

Tate House Gazette

News from the Tate House Museum

Connecting people to Maine's colonial roots and helping them to discover, imagine, and value the relevance of this history to our lives.

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 1

www.tatehouse.org

MARCH 2016

Welcome To A New Year At The Tate House 2015 In a Nutshell

Drainage Improvements Completed; Site Work Continues



Cooperation was a key to success! Archaeologist Peter Morrison (left) tests along the walk while Mike Gravel continues grading work. The piles of sand and crushed rock replaced clay around the house to improve drainage.

In September 2015 Tate House Museum began drainage work as part of its \$122,550 capital improvement project. Gnome Landscapes implemented drainage improvements per Mohr & Seredin Landscape Architects' site plan. Gnome's efficient three-man crew completed the work in just less than four weeks. Three new catch basins for downspouts on the front and west sides of house were tied into a rehabilitated and expanded underground drain with its outfall at the lower end of the property. The entire site was graded and a clay lens installed at the foundation to provide positive drainage away from the building. Upon completion the entire lawn was reseeded. A new ADA-compliant gravel walkway from Westbrook Street to the rear entrance of the house was installed as was the addition of granite curbing. We are most grateful to Todd Marco, Gnome president, and Mike Gravel, manager, who paid attention to detail, respected our historic site, and were flexible in their management of this intensive work.

Crane & Morrison Historic Archaeologists, in consultation with Leith Smith of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, excavated two

additional test units; one on the west side of the foundation and the other at the drainage outfall.

Barbara Luke and members of the garden committee not only moved three raised beds and all the plantings affected by this major work but also helped water the newly seeded lawn front and back.

Sutherland Conservation & Consulting completed extensive historical research during this construction period and presented their recommendations for new front steps and a wooden walkway. This allowed a gravel substrate for the new wooden boardwalk to be prepared while the drainage project was under way. Approvals by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the City of



Portland's Historic Preservation Office are needed before these important features can be constructed. Our agreement with the National Park Service through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission requires this part of the project must be completed by August 31, 2016.

Leith Smith (left), the State's Historic Archaeologist, reviews the foundation test unit with archaeologists Pamela Crane and Peter Morrison, and Gnome's Mike Gravel at rear. We took advantage of the ground was being disturbed to check for 18th-century features.

Thanks are extended to the Davis Family Foundation, the National Park Service, the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, and the P.W. Sprague Memorial Foundation for their generous grant support. Funds from the Morton-Kelly Charitable Trust and the Margaret E. Burnham Charitable Trust are dedicated to a new fuel-efficient furnace and the restoration of the crossed-sapling fence. Funds are still being sought to bury the power lines in underground conduit prepared during grading work. The next phase of work will address window conservation.

All in all this is an exciting and important time in the preservation of this historical treasure, the Tate House.

Laura F. Sprague - Consulting Curator

Happenings in the Tate House Museum Gift Shop

2015 was a great year for the Tate House Gift Shop. We had a lot of new books and gifts to offer our guests and hope that maybe you found something that interested you.

We began carrying American Heritage Chocolate thanks to a recommendation of Laura Sprague. This product is made by a distinct division of the Mars Corporation and it bases its recipe on one found in colonial times. That recipe uses a sprinkling of spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, orange, and red pepper. I am carrying Chocolate Drink and Chocolate Bites and have ordered more for those of you who need a chocolate fix.

We hope to have another "Chocolate Tasting" this winter so that you can savor the richness of this product.

At our annual fundraiser Colin Woodard gave an entertaining and informative talk. We had Colin sign copies of his 2 books, *American Nation* and *The Lobster Coast* which are available in the gift shop.

This year we carried several jams from the Northwood Girl. Our Wild Woman Jam was a big favorite as was her Blueberry Jam. She makes a wide variety of products so we will be adding new items to our inventory this year.

This season was so successful that the shelves of the shop are a little bare. In the next couple of months I will be shopping so if there is anything that you think would be perfect for our shop please email me at chefjoan@earthlink.net.

