mansion and Maine Irish Heritage Center wondered if there might be more to learn about the people who lived and worked in the back spaces of the Mansion.

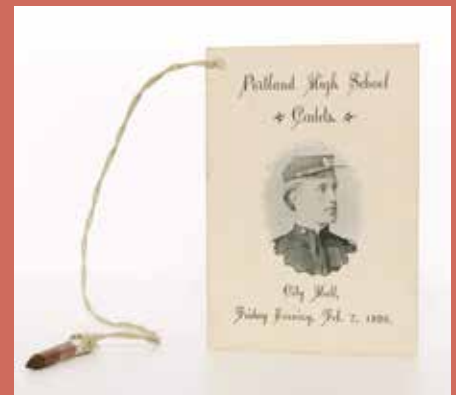
Thankfully, over the past few years, online resources have become much more available. Instead of having to be in a library, looking page by page in large, old books or through spools of microfilm, we could now access these records remotely. Last year, the historic Portland newspapers were finally also put online, increasing accessibility. We could use digital indexing in these resources to search for additional people who lived at the Mansion's address.

There are still a few obstacles, especially for the earliest years. The Morses lived in New Orleans most of the year, so there are fewer Maine records. Portland streets were also renumbered in 1869 and there were ten years before people were using the new system consistently. At least three houses were using the same address as the Mansion for many years. It's difficult to know who at that address was actually living at the Mansion. Another problem for both the Morse and Libby eras is that city directories are not complete; they only record adults in a household and frequently only the men. Lastly, our research methods could only identify people who lived and worked at the Mansion, not those who may have come in as day workers.

In spite of those limitations, we so far have been able to find fifteen people who lived and worked at the Mansion, in addition to the six who had previously been identified. We have been able to find information from public records for most of them. We have pieced together some basic biographies and even found photographs online for some of them. Most, though not all, were from Ireland. There were a pair of sisters, an aunt/niece, as well as five people who were all from the same small area outside of Tuam, Galway. One was from Sweden and two from Canada. A couple were from families in the US for several generations and we've not been able to trace the background for a handful. Our goal is to be able to tell a bit about the lives of the people who worked at the Mansion, going beyond just their names.

One very exciting result of our research is that we have found living relatives for six of the servants. They have shared personal stories and photographs of their loved ones and helped us know

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



On February 7, 1896, the Portland High School Cadets hosted a dance at City Hall, welcoming such luminaries as Portland's mayor and Maine's Governor. This dance card, with the attached pencil, descended in the family of Mary Libby Chamberlain. The interior of the card, shown here, lists the evening's dances, which included the "Portland Fancy." The handwritten initials indicate dance partners.

*Gift of Arthur and Diane Chamberlain, 2021
in memory of Mary Louise Chamberlain*

them as people, not just "the help." We are extremely grateful to the grandchildren of Hannah Shine, who worked at the Mansion in 1910. They have given us photos of Hannah (*top left*) as well as of Katie Steed, who worked with her at that time. They have entrusted us with Hannah's brownie recipe. They also donated Hannah's knitting needles, tape measure, darning egg and rolling pin. These are the first servant-related items to be accessioned into our collection. These were on display in Maine Irish Heritage Center's decorated room during the Christmas season and will be part of a new servant's display when the Mansion re-opens in May. We will also have new interpretive panels about the servants that will include a QR code linking to more information about the servants on our webpage.

The Backstairs Lives Initiative is a volunteer project researched by Mansion Guide Hannah Field, Docent Matt Barker, and Senior Site Manager Michelle Josephson.

The Unwilling Architects Initiative

On the map of New Orleans¹ (right), ca.1860-64, three free people of color appear whose names have been recently restored to the history of Victoria Mansion. David Wilson lived and worked as a barber on Calliope Street; Mary Ann Jones operated a boarding house and lived on Customhouse Street; and Oliver Warfield was working as a deckhand in the Algiers district when he was drafted into military service in April 1865. These three individuals may never have crossed paths, but they did share a common history: each of them had once been enslaved by Ruggles and Olive Morse, most likely at one of Morse's hotels.

Their stories have come into fuller light during the research process of the Mansion's Unwilling Architects Initiative, funded by a SHARP grant through the Maine Humanities Council as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. This funding gave us the opportunity to hire Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) consultant Anisa Khadraoui, a public health professional with a DEI background and a board member of the Committee to Restore the Abyssinian Meetinghouse (the oldest Black meetinghouse left standing in Maine, located just across town from the Mansion). Ms. Khadraoui helped Mansion staff craft research questions and processes early in the project, and continues to provide insight and assistance as Mansion staff members Brittany Cook and Staci Hanscom conduct research.

