Say the name Frederick Douglass and many people visualize an elder statesman. But Douglass began his career as an abolitionist almost immediately after his escape from slavery in 1838. In 1844 at the age of 26 he was invited by abolitionists to speak on the lawn of Independence Hall. Douglass had a natural connection with Philadelphia as this was the first Northern city he came to upon his escape. In 1844 he would still have been a wanted man. Slave catchers working for his former owner would continue to hunt him until he and his wife escaped to England and Scotland in 1845. It is a testament to Douglass’ courage that he came to Philadelphia, so close to his old master's state of Maryland, to give this speech. While no text of the speech survives, the Philadelphia Public Ledger gave the following report.

About two hundred persons, about one third of whom were colored, assembled in the Statehouse yard, on Saturday evening, to hear an address delivered by Frederick Douglass, a man of color, formerly a slave. His address was interesting and of an excellent style of composition, delivered in an easy, fluent manner...The opinions expressed by him were, of course, not approved of by all present, and at times some symptoms of disapprobation were apparent; but the applause of the majority drowned the dissenting voices.

In March of 2020 Douglass will return to Philadelphia in a one man show based on one of his most famous speeches. Audience members will have the opportunity to watch and participate as Douglass struggles with the concept of “Independence” as it applies to enslaved Africans. The play, Tea with Frederick Douglass is the brainchild of Shav’on Smith. Ms. Smith is a graduate of Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland and founder and artistic director of Grounded Theatre Company. Grounded most recently presented excerpts from Ms. Smith’s play The Slave Narratives at the Concord School at this year’s Juneteenth celebration. Grounded’s mission is to tell the stories of the African diaspora. Tea with Frederick Douglass represents a further exploration of the relationship between African Americans and history. Ms. Smith is especially excited to present this work in the intimate environment of Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion.

Author bio: Jackie Jonas is a company member and board president for Grounded Theatre Company.
Remembering Gloria Wallace

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion mourns the loss the Gloria Wallace, long-time docent and volunteer, who died unexpectedly on July 10, 2019.

During the summer of 2010, Gloria Wallace and her daughter, Angela, came to Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion for a docent-led tour. Former docent, Marilyn Popp, conducted the tour. At the end of the tour, Gloria told Marilyn and me that she was a retired Philadelphia elementary school teacher ending her career at Lingelbach Elementary near the Mansion. On the spot, we recruited Gloria to volunteer at the Mansion. She trained as a docent and in September 2010 became the docent for Friday afternoons. From September 2010 through June 2019, Gloria faithfully came to the Mansion on Fridays from Noon to 4:00 pm year round. I could always tell when Gloria was leading a tour because laughter rang out in the museum.

Gloria also volunteered at events. In particular, she loved the Old Fashioned Picnic and always served the ice cream sundaes at this event. She served cookies and beverages at the annual Murder Mystery and Dickens Christmas Party. She cheerfully and capably helped with school groups and special tours. Most recently in May 2019, she was posted in the circa 1860s kitchen to answer questions from a group of over 75 members of the Vernacular Architectural Forum.

by Diane Richardson

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SEPTEMBER – *Love and Mr. Lewisham* by H.G. Wells

Sunday, September 8 at 1:30 pm

*Love and Mr. Lewisham*, set in 1880, is among H. G. Wells’ first fictional writings outside the science fiction genre. Plot: Mr. Lewisham is an 18-year-old teacher at a boys’ school in Sussex. He meets and falls in love with Ethel Henderson, who is paying a visit to relatives. His involvement with her costs him his position. *Love and Mr. Lewisham* is considered one of Wells’ best novels. Cost: $15, Member cost: $10

Make reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/

OCTOBER – Spooky Literary Parlor

Friday, October 11 at 7:00 pm

Join us for a spine chilling evening of Victorian ghost stories. Volunteers select a favorite 19th-century scary tale to read aloud to the group. Select a story that can be read aloud in less than 10 minutes. If you want to be a reader, call Diane at 215-438-1861. Advance reservations are required. Time allows for only eight story readers so submit your selection early.

