



# NEWSLETTER

Latest Updates | Museum Stories | Upcoming Events

## Board of Trustees

### OFFICERS:

- John Saraceno, *President*
- Stacey Williams, *Vice-President*
- Khristine Forehand, *Treasurer*
- Lisa P. Soler, *Secretary*
- Margaret Ryan, *Governance Chair*

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- Kristen Evangelista
- Mark Harrington
- Daniel Horn
- Jane Hunter
- Terry P. Mingle
- Sandy Panzanella
- Michael Welser
- Jerry Wilcox
- Marisa Zogg

### SUNY CORTLAND INTERNS:

- Gavin Brown
- Mitch Whittaker

*We wish our former interns all the best!*

## A Word from Board of Trustees President, John Saraceno

The issues created by the COVID pandemic over the past twenty months have made times very challenging for many historic venues across the Country, including the 1890 House Museum. Through the diligence of the Board and Directors and museum staff, we were able to continue museum tours on an ongoing basis, however the major annual events, such as the Annual Gala, Valentines Day Dinner, and Gambling with Gatsby, all had to be cancelled. These events have always been the significant fundraising functions for the organization, and their cancellations had a negative impact on the Museum operating budget. Fortunately, through cutting expenses and pursuing several grant programs, the Museum has survived! In the coming months we look forward to beginning to resume some of our regular annual events, while observing all the precautions necessary to do so safely. We have already begun to book small private family events such as weddings, wedding and baby showers, birthday parties, anniversaries and graduation parties, and more. We have even had several very successful ghost hunting, paranormal, and psychic events at the Museum over the past several months which were well attended and enjoyed. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you would like host or attend one of these events going forward.

One of the major challenges created by the pandemic has been the lack of staffing at the museum, which has unfortunately diminished our ability to communicate with our membership.

As you are all aware, memberships and the financial support of our members is imperative to the continued operation and success of the Museum.

As such, we are now on a mission to reach out to our current and past members to remind them

*(Continued on page 2)*



how important they are to the future of the 1890 House. We have included the membership information in this newsletter, so you hopefully follow through with your renewal or new membership!

The 1890 House Museum is also in the process of kicking off a new Capital Campaign to support the much-needed interior and exterior renovations and repairs of both the Main House and the Carriage House. The deferred maintenance caused by the pandemic has now become a critical issue in some circumstances and needs immediate attention. We are hoping that you can help us with this campaign and have included information on just how you can do that later in the newsletter as well.

We also wanted to be sure to remind you that the Annual 1890 House Museum Holiday Wassail is just around the corner and to be sure to let you know that you are all invited to join us. We certainly all hope to see you there!

Sincerely,

John Saraceno, *President*

### An 1890 House Membership will get you:

- Free Admission to the Museum, *plus* 2 guest passes
- 10% off at the Museum Gift Shop
- A subscription to our e-newsletter

**NOTE:** *Dual and Household individual membership packages also provide free admission to spouses and family members.*

### Entry Level (Household) Membership levels:

**\$35 – Student/Educator:** Unlimited Admission for you and free admission for your student groups; Access to our research library with customized research assistance.

**\$35 – Senior:** Unlimited admission for you and one complimentary admission for 2 guests.

**\$50 – Individual:** Unlimited admission for you and one complimentary admission for 2 guests.

**\$80 – Dual:** Unlimited admission for 2 adults, one complimentary admission for 2 guests, and two membership cards.

**\$90 – Household:** Unlimited admission for 2 adults, children under 18, one complimentary admission 2 guests, and 3 membership cards.

**Enhanced Membership Levels are also available.** Please visit our web site for additional information: <https://the1890house.org/membership/>



### *YOU can help!*

If you'd like to Volunteer or Intern, we would love to meet you! We will the following information:

#### **Your interests:**

- Tour Guide
- Greeter / Front Desk Attendant
- Grounds Assistant
- Events Assistant
- Historical Researcher
- Exhibition Assistant
- Collections / Archive Assistant
- Digitization Assistant
- Photographer / Videographer
- Translator
- Other (please list)

#### **Your Availability:**

- Weekday/Weekend mornings
- Weekday/Weekend afternoons

#### **To Apply:**

<https://the1890house.org/volunteer-intern/> for more information, and to fill out and submit our interest form.

## INSIDE THE MUSEUM

## The Gold Room

By Mitch Whittaker

As one of the first rooms that a guest would see upon entering the 1890 House, the Gold Parlor serves a very special purpose. The room exudes a certain sense of elegance and class, and many people believe it to be the finest room in the house. Being that it was the more formal of the two living spaces on the first floor, one can infer that its use was reserved for special occasions or certain honored guests. Every detail in the room, from the large fireplace mantle to the designs on the fabric of the wallpaper, is important and helps emulate the heightened status of the Wickwire Family and the 1890 House itself.