Launched in the fall of 2021, the initiative is named for the 27 Black and mixed-race individuals known to have been enslaved by the Morses in Louisiana between 1847-1860. Through their unpaid labor, they unwillingly contributed to the accumulated fortune that underwrote the Mansion's construction. Visitor curiosity has prompted frequent questions regarding the Morses' activities in the South – particularly their involvement in the pervasive slave economy, of which New Orleans was a business capital. Our goal, through this initiative, is to present information not just about the Morses' activities, but about the lives of the people their choices impacted.

Research began with Morse's business transactions, uncovered by past museum staff through visits to Louisiana. Fortunately for us, increased availability of primary sources online has made doing research into 19th century New Orleans from afar more feasible than in the past. However, challenges beyond the geographic still remain. Researching Black history in this period, particularly individual narratives, can be difficult. People were stripped of their dignity and humanity by white enslavers and lawmakers, Black individuals were denied access to education, and many accounts of Black communities – enslaved and free – were written through a biased, outsider's lens.

While first-person written accounts and oral histories remain more difficult to come by, many research avenues are still available. From 1830-1864, free Black adults in New Orleans were required to register with the city to prove that they had either been born in Louisiana or were gainfully employed. It cost fifty cents to register. Those who did not meet the criteria or could not pay risked expulsion from the state, fines and imprisonment, or enslavement – even if they, or their families, had never been enslaved. Within the handwritten pages of



these Registers of Free Colored Persons Entitled to Remain in the State, we were able to match a few names to those we recognized from Morse's records. Mary Ann [Jones] and David Wilson stood out in particular. The Register gave us their surnames, occupations, and states of birth. From there, we could cross-reference their information against other sources such as city directories, newspapers, and censuses, where we could corroborate their identities and learn more about them.

Once they were emancipated, both David and Mary Ann had limited career opportunities, but both established themselves in prominent occupations within the Black community. Free women of color, many of whom operated boarding houses, owned nearly 50% of properties surveyed in New Orleans through 1866.² Operating a barbershop opened men of color up to opportunities for self-education through conversation and news sharing among clientele. Even without firsthand accounts, the information that is available can be viewed alongside contextual information about the New Orleans in which these individuals lived and worked. Church records, marriage records, and Freedmen's Bureau records may yet offer up additional information that we have not yet discovered.

Every day can lead to new breakthroughs in this research, which allows us to ask more questions that can lead to a fuller, richer understanding of the lives these individuals lived. Through this initiative and other ongoing work, we also aim to place Victoria Mansion more fully within the greater context of Portland, Maine, and United States history in the 19th century. A page on the Mansion's website devoted to the Initiative will be continuously updated with new information, and a new exhibit and interpretive materials are in the works for 2023.

¹ "Plan of New Orleans." Map prepared by S.A. Mitchell, Jr. for Mitchell's New General Atlas, published 1864; map dated 1860. Public domain, retrieved via Wikimedia Commons.

² Johnson, Jessica Marie. "Fighting for Freedom: Free Women of African Descent in New Orleans and Beyond." In *Black Perspectives*: 12 April 2015. African American Intellectual History Society. Published by AAHIS online, retrieved from <https://www.aaahis.org/fighting-for-freedom-free-women-of-african-descent-in-new-orleans-and-beyond/>

INSTITUTIONAL

Financial Report 2021-2023

Victoria Mansion's fiscal year runs from April to March, a timeframe chosen to ensure that the transition between years happens during the slow season when the museum is closed to the public. Comparing operating revenues and expenses for the two most recent fiscal years (FY 21-22 and FY 22-23, *below*), we find two nearly identical bottom lines, with healthy operating surpluses. Look more closely, however, and you will notice significant differences line by line. Together, these differences tell a story of economic recovery.

In FY 21-22 Victoria Mansion's ticket revenue came in just short of \$300,000, a respectable figure that was nonetheless diminished by our delayed opening in July. The shortfall was made up by over \$150,000 in pandemic relief aid and operating grants. Together, these funds allowed us to begin rebuilding the staff which had dwindled to just two in 2020, and to lay the groundwork for reopening to the public.

In FY 22-23, our return to the museum's traditional May 1 opening date allowed us to generate nearly \$100,000 in additional admissions revenue, filling the void left by sunsetting relief programs. Rising visitation led to a pleasant boost in shop sales as well. On the expense side, the cost of salaries rose significantly as staffing returned to pre-pandemic levels. But this was a good thing: returning staff meant the organization was coming back to life. Despite the similarity in bottom lines, the years illustrated in this chart were quite different. In the first, relief aid helped keep a hamstrung organization afloat. In the second, a healthy organization stood on its own two feet.

