



YOU'RE INVITED

19TH-CENTURY HOLIDAY PARTY

Wednesday, December 13, 2006, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

NEW YEAR'S DAY OPEN HOUSE

Monday, January 1, 2007, Noon to 5 p.m.

Ghosts of New York Christmas Past . . .

1822 – New York author Clement Clark Moore wrote “A Visit From Saint Nicholas.” (In 1851 it became known as “The Night Before Christmas.”)

1849 – Christmas became a legal holiday in New York State.

1851 – Christmas trees were sold in New York City for the first time.

1857 – J.P. Morgan's uncle wrote “Jingle Bells,” reportedly for a New York City Sunday school.

1860s – Christmas began to replace New Year's Day as the traditional time for exchanging presents.

1869 – FAO Schwarz held its first “Grand Christmas Exhibition” with toys, dolls, games, fancy goods, and novelties in their 14th Street store.

1874 – Macy's department store grossed \$6,000 on Christmas Eve. The store, then located on 14th Street, was open until midnight.

New Year's Day in Old New York — When Gentlemen Came Calling

In the 19th century, the gentlemen of New York City sallied forth on New Year's Day to make calls on friends, family, and acquaintances. The ladies stayed home to receive the guests and preside over a sumptuous buffet and a punch bowl liberally laced with alcohol. After the third or fourth visit, the January chill was usually vanquished.

One of New York's most distinguished citizens, Philip Hone, who was a neighbor of the Tredwells (he lived at the corner of Great Jones and Broadway) and at one time the mayor of New York City, described his participation in this festive tradition in his diary.

In 1843, Hone left his home at noon

and made an astonishing forty-odd calls before five p.m. – on average, a visit every seven and a half minutes. It was snowing, and he traveled from house to house by sleigh. He wrote, “The ladies smiled and looked beautiful, the fires sparkled and looked warm, the furniture shone and looked comfortable, the whisky-toddy smoked and looked strong, and everything was gay...”

The following year, he noted that “Broadway, from one end to the other, was alive with private carriages, and lines of pedestrians fringed the carriageways. I was out more than five hours, and my girls tell me they received one hundred and sixty-nine visits.”

Unfortunately, the Tredwells left no

diaries or letters describing their holidays. However, it is probably safe to assume that in 1843 the six daughters, from twenty-one-year-old Elizabeth to two-year-old Gertrude, entertained callers with their mother while the two sons of the family, Horace, 19, and Samuel, 16, made the rounds with their father. Their first stop was no doubt at the home of Seabury Tredwell's cousin, Samuel Skidmore, who lived just a few doors down the block.

As for us, we look forward to continuing this 19th-century New York City tradition on January 1, 2007. We think it's a delightful way to start the New Year, and we hope you'll come calling – ladies and gentlemen alike.

MERCHANT'S HOUSE MUSEUM

29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003 Tel 212-777-1089 Fax 212-777-1104 nyc1832@merchantshouse.org

OPEN Thursday through Monday, Noon to 5 p.m. GUIDED TOUR Saturday & Sunday at 1 p.m. ADMISSION \$8, Students & Seniors \$5, Free for Members

www.merchantshouse.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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

HOLIDAY EVENTS

Wednesday, December 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Annual 19th-Century Holiday Party

The halls will be decked and our own Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society will sing traditional carols. Join us for holiday fare and a 'bowl of bishop', a libation frequently offered to 19th-century callers. Tours of the House and a holiday gift bazaar and live auction will complete the festivities. \$25, FREE for Members.

Sunday, December 17, 5:30 p.m.

"To All, Wassail": A Concert of 19th-Century Holiday Songs and Stories

The Bond Street Euterpean Singing Society will present a concert of vocal quartets, solos, holiday readings and sing-alongs. A wassail reception to meet the artists will follow. \$10, \$5 Seniors & Children, FREE for Members.

Monday, January 1, 2007, Noon to 5 p.m.

'Come Calling': New Year's Day Open House

The Merchant's House will receive 'callers' on January 1. Tour the House decorated for the holidays, learn about the forgotten custom of New Year's Day calling, enjoy a cup of warm cider, and take a tour of the historic neighborhood (if weather permits.) \$10 suggested donation, FREE for Members

ON EXHIBITION

Friday, November 24, 2006, through Monday, January 9, 2007

Traditions of Old New York: A Mid-19th-Century Holiday

The House will be in festive holiday dress — just as it would have been 150 years ago — with evergreen swags and garlands, holly and winter berries, poinsettias, and fruits and cornucopia. A lavish table will be set with holiday fare, a table-top tree will be decorated with candles and candies, and 'fancy dresses' belonging to the Tredwells will be on display.

AN APPEAL AT YEAR'S END

(Donations are tax-deductible)

\$_____ \$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50

Please make checks payable to the Merchant's House Museum and mail with this form to 29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003-7003, or charge your contribution to: American Express Visa Master Card

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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.

The Merchant's House Museum is owned by the City of New York, operated by Old Merchants House of New York, Inc., and is a member of the Historic House Trust.



Merchant's House Museum
29 East Fourth Street
New York, NY 10003

Non-Profit
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