

Merchant's House Museum

Newsletter

Fall 2002



Star Power

We've been called "the star at the center of the NoHo constellation" (*New York Resident*). Now that star shines brightly through the night, thanks to new exterior illumination of the House designed by Charles Stone, of Fisher Marazz Stone, who also designed the lighting of the Hong Kong airport. We think the Museum can now be seen from outer space, and we should expect visitors from very far away soon. Our thanks to the NYU Community Fund for funding this project.

Fall Lecture Series Spotlights Collections

The 1832 Society, a group of the Museum's younger members, has formed a new committee to create a lecture series highlighting 19th-century material culture and architecture. The first two programs will feature our costume and furniture collections. Check the calendar for details. Seating is limited so make your reservations now.

Wish List

Memories of the House— Were you associated with the Decorators Club in the 1960s and 70s? Call us at 212.777.1089 and we will put you in touch with the author of a book-in-progress on the history of the Museum, who would like to speak with you!

A Computer for the Curatorial Department that, unlike our current model, doesn't bring UNIVAC to mind. Printer too, please.

A Famous 1937 Photograph of the Merchant's House by Berenice Abbott will be auctioned by Sotheby's in October. What an addition this would make to our collection!

Ever in the Limelight Britain's *Country Life* Magazine to Feature Merchant's House Museum in its October Issue

The prestigious British magazine, *Country Life*, will feature the Merchant's House in its October issue. Marcus Binney, noted architectural historian and author of the definitive book, *Town Houses: Urban Houses from 1200 to the Present Day*, paid us a visit in July and has written the story on the House and its collections. The article will be illustrated with numerous color photographs by acclaimed photographer Ian Bradshaw.

Throughout its history, the Museum has repeatedly attracted the attention of the national and international media. The first article to bring the Merchant's House into the flattering glare of the national spotlight was in June 1937, shortly after its opening to the public as a museum, when *Antiques* magazine

featured the Museum and its furniture. They called the House "one of the most perfectly preserved dwellings of its period."

Now, 65 years later, nothing has changed—in the House, or the media. We're still "the real thing" (yet another accolade, in *The New York Times*). Thanks to ongoing restoration and conservation policies—and support of our members and friends—our 1832 landmark building and its original collections continue to provide a unique glimpse of the way of life of a prosperous merchant family in 19th-century New York City. And the media keeps knocking at our door: watch for the October issue of *Country Life*, soon to appear on newsstands. Ah, fame and glory. One gets used to it.

Curatorial Staff and Interns Light the Way in Caring For the Museum's Valuable Collections

Curator Mary Anne Caton and Collections Manager Shira Silverman are working to create a computerized database for our collections (please see Wish List), an interpretation and furnishings plan, and a long-range phased conservation plan. Re-housing of the photographs is now under way, as is planning for the preservation of the documents relating to the Tredwell family. When funds are available, we will be undertaking a complete analysis of our historic wall finishes, including a chromochronology of the paint that has been applied over the past 170 years.

Four stellar interns assisting this past summer include Marci Morimoto, a graduate student in costume history at NYU, and Melanie Teslik, a student in Cooper-Hewitt's

graduate program, both of whom are continuing with us this fall. Anne Patrone, a Harvard junior, worked with the archives and researched the early days of the Museum. Alison Campbell, a graduate of McGill University, completed her internship at the end of July.

Life in the Past Lane

"Wall street continues in feverish, nervous malaise. Its pulse keeps going up to 120 under hourly rumors of defalcation in this or that corporation . . . Faith in financial agents is gone. Every treasurer and cashier is 'suspect,' and no wonder after the recent epidemic of fraud." So wrote the New York City diarist George Templeton Strong in 1873. Sound familiar? Alas, some things never change.

YES INDEED! I (We) Want to Become a Member of the Merchant's House Museum

- Good Neighbor—\$50
- Family/Household—\$75
- Protector—\$125
- Cultural Hero—\$250
- Princely Supporter—\$500
- Leading Light—\$1,000
- Paragon of Virtue—\$2,500
- Senior Citizen/Student—\$25

Please make checks payable to the Merchant's House Museum or charge your contribution

- American Express
- Visa
- Master Card

Card No. _____ Expiration Date _____ Signature _____

MATCHING GIFT: You may be able to double your contribution through your company's matching gift program.

