



*The Wentworth-Gardner &
Tobias Lear Houses*
ASSOCIATION

www.wentworthgardnerandlear.org

Fall 2011

Annual Meeting

Monday, November 28, 6pm

at Strawberry Banke Museum

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Dear Members and Friends,

As the 2011 season winds to a close, we'd like to thank members, staff, and volunteers for their work promoting, supporting, and providing continuity to the Wentworth Gardner-Tobias Lear Houses Association. 2011 was a busy, exciting, and interesting year for the Houses. This year, the corner of Hunking and Mechanic Streets has seen a new office space in the Tobias Lear House, plants for sale, photographs from four different artists on the walls of the Wentworth-Gardner House, dozens of volunteers painting and cleaning, fairies galore, a photo shoot model in a bridal gown on the stairs of the W-G House, and thousands of dollars of work on the buildings.

All of this takes time, and effort, and love. If you would like to support the Houses in a very tangible way, please contact House Manager Stacey Fraser-deHaan to talk about plans for the 2012 season. We'd like to extend our thanks to our neighbors in the South End who watch



Photo by Philip Case Cohen.

caretaker, Peter Allen, and his family for the care, concern and time they give to the houses and grounds. Thank you to our commercial neighbors, Geno's Chowder & Sandwich Shop and the Chandler's Loft, for gifts of hot coffee and sandwiches when our volunteers need a boost. And lastly, thank you to the past generations that kept the Houses intact, vibrant, and gracing our lovely city to this day.

As we move forward into 2012 with plans and goals, we'd like to take a moment to thank our outgoing president Ron Tuveson for his many years of faithful service to the Houses. After more than six years on the Board, Ron will be taking a much-deserved break before (hopefully) returning to us as a volunteer. In his time on the WGTLHA Board, Ron has been a staunch and loyal advocate for the Houses and their preservation. We all owe him a debt of gratitude. *~*

over the house, visit us at the Plant Sale and bring their grandchildren over to tour the house. Thank you to our
-WGTLHA Board

TREASURER'S REPORT

For the twelve months ended September 30, 2011, the Wentworth-Gardner & Tobias Lear Houses Association ended with a positive balance with revenues exceeding expenses and renovation work. This increase in income is primarily due to the generous donation of a single benefactor but also increases in house admissions and membership renewals/additions. To all of our members who renewed or reinstated their memberships and gave gifts whether monetary or in other forms (time, energy and good will), we greatly appreciate your support.

Having carefully controlled expenses and accumulated fund raising proceeds for the past two years, the Board completed just over \$8,000 in house restoration and upgrade projects (see Building Committee Report) without deteriorating the

liquidity of the operating account or having to access the endowment accounts.

The WGTLHA's endowment funds rode the ups and downs of this year's stock market along with everyone else. Total Board managed endowments remained essentially even in value year over year. As a point of comparison, both the Dow and the NASDAQ performed similarly for the same period. An additional fund for the benefit of the WGTLHA is managed by the New Hampshire Charitable Trust Foundation which provides semi-annual interest disbursements which also support our budget. ☺.

-Margot Doering

THANK YOU TO OUR GUIDES AND GREETERS

Our staff this year has included two excellent guides, Pam Schwotzer and Brendan McCaughey. Pam has been with us for a number of years and continues to give visitors wonderful tours. Brendan is working on his dissertation for the history department at the University of New Hampshire and joined our staff this year.

We were also ably assisted this season by two new

volunteers, Colette Willging and Inge Houck. Colette and Inge served as greeters in our warehouse and helped provide a warm welcome to visitors.

Thank you, Pam, Brendan, Colette, and Inge! ☺.

FAIRY HOUSES 2011



Photo by Laura Pope

For the seventh consecutive year, the WGTLHA participated in the annual Fairy Houses event in the South End of Portsmouth. Along with Strawberry Banke, our houses hosted more than 3,000 visitors during the two-day event.

The Fairy House event remains our single largest fund-raiser and we will receive our portion of the ticket sales in the coming months, thanks to the generosity of Friends of the

South End.

In addition, we sold cotton candy, popcorn, bottled water, and fresh fruit this year and made a small profit from that endeavor. Our thanks to former Board members Judy Capobianco and Penny Gant for making available fairy trinkets (wings, crowns, necklaces) that were also sold at the event.

