



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 XIX,

November 2010

Mast Exhibit Expansion

Tate House Museum board members Dick Gilbane and Tom Thomsen have been working to obtain two twelve foot logging wheels and a large mast pine to exhibit at the Means House mast yard. The wheels are currently on display at Storyland in Glenn, New Hampshire and may be donated to the museum. This exhibit would be placed in the front yard of the Means House, giving the museum a tremendous visual display to the thousand of vehicles that travel along Congress Street each day. The yard is the original location of Colonel Thomas Westbrook's mast yard, an area that was reconfigured when Capt. James Means built his splendid new home in 1797. Roger Knight of

Smiling Hill Farm is very interested in exploring this acquisition. His connection to the mast trade can be traced to the first mast agent in the Stroudwater area, Colonel Thomas Westbrook. When Colonel Westbrook died in 1744, he was in debt and as was the custom at the time, the creditors could "arrest" the body until the debts were settled. Westbrook's nephew, Nathaniel Knight, instead took the body and buried it in remote Westbrook. Today Colonel Westbrook lies buried on the property of Roger Knight. We welcome Roger's effort in this endeavor and we will report in the next issue of the Gazette on the progress of this exciting project!



Upcoming Events:

November 18th—Soup and Connoisseurship Sit Down! Exhibit at Bowdoin College *see p.3*

November 20th—Museum Shoppers Sale *see p.4*

December 2nd—Community Winter Frolic

May 19, 2011—Patron's Dinner

Collections News

During the Year of the Kitchen, the Museum identified priorities to fill gaps at the cooking hearth and introduce refinements that would have been used in households of Tate's economic standing. A request to acquire appropriate objects, using dedicated

NSCDA acquisitions funds for the Tate House collection, was recently approved by the NSCDA Board of Managers. In the months ahead, THM will be making these acquisitions, including an 18th-century brass clock jack, wrought-iron spit and andirons with

spit hooks, bell-metal or brass cooking pots. Many thanks are extended to NSCDA president Martha Timothy for her support of this collections request. An old joined box has already been put to use as a wood box, thanks to the generosity of Frances and Robert

Lord of Portsmouth, who donated a great solution to the kitchen collection. Also, a late 18th century brass skimmer has been acquired, thanks to dedicated collections funds given by Amy Shinn.

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Spirits of Stroudwater Tour

The Spirits of Stroudwater came alive on October 30th during two tours of the Stroudwater Cemetery staged by specters portrayed by Tate House Museum's volunteers. Close to twenty guests were entertained by Sophia Means Mason (Cynthia Sechell), Lafayette (Bill Hubbell), Lillian Stevens (Theresa Libby), Rhoda Patridge (Gini Link), Lydia Brown (Liz Bradley), Mary Tate (Anna Barnett), Robert Tate (Dick Kempton), and The Wolfman, played by special volunteer Sean. Delene Perley guided

the tours, interpreted the headstones, and introduced the specters.

The research and much of the writing for the tour was done by THM long-time supporter, former librarian and avid historian, Elizabeth Oatley, who also sewed and provided the capes.

Between tours guests were served refreshments in the Means House Lafayette parlor. Lillian Haversat served the drinks and snacks that were provided by several volunteers. Joan



Hatch signed up people and collected payment for the tour tickets. Thanks also go to Perry Hopf for sending the publicity information to the newspapers.

Many thanks to Delene for organizing this event and to the volunteers who braved the chilly Stroudwater winds!

Development Committee Notes

- ❖ Next Year will be the "Year of the Pine". A discussion was held about trying to get a Mast Tree here on our campus.
- ❖ Work is ongoing to clear the brush and small trees which impede the view of the Tate House from Congress Street.
- ❖ Tate House should develop an ambitious plan to educate the state about the importance and history of the Maine forest industry.
- ❖ We should develop a flyer similar to that of the Sprague Hall at Ram Island to promote rentals of the Means House Lafayette Room.

Preservation Work Continues Apace

This year the State of Maine's New Century Community Program awarded a \$5,000 grant for collections facilities work at Tate House. The goal is to ensure Tate House's long-term preservation by securing the physical envelope and to correct high humidity within the building, caused by the lack of positive drainage away from the foundation. The grant funds, which must be matched, support a \$14,000 project to repair and repaint window sashes and to create recommendations for a drainage plan.

This summer Greg Kirk of Kirk Painting painted

and reglazed ten windows at Tate House. Caleb Hemphill of Hemphill Preservation and Woodworking is currently working to stabilize four original decorative cornices on the façade of Tate House. Tatyanna Seredin, of Mohr and Seredin Landscape Architects, is compiling recommendations toward improved drainage. Much work has been done on this subject since 2005, including archaeology at the building's foundation and a drainage assessment by Ernest Conrad of Landmarks Facilities Group, one of America's leading consultants on climate con-

trol in historic structures. The repainted windows look terrific and we look forward to Mohr and Seredin's recommendations for drainage work that will need to be planned, funded, and implemented in the year ahead. The Museum is working to raise the additional \$5,000 cash match. If you would like to contribute to this project, please contact consulting curator Laura Sprague.

Did you know that the monthly calendar is viewable online at www.tatehouse.org/gazette/ and click on Monthly Calendar?

Annual Appeal In Progress

The Annual Appeal letter was mailed on October 14, 2011. Thank you all who have generously given to support to the work of the Museum. Our work is ongoing, and we welcome contributions anytime. We truly appreciate your support.

Lock Box Repaired!

The Museum was able to repair the original box lock on the front door of Tate House, thanks to the kind assistance of the Old House Parts Company in Kennebunk. Tom Joyal, the company's owner, found away to repair, rather than replace, the lock. He contributed his time and talent. We are most grateful for his generous assistance.

Congratulations to Joan Hatch for becoming the latest "approved" docent!

Tate House Chair Visits Bowdoin!

A wonderful Windsor armchair in the Tate House collection is keeping good company with 50+ other examples in *Sit Down! Chairs from Six Centuries*, a lively and visually engaging exhibition at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, through

January 16, 2011.

The chair, included in a discussion of the colonial revival style of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, nearly matches a Windsor armchair depicted in a portrait by Gertrude Fiske, on loan from the Farns-

worth Art Museum. A Soup and Connoisseurship program is planned for Thursday, November 18. We will meet at the Means House at 5 p.m. for soup and then carpool to Bowdoin for a 7 p.m., tour with Laura Sprague, the exhibition's curator.

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Change service requested.

MUSEUM SHOPPERS DAY

The Tate House Museum will be participating, for the 4th year in a row, in the Museum Shoppers Day! This will take place on November 20, 2010 from 9 am to 3 pm at Events on Broadway, 729 Broadway in So. Portland. This is located across the street from where the old Captain Newick's restaurant location. Along with the Tate House, the other museum shops that will be present are Maine Audubon, Maine Historical Society, Portland Head Light Museum, Seashore Trolley Museum, The Brick Store Museum, and South Portland Historical Society. This is a great opportunity to get some early holiday shopping done and a great place to find gifts for that person for whom who you just don't know what to get!! HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!!!

THM Welcomes New Site Coordinator

Dick Kempton started his duties as the THM Site Coordinator on October 16th. He will be in the office from 7:30 to 2:30 Tuesday through Thursday during the winter season. For urgent matters outside of regular office hours, email Dick at: Tate1755@gmail.com.