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Check the website
for dates and times of
Virtual Tours

Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker

The Story of Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker Comes to the Mansion.

While the mansion has been closed during the pandemic, we have not been idle. In addition to various virtual offerings, we have been preparing programming for the coming season. One of those events is the play *A Life in Three Dresses: The Story of Elizabeth Keckley*. Elizabeth Keckley was the dressmaker for Mary Todd Lincoln during her time in the White House. Born into slavery, Keckley rose to prominence as a modiste for the leading women in DC society. Becoming dressmaker and confidante to Mrs. Lincoln was the pinnacle of her career. In the end she became estranged from Mrs. Lincoln after publishing a memoir which in part detailed their time together.



Tenea Wilborn

The play is set 22 years after the publication of the memoir. We meet Keckley as she works in her small dressmaker shop, rebuilding her life after years of turmoil. Using clothing as a metaphor, Keckley guides the audience through the events that brought her to the inner circle of the Lincoln White House and chronicles the years of struggle and redemption after her estrangement from Mrs. Lincoln. In this piece playwright and director Shav'on Smith of Grounded Theatre Company has given us a powerful and intimate portrait of a fascinating woman. *A Life in Three Dresses* will premiere at the mansion sometime in 2021. Tenea Wilborn portrays Elizabeth Keckley.

by Jackie Jonas

LOOKING BACK



Maurice Tucker

TEA WITH FREDERICK DOUGLAS

On November 15, 2020, Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion launched the world premiere of “Tea with Frederick Douglass,” written by Shav’on Smith on Vimeo. Germantown resident, Maurice Tucker, portrayed Douglass in this one-man play. Over 150 people viewed the video.

JULIAN FRANCIS ABELE – AFRICAN AMERICAN ARCHITECT

Board member DuRay Montague hosted a fascinating presentation about the life and work of Julian Abele on Saturday, September 12, 2020. Over 45 people attended this ZOOM presentation, including the son and nephew of Abele, who are also architects. Attendees learned that Julian Abele designed the Keswick Theater and the Free Library of Philadelphia.



Julian Francis Abele



VIRTUAL TOURS

During summer and fall 2020, the Mansion continued to offer virtual tours of the museum’s interiors. Experienced docents Cindy Iavecchia and Kathleen Sholinsky guided guests room by room through the downstairs and upstairs of the museum. Guests saw close-up images of items from the collection for a more in-depth experience than enjoyed during an in-person tour. Over 90 interior design and architecture students from Thomas Jefferson University and Temple’s Tyler School of Art attended the virtual tours in October 2020. Virtual tours are resuming in February 2021.



CONVERSATIONS WITH SANTA

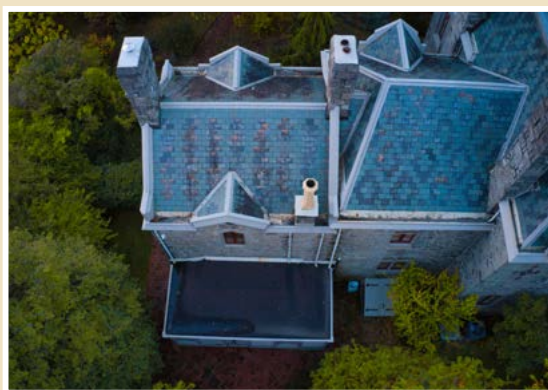
Traditionally, Santa Claus visits the Mansion every December to meet with neighborhood children and families. Because of the coronavirus, Santa could not leave the North Pole until Christmas; however, families met with him virtually on ZOOM on Saturday, December 5. Germantown, as well as out-of-town children, met with Santa and gave him their wish lists.

IEWS OF THE MANSION



East façade of the Mansion with amazing roof patterns

Thermon Dooley took these amazing images of the roof at Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion with his drone. Thermon “Coach” Dooley is an FAA Certified Drone pilot living in West Norriton, PA. He became interested in aerial photography and videography in 2015 after purchasing and then seeing the results of his 1st Drone’s photos and videos. This, in turn, created a desire to capture unique properties in and around the Philadelphia area.



Birds-eye view of the roof



Close-up of the tower.

WESLEY’S JOURNEY – 1865

By Marilyn Dyson

I’ve asked everyone who’d talk to me. No one knows about them: Ma, my sisters and brothers. I said I’d come back to this camp. I went to other contraband camps near Norfolk: Poindexter Farm and Rope Walk. I visited the Orphan Home, the Jail Yard and Pest House with all those sick people. I can’t find them. What else can I do?

Years ago, I ran away from that Georgia plantation and hid in the creek. That was easy. Followed the Union Army; joined the colored troops. I did things I never dreamt about; seen worse. Yet, every night, I dreamt about home; I promised I’d go back.