Joan Hatch - Gift Shop Manager



Tate House Sew Historical Society Volunteers at Strawberry Banke's Christmas Stroll

Just in case you think that Tate House Museum docents go into hibernation for the winter, you may be amazed to find out this just isn't true. This past year, thanks to Beth and Fred Maitland, a new group of volunteers formed the Tate House Sew Historical Society. These women were busy making authentic colonial clothes in preparation for the Christmas Stroll at Strawberry Banke in Portsmouth, NH.

Throughout the late summer and fall they worked on caps, petticoats, jackets and capes under Beth's direction. They also had the help of Linda Carmichael and Ginny Bishop in making sure that these clothes were authentic to the time period of the Tate House which is mid-18th century.

On December 12th the society members traveled down to Portsmouth, dressed to the hilt, to volunteer at the Mason's Hall and the Pitt Tavern which are both part of Strawberry Banke. The ladies and Fred Maitland "hung out" at the Mason's Hall directing visitors and demonstrating colonial crafts such as corn husk dolls, knitting and sewing. They had the opportunity to talk about the Tate House and pass out information to visitors.



Those volunteers who went to Portsmouth were Beth and Fred Maitland, Michelle Josephson, Ginny Bishop, Linda Carmichael, Kitty Penner, Diane Hoppe, Peg Puza and Joan Hatch. Our group was joined by volunteers from other groups as shown in the accompanying picture.

The Tate House Sew Historical Society meets on Thursday afternoons at the Means House and all are welcome to join. For any questions contact the Tate House Office.

Joan Hatch - Docent



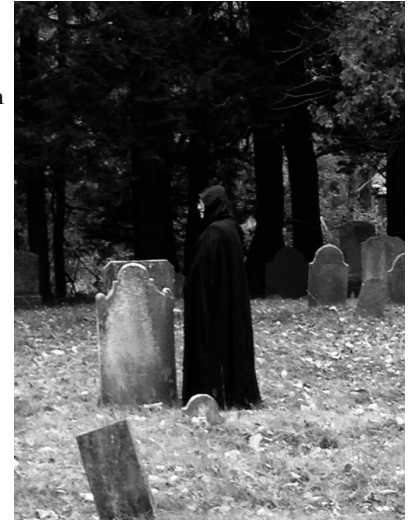
Spirits of the Stroudwater Cemetery Tour 2015



Once again for two consecutive Saturdays in October volunteers and staff from the Tate House Museum hosted the Spirits of Stroudwater Cemetery Tour. This year was different from previous years in that the Tate House was open for tours and a combination ticket was offered to participants. The attendance this year was excellent and many of our guests took advantage of the combination ticket offering. Guests were escorted through the historic Stroudwater Cemetery where they encountered spirits of prominent village residents from the 18th century. The tour guides provided

the guests with a brief history of the area and the spirits with a synopsis of their lives. Concurrently docents provided tours of the Tate House and told of its fascinating history.

The weather on both days cooperated and lent a beautiful fall setting to the occasion. The tours began in the front yard of the Means' house where guest could browse through the gift shop and from tables on the front lawn, an even larger than last year, selection of delicious treats were available for purchase with the proceeds from all sales benefiting the museum.



Thanks to the efforts of the Tate House Museum staff and our hard working volunteers the event was a huge success. Preparations are already underway to make the 2016 Spirits of Stroudwater even better.

John Farmer - Docent

Stroudwater Village Association News



SVA is working to protect the character of Stroudwater Village, which of course also protects the historic district and the Tate House too. For your interest, here is the mission of the Stroudwater Village Association:

The Stroudwater Village Association is dedicated to promoting and enhancing the historic and village nature of the Stroudwater neighborhood by celebrating its historic buildings and natural treasures and maintaining its residential nature, where children play and people walk safely in its streets.