Cost: $15, Member cost: $10

Make reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/

NOVEMBER – *Olive* by Dinah Mulock Craik

Sunday, November 17 at 1:30 pm

First published in 1850, *Olive* is the story of a crippled child whose parents are disgusted by her physical ‘imperfection,’ curvature of the spine. Olive struggles to take her place in the world as an artist and woman. Join 19th-century bibliophile, Kate Howe, for an interesting afternoon.

Cost: $15, Member cost: $10

Make reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/

JANUARY 2020 – MOVIE NIGHT – Wilke Collins’ *The Moonstone*

Sunday, January 19, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Spend a cozy January afternoon in the Mansion’s parlor watching the movie version of Wilke Collins’ compelling tale, *The Moonstone*. A young English woman inherits a large Indian diamond for her eighteenth birthday. The story revolves around the theft of the diamond; the complex plot traces the subsequent efforts to explain the theft, identify the thief, trace the stone and recover it. Enjoy hot chocolate and cookies at the intermission.

ADMISSION IS FREE. Reservations are required.

Make your reservations online at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/movie-at-the-mansion-moonstone-tickets-67540572671

FEBRUARY 2020 – *Behind the Scenes or Thirty Years a Slave and Four in the White House* by Elizabeth Keckley

Join 19th-century bibliophile, Kate Howe, to discuss Elizabeth Keckley’s autobiography of her years as a dress designer and seamstress for Mary Todd Lincoln and other prominent Washington, D.C. women. After the publication of Behind the Scenes, Mary Todd Lincoln turned against Keckley, causing her to lose her prestigious clients. She died in poverty in 1907.

Cost: $15, Free to anyone with 19144 zip code.

Make your reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/
UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

OSCAR WILDE’S SALOME
Friday, September 13 at 7:00 pm
Saturday, September 14 at 2:00 pm
Saturday, September 14 at 7:00 pm
Written in 1891 and initially banned by censors, Salome is Oscar Wilde’s only tragedy. Seldom produced even to this day, this powerful play is filled with beautifully poetic language and startling imagery. King Herod wants his stepdaughter Salome to dance for him, and in return will give her anything she wants. She wants the head of John the Baptist on a silver platter. A performance scored entirely with live music, this will be an intensely exhilarating theatrical experience you will never forget. Allison Kessler is Salome. Directed by Josh Hitchens.
Cost: $35, Member cost: $30, Young Friends cost: $15.
Reservations are required.

VICTORIAN INSPIRED JEWELRY WORKSHOP
Sunday, September 22 at 1:30 pm
Join us on Sunday, September 22 to design your own Victorian-inspired jewelry. Jewelry designer, Y'vonne Page-Magnus, guides you as you design your own 19th-century necklace and earrings.
Cost: $45, Member cost: $40 (Includes $15 materials fee)
Reservations are required.

OCTOBER

MURDER MYSTERY 2019 – WHO KILLED SHAKESPEARE?
Saturday, October 19, Sunday, October 20, Saturday, October 26, Sunday, October 27
Visit the Mansion to unravel this mystery similar to the game of “Clue.” This year’s interactive play Who Killed Shakespeare? is written and directed by Josh Hitchens with special effects by Jay Efran. William Shakespeare is dead. A character from one of his plays committed this dastardly deed. Help us solve the mystery! Upon entering the Mansion, you receive a clipboard with a list of suspects. As you move from room to room inside the Mansion, you are greeted in each room by an actor portraying a suspect. Could the murderer be the witch from Macbeth, Juliet’s nurse, Puck, Hamlet’s ghost or Lady Macbeth? Help us solve the mystery!
Cost: $16 Reservations are required.

Make reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/ or call 215-438-1861
PYsanky Christmas Ornament Workshop
Saturday, November 23 at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm
Embellish your Christmas tree with your own beautifully decorated Pysanky egg. Learning this ancient technique for decorating eggs is actually easy. Using a stylus called a kistka, we will write with melted beeswax onto the shell of an egg, then dip it into vibrant dyes. We will complete two different eggs in the workshop, and you will keep your kistka and wax to use at home. Join us to make your own little heirloom – it’s a lot of fun and will impress your family and friends!
Cost: $40, Member cost: $35 (Includes $10 materials fee). Reservations are required.

