



EBENEZER MAXWELL MANSION

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Gazette

Fall 2021

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An Old Garden Grows Anew

Due to a lack of documentation describing how the grounds looked in the mid-19th century, the garden's restoration has depended on informed creativity in addition to historical record. Experiments in interpreting Victorian garden design at the Mansion began in 1975. At that time, a parterre garden was laid out based on the drawing of a 19th century Germantown nurseryman. A few years later, landscape architect Reed L. Engle proposed a new design inspired by the work of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852) and Frank J. Scott (1828-1919). Preeminent landscape designers during the Victorian period in the United States, both men were well known by a broad audience for the instructional books they published on landscape and garden principles. Engle used these very publications in creating a two-part garden for the Mansion, half in the style of Downing, half in the style of Scott.



Many of the shrubs and trees of Engle's design remain today and provide the garden's structural backbone. Garden curator Scott Travaline has recently added new herbaceous perennials to carry color across the seasons. A blue-themed bed within the Downing portion of the garden is now full of lavender, Russian sage, and iridescent blue delphinium. Begonias and diascias fill the white and pink beds. Within the Scott-inspired portion, an area known as the "ribbon garden" bursts with stripes of annuals such as blue sage, pink geranium, and dusty miller. Mexican sunflowers and cannas create their dramatic backdrop, while new espaliered fruit trees return a practical identity to the kitchen garden.

The gardens are a place of beauty and will continue to be open to the public for casual strolls year-round. But they will also begin to host more programs. For example, they will be the setting for this year's Magnificent Maxwell event. Food demos using ingredients from the garden, like sour cherries and peaches, are on the horizon. The mansion has even acquired a Victorian-era grape press manufactured by the American Waggon Co. (as it was known in 1888) to use in winemaking experiments featuring grapes from the garden's thirty-foot trellis. Some of these plans will take a few years to come to fruition, but in the meantime, new garden tours are being planned for the fall.

by Claire Casstevens

LOOKING BACK

INSTITUTE FOR COLORED YOUTH



Institute For Colored Youth

On February 6th, the Mansion was thrilled to host Dr. Judith Giesberg who spoke about the Institute for Colored Youth, which opened in 1852 to offer educational opportunities for African American children in Philadelphia.

HENRY OSSAWA TANNER



Henry Ossawa Tanner

Dr. Anna O. Marley presented an illustrated talk on March 6th about the life of Henry Ossawa Tanner, who enrolled at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 1879 as the only African American student. Tanner became the first African American painter to gain international recognition. 55 people attended this virtual event.

OCTAVIUS CATTO



Octavius Catto

Forty-seven people attended our virtual event about the life and untimely death of Octavius Catto on April 10th, presented by Amy Cohen. Catto was a 19th-century Civil Rights activist who was murdered on Election Day 1871. His assassin was never prosecuted. In her talk Amy Cohen spoke about parallels between the 19th century and today.

THE JEW AS OTHER IN VICTORIAN BRITISH LITERATURE



On June 6th, Dr. Carol Harris-Shapiro hosted an incredible talk about the depiction of Jews in British 19th-century literature. The works of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Trollope, and others were explored for stereotypes of Jewish characters.

LITERARY PARLOR



Kate Howe

Guests had spirited and fascinating discussions at our recent Literary Parlor book club events, moderated by 19th century bibliophile Kate Howe. Over the past few months, we discussed the books:

THE SCARLET LETTER by Nathaniel Hawthorne and *ADAM BEDE* by George Eliot
UNBEATEN TRACKS IN JAPAN by Isabella Bird
THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL by Anne Bronte
WIVES AND DAUGHTERS by Elizabeth Gaskell
CLOTEL: A NARRATIVE OF SLAVE LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES by William Wells Brown

We hope you can join us for our upcoming Literary Parlor events!