Stroudwater Village Association members had a busy November and December attending neighborhood and city meetings having to do with the sale of the Elks Club property on Congress Street. On January 20, 2016 the City Council voted to approve the zoning change required to allow the sale of the property to the new owner. This re-zoning changes the seven acre parcel from Residential to an Office Park zone.

Residents opposed to the zoning change feared "commercial creep", and site the Portland Comprehensive Plan's call for more residential rather than office space. Those who felt comfortable with the change say the plans would have a minimum impact on the neighborhood and the chances of residential building in that spot are unlikely.

In additional action, the River's Edge neighborhood organization, a sub-set of SVA, successfully defeated Verizon Wireless's bid to re-zone Congress Street property immediately adjacent to River's Edge homes for a large, potentially noisy sub-station. The SVA Annual Pancake Breakfast was held again this year on February 13th. Mayor Ethan Strimling was able to attend, as well as other dignitaries from City Hall to respond to questions from the neighbors.

Anita B. Jones - SVA Boad Member

Sophia Means Sampler Adds to Knowledge of Means Family



The Tate House Museum Collections Committee is pleased to announce the acquisition of an 1808 sampler created by Sophia Means, daughter of Captain James Means. The grandson of Scotts-Irish immigrants, James Means was born to John and Eleanor in 1753 in Old Orchard and is most commonly remembered for his military career in which he reportedly worked under General Washington. One of Sophia's daughters, Sophiette, was named after Means' rumored association with Lafayette and the hero's visit to his home. Means constructed his home on property formerly belonging to Colonel Westbrook in 1797, an act which, according to Hawes family tradition, was met with protest from the Tate family because of the obstruction of their view, and by the Quinby family because of plans to use the plot for a village green. Means house is a hipped-roof structure with four chimneys placed on exterior walls, very similar to the building depicted in Sophia's sampler. The interior is fashionably decorated with especially fine woodcarving in the parlor, large rooms with high ceilings and, according to neighborhood rumors, a fine wool rug.

Until recently relatively little attention has been given to Captain James Means and Mary Cox Means' youngest daughter, Sophia Means Mason. Sophia, born in 1797, married Samuel Mason in 1815. Mason's work as a tanner and a shipper of beef seems to have been only partially able to fund the family's lifestyle as he was forced in 1827 to sell household goods and furniture to pay off a debt of one-hundred-and-seven dollars. From the items listed and their quality it is apparent that the Masons kept a household typical of the merchant class. Sophia spent her childhood in her father's

stylish Stroudwater home, and upon her sister Mary's death she inherited the house. It is unclear precisely where Sophia and Samuel lived prior to this, but an 1820 census places them in the then new town of Westbrook. Sophia and Samuel had eleven children. By 1860 Sophia lived with her youngest daughter Elizabeth, her son Samuel, a shoemaker, his wife Eunice Winship, their son, Frank, in the Means house. An 1890 census lists Frank and Sophia as the sole residents. Frank, a farmer, sold the home out of the family sometime after 1897.

Sophia Means' sampler, created at age eleven, features a home with a hipped roof and nine windows flanked on the left by a tree, bird, and floral arrangement, and on the right by another arrangement of flowers. As is common the text of the sampler starts with three alphabets wrought in a light color, probably white. Below that, in black letters, the following saying is stitched: "Let modesty that heaven born maid/Your words and actions grace/'Tis this this only that can add/True lustre to your face". Below this moral verse Sophia stitched her name, age, place of residence, the date of completion of her work, and her date of birth, finishing the line by demonstrating her ability to form numerals up to thirteen. Each section of the sampler is divided by a simple horizontal border. Surrounding the entire work is an inner boarder of the same simple border, followed by a wider boarder of trefoil design. The content and structure of this sampler are typical of the time, with little evidence to assign the work to any of the many schools emerging in Portland at the start of the nineteenth century. The dimensions of the work are also typical of the period, shorter than the longer banded samplers popular in America in the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries.