The room was designed in the French Revival fashion, and as it sits right now, it is styled in its original appearance. Ardelle Wickwire, Chester's wife, was responsible for the décor of the room. She was very interested in Parisian fashion and culture, and Tiffany & Co. of Manhattan helped her furnish the living space with several high-end pieces. When one enters the room, the craftsmanship that went into the construction of the room is apparent immediately. For example, the detailed plaster designs that run along the ceiling at the top of the wall stand out as a distinctive feature of the house. An added touch of flair like this in the home was reserved only for the wealthy of the time. Similar details to express the sheer class of the place can be found in the designs on the front of the fireplace and mantle. Featured on the surround, embellishments which mirror the style of the designs on the ceiling are present and make the mantle stand out as a central feature of the room.

After spending some time in this room, one can find themselves experiencing a newfound respect for the work of carpenters, painters, and masons because of the brilliant detail that was put into each feature of this space. Even more impressive is the fact that during this time, obviously before the turn of the 20th century, there were no power tools. All the beautiful work was done entirely by hand, which is a serious amount of effort in terms of both time consumption and skill, by today's standards.

At the 1890 House, we are so proud of this parlor and everything for which it stands. The room's elegance is a metaphor for the entire house and the period in which it was constructed. By spending time in this room and studying the appearance of it, we all get a glimpse into the style of the day and the decorating habits of the wealthy during the Gilded Age. We are so glad to be able to present our guests with an opportunity to experience a little bit of late eighteenth-century luxury style, and we look forward to continuing this tradition for many years to come.

**DONATIONS ARE WELCOME**

<https://the1890house.org/donate/>





## Do You Know This Woman?

By David Cashill Lane

We have a number of paintings and photos around the house that are not identified. Tourists frequently ask who people are, but unfortunately these are among the answers that our tour guides and director do not have.

This photo hangs in the museum's Gold Room and is one that people most frequently ask about. If you (or someone you know) can identify her, please contact us via email, at [director@the1890house.org](mailto:director@the1890house.org). Any leads are appreciated.

## 1890 House Museum Intern Honored ★ By David Cashill Lane

Christopher Chapman, a 2020-2021 intern from SUNY Cortland was recently selected as "Outstanding Intern of the Year" at the annual History Awards Ceremony held in April.

Phi Alpha Theta, the National History Honorary Society, recognized Christopher for his work in restoring the museum's lower level, storyboards, and pictures. As a result of this work, the area, after five years of closure due to its disrepair, was finally re-opened to the public. Christopher cleaned and painted, repaired the floor, added new displays, improved the lighting, and researched the house for little-used display articles to highlight.

In January his work was featured at a ribbon cutting, attended by board member Lee Benson, his wife Annette, Dr. Evan Faulkenbury (Christopher's history professor and sponsor), Katie Keyser (The Cortland Standard's *Living and Leisure* editor), as well as friends and family. Katie's article, an extensive story of Christopher's work and its importance to the 1890 House museum, was then published in the Cortland Standard.

Christopher is a senior history major with a love and passion for history. His goal after graduate school is to become a history teacher.



## Tour Attendance at the 1890 House Museum is a bright spot!

The *CNY Business Journal 2021 Book of Lists* ranks, based upon attendance, the 1890 House at number 19 out of all museums in the Central NY area. At the top of the list was the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, and Boldt Castle in Alexandria Bay. The 1890 House was the highest-ranking museum in Cortland and surrounding cities. Much of the attendance was made up of those from out of the area (i.e. New York City, Pennsylvania, Connecticut) - with people taking a getaway from lockdown areas.

## Where are they now?

Catching up with The Wickwires

Peggy (Wickwire) King resides in Hawaii. She is multi-talented, and an amazing pianist. You can hear her perform *Chopin Piano Concerto No. 1: Romanze* with the West Valley College Orchestra Players as part of the California Concerto Weekend for Amateur Pianists in Saratoga, CA (back on January 16th, 2012) by visiting this link: <https://youtu.be/R3tIz3S2-Nc>



## Teatime! A Wickwire Tradition

By Gavin Brown

*Teatime!* What a wonderfully social event, filled with delightful conversations, delicious food, and (of course) tea! What are some images that come from ‘teatime’? What’s the setting like? Who’s attending? Naturally, most people’s thoughts may jump to a classic Victorian-style room with fancy dresses, big hats, and elegant china. While that is partly true, classical United States teatime contains much more information to add to the story.