COFFEE FOR NEIGHBORS



On Saturday, July 10, the Mansion hosted "Coffee for Neighbors" in our gardens. About 20 neighbors enjoyed coffee, hot chocolate, and delectable pastries while touring the gardens with our horticulturist, Scott Traveline.



MEET THE MANSION'S GARDEN TEAM



If you haven't been to the Mansion lately, make a plan to visit us soon and you will notice that our gardens are perhaps the most beautiful they've looked in 100 years! All of these amazing improvements you see in the Downing and Scott gardens are due to our incredibly dedicated new gardening team: Garden Curator Scott Travaline and Garden Ambassador Claire Casstevens.

Claire Casstevens (Garden Ambassador) is a landscape architect. She received her Masters of Landscape Architecture at UVA and currently works at OLIN, a landscape architecture and planning firm. She is a plant and garden enthusiast whose approach to historic landscapes is informed by her liberal arts background as well as firsthand experiences on farms, at historic sites like Monticello, and in her own garden. At the Mansion, Claire is developing a new garden brochure and garden tour.



Claire Casstevens

Scott Travaline (Garden Curator) is a graduate of Temple University School of Horticulture and brings years of professional experience growing and selecting annuals and perennials for professional and residential clients. He is an expert in cultivation and plant and tree species. Scott is carefully planting and restoring the historically designed gardens at the Mansion. Make sure to watch his ongoing video series "Gardening with Scott" on the Mansion's Instagram and other social media.



Scott Travaline

HOW TO PLANT A CONTAINER GROWN TREE

Our garden curator Scott Travaline went to great lengths to acquire a scarce Laburnum tree to plant at the Mansion since we know that one was part of landscape architect Reed Engle's original design for the restored gardens in 1978. Following is Scott's account of planting this beautiful tree, also known as "Golden Chain."

Currently, plant availability to the homeowner is most likely a plant which has never been placed in real North Eastern U.S. soil (container grown). Here is a brief guide for those inclined to plant a container grown tree.

STEP ONE: Make sure that you understand the needs of the tree. Does it like full sun, partial shade, full shade? When you find the proper location (this should be done before purchasing) prepare to dig your hole.



STEP TWO: Determine the diameter of the hole for the tree. At chest height measure the diameter of the tree trunk. For every inch of diameter of trunk you will need a hole 1 foot in diameter per inch. Depth is determined when you take the tree out of the pot. Add six inches more of depth than the height of the ball. All soil should be placed on a tarp in proximity of the whole being dug.

STEP THREE: Add organic matter to the soil at the bottom of the hole. Don't use peat moss. It could pack too tight and cause problems. Use a good mulch high in organic matter. When packing new soil around the tree, the mulch adds air to the soil. Plus, as the mulch breaks down you are creating an environmental situation for helpful macro/micro organisms to prosper.

STEP FOUR: Amend the soil which was taken out of the ground (now on the tarp). Add the mulch to this soil. Mix thoroughly.

STEP FIVE: Since the tree was grown in a container, take note that the roots will be hardened off. That is, the root ball holds shape (If you take the tree out of the container and the root mass falls totally apart, return the tree). Carefully loosen the ball with a shovel. Pry the roots outwardly, 2-3 inches will do. This step must be done.

STEP SIX: Place amended soil around the ball of the tree by adding water.

STEP SEVEN: When it comes to the soil being filled around the ball of the tree (level to the height of the surrounding ground) create a 4 inch high wall around the new tree with soil. This will help to hold water.

STEP EIGHT: Dress your base with mulch. Fill the walled area you created around the base of the tree with water.

STEP NINE: Dress the whole area around the tree with mulch. You are now finished. For the next six weeks, water three times a week regardless of rain. Fill the area around the tree with water till your manmade bowl is filled. Let it drain and fill again. After six weeks, fill this bowl twice a week until established (look for new leaf growth).





