

Wreaths and Trees Attracts 1,100+ Visitors



We ended the season this year with our biennial Celebration of Wreaths and Trees, Nov. 16-18. More than 100 displays from 80 different businesses and organizations graced the house and property. It was especially nice to greet a record number of children to the event. Many people commented that they had come before, and had waited anxiously for our next Celebration. It is nice to know that we are gaining a reputation for a beautiful presentation and that people look forward to attending. We would like to thank our in-kind donors Lindt Chocolate, Northeast Shade Tree, Beth Dupell, the O'Brien Family, and Bill Taylor Woodworking, and all of the wonderful businesses and organizations that contributed wreaths, trees, or displays, particularly those who allowed us to sell their wreaths for the benefit of the museum. Thank you to our sponsors: Rolling Green Nursery, Aland Realty, Hampton Inn and Suites, Sheraton Harborside Hotel, Marriott Residence Inn and Harbor Events, Piscataqua



Savings Bank, Cambridge Trust, York Insurance, Write On Mission, Hunkins Realty, and Accent on Kitchens. All proceeds from the event support our educational programs.

Educators' Trainings

In a museum, our business is education. We seek to provide the best information to our visitors and to make their experience a memorable one by providing our staff with ongoing training opportunities.

In late May we partnered with the Black Heritage Trail of NH for a joint session on interpreting African-



American History. Elon Cook of the Center for Reconciliation in Providence, Rhode Island, conducted the day-long training. Cook gave informative presentations, led us in exercises, and shared her work in creating an exhibition on the African American experience for Brown University. She was delighted to discover our 18th century prints depicting the pernicious influence of the slave trade on Africa.

We added several lectures on 18th and 19th century furniture, to our usual guide training. Barbara Ward spoke on 18th and 19th century furniture and Gerry Ward, Sr. Curator emeritus in the Art of the Americas at the

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, presented a lecture on architecture and decorative arts.

On August 1 and 2, we held our second workshop for teachers and museum educators on “Reaching for Truth: Exploring the Issue of Slavery in the Era of the American Revolution.” Twenty participants toured the house and the Black Heritage Trail, heard presentations by Keith Mascoll and Joel Christian Gill, and took part in an afternoon of exercises for facilitating discussions of race led by JerriAnne Boggis of the Black Heritage Trail of New Hampshire.



“Exploring the Issue of Slavery” Program Continues

Two groups of students from Coe-Brown Northwood Academy took advantage of the program in 2018 under our Institute of Museum and Library Services grant. Although that grant comes to an end this month, several teachers from Oyster River Middle School who participated in the 2018 Teacher-Educator Workshop are enthusiastic about having their fifth-grade students experience the program. This presents an exciting opportunity and a new challenge!

Our other challenge is to raise funds to continue the program and make it more broadly available. As one of our last activities under the grant, we have produced a short video that will soon be available on our website and on our own YouTube channel. You also can find the link on our Facebook page. Please share it with your friends!



A Rainy Children’s Day

Pro-Portsmouth’s Children’s Day is a rain or shine event. The first Sunday in May can be glorious or dismal. This year, it was a dark, rainy day! Nonetheless, 500 brave souls took part in our pirate-themed activities and took the opportunity to see the first floor of the house. Many of the young visitors particularly enjoyed the addition of mermaids into the mix!



Masonry Repairs



In 2016, Master Mason John Wastrom (below) prepared a survey of all of our masonry issues, and we are slowly putting together the funds needed to address some of our biggest problems. Last

March, Wastrom and his crew restored the ashbin at the base of the southeast chimney stack, directly below the Dining Room, and the oven opening in the basement Summer Kitchen. The results are amazing. Wastrom’s next project with us will be to repoint the southeast chimney stack above the roofline.



Parlor Project Updates



In December of 2017, we were startled to discover fragments of 18th century wallpaper under a partition in the Parlor's west closet! Richard Nylander has reached out to wallpaper scholars around the world, but we have yet to find any additional specimens of this paper. We are looking for a full repeat to enable us to reproduce it for the Parlor. Please share this photo with others. The grey and white sections are flat, the red sections are flopped.

Other progress has been steady.

The woodwork and walls are now repaired and painted, and the floor soon will be taken back to its original unfinished state (with sections preserved with their historic layers of paint). The Chinese Chippendale furniture has been conserved, and we have acquired a beautiful reproduction Portsmouth tea table by master furniture maker Allan Breed to represent the "rail'd tea table" listed in William Whipple's estate inventory.