Whether or not young Sophia Means was taught by one of the many schools available to girls of her class in turn-of-the-century Portland is unclear. From what we know James Means' wealth circa 1808, the family would have been financially able to send their daughters to one of the available local schools or perhaps even pursue the more expensive but higher status route of sending their daughter (and perhaps her elder sister) to one of the well-established schools near Boston. We do know that her cousin Hannah, daughter of George and Hannah of Saco, attended the Cony Female Academy in Augusta and produced a delicate floral family register in 1815. Its trefoil-esque border shares some similarities with trefoil patterns commonly used in Southern Maine and Coastal New Hampshire. Sophia's border roughly resembles an intertwined acorn border but the curling leaves and small size of the berry or flower in the center set it apart from standard examples of the form.

(continued)

Sophia Means Sampler Adds to Knowledge of Means Family (continued)

Samplers were usually made by girls around age eleven as a way to learn important skills. Successful completion of a sampler was required before young women could continue use these skills to adorn items of clothing and other household textiles. Samplers were displayed in homes for their beauty and to showcase the skill of their makers. The fact that samplers alone among myriad other crafts practiced by women later in life bore the makers name makes them particularly useful for studying regional trends in style and technique.

Funds for the restoration of the Sophia Means sampler have been generously provided by the Swan Sampler Guild, a national organization based in Salt Lake City, Utah dedicated to preserving historic samplers and providing education in needlework sampler making. The funds will allow the museum to ensure the long term preservation of this beautiful piece of work.

Harper Batsford

Puppet Performance at the Tate House Museum



In August, The Tate House Museum Education Committee presented the first, of what we hope to be an annual puppet performance entitled, "Colonial Education of the Tate Boys".

The audience was treated to an interactive, fun and informative puppet performance focused on the Colonial elite education of two (2) of the Tate boys, George II (Donna Griglock) and Robert (Denise Kelly).

Under the tutelage of itinerant schoolmaster, William McMahon (John Farmer), the Tate boys, with the aid of hornbooks, learned the Letters of the alphabet, practiced Penmanship on slate boards and of great importance recited the Rules of Children's Behavior and Good Manners they had learned. Such knowledge would have been expected of children of the Tate's stature. It would reflect greatly upon the quality of their education, their family, their community and eventually their place in the business world.



Following the performance, the audience was provided an in-depth tour of the chambers of the Tate boys and their schoolmaster. This tour provided a glimpse of how the Tate boys and their schoolmaster lived. It also offered the opportunity the guests to ask questions regarding what they had seen and heard.

The Tate House Museum looks forward to this becoming an annual event and yet another opportunity to pass on the rich colonial history of our area to guests of all ages.

Watch for the date and time of the 2016 Puppet performance!

Donna Griglock - Docent

Did You Know



During the Colonial period, refined white sugar was commercially available. It came in the shape of cones, or loaves due to the processing technique used to refine the sugar. Sugar during this period was obtained primarily from the Caribbean and was typically the product of slave labor.

In simplistic terms raw sugar from sugar cane was boiled and filtered a number of times, then poured into cone or loaf-shaped molds. Once in the mold, sugar water or another similar solution was poured over the sugar to remove the excess molasses. The sugar cones/loaves were then removed from the molds and dried. Many cones/loaves during the period were wrapped in blue paper for shipping.

Fine sugar came in smaller cones and cheaper sugar came in bigger cones or loaves as lower quality sugar was more difficult to crystallize and the larger sizes worked better.

worldturnupsidedown.blogspot.com

2015 Annual Tate House Museum Fund Raiser

On November 7, 2015 the Tate House Museum annual fund raiser was held at the Portland Country Club. The Event Committee chaired by Liz Bradley put together an outstanding and very successful event.

The evening started with a bountiful buffet, a cocktail reception and a chance for the attendees to enjoy the company of old friends and the opportunity to make new acquaintances.

At the same time as the reception there was a silent auction going on with a large number of extremely interesting and valuable items up for bid.