Development Update

Over the last two years, your ongoing support has allowed us to regain our footing after a very difficult period. Our supporters have generously helped us continue our mission to conserve, maintain, and restore this one-of-a-kind property and share its history with the public. Through it all, our donors have shown a remarkable degree of loyalty for which we are incredibly grateful. Despite the significant challenges over the past two years, our membership, donors, and grant funding trends have held steady. Over the past year, donor retention increased by 14 percent and the total raised through our development efforts increased by ten percent. This has helped facilitate all the progress and achievement you've been reading about in this report. And none of it would be possible without you!

From this durable foundation, we are excited and hopeful about the opportunities that lie ahead. Over the last several months, we've made important progress that will serve as a springboard for future growth.

Staffing

Since 2021, we've taken a gradual approach to bringing back key staff positions and have been able to welcome back 32 part-time and seasonal staff. We're also excited that our development team has recently returned to full strength. Led by Executive Director Timothy Brosnihan, who was named to his new post after an extensive national search in December 2021, the team includes Ann O'Hagan, who joined as our new Development Director in July of 2022, and Brittany Cook, whose role as Development and Communications Coordinator was expanded to full time in January 2023.

| | APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022 | APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023 (Estimated Final) |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| Support and Revenue | | |
| 3010 - ADMISSIONS/TOURS | 296,312.67 | 391,617.76 |
| 3020 - CONTRIBUTIONS | 42,071.62 | 51,933.71 |
| 3030 - ENDOWMENT | 32,633.08 | 59,200.52 |
| 3040 - GRANTS | 83,815.00 | 0.00 |
| 3050 - INTEREST | 0.00 | 442.88 |
| 3060 - MEMBERSHIP | 33,038.00 | 32,162.20 |
| 3080 - PROGRAMS | 1,341.27 | 7,212.00 |
| 3090 - RENTAL FEES CARRIAGE HOUSE | 150.00 | -1,295.00 |
| 3120 - SALES | 105,973.14 | 127,371.63 |
| 3130 - SPECIAL EVENTS | 17,450.00 | 14,800.00 |
| 3140 - Released From Restricted | 574.26 | 25,000.00 |
| Total Income | 613,359.04 | 708,445.70 |
| Total Cost of Goods Sold (Museum Shop) | 55,258.27 | 64,802.97 |
| Gross Profit | \$58,100.77 | 643,642.73 |
| Expenses | | |
| 3000 - ADMIN | 124,721.45 | 155,602.43 |
| 4000 - PROGRAM | 83,692.31 | 25,514.88 |
| 5000 - DEVELOPMENT | 7,480.46 | 14,291.84 |
| 5080 - RESTORATION UNRESTRICTED | 40,413.65 | 9,000.00 |
| 6150 - SALARIES/BENEFITS | 298,251.45 | 405,809.60 |
| 6050 - Capital Purchases | 0.00 | 9,798.00 |
| Total Expenses | \$54,559.32 | 620,016.75 |
| Surplus (Deficit) | 3,541.45 | 23,625.98 |

A SIMPLE WAY TO GIVE

Scan this QR code to donate to Victoria Mansion. Your tax-deductible contribution helps to support education, conservation, and restoration initiatives. We appreciate your support!



2023–2026 Strategic Plan

Victoria Mansion's Board of Trustees recently adopted a new three-year strategic plan that prioritizes expanding the organization's visibility and reach, deepening ties with the surrounding community to amplify our educational impact, undertaking ambitious restoration and conservation projects to preserve our nationally important building and interiors, and embracing new and innovative ways to meet the challenges ahead. The success of these efforts will be dependent on a robust and vibrant development program.

Development Committee

In December 2022, after a significant hiatus, the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees was reestablished and enthusiastically set to work. The Committee will work closely to help set the strategic direction for fundraising and community relations as well as help support staff in executing our plans. One of the group's first priorities is to revitalize our Case for Giving by making it more accessible and versatile, and allowing us to be more responsive to the local community. Development activities will also focus on enhancing our efforts to build relationships with the local business community.

Membership

Victoria Mansion has a vibrant membership program that forms the backbone of all that we do. Over the past two years, we've been unable to operate as usual and have been cautious about crowd capacity and hosting large events. Fortunately, it seems the tide has turned, and we are now on the cusp of being able to reinvigorate our member activities, while incorporating lessons learned along the way. As we begin to plan for the future, this is an opportune time to recalibrate our activities and find new and innovative ways to connect with and engage donors, support our stewardship goals, and refresh the interpretive mission for a new age.