UPCOMING EVENTS

SEPTEMBER



THE MAGNIFICENT MAXWELL AFFAIR

Saturday, September 11, 2021 at 4:00 pm

Join us on Saturday, September 11, 2021 in our beautifully restored Victorian gardens for lovely hors d'oeuvres, champagne, and desserts. Scott Travaline, Horticulturist, and Claire Casstevens, Garden Ambassador, are here to guide you through the gardens and answer your questions about landscape design and best gardening practices. Cost: Various tickets and sponsorship levels are available. Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/garden-party/>



EMILIE DAVIS'S CIVIL WAR

Sunday, September 12, 2021 at 1:00 pm

Join Civil War scholar and author Judith Giesberg, Ph.D. for an illustrated talk via ZOOM about the diaries of Emilie Davis. Emilie Davis was 22 years old in 1861 when the Civil War began. Two years later she penned the words with which we were introduced to her, 'Today has been a memorable day,' opening up a small window into a black community in war. In three slim pocket-sized diaries, Emilie wrote daily entries, recounting events big and small.

Cost: \$6

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/interactiveqa/>



DEEP RIVERS

Sunday, September 26th at 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm

The Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion is pleased to announce our new interpretive docent-led tour Deep Rivers, is now live and in-person at the Mansion. Our docents lead you through the museum highlighting the lives, stories, and achievements of 19th century Black entrepreneurs, intellectuals, and artisans with soundscapes and images.. Tickets are available until 10:00am the day of the tour. Cost: \$8. Free for our neighbors in the 19144 zip code.

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/deep-rivers/>

OCTOBER



SPOOKY LITERARY PARLOR

Friday, October 8, 2021 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, email diane@ebenezermaxwellmansion.org with your selection. Reservations are required. Time allows for only eight individual story readers so submit your selection early. Cost: \$8

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/>

AT THE MANSION

OCTOBER

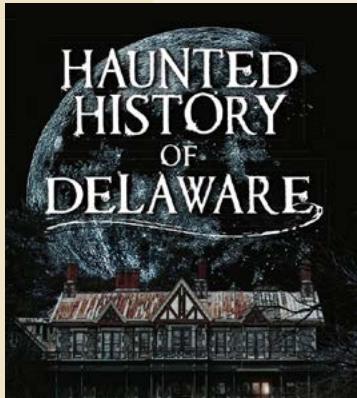


ARCHITECTURAL WALKING TOUR

Sunday, October 10, 2021 at 1:00 pm

Join Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion's Board members, DuRay Montague and Concetta Martone Dragoni, Ph.D., for a walking tour of the Tulpehocken Station Historic District. The tour focuses on the Resilience of Germantown. The tour begins at Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion, moving west on Tulpehocken Street; south on Wayne; east on Walnut Lane; north on McCallum; east on Tulpehocken Street. The tour ends at the Mansion for apple cider and ginger snaps. Cost: \$20

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/event/architectural-walking-tour/>



HAUNTED HISTORY OF DELAWARE

Friday, October 22, 2021 at 7:00 pm

Join author and paranormal historian Josh Hitchens as he reads from his new book *Haunted History of Delaware*, focusing on First State ghost stories and legends from the Victorian era. Hear spine-tingling tales of Civil War phantoms at Fort Delaware, sinister spirits of the Rockwood Mansion, and the tragic legend of an enslaved Black man whose spectral music can still be heard echoing from Fiddler's Bridge. A short Q&A will follow the reading, and copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing. Cost: \$10

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/interactiveqa/>

NOVEMBER



LITERARY PARLOR – MISS MARJORIBANKS

Sunday, November 14, 2021 at 1:30 pm

Lucilla Marjoribanks is determined to look after her widowed father and become 'the sunshine of his life' whether he likes it or not. Lucilla is optimistic, resourceful, and completely without self-doubt, but will her indomitable nature diminish her marriage prospects? *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866) is a wonderfully comic depiction of the conventions and proprieties that rule a vacuous society. Cost: \$8

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/>

DECEMBER



CONVERSATIONS WITH SANTA

Sunday, December 4, 2021 beginning at 10:00 am

Schedule an appointment to meet with Santa! The first appointment is at 10:00 am. Appointments are scheduled every 15 minutes. Each time slot is for one family. You have your own special meeting with Santa. Bring your wish list!

