

Merchant's House Museum

Newsletter

Winter 2003

Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Annual 19th-Century Holiday Party & Silent Auction

The House will be in festive holiday dress -- just as it would have been 150 years ago -- with boughs of holly, wreaths and topiaries, swags and garlands, spice pomanders and fruits, a traditional table-top tree, cornucopia -- and "kissing balls." Figured mahogany and crystal prisms will dance in the candlelight, and the house will be filled with music. We'll be offering the legendary Cup of Bishop and our table will be laden with holiday fare. And for your added delight during the evening, a silent auction. \$25, Members free. (If you're not already a member, now is the perfect time to join.)

A New Year in Old New York

Until the latter part of the century, New Year's day was more widely celebrated than Christmas and

received more attention in contemporary periodicals. One of the holiday customs continued by New Yorkers was the long-standing Dutch tradition known as New Year's day calling. Preparations often started months in advance. The house was cleaned or updated, jewelry and silver were rented if necessary, and special punch was sometimes ordered.

The ladies had elaborate coiffures dressed by 'artistes in hair' and they dared not retire the night before for fear of musing these creations. In 1843, Lydia Maria Francis Child succinctly described the custom of the day: "Every woman that is 'anybody' stays at home, dressed in her best, and by her side is a table covered with cakes, preserves, wines,

oysters, and hot coffee." She explained, "The number of calls is a matter of pride and boasting among ladies."

For the gentlemen, New Year's day calling, or "cake day" as it was sometimes called, was a race to see how many calls one could make to the houses of friends and associates. While one melancholy gentleman lamented that he had lost his calling list so he did not know where to go, Philip Hone (1780-1851), once mayor of New York, noted in 1844 that he had made calls for five hours while his daughters entertained 169 well-wishers.

The day was so significant to New Yorkers that instructions for entertaining were detailed in *The Knickerbocker: The Complete New Year's Visitor*.

Reprinted with the permission of the author, historian Sybil McCormac Groff, from her spirited article in the magazine *Antiques*, December 2002.

Thursday, January 1, 2004, 3 to 6 p.m.

New Year's Day 2004

Come calling. We'll toast 2004 with champagne punch and feast on holiday cakes and confectionery. Guided tours of the House, informal talks on the etiquette of calling, and walking tours of the neighborhood. Bring your 21st-century calling card (personal or business) for our prize drawing. \$25. Members \$15.

JOIN US FOR A



BOWL OF BISHOP

No, not Bishop Samuel Seabury, the first Episcopal bishop to preside in the United States, and our own Seabury Tredwell's uncle, but the popular mixture of ...

2 small oranges	2 pieces candied ginger,
8 cloves	chopped
8 allspice berries	1/2 cup sugar
1 cup water	Zest of 1 lemon
1-inch piece	Juice of 1 lemon
cinnamon	1 bottle port
2 blades of mace	Pinch grated nutmeg

Stud the oranges with the whole cloves and roast in a slow oven for 45 minutes. Place cinnamon, mace, allspice, ginger, lemon zest, and water into a saucepan and simmer to a reduction by 1/3. Add the sugar near the end of the reduction so that it dissolves. In a separate pan, heat the port but do not boil. Strain the spice reduction and combine with the warmed port. Add lemon juice and pour over the roasted oranges. Topped with a pinch of nutmeg, this racy concoction may be quaffed right away, or let it all steep together for 24 hours. Gently reheat before serving.

'... Fine oranges, well roasted, with sugar and wine in a cup, they'll make a sweet Bishop when gentlefolks sup.'

Dean Jonathan Swift

Our thanks to Museum volunteers Robert and Julia Van Nutt. The charming illustration was designed by Robert, based on an etching of Bishop Samuel Seabury in the museum's collection. The tasty recipe was researched and blended by Julia.

The Merchants House Museum is New York City's only family home preserved intact - inside and out - from the 19th century. A National Historic and New York City Landmark, the house was built in 1832 and was home to a prosperous merchant family for 100 years.