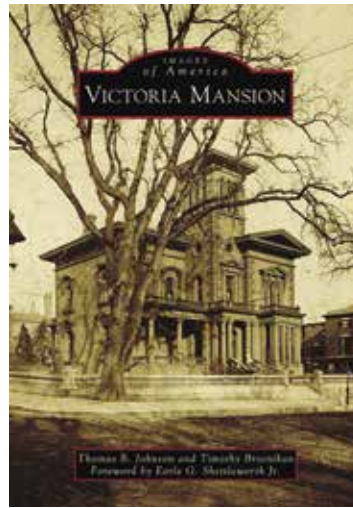
Our members are our best ambassadors, and we rely on you to successfully advance our mission. To get us off to a great start, we would like to hear from you. A membership survey will be launched in Spring 2023. We hope you'll take the time to respond so that we can see how best to make the membership program exciting for you. Your input will also provide valuable insights into ways we can help engage our communities based on new, more dynamic interpretations of the Mansion's stories.

Thank you!

We couldn't do what we do without the support provided by dedicated friends such as you. Investment from our community helps us fund the much-needed care this historic structure requires, allowing us to consult with some of New England's top experts in historic preservation and conservation, and bring our history curriculum, *A Century of Change*, to Maine classrooms at no cost to the schools.

All of us at the Mansion offer our profound thanks that you've chosen to be part of the community of volunteers, supporters, and friends whose ongoing faith in our work sustains us. We hope you take pride in knowing that your generosity fuels all that we do.

New Publication about Victoria Mansion



Images of America: Victoria Mansion, by current Executive Director Tim Brosnihan and former Executive Director Tom Johnson, was published in August 2022 by Arcadia Publishing, and quickly became the top-selling item in the Carriage House Museum Shop.

This book, featuring an introduction by Maine State Historian Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., compliments our ever-popular Victoria Mansion guidebook by Arlene Palmer

Schwind. *Images of America: Victoria Mansion* focuses on photographs and other images documenting Victoria Mansion's history, from its conceptualization as a grand summer home through its current existence as an historic house museum. Rarely seen photographs of the Morse and Libby eras grace the pages, as do images of the early years of the Victoria Society's stewardship of the house in the mid-20th century. Most photos featured in this book are being published for the first time.

In September, Tim and Tom gave a book launch talk at Maine Historical Society (the first talk given in person there since early 2020!) to a packed room, giving a few glimpses into the book's photos and stories. Intern Lauren Grant tirelessly helped to source and scan images throughout the early stages of production, while Director of Education & Public Programs Staci Hanscom provided vital fact-checking against Mansion records as captions were finalized. In addition to photographs and images from the Mansion's collection, the new book also features images from Maine Historical Society, Independent Archaeological Consulting, Greater Portland Landmarks, Harvard University, the New Haven Museum, Historic New England, and the Margaret Chase Smith Library, the last of which helped us source a photograph of the elusive Dr. William Holmes.

Images of America: Victoria Mansion is available through Arcadia Publishing, at many local Portland bookshops, and of course at the Carriage House Museum Shop (and online shop!), where you might be able to find a signed copy.

VOLUNTEERS/DOCENTS/GUIDES



MEET RUFFI THE MUSEUM CAT

Ruffi, a one-eyed cat who lives with his people next door to Victoria Mansion, started hanging out on Mansion grounds in the summer of 2020 when we were closed to the public. When he returned in the summer of 2021, he seemed delighted to have so many people around and took it upon himself to volunteer to welcome guests as they waited in the courtyard for their tours. Ruffi became “VM Greeter” (with a fancy new name tag for his collar) in 2022 and can usually be seen in the courtyard, lawn, or Carriage House on sunny days during the regular season. He’s very friendly, and we’re happy to have a feline volunteer! Follow our Facebook and Instagram pages for occasional Ruffi adventures.



VOLUNTEER AT THE MANSION!

Want to join the fun? If you are interested in history and art and enjoy interacting with people from all over the country and world, we would love to welcome you into our volunteer corps. Full training is provided. For more information please reach out to Education Director Stacia Hanscom at shanscom@victoriamansion.org.



CHRISTMAS AT VICTORIA MANSION



Previous page (clockwise from bottom): Docent Clean-up Day, 2022 ; Guide Patti Lacombe with author and activist Anne B. Gass; Nik Josephson and Bob Parker decorate the Library, 2022; Docent Committee members Susan Lyons, Heather Shannon, & Mary Doughty decorate the courtyard for Christmas; Trustee Carlene Magno with The Nutcracker King; This page (clockwise from top left): Andrew Harris as Charles Dickens; Tom Lafavore showing visitors the Dining Room ceiling; the Sitting Room, 2022; the Parlor, 2022.



