



TA DA!!

WE MET THE GERRY CHALLENGE!

We are thrilled to report that we have met the \$25,000 dollar-for-dollar Challenge Grant from The Gerry Charitable Trust in New York – in spades! By the deadline date, September 1, we had surpassed the matching requirement and now have the initial funding -- \$50,000 -- to launch a multi-year, house-wide, and much-needed interior restoration project. Our thanks beyond measure to all of you who were able to make a contribution.

Now We Can Execute the Historic Furnishings Plan

With the help of consulting Project Director Vincent Plescia, who you may recall oversaw the conservation of our matching pair of gas chandeliers, ca. 1852, we will begin to develop a full scope of work and timeline to prioritize the recommendations in the Museum's first-ever Historic Furnishings Plan. The Plan outlines top-to-bottom treatment recommendations for all our period rooms, including walls, floors, window coverings, lighting, and upholstery, that best tell the story of our Tredwells – i.e., the domestic life of a prosperous New York City merchant family during the three decades before the Civil War.

This “action plan” will, of course, include a plan for fully funding the restoration. Not only will implementing the Plan's recommendations be very expensive, it will be extremely disruptive, and likely to take three to four years -- but it is no overstatement that the impact will be transformative, dramatically

affecting the appearance of the museum. Completion of this house-wide project will result in a truly authentic interpretation of the house and the Tredwell family's original 19th-century furnishings.

Somebody's Coming To Dinner

Research tells us that during the 19th century, residents of urban rowhouses like the 'Tredwells' were very flexible in their use of the back parlor. It was not usually a stiff formal dining room, but rather a family sitting room. When guests were expected for a formal dinner party, the clutter of needlework, papers, and other family activities, as well as furniture used for comfortable sitting, were moved to the hall and other parts of the house. The table was then extended, set with fine china and silver, and two damask tablecloths. (The first cloth would be removed before the dessert service).

In order to tell the story of how this transformation took place, we have recently made a change in the way we exhibit the back parlor.

Visitors will now see a mannequin dressed as Bridget Murphy, one of the 'Tredwells' Irish servants, who is supervising the process. The black horsehair sofa is on its way out the door, the table has been opened, ready to receive its leaves, and a soup tureen is at the ready.

After the table has been beautifully set, the 12 Duncan Phyfe chairs will be corralled around it.

After dinner, the ladies retired to the front parlor, the sliding mahogany pocket

doors were closed, and the men remained at the table, smoking cigars and drinking brandy.

One of the advantages of the new interpretation is that it reminds us of the critical role the servants played in the life of the Tredwell family.



Life in the Past Lane

A 19th-century Dinner Party

In her memoir, *My New York*, Mabel Wright tells about a dinner party which took place in 1849 just a few blocks from the 'Tredwells'.

Menu cards, decorated by Mrs. Paine . . . then a novelty in private houses, were placed at intervals along the flower-trimmed table that was covered with rich damask and glittered with silver and glass. The napkins themselves were so large that they covered the widest crinoline . . . Very stiff and prim that card looks today, and the offering of food is quite appalling.—beginning with large, fat Chesapeake Bay Oysters, it meandered through nine courses until it reached a solid wall of plum pudding.

Yes, I (We) Will Help the Merchant's House Museum (Continue to) Weather the Economic Storm.

2009 Recession Fund \$_____ (Thank You) Good Neighbor \$60 Family/Household \$80 Senior/Student \$30
 Protector \$125 Cultural Hero \$250 Princely Supporter \$500 Leading Light \$1,000 Paragon of Virtue \$2,500

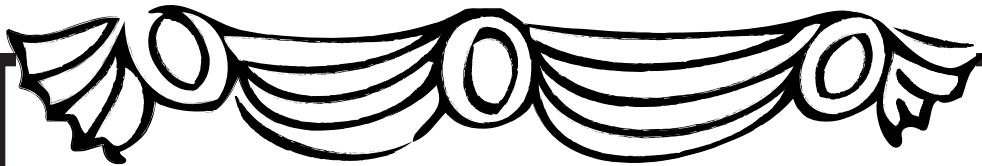
Please make checks payable to the Merchant's House Museum and mail with this form to 29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003-7003, or charge your contribution to: American Express Visa Master Card

Card No. _____ Exp. _____ Signature _____

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Telephone _____ Email (please!) _____



CALENDAR OF 'SPIRITED' EVENTS

Reservations and prepayment are required unless otherwise noted. Call 212-777-1089.

Thursday, September 24, through Monday, November 2

Exhibition: Death & Mourning in a Mid-19th Century Home

Learn how New Yorkers dealt with death and grief in the mid-19th century as you explore poignantly recreated scenes throughout the House, including a death watch in the bedroom and a funeral in the parlor.

Included with regular Museum admission, reservations not required.

October 23, 24, 29, & 30, 6 to 10 p.m. (45 minute tours begin every half hour)

Candlelight Ghost Tours of "Manhattan's Most Haunted House"

Come see the house *The New York Times* called "Manhattan's Most Haunted" by flickering candlelight – complete with eerie scenes of mid-19th century death and mourning. You'll find out what paranormal investigations have uncovered and hear about strange and inexplicable occurrences from people who actually experienced them. *Not recommended for children. \$25, MHM Members \$13.*

Sunday, October 25, 3 to 5 p.m.

From Parlor to Grave: 1865 Funeral Reenactment

The parlors will be draped in black crape as we recreate the 1865 funeral of Seabury Tredwell. After the service, mourners are invited to follow the coffin to nearby New York City Marble Cemetery – rarely open to the public – for a tour. 19th-century mourning attire encouraged; black crape armbands will be provided. *\$15, MHM Members \$10.*

Celebrate Halloween, 19th-Century Style

Saturday, October 31, Noon to 5 p.m. (30 minute tours begin every 20 minutes)

Family Friendly Ghost Tours to Make Your Halloween a Scream

Celebrate Halloween at a 'real' haunted house. Tours of the Museum's exhibition about 19th-century death and mourning are just spooky enough – then come downstairs for hot cider, creep cakes, lady fingers, and 'spirited' 19th-century activities. *Recommended for ages 7-12. Adults & Children \$10.*

Saturday, October 31, 60 minutes Readings at 7 & 9 p.m.

Spine Tingling & True: Ghost Stories of the Merchant's House Museum

Official Merchant's House ghost-storyteller Anthony Bellov will read selections from 19th-century horror classics, and recount highlights from his ongoing research into the strange and supernatural occurrences at the Merchant's House Museum – in a parlor arranged for a mid-19th century funeral!

\$25, MHM Members \$15.



The Museum's educational programs are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

MERCHANT'S HOUSE MUSEUM

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.

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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.

Visit the Museum

Hours Thursday through Monday, 12 to 5 p.m., self-guided tours
Groups by appointment
Admission Members Free
Adults \$8, Students & Seniors \$5

29 East Fourth Street, NYC 10003
Tel 212-777-1089 Fax 212-777-1104
www.merchantshouse.org

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29 East Fourth Street
New York, NY 10003



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