The House Manager wishes to thank the current Board, tour guide Brendan McCaughey, and our day-of volunteers for their help with this annual event! ☺.



Photo by Laura Pope

DOUBLE EXPOSURE: HISTORIC & CONTEMPORARY IMAGES OF THE WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE

In June, nearly fifty people were welcomed to the opening of our 2011 exhibit, "Double Exposure: Historic and Contemporary Images of the Wentworth-Gardner House." This photography exhibit was curated by our own House Manager, Stacey Fraser-deHaan.



Stair Landing from Upper Hallway, 2011
Geneve Hoffman (photography), Kate Martin (styling)

In August, Richard Candee gave an amusing, interesting and educational lecture entitled "Wallace Nutting's Portsmouth: Photographing the 'Colonial Past' 1908-1918." The lecture, illustrated with Nutting prints of the Wentworth-Gardner House and other historic homes in Portsmouth, was a wonderful treat. We hope Richard will come back and talk again. ☺.

-Helen Rollins



Upper Hallway from Stair Landing
M.M. 2886, Metropolitan Museum of Art

Along with Wallace Nutting's prints, several photos taken by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the 1920s and 30s and modern photos by local photographers Philip Case Cohen and Geneve Hoffman were also exhibited. Funding for both "Double Exposure" and an exhibit of Wentworth, Gardner, and Lear family trees was generously provided by Piscataqua Savings Bank, People's United Banke, and Jeanne Rosadina, CPA.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

I am a design professional with extensive experience in brand strategy and management, team building/leadership, and design of conceptual, message driven creative. This unwieldy sentence comes from the last iteration of my resume, but it's actually true and some of this experience will hopefully be useful to the Wentworth-Gardner. I am looking forward to the opportunity to contribute whatever I can to the marketing and communications efforts of the group.



My interest in being part of the Wentworth-Gardner team probably stems from a childhood spent in Connecticut being hauled around to historic homes by my parents every chance they got. I loved it. ☺.

-Betsy Bennett

HOUSE MANAGER'S REPORT

We've had a busy and exciting year at the houses! The month of May saw a lot of activity. Our annual Plant Sale went off without a hitch. We had a visit from two classes of third graders from Little Harbor School. A dozen volunteers from Liberty Mutual and a local realtors' group helped paint the fences and clean the houses for the upcoming season.



Day of Caring volunteers take a break from painting for a photo op!

AND we hosted an inspiration photo shoot for local wedding talent! As

the Association contemplates hosting wedding ceremonies and photo shoots at the houses, we're grateful for the advice of wedding experts like photographer Geneve Hoffman and planner Kate Martin. Six of the images from the May photo shoot were featured in the "Double Exposure" exhibit.

After the summer tourists went home, we stayed busy. A total of eighty-four visitors viewed the houses during regular tours in September and we hosted many more during Fairy House weekend. Good thing we had sixteen volunteers from Liberty Mutual to help us clean, paint, and prepare!

All told, the houses were visited by nearly 450 people in the 2011 season.

We thank you all for visiting and look forward to seeing you next year. Or this

winter — we can always use more volunteers! ☺.

-Stacey Fraser-deHaan

BUILDING COMMITTEE REPORT

After two years of scrimping and saving, the building committee was happy to be at work this past year with projects large and small. First, we would like to thank John Schnitzler for kindly joining the committee to lend his expertise, energy and knowledge to the preservation of our houses. With John's able assistance, we addressed the work needed on the north wall of the Wentworth Gardner House.

Here is some background on the situation and the resolution:

The lower four to five feet of clapboards on the back "L" section of the house were either rotted or beginning to deteriorate. If it had continued, we would have lost exterior protection from the elements and risked moisture damage to the underlying structural supports.

The primary cause of the deterioration was rain water and seeping ground moisture trapped by the cement bulwark poured around the "L" foundation, probably in the 1950's or slightly earlier. At some point, the rain gutters

that existed on the roof of the "L" were removed on both the north and south sides. As a result, rain was pouring directly off the roof, hitting the cement bulwark and splashing back against the clapboards and seeping into the areas between the cement and the wood of the house itself. Hence, moisture and rot built up over time.