A musical sensation in her native Rwanda, Clarisse Karasira now lives, makes music, and performs in Portland, Maine. Her music and accompanying videos are vibrant and heartfelt, and she has recorded in languages including Kinyarwanda and English.

In May 2022, Karasira filmed part of the music video for her song “Kaze Neza” in Victoria Mansion. “Kaze Neza” is a song dedicated to Karasira’s first child, who was born in summer 2022 after the video premiered. As of March 2023, the video has already reached more than 696,000 views on her YouTube channel! Watch the full video at youtube.com/@clarissekarasira5749.

We were delighted to welcome Clarisse Karasira, Sylvain de Joie, and Karasira’s production crew to the Mansion, and congratulate her and her husband on welcoming their new baby!

COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS



This continental European porcelain compote, roughly contemporary with the house’s 1860 decoration, came as part of the Greenberg Collection donation in 2023. It is similar in form to the central piece from the missing Reception Room mantle garniture (matched set of decorative objects) visible in a photo from the Libby era (*below*). Its central medallion with classical bust relates directly to similar motifs throughout the house.

*Gift of Barbara Harrison, 2023
in memory of Sylvia and Morris Greenberg*



THANK YOU TO

Our Supporters

Cumulative Giving April 2021 – March 2023

KEY

† Deceased M Morse Associate

\$10,001 and above

Allagash Brewing Company
Cascade Foundation
Davis Family Foundation
North Texas Community Foundation
Estate of Christopher P. Monkhouse †
Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust
Robert J. Trulaske, Jr. Family Foundation

\$5,001-\$10,000

Jonathan Carr M
Elsie & William Viles Foundation
Maine Humanities Council

\$1,001-\$5,000

Nancy Armitage M
Elizabeth Astor M
Robert and Linda Ayotte M
Sandra Bahre
Bangor Savings Bank
Julie Bartage
Stephen Barton M
Suzanne & Joe Bruno
Cathy Bunton M
Arthur & Diane Chamberlain M
Sheila Clark-Edmands & Peter Edmands
Estate of Robert C. Crane †
Arlene DiMillo
Embrace Home Loans
Marc Engelsman
John E. Gibson
James & Maureen Gorman M
John Hatcher & Dan Kennedy M
Thomas L. Hinkle & Gary Duford M
Candice Lee M
Cynthia and Robert Macdonald M
Carol & Rick Malone M
Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust
Marian H. Morgan M
Normand & Eleanor Nicholson
Sue Nutty M
Drew & Alexa Oestreicher M
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce C. Perkins
Kathleen Phillips & Scott Lombard M
Phineas W. Sprague Memorial Foundation
Gianfranco Pocobene

Tim & Kathie Propp M
Lynn Reese M
John S. Rozos
Jane Sawyer M
Spinnaker Trust
Sue Sturtevant M
Valley Charitable Trust
Robin Webber M

\$501-\$1,000

Anonymous
Anonymous Donor Advised Fund at the
Chicago Community Foundation
Suzy Barbee
Lauri Bolton & Jennifer Bricker-Bolton
Tim Brosnihan and Sarah Maciejewski M
Kelly & Greg Caiazzo M
Coffee By Design
Mary C. Doughty
John F. Edwards
Margaret Fenderson
Elsa Geskus
Mark & Joan Greenquist
H. H. Sawyer Realty Co.
Kurt E. Klebe M
Harry W. Konkel
William Lawrence
Ralph G. Libby III
Susan Lyons
Carlene D. Magno
Brian Maxine
Meghan Miers
Sarah Newick M
OceanView at Falmouth
Norma Phelps
Sandra & Robert Riley
Randal Rucker & Jim Becker
Patricia Sangillo M
Heather Shannon & Stewart Field
Monte and Anne Wallace
Katharine J. Watson M
Breda & David White