Understandably so, many people may tend to associate teatime with upper-class individuals who were practically unburdened with social problems, when in actuality teatime was divided by class. Afternoon tea was traditionally enjoyed by the upper-class at around 3-4pm, during which small crustless finger sandwiches, macaroons, and several other small food items were served; perfect for quick conversation! Essentially, light foods were offered during afternoon tea to save room for dinner, which typically followed soon after. Around 5-6pm, teatime was usually enjoyed by the servants of wealthier families. Why were their respected teatimes separated? Well, who else would assist the hostess during afternoon tea? *The servants, of course!*

It comes as no surprise that the eccentric Wickwire family engaged in afternoon tea, and probably with high frequency. Despite the Wickwire story being surrounded mostly by industry, there were also a plethora of social gatherings and parties. C.F. Wickwire attended many social events, including Mrs. W.E. Wallace’s evening tea parties for the ‘elite ladies of Cortland.’ One problem people seem to have when examining society in the past is that assuming that mostly all situations were serious. Essentially, they may ignorantly believe that laughter and jokes were a recently created concept. *Definitely not true!* Afternoon tea wasn’t merely used for discussing wealthier families’ capital gains or who had better servants. Most likely, afternoon tea rooms echoed with laughter, perhaps maybe some silly impressions, and news of the world. The point being is the enjoyment of teatime wasn’t a stuffy, dry occasion as most people might have believed them to be. Is there not a perfect visual of Lucy Ardwell sitting in a low, plush couch in the elegant ‘Gold Room,’ surrounded by family and friends, all gossiping and poking fun at their husbands? Maybe Lucy Ardwell half-jokingly critiqued her husband Chester’s mustache!

Of course, with most upper-class events, there was also an expected level of etiquette for attendees and hostesses during afternoon tea. Interestingly enough, afternoon tea tables were seemingly expected to have been “not elaborately decorated.” As in, the table needed to have an almost “thrown together” feel to it, as if little-to-no thought was put into the event. Fine, thin china, not necessarily following any specific pattern, was expected to be set, along with sugar blocks (with tongs), plus cream, and lemon. Hostesses must serve tea to their guests, with some even practicing how to create the perfect cup of tea in hopes of not embarrassing themselves. Clearly the pressure was on during the late 19th-early 20th century teatime!

There definitely was a great deal behind teatime, aside from just tea. These lavish, or average, gatherings created excellent social conventions, news (and yes, *gossip*) sources in order to maintain knowledge of present day events. Teatime isn’t lost in the 21st century, as several people and groups still throw amazing tea parties... including The 1890 House. *Be watching for our next Teatime event!*



**1890 HOUSE MUSEUM**  
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607.756.7551  
[info@the1890house.org](mailto:info@the1890house.org)  
<https://the1890house.org/>

Fall 2021

Dear 1890 House Enthusiast,

*What does the 1890 House mean to you?* Some say it is a jewel in our crown city, showcasing Victorian culture, as well as the Wickwire family's legacy in our community. We agree, but as with any jewel, it needs great care and polishing. For the house, that means upkeep and repairs. Because of this, the current Board of Trustees is embarking on a **\$250,000 Capital Campaign**.

We have identified three long-overdue projects and repairs that need attention:

1. A new roof, window repairs, and painting of the "Carriage House" (Barn);
2. Exterior stonework repairs, and painting of the 1890 House; and
3. Restoration and painting of the 1890 House's interior rooms.

Though a Downtown Revitalization Initiative Grant was received, additional funds are needed to accomplish the above goals. To raise funds, we are reaching out to all who have toured or enjoyed the house throughout the years, along with key community members, to request donations.

If you are willing/able to assist by donating funds, please visit our Capital Campaign web site page, and/or refer to the attached donation suggestions sheet for ideas on how you can help to preserve this local treasure and much-loved Cortland landmark for many generations to come. Please note that donations are tax-deductible, as we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

We thank you for your generosity in advance.

Sincerely,

John Saraceno  
*President, The 1890 House Board of Trustees*



**2021-2022 CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**

**YOUR INFORMATION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**CATEGORIES (tax-deductible donations)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Can of paint: \$25
- \_\_\_\_\_ Various restoration supplies: \$50
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stone repair (*a la* "Buy a Brick"): \$100
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10 hours of Labor: \$250
- \_\_\_\_\_ Equipment Rental \$500
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restore a window: \$1,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restore a stained glass window: \$1,500
- \_\_\_\_\_ Restore a wood floor: \$2,000
- \_\_\_\_\_ Paint a small room: \$2,500
- \_\_\_\_\_ Adopt a large room: \$25,000



**Free Will Donation** (any amount welcome): \_\_\_\_\_

Is your donation in honor or memory of someone? If so, please provide this information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENT INFORMATION (other forms of payment also welcome)**

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date (MM/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU**

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Coming soon - events will return to the 1890 House Museum!**

The 1890 House is currently busy planning events for you. We *hope that you will join us for some merriment!* In our next issue, we will include a list of upcoming events, but until then, be sure to check our web site for any events that might pop up.

**NOTE:** 1890 House Members receive discounts! Join or renew your membership today.

**For more information on events/memberships, please visit:**

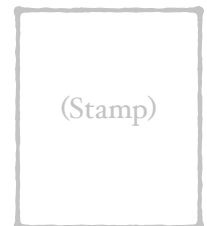
<https://the1890house.org>



**PS: We're on Social Media!** Links are at the bottom of our web site: <https://the1890house.org/>



1890 House Museum  
37 Tompkins Street  
Cortland, NY 13045



(ADDRESS LABEL HERE)