Visit Thursday through Monday, 1 to 5 p.m.

29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003 212-777-1089 www.merchantshouse.com

AN APPEAL AT YEAR'S END

YES, I want to preserve this unique landmark of 19th-century New York with a tax-deductible year-end donation of:

\$ _____ \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50

Please make checks payable to the Merchant's House Museum or charge your contribution to: Amex Visa Master Card

If you wish to donate appreciated securities (and maximize your tax savings), please call the Museum office at 212-777-1089.

Card No. _____ Exp. _____ Signature _____

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

For reservations, call 212-777-1089 or
email nyc1832@merchantshouse.com

On Exhibit

Through January 30

The Tredwells: A Family Tree in Pictures

Tredwell family photographs of all types – cartes-de-visite, cabinet cards, and tintypes – are on display, most for the first time.

Through February 16

The Changing Silhouette of Fashion – Six Decades of Tredwell Costumes

Third in our parade of fashion is a festive dark green silk taffeta dress with pagoda sleeves and a boned fitted bodice, ca.1858.

Saturday, December 6, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Workshop: Wreaths & Evergreen Decoration**

Evergreens, pine cones, dried materials, and ribbons will be provided to decorate *lex crenata* wreaths created by John Rommel, Head Gardener, from our own garden shrubs. Hot cider, tea, and cookies. Bring cloth gloves. \$25 donation benefits the Garden Fund.

Winter Wine Tastings

In Collaboration with our Noho neighbor

Astor Wines & Spirits

We'll gather in our cozy 19th-century family kitchen to taste choice wines paired with delicious hors d'oeuvres.

Thursday, January 22, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Mi Casa, Tu Casa: Wines of Spain

Think toreadors, flamenco ... El Greco. Tonight, Kerin Auth, a former resident of Seville now with esteemed Spanish wine importer Tempranillo, will lead us through a tasting of some of Spain's *my bueno*. And tapas, too. Ole.

Thursday, March 25, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Winter's Last Blast:

Big Reds, Ports, and Sherries

We'll ward off those still-icy March winds with a selection of hearty reds, ports, and sherries that will take the chill out of the air and warm the bones. Spring may be wishful thinking, but who cares?

\$35 each tasting, \$60 for both.

Reservations must be paid for in advance, cancellations and full refunds accepted up to 48 hours prior.

Monday, November 24, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

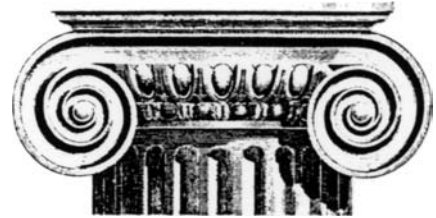
Great New York Writers in Great New York Places American Wits: An Evening of Light Verse at the Society of Illustrators

The final reading in our sixth annual series celebrating the literary history of New York City. 128 East 63rd Street. Tickets \$30. Reservations, 212-360-1378.

March 11 to 14, 2004

Classical Charleston: An Architecture & Decorative Arts Tour with the Historic Charleston Foundation

During the 18th and early 19th centuries, Charleston was one of the wealthiest commercial ports in the country. Today, it ranks among the best historically preserved cities in America. An exclusive 4-day weekend tour will focus on the classically inspired architecture, decorative arts, and gardens that have been meticulously preserved in urbane Charleston as well as its neighboring Low Country plantations. For information and a brochure, please contact Classical Excursions, PO Box 724, Stockbridge, MA 01262, 413-298-3399, 800-390-5536.

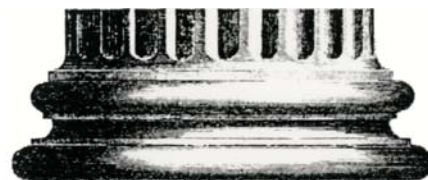


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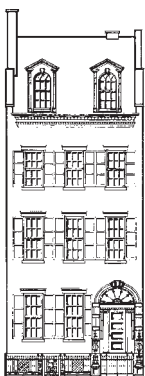
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