\$251-\$500

Abacus
Janice Adler

Tawny Alvarez
Karin & Richard Anderson
Anonymous gift in memory of Christopher
Monkhouse
Adina Bercowicz
Mary Alice Binder
Linda Boentgen & Michael Liff
Susan and Josh Burns
Mark Curtis
Susan Danly & James F. O’Gorman
Gail Dodge
Holly Doggett & Daryl “Cheese” Turicek
Linda Eastman
Rosie Fink & Gerry Goldammer
Alexandra Garbeck
Michael & Malisa Gatje
Carlene Gavin
E. Kent Gordon
Ward & Linda Graffam
William E. Hall
Ms. Sarah Hansen
Paul Lafavore MD
Linda Levesque
Linda & Steve Lindsay
Robert & Margaret Macdonald
William A. Macleod
Judy & Phil McCormick
Pauline C. Metcalf
Moe’s BBQ
Jacqueline Moss
Stephanie Nichols
Jean K. Nishiyama M
Sally & Ted Oldham
Harold & Peggy Osher
Katrina Petersen
Arthur & Deborah Pierce
Warren’s Office Supplies
Anne & David Ryan
Judith C. Scott
Bill & Julie Simpson
Jeremiah Spaulding
Laura & Seth Sprague
Mary Louise Sprague
Diana C. Stanzione
Caroline Stevens
Mr. Michael Taylor
Neil & Butch Wallace

Up to \$250

Heather Abel
John Alden and Beth Gilford
Pat Allen
Delia Anavi
Reverend Dennis Andersen
Anonymous
Karen A. Bain
Deborah Ballard
Lew & Carol Barnes
Joel & Kim Bassett

Michael Beck
 Roger Bennatti
 Yvonne Benney Basque
 Joyce Berlucchi
 Jim & Denise Blanchard
 Alexis Bohlander
 Diane Brackett
 Jane G. Briggs
 Kathleen Brock
 David & Rebekah Bucci
 Diane J. Bullock
 John & Charlotte Calhoun
 Hannah Calkin
 Peter J. Callnan & John J. Hennessy
 Heather Cameron
 Donald & Patricia Carter
 Donna Cassidy
 Patti Chase
 Petra Chuenarrom
 Carolyn & Christopher Colpitts
 Karen and Michael Cook
 Ernest & Helen Copley
 John B. Corbett
 Marian Cote
 Robert T. Crane
 Mary V. Cullinan
 Laurie & Peter de Paolo
 Linda Docherty
 Paul and Frances Doucette
 Jeffrey & Rosemary Doyle
 Elaine B. Duffus
 Eliza Eastman
 Dolly Ann Eaton
 Amanda Edwards
 Donald Farwell
 Laurie Fear
 Robert & Wendy Ferns
 Jacqueline Field & James Roberts
 Mimi Findlay
 Dennis Fiori & Margaret Burke
 Daniel & Carol Fitch
 Paula & Ken Forsythe
 Christina Foster
 Martin & Mary Gavin
 Bernard Givertz MD & Phyllis G. Givertz
 Jerry & Marcia Gordon
 Robert & Marguerite Gorman
 Brian & Linda Hamill
 Jim Hansen
 Scott Hanson
 Doris Harris
 Barbara Harrison, in memory of Sylvia
 Greenberg
 Joan M. Hatch
 Caleb & Rebecca Hemphill
 Nicholas Herold
 Alison D. Hildreth
 Allyson Hitte
 Mary & Robert Hoffman

Elizabeth Hope
 Eric Hull
 Cheryl Hunt
 Louis Kaucic
 Elizabeth Kean
 Frederic & Molly Kellogg
 Sally Anne Kellogg
 Leon Kirby
 Robert & Caroline Knott
 Andrea Krasker Gavin
 Aimee, Chris, & Henry Labbe
 Nathaniel Larrabee
 Beth and Robert Lavoie
 Learningworks
 Kerrie Leclair
 Eva P. Lee
 Scot Loiselle, Sr.
 Steve Long
 Anne & Stephen Macdonald
 Kathryn MacLeod
 Miriam Malkasian
 Ryan Maloney
 John & Nancy Marr
 Rachel McBeth
 Sheila Mcgarr
 Nina McKee
 Barbara A. McManus
 Florence R. Meyer
 Nancy & Peter Mills
 Zareen Taj Mirza
 Janis M. Molleur
 Carmen Monroy Firoozfar
 Deborah Moulton & Charles Baird
 Nancy Noble
 Amy Nolan Osborn & Jim Osborn
 Claudia and Harold Pachios
 Robert Parker
 Gail Peabody
 Noel & Cynthia Pelliccia
 Marie Pereto-Hedin
 Larry Perkins
 Rebecca Peters-Campbell
 D. & L. Pettey
 Lois Pike
 Pamela & Peter Plumb
 PortTIX
 Jeffrey and Andrée Pride
 Peg & Bill Puza
 Lorraine Ramsay
 Vesta Vaughan Rand
 Daniel & Nancy Ravin
 Michelle Regan
 Frank & Sharon Reilly
 Lara Renner
 Jamie Kingman Rice
 Chris Romero
 Arnold & Tamara Rosario
 James & Linda Sargent
 David Schmerler