The featured speaker for the evening was the renowned author and journalist Colin Woodard. His New York Times Bestseller "The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down", is the book on which the NBC series "Crossbones" was based.

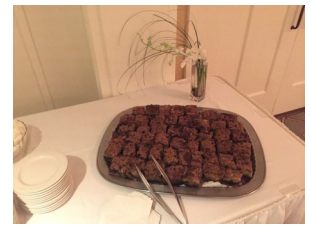
Colin's topic for the evening was "The Maine Coast, Past, Present and Future". It was very well received by the audience. After his presentation Colin was available to autograph copies of his most recent books which were made available for purchase at the event by the Tate House Museum Gift Shop.

The Tate House Museum Organization would like to take this opportunity to thank the corporate sponsors, patrons and volunteers for all their contributions which made this year's event one of the best ever.

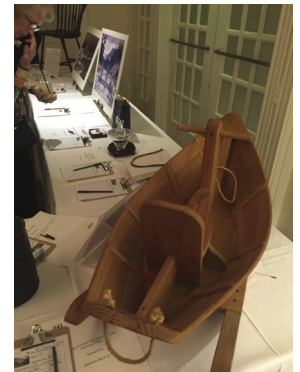
We look forward to seeing everyone again this fall.

Christina Jackson

The Food



The Auction



The Fellowship

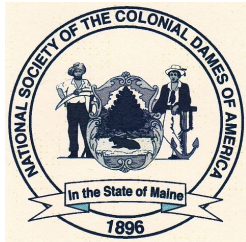


The Fellowship



Liz Bradley

Colin Woodard



Photographs By Linda Rogoff

Tate House Research Project

There is much to learn about the social structures, material possessions, community engagement, and education during the years 1756 – 1804 in Falmouth (Portland) and more specifically, the Stroudwater neighborhood, the Tate family, and museum properties.

Beginning any research project can be daunting. Guidance, mutual support and peer interaction can make the research and its results fun and rewarding. The 2016 Tate House research project is planned for maximum docent engagement, education, and enjoyment.

In January, the Tate House Research Project began at our monthly Soup & Connoisseur Gatherings. Diane Hoppe and Harper shared the best ways to begin and share your research about your special interests in the Tate House Museum and Colonial History. Harper gave tips and hints on research methods, supports, and specifically the Tate House Archives. Diane introduced the on-line research platform. We are using a site called Slack for sharing our research information. The Tate House Research domain on Slack is a private domain for us to exchange and share our ideas, questions, interests, and research results. Interested docents will be invited to join the Tate House Research team on Slack. To do this, contact Diane at heroncrossing@gmail.com and ask to be invited to the research team. Once you get your invitation, you can sign in to the Tate House Research pages and review the channels listed on the left side. Each channel is your platform for reading about or contributing towards our collective research. Our Docent Resource Guide is available for you to review (and suggest edits) when preparing for the new visitor season. There are channels for many of your individual interests. For example, in the Collections channel, you will find the introduction to the Tate House Collection that we show to new docents each year. Please browse around the site and begin interacting with the rest of us. It is going to be an exciting and enlightening way for us to interact through the long winter.

If you have any questions about joining, feel free to contact me at the above email address. I am looking forward to learning from all of you!

Diane Hoppe

The Fast and the Furious - 2016 at the Tate House Museum

Tate House Museum members and volunteers embrace the dictates of our museum's mission to *"connect people to our colonial roots and to help them discover, imagine, and value the relevance of this history to our lives"*. Education committee members are excited about the potential of improving our own *"connection to our colonial roots"*, and sharing what we know and learn with each other and the public. This year we are out-doing ourselves with the development of more activities for the public and increased learning opportunities for volunteers.

We have begun an on-line research group to discover and share the *"relevance of this history"*. (Read more about this project in the Tate House Research article.)