Magnificent Maxwell Affair
Saturday, December 7, 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm
The Board of Trustees of the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion requests your presence as we celebrate the Mansion and get a rare peek into the home of Mark and Jeanette Turnbull. Join us for splendid hors d’oeuvres, champagne, great conversation, and holiday piano music by Phil and Carrie Warner.
Join us as we honor Tulpehocken Station District preservationists, Luke and Marjorie Russell, Linda Corsover and Jeff Smith.
Location: 8811 Towanda Street, Philadelphia, PA 19118
Sponsorship levels begin at $75
Make reservations online at https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/magnificent-maxwell-affair/ or call 215-438-1861.

Coffee with Neighbors and Santa
Saturday, December 14, 9:30 am to 11:30 am
Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion welcomes our neighbors for complimentary Christmas cookies, hot chocolate, and coffee. Learn about the 1860s section of our museum. BONUS: Santa Claus is at the Mansion to hear your Christmas requests. Have a photo taken with Santa as a holiday keepsake.

The Talented Tenth
Black Entrepreneurs, Physicians, Artists and Educators Who Shaped the City and the Nation
Opening Reception - Saturday, March 7, 2020 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
Please join us for a very special evening. Reenactors portraying John Trower, Philadelphia’s most prominent 19th-century caterer and Elizabeth Keckley, dress designer and seamstress for Mary Todd Lincoln. Champagne reception with food taken from one of Trower’s 1890 wedding menus. Open to the public and free of charge. Reservations are required. For more information, visit https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/the-talented-tenth/ or call 215-438-1861
NEW AT THE MUSEUM

NEW BATHROOM

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion has a second bathroom. Elsa Efran donated the funds for the bathroom in loving memory of her aunt, Betty L. Rubin, Ph.D. John Neill Painters served as the general contractor for the project, which began on February 13, 2019 and reached completion on March 22, 2019 – an amazing feat! The bathroom is located near the circa 1860s kitchen. John Neill Painters framed the room and added baseboard. A door, original to the Mansion, serves as the entrance to the room. Bobby Preston from John Neill faux grained the door and all the wood trim to match the existing kitchen trim.

Diane Richardson and Elsa Efran knew that they needed help in choosing all the bathroom fixtures and decorative elements for this important addition to the museum, so they approached long-time Mansion friend and interior designer, Kristine Robinson of Robinson Interiors, to ask if she might help us design this room – pro bono. She agreed! Elsa and Kristine “shopped” in the attic for inspiration and 19th-century antiques to decorate the interior of the new bathroom. Gothic revival wallpaper that originally decorated the parlor now adorns the new room. A magnificent Renaissance revival walnut mirror hangs over a new vanity purchased to coordinate with the mirror.

Every decorative detail in the room harkens back to the Victorian era. Thank you to Elsa, Kristine and John Neill Painters.

THE TALENTED TENTH

A new interpretive docent-led tour entitled “The Talented Tenth: Black Entrepreneurs, Physicians, Artists and Educators Who Shaped the City and the Nation” will be offered on select Sundays throughout several years beginning in April 2020. A committee of board members and Black neighbors used W.E.B. DuBois’s The Philadelphia Negro, A Social Study as a starting point to develop an outline for the tour. Local African American writer/director Shav’on Smith was engaged to write the tour. The tour itself has sound elements, take-away recipe cards and identity cards for featured 19th-century Black individuals, and even a cookie made from Mrs. Fisher’s 1881 cookbook. These elements promise to create an inspirational and memorable experience for neighborhood adults and children.

The opening reception for “The Talented Tenth”, scheduled for March 7, 2020, features live re-enactors, music, and a champagne reception with menu items from 19th-century Germantown caterer, John Trower. This reception is open to the public and free of charge to those living in the 19144 zip code.

MR. JOHN S. TROWER, Philadelphia, PA
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Literary Parlor with Kate Howe

Celebrating Frederick Douglass

Remembering Gloria Wallace

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