Morse Associates Outing, September 2022

Sheila Schwartzman
 Shelley Serber
 Earle G. Shettleworth Jr.
 Misty Simoneau
 Patricia Snyder
 Philip Spalding & Lynn Coffin
 Kellie Steilow
 Doris & Paul Stevens
 Holmes & Didi Stockly
 Vicki Sullivan
 Greg & Jenny Sundik
 Sue Tel
 Sarah Terriciano
 Caroline J. Teschke
 Dan K. Thompson
 Andrea Tomasso
 Sarah Tucker
 Lea Tunney Foley
 John Uzee
 Patricia & Lyle Voss
 Sima Walker
 Mary Ann & Brian Wallace
 Lauren Webster
 Sheila Wellehan
 John & Eunice Wilcox
 Blake & Gibson Wilkes
 William Willauer
 Avery Windham
 Bruce Wood
 Ian & Maryann Wood
 Katherine Worthing & Sam Heck
 Alessa & Stephen Wylie
 Amy Yasko

In-Kind Supporters

Thomas B. Johnson
 Linda Levesque & Mary Spugnardi
 R. Cariddi Fine Woodwork
 Pejepsot History Center
 Portland Public Library
 The Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation

Partners

Abyssinian Meetinghouse
Allagash Brewing Company
Kim Block
Sam Cook
Gail Diamon
Friends of the Kitzschmar Organ
Anne B. Gass
Goldenwood Ensemble
Greater Portland Landmarks
Andrew Harris
Islandport Press
Clarisse Karasira
Anisa Khadraoui
Maine Historical Society
Maine Irish Heritage Center
Midcoast High Winds Flute Choir
Nellie's Teas
New England Museum Association
Osher Map Library
Pejepscot History Center
Portland Ballet
Portland Stage
travelMAINE
Visit Portland

Christmas at Victoria Mansion 2021 Designers

Blue Elephant Events & Catering
(Reuben Bell and Fausto Pifferer)
Clipper Merchant Tea House
(Melinda Thomas, Natasha Titus, and Christopher Grant)
Dan Gifford & Dr. Larry Plant
Emerald City
(Danny R. Hatt, Don Chouinard, Mercedes Hatt-O'Toole)
Harmon's Floral Company
(Dan Kennedy and Jennifer Miller)
K.D. Cole and D.L. Cole & Associates
(Karen and David Cole)
Laurie Andrews Design
(Laurie Andrews and Brianna Silva)
Kristin Redpath
Saco Festival of Trees Design Committee
Victoria Mansion Docent Committee

In 2021, our holiday season of tours returned after its 2020 hiatus with great anticipation from guests, designers, staff, and volunteers alike. The Mansion itself served as the "theme," open for designers to interpret their spaces in whatever ways spoke to them.



Kristine Perkins



Bob Crane & son with Director Tim Brosnihan



Charlotte Brown

Christmas at Victoria Mansion A Maine Christmas 2022 Designers

Blue Elephant Events & Catering
(Reuben Bell and Fausto Pifferer)
Dan Gifford
Emerald City
(Danny R. Hatt, Don Chouinard, Mercedes Hatt-O'Toole)
Harmon's Floral Company
(Dan Kennedy and Jennifer Miller)
Maine Irish Heritage Center
(Sue Flaherty, Hannah Field, Michelle Josephson, Ann O'Hagan, and Mary Burke)

Bob Parker
Kristin Redpath
Saco Festival of Trees Design Committee
(Theresa Ruel)
Sarah Coughlin Fine Art
(Sarah Coughlin, Kay Murchie, and Kerry Smith)
Victoria Mansion Docent Committee

The belated Maine state bicentennial (2020) informed the 2022 holiday season theme, for which designers drew inspiration from the state's history and landscape. An exhibition in the Library highlighted 200 years of Maine literature, showcasing rare original books from the Mansion's collection as well as donations and loans from our partners.

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 us at information@victoriamansion.org or (207) 772-4841, so that we can correct our records.



VM

In Memoriam

Charlotte Brown

Soon after moving to Falmouth, Maine in the 1980s, Charlotte Brown (*see photo, previous page*) discovered Victoria Mansion. In her own words: "On my first visit to the Mansion, I was so surprised, because I could see all of our history seemed to have been gathered into one magnificent interior." Having earned an MFA in art history and worked at Harvard's Center for Renaissance Studies at Villa I Tatti in Florence, Italy, Charlotte was uniquely equipped to decipher the iconography found in the Mansion's painted decorations, an eclectic amalgam of European historical styles which flowed from the imaginations of Giuseppe Guidicini and a small group of Italian painters in 1860. Charlotte's research remains foundational to our interpretation of these works to this day. In addition to her critical contributions as an art historian, Charlotte provided sage advice as a member of the Board and the Collections and Restoration Committees. She was also a generous benefactor, underwriting the preservation of the works of art she so treasured.