Docents and Volunteers are the backbone and frontline of the Tate House Museum! Our regular get together activities, otherwise known as Soup & Connoisseur Gatherings are designed to engage and educate in an informal and collaborative setting. This year we will continue with the Sew Historical Society project (formerly known as the Colonial Clothing Project). Every other month Beth Maitland teaches us about colonial clothing construction. All are welcome to join, and there is ample support and encouragement from the sewers. A visit to Tare Shirt Farm is also in the plans for this spring. We will get to learn about the construction projects that have been ongoing at the museum and in the gardens. Last, but certainly not least, we are all invited to help in organizing and supporting our public programs and activities.

This year we will welcome the new museum season as one of the participants of Maine Historical Society's Magical History Tour on May 21st, the same day as our annual Plant Sale! Join us on June 12th for our annual Colonial Tea. On June 18th Fletcher's Scouting Company will be at Tate House giving demonstrations and lectures. Again this year we will be entertained in the Tate gardens to Poetry on the Stroudwater on June 28th. In July and August, there will be two opportunities to experience different quilting techniques. On July 28th, Diane will engage us in the stories and methods of Hawaiian quilting. While on August 9th, Beth will show us English Paper Piecing techniques. Also on August 6th, there will be an opportunity for a hands-on Gravestone Preservation activity.

The fall is a wonderful time at the museum, and on September 10th regional Girl Scouts will join us for a special day at the Tate House. Sandy Oliver is returning to the Tate House kitchen to give a public lecture on September 13th. October brings out our specters during our Stroudwater Cemetery tours and bake sale. And, new this year, we will be hosting a winter frolic and Christmas with the Tates on December 11th. We will also travel to Strawberry Banke to participate in their Candlelight Stroll on December 17th.

Please join us for as many of our activities as you can! We are sure you will *"discover, imagine, and value the relevance of this history to your lives!"*

Diane Hoppe



The Tate House Museum 2016 Schedule of Events

TATE HOUSE MUSEUM 2016



“Connecting People to Maine’s Colonial Roots”

Open Wed - Sun, June - October

Hourly Tours from 10AM-4PM

Sun 1PM-4PM

Last Tour at 3PM

School Tours

Architecture Tours

Garden Tours

Available- Call 207-774-6177

1267 Westbrook Street

Portland, Maine 04102

info@tatehouse.org~www.tatehouse.org

2016 Programs

May 21

Annual Plant Sale

June 5

Opening Day Celebration

June 12

Annual Tea and Colonial Fashion Show in the Garden

June 18

18th Century Fletcher's Scouting Company Demonstration

June 28

Poetry in the Garden

July 12

Herb Garden Construction and Maintenance Lecture

July 26

Hawaiian Quilting Workshop

August 6

Gravestone Preservation

August 9

English Paper Piecing Quilt Workshop

September 10

Girl Scouts Playing the Past Junior Badge at the Tate House Museum

September 13

Center of the Female Universe The Early American Kitchen with Sandy Oliver

October 15 and 22

Stroudwater Cemetery Tours and Bake Sale

December 11

A Tate House Colonial Christmas

Tate House Museum Members 2015

Captain Tate

Andrew Stickney

Colonel Westbrook

Elizabeth and David Bradley

Kathryn Ann Clark

Barbara and Robert Luke

Katharine Watson

Mast Agent

Col. William Hall Jr.

Joan and James Hatch

Anita B. Jones

Annie Upton

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Sally Foy

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Cate Gilbane

Margaret Glover

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toria Kurtz Virgin-

ia Kurtz Nancy

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Mary Rea

Deborah Reed

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"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."
~ Elizabeth Andrew

Tate House Museum
1267 Westbrook Street
Portland, ME 04102
207-774-6177
www.tatehouse.org



Our mission is to connect people to Maine's colonial roots, and to help them discover, imagine, and value the relevance of this history to our lives.

Make a Donation

Tate House Museum, its history, and neighborhood will serve as a catalyst for educational programs and research for students and the general public who visit the house, as well as a community resource.

You can help! !

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☐ I wish to remain anonymous *