We are fortunate to have the expertise of Jane Nylander and Natalie Larson of Historic Textile Reproductions, in finalizing the design for the window treatments. The fabric is being hand woven by Kate Smith of Eaton Hill Textiles, and Natalie Larson will sew the curtains. Both are making generous in-kind donations to the project. An 18th century brass pin discovered in the attic is being reproduced to secure the cords for the window hangings.



We are looking for 18th century glassware and a silver tea urn for the Parlor furnishings as well. Please contact us if you have objects in your collection that you might be interested in donating to the house.

The June Garden Party yielded nearly \$8,000 for the project thanks to the efforts of Parlor Committee

members Jennifer Evans, Sherry Cullimore, Meredith Harding, and Mary Waples! Please help us meet our fundraising goals and celebrate the completion of the Parlor restoration next Fall.



Milestones

This year marked two milestones for our staff. We have often been impressed by the loyalty and enthusiasm of our staff for the Moffatt-Ladd House, but it was still a surprise to many members when, at the annual meeting, the Society recognized Haven Milton's 30th year as our gardener, and on September 9, staff, members, friends, and family surprised Barbara with a celebration of her 20 years as our director/curator. Thanks to everyone for their wonderful recognition of these milestones!



North End Development

The city of Portsmouth is experiencing rapid growth. This is having a profound impact on the North End where the Moffatt-Ladd House is located. The City of Portsmouth created form-based zoning districts in 2015, in an effort to preserve what remains of the historic character of our neighborhood. Nonetheless, one of our abutters has obtained variances to develop his property in a way that threatens the privacy of our garden and the archaeologically significant area behind the home of Prince and Dinah Whipple, the site of the city's first African Ladies Charitable School. The Society is responding and is committed to obtaining the best possible resolution to these issues.

New *Mansion to Museum & Calendar* Now Available



The revised and enlarged edition of *The Moffatt-Ladd House and Garden: From Mansion to Museum* is now available. With 44 more pages, and 66 new photographs, including many color photographs of the garden, it is a real bargain at \$12 for

members of NSCDA-NH and the Friends! Two new chapters by Barbara Ward cover the architectural evolution of the house, and the history of the garden. The calendar brings together professional and staff photographs of the house and garden and is available for \$10. Order both, and save on shipping -- they make great gifts! To order, call the office at (603) 430-7968 or email us at moffattladd@gmail.com.

Ongoing Programs

We were pleased to again welcome two groups of Girl Scouts for our overnight programs in May. Because the Parlor was cleared of furniture in April and May, we were able to give the girls the experience of actually performing their skits on the women of the Moffatt-Ladd House in the Parlor.



We hosted another window restoration workshop with the NH Preservation Alliance and Jade Mortimer in May. In June we were again the site for the annual fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity. This was our 10th year as a screening venue for the NH Film Festival, and as a performance venue for the Maritime Folk Festival. On August 10, we joined with other members of the Portsmouth Historic Sites Associates to present the annual Twilight Tour.



Maintenance Projects

This year included both scheduled maintenance and the usual surprises! After a storm with high winds, we lost a section of the fence that separates the front lawn from the driveway. Thankfully, we lost only this fence!

This year the grass steps and spiral rose trellis were both rebuilt, and three sides of the Warehouse received a new coat of paint. Serve with Liberty volunteers did an incredible amount of work for us in the garden, and put together more shelving units for the 3rd floor storerooms. This winter, improvements to the bathrooms and to the breezeway will make these areas more attractive and useful for visitors, staff, and volunteers.

New Acquisitions

We received several wonderful objects for the collection this year, including a beautiful ca. 1768 sampler worked by Ladd family ancestor Tabitha Skinner from the Wickeraads. Two descendents of Mary Tufton Haven Ladd Blake gave us objects that had been owned by their great-grandmother.



Sylvia van Sinderen gave us a set of silver forks, and Ariel Dickerman donated a silver butter dish and gold thimble. These are nice additions to the collection



because Mary Blake was married in the house, and after she was widowed lived here for several years with her children and her father Alexander Hamilton Ladd.

Text and design by Barbara M. Ward
Photos by Jennifer Belmont-Earl, Marsha Gmyrek,
Stephanie Hewson, Ralph Morang, and Barbara Ward.