Cost: \$8, FREE for families in the 19144 zip code

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/conversations-with-santa/>

Make reservations online at <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/> or call 215-438-1861

www.ebenezermaxwellmansion.org



UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY



LITERARY PARLOR – *DOMESTIC MANNERS OF THE AMERICANS*

Sunday, January 16, 2022 at 1:30 pm

Domestic Manners of the Americans is a 2-volume 1832 travel book by Frances Trollope, which follows her travels through America. The book created a sensation on both sides of the Atlantic, as Frances Trollope had a caustic view of Americans and found America strongly lacking in manners and learning. Trollope was also harshly critical of slavery in the United States, and by the popularity of tobacco chewing, and the consequent spitting, even on carpets! Cost: \$8

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/>



MORRIS AND COMPANY: A VICTORIAN LIFESTYLE BRAND

Saturday, January 22, 2022 at 1:00 pm

Join Dr. Concetta Martone for an illustrated talk on ZOOM – One of the most influential figures of the nineteenth century, William Morris, was a poet, a designer, and an activist for social reform. His ideas about art and production stimulated a new way of thinking about the design and making of household objects. This talk concentrates on Morris' entrepreneurial efforts, investigating the relationship between his design/production methods, marketing strategies, and socialist ideals. Cost: \$10

Reservations at: <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/interactiveqa/>



VICTORIAN THEATRE: TEA WITH FREDERICK DOUGLASS AND A LIFE IN THREE DRESSES: THE STORY OF ELIZABETH KECKLEY

Friday, February 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm

Saturday, February 12, 2022 at 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm

The Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion proudly celebrates Black History Month with a double feature of two powerful one act plays written and directed by Shav'on Smith. Tea with Frederick Douglass finds him trying out his famous speech "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" while examining his own past. A Life in Three Dresses tells the story of Elizabeth Keckley, also born into slavery, whose brilliance saw her rise to the White House, becoming the dressmaker and confidante of Mary Todd Lincoln. Together, these plays will give you an inside look into the lives of two extraordinary Black Americans.

Cost: \$30 Cost for neighbors with 19144 zip code: \$15

Call 215-438-1861 for details



FEBRUARY

PLEASE SELECT MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

{ } **Young Friend** (Under 30) \$25

- Unlimited docent-led tours
- Research privileges in the library
- Invitations to members-only events
- Advance notice of programs and events
- Discounts to Victorian workshops and events

{ } **Mansion Friend** \$50

- All privileges listed above

{ } **Mansion Sponsor** \$70

- All privileges listed above
- Membership for immediate family

{ } **Mansion Conservator** \$150

- All privileges listed above
- Membership to the North American Reciprocal Museum Program – free admission to over 985 museums nationwide-
BEST VALUE!

{ } **Mansion Sustainer** \$250

- All privileges listed above
- Two guest passes for docent-led tours

{ } **Mansion Preservation Circle** \$500

- All privileges listed above
- Acknowledgment in newsletter
- Two additional guest passes

{ } **Mansion Benefactor** \$1,000

- All privileges listed above
- Gift membership for a person of your choosing

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{ } **Business Bronze** \$250

- Business logo on the Mansion's website with a link to your website and acknowledgement in the Mansion newsletter

{ } **Business Silver** \$500

- Same as above with special silver acknowledgement.

{ } **Business Gold** \$1,000

- Same as above with special gold acknowledgement.

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EBENEZER MAXWELL MANSION

Gazette

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion
200 West Tulpehocken Street
Philadelphia, PA 19144

WHAT'S INSIDE:

Upcoming Events

Looking Back

Meet the Mansion's Gardening Team


EBENEZER MAXWELL MANSION
Victorian House Museum & Garden

All correspondence should be sent to:
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