Bob Crane

Bob Crane was so involved for so many years at Victoria Mansion that he seemed almost like an institution unto himself. He volunteered for decades as a docent, almost always in tandem with his wife Betty. He served on the Board of Trustees and on the Finance and Restoration Committees, the latter into his late 90s. Prevented from visiting during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, he came for a special visit in 2021 with his son to admire the house he had done so much to preserve and care for throughout his long life (*see photo, previous page*). He passed away at age 100 in August of 2021.

Christopher Monkhouse

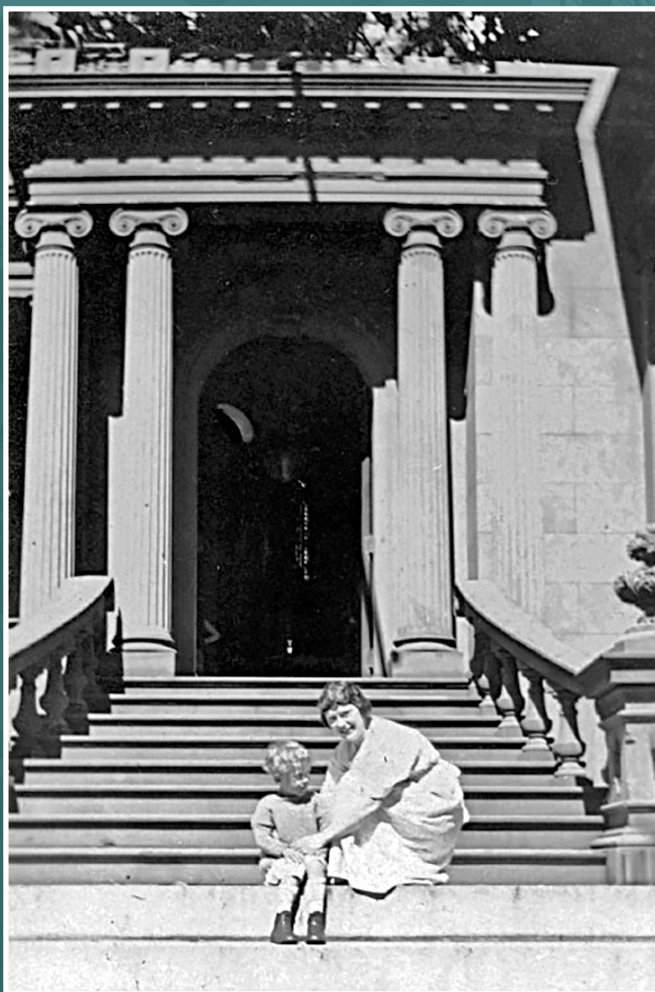
Raised here in Portland, Christopher Monkhouse developed an interest in art and antiques early in life, and soon connected with Victoria Mansion, giving guided tours of the house in his early teens. His passion for decorative arts led him naturally to a career in museums. He served as a curator in prestigious institutions across the country, most recently at the Art Institute of Chicago, where he closed out his career as chair of the Department of European Decorative Arts from 2007 until his retirement in 2017. For many years he served on Victoria Mansion's Professional Advisory Committee, a group of museum professionals convened semi-annually to offer an outside perspective and guidance to the Mansion's Board and staff. As part of his estate planning, Christopher provided a generous bequest to the Mansion to establish a collections acquisition fund.

Kristine Perkins

Kristine Perkins (*see photo, previous page*) came into the Mansion fold nearly two decades ago, joining as a member and attending events with her partner Cathy Bunton before training to offer guided tours in 2015. She was passionately interested in the Mansion and its history, a fact which showed through in the enthusiasm and dedication she brought to her role as a docent. In 2021 she joined the Victoria Mansion Board of Trustees and the Collections Committee.

Peter Sheldon

Peter Sheldon was a long-time friend and supporter of Victoria Mansion, and served as a member of the Mansion's Restoration Committee in its earliest years. A true philanthropist with a broad range of charitable interests, he recognized the national significance of the Mansion's architecture and interiors and helped underwrite several significant restoration initiatives over the years.



Domestic Servant Sabina Grady with Libby grandchild, c. 1920

VICTORIA MANSION
— Historic House Museum —
1858

Open May - October
& for the Holiday Season
www.victoriamansion.org • 207-772-4841

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