Check here and enclose the Matching Gift form. Mail to Merchant's House Museum, 29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003.

Name(s) _____

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The Merchant's 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 Tel. 212.777.1089 www.merchantshouse.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September, October & November 2002

For reservations, call 212.777.1089 or e-mail nyc1832@merchantshouse.com

Sunday, September 22, and 29

Seating at 1:30 and 3 p.m.

Tea and Tour for Two

Traditional afternoon tea served in our charming walled garden. Includes a selection of finger sandwiches, scones with jam and Devonshire cream, and a choice of desserts. Guided tour of the House at 2:30 and 4 p.m. \$35 per couple (additional guests \$15 each) to benefit the Garden Fund.

Wednesday, October 16, Noon to 2 p.m.

Lecture: Digging for the 1835 Fire

Diane Dallal, South Street Seaport Museum Curator of Archeology, will present an illustrated talk on her work and the artifacts in India House's "Forged by Fire" exhibit (opens September 25), which document the ravages of the Great Fire of 1835 in Lower Manhattan. At India House, One Hanover Square. \$39. Includes a 3-course lunch.

Close Encounters Of a Curatorial Kind

Friday, September 27, and

Friday, October 25, 6:30 p.m.

The Costume Collection:

An Inside Peek

Costume historian Marci Morimoto will show never-before-seen items from the costume collection. She will provide an overview of women's clothing of the 19th century and discuss the Tredwell garments, how they were made, when they would have been worn, and by whom. Different garments will be displayed at each session. Reception. \$15, members \$10.

Wednesday, October 16, 6:30 p.m.

The Furniture Collection:

The Connoisseur's Look

Decorative arts scholar Emily Eerdman will discuss furniture fashions in 19th-century New York, from the Classical to the Rococo Revival. This "hands-on" tour of the Museum's furniture collection focuses on styles, construction, and function. Reception. \$15, members \$10.



THE HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST OF NEW YORK CITY

Great New York Writers in Great New York Places

5th annual reading series celebrating the literary history of New York City in significant architectural and historic sites. A collaboration with *The Library of America and the City of New York Parks & Recreation*. Reading and reception \$25. For reservations, call 212.360.1378.

Monday, October 7, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Writing Los Angeles:

New Yorkers on L.A.

At the Times Square Studio. 1500 Broadway.

Wednesday, November 13, and Thursday,

November 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Paul Bowles

At the Explorers Club, 46 East 70th Street.

Ghostly & Other Spirited Events

Friday, October 18, 7 p.m.

The Enchanting Realm of Ghosts: An Evening with the Experts

Parapsychologists George Hansen and Joanne D.S. McMahon, Ph.D., and famed magician Ben Robinson will combine talents for a spellbinding exploration of the spirit world (including our resident ghosts), with historical references, modern examples, and dramatic demonstrations. \$15.

Tuesday, October 29, 7 to 9 p.m.

Benefit: Good Scary Fun

Our seeing friends, including "the Rolls-Royce of psychics," Frank Andrews, will offer readings, *if you dare*. Reception with horror d'oeuvres, wine tastings, and spirits (astral and otherwise). Special appearance by Norman Bates's mother. \$50.

Sunday, November 16,

10 a.m. to 12 Noon

Workshop: Table Harvest Baskets and Centerpieces

Create Mayapple tree centerpieces and floral and fruit decoration for your Holiday table. Woven baskets, dried and other materials provided for hands-on workshop. Refreshments. \$20 donation benefits the Garden Fund.



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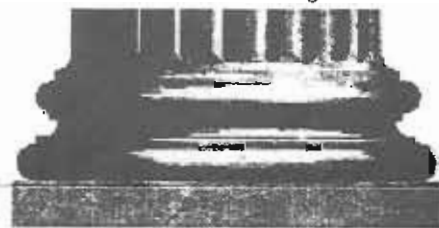
Program Director

Mary Anne Caton

Curator

Shira Silverman

Collections Manager



Themed Walking Tours

James Papp, Ph.D., leader. Each tour includes guided tour of the Merchant's House. \$10.

Sunday, September 22, 2 p.m.

Finding Old New York: How to Read Streets and Buildings

Sunday, October 13, 2 p.m.

Rise and Fall of Architecture in the East Village: What's Next?

The Museum's public education programs are sponsored in part through the generous support of the Public Service Award program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.



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