To fix the damage, the committee engaged Jack Kane to remove the affected clapboards, examine the underlying supports for damage and rot, replace any affected wood, install new clapboards, and prime the area to seal the wood. This work was completed in September. To prevent future recurrences, the building committee sought and received approval from the Historic District Commission to reinstall the gutters on both sides of the "L" which will direct the water away from the cement bulwark and keep the lower clapboards of the "L" from being drenched with excess water. Installation of the gutters was completed in October (our 2012 fiscal year). A lead certified painter has already been contracted to paint the entire north wall of the house,

including the "L" in the spring before opening day.

Additional maintenance issues that were addressed this year include an upgrade to the fire and burglary detection system, motion activated lights for the yard between the two houses, and an upgrade of electrical systems in the caretaker's apartment and laundry facility. Separately, a small back room in the Lear House was outfitted to serve as the Association office. Appropriate wiring and electrical upgrades were installed and the office was occupied in March allowing the Board to cease rental payments for office premises in another location.

For 2012, the committee will return to the moisture issues in the basement of the Lear House, looking at repairs needed to the parking lot surface and laying out a five year project plan. The project plan will help the Board prioritize work, budget capital needs and project major fund raising and grant efforts. ☺.

-Building Committee

THE WENTWORTH-GARDNER HOUSE- WHAT STYLE IS THIS?

When it comes to classifying architectural styles, the nomenclature can get a bit confusing. In the real estate biz, anything not obviously Victorian or glass and steel seems to fall under the "Colonial" umbrella, placing it historically between

Plymouth Rock and the Revolution, an architecturally vague stretch encompassing thatched huts and glittering mansions and hopefully not uttered by architects, but by historians. Architectural historians are the ones we really need to talk to, people like our own Richard Candee, Jim Garvin and Andrea Palladio, the latter not a local.

Do we have a Georgian house? Yes. Georgian has been thought of as any symmetrical mostly five-bay building painted white, as many old-house docents will tell you, but more than being built during the reign of one of the several King Georges, a Georgian house is one where the interior finish is done by a joiner whose work serves to embellish the inside and in the process covers up the framework of the building itself. Previously, the very timbers themselves were decorated with shallow moldings and paint and served as the major focus of interior refinement. Georgian houses use ornamental and complex moldings, carvings and paneled walls and doors to make us forget about the frame and think more about, well, Versailles.

Which, speaking of France, brings us to the question, "Is our house Rococo?". M. Mesonnier designed the decoration for Louis IV at Versailles, and this natural-form inspired style later became generally known as Rococo. As the English designers elabo-



South parlor fireplace carving. Photo by Stacey Fraser-deHaan.

rated on this it became known to us through Chippendale, Thomas Johnson and others in England and thence to New England. And since we do have Rococo-inspired rose-carved panels above our parlor fireplace most probably carved around the time of the Revolution and attributed to the local Ebenezer Dearing, we can claim to have a house that is at least in part Rococo.

Villa Pisani in 1542. Later known as a Venetian or Palladian window in England and America, its derivatives are seen in the 18th century and more often in the Colonial Revival work of the 20th century. Going back even further, we can find these round topped openings in ancient times. It was the ruins in Bagnolo in Italy that inspired Palladio to incorporate them into the Villa he built there.



Palladian window in WG House. Photo by Stacey Fraser-deHaan.

And what would a discussion of architectural style be without mentioning Palladio? The window at the head of the stairs is often referred to generically

as a Palladian window. This round-topped style of window and door opening was actually derived from a more elaborate three-part form with flanking symmetrical openings designed by Raphael and first used by Palladio in his

Hopefully the answer to the question "Whose style is this?", although not simpler, will be a bit more reasoned. Style is something that, instead of being a product of one point in time, is actually the culmination of a lot of them all rolled into one. If you're really pressed on the point you can answer that the style of our house is Roman Palladian Georgian Rococo, although "Colonial" will do if you're in a rush. ✎.

-Al Breed

Wentworth-Gardner and Tobias Lear

Houses Association

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Wentworth-Gardner and Tobias Lear Houses Association

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