At home, it rained as hard inside our cabin as it did outside. But, in North Carolina, living in a drafty canvas tent on muddy fields was worse. Seemed like, it was cold and rainy all the time. Night after night, I listened to grown men and young boys cry, cough or moan in pain. More men died from being sick then got killed fighting. We tended horses, marched in the day and set up the next camp at night. Some cooked. Others dug ditches. Killed a few Rebels and watched our soldiers get wounded and die. After each battle someone patched up the wounds; others buried the dead. Then, we marched again. Every one of those men is a hero; the ones who died and the ones who lived.

We told each other we were fighting to free slaves; I was fighting to stay alive; be with my family. I want to sit with my sisters and brothers. Smell greens and taste sweet corn. Not one more strip of dried meat; not another tack biscuit sopping up pot liquor.

But, I can’t keep searching. I’ll never stop thinking about them: Did they leave Georgia? Did they get to a camp? Did they die trying? Are they free? I hope so.

Now, I’ll settle here in Virginia. Find a good wife and be a carpenter again. This time, Mister won’t get the money. I will. And, my children, they’ll learn to read and write.

Marilyn Dyson lives in Philadelphia’s East Mt. Airy neighborhood. She writes historical fiction monologues and short stories about her ancestors. Wesley Simmons is her great grandfather.



Marilyn Dyson



UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY



THE INSTITUTE FOR COLORED YOUTH

Saturday, February 6, 2021, at 1:00 pm

Join Dr. Judith Giesberg for an illustrated talk via ZOOM about The Institute for Colored Youth. Opened in 1852, the Institute offered educational opportunities for African American children in Philadelphia. Many graduates and teachers of the Institute became important 19th-century civil rights activists and leaders. Dr. Giesberg is an expert on the history of women and gender during the U.S. Civil War. Cost: \$6

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



LITERARY PARLOR – *THE SCARLET LETTER AND ADAM BEDE*

Sunday, February 21, 2021, at 1:30 pm

Hawthorne's compelling work *The Scarlet Letter*, published in 1850, shows the ripple effect that two characters' actions have on their insular New England Colony. Elliot's novel, *Adam Bede*, was published in 1859. It is a response to *The Scarlet Letter* and what she observed as the double standards for men's behavior versus women. Join us from the comfort of your own home via ZOOM for a lively discussion led by Kate Howe. Cost: \$6

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



HENRY OSSAWA TANNER

Saturday, March 6, 2021, at 1:00 pm

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion is pleased to host Dr. Anna O. Marley for an illustrated talk via ZOOM about Henry Ossawa Tanner. Tanner was born in Pittsburg but grew up in Philadelphia. In 1879, he enrolled in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and was the only African American enrolled at that time. He is known as a realistic painter and became the first African American painter to gain international acclaim. Cost: \$6

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

MARCH



LITERARY PARLOR – *UNBEATEN TRACKS IN JAPAN*

Sunday, March 14, 2021, at 1:30 pm

Unbeaten Tracks in Japan is a travel diary written by Isabella Bird of her trip to Japan in 1878. It chronicles the trip Bird made with a Japanese interpreter named Ito in 1878 from about June until September from Tokyo to Hokkaido, and recorded such things as Japanese houses, clothing, the sex industry, and the natural environment in great detail, as they were during the early years of the Meiji restoration. Join 19th-century bibliophile Kate Howe for a lively discussion via ZOOM. Cost: \$6

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

AT THE MANSION

APRIL



OCTAVIUS CATTO

Saturday, April 10, 2021, at 1:00 pm

Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion is pleased to welcome Amy Cohen for an illustrated talk via ZOOM about the life of Octavius Catto, 19th-century civil rights activist. Catto was murdered in broad daylight on election day, October 10, 1871. Catto's assassin, Frank Kelly, was not prosecuted. In her talk, Cohen draws parallels to what happened in the 19th-century and what is happening today. Join us for what surely will be a most informative talk, with time for discussion afterward. Cost: \$6

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



LITERARY PARLOR – *THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL*

Sunday, April 11, 2021, at 1:30 pm

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is the second and final novel by the English author Anne Bronte. The novel is framed as a series of letters from Gilbert Markham to his friend about the events connected with his meeting a mysterious young widow, calling herself Helen Graham, who arrives at Wildfell Hall. Critics consider *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* to be one of the first feminist novels. Join 19th-century bibliophile Kate Howe for an exciting discussion via ZOOM.

Cost: \$6

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

JUNE



LITERARY PARLOR – *WIVES AND DAUGHTERS*

Sunday, June 13, 2021, at 1:30 pm

Elizabeth Gaskell wrote *Wives and Daughters* from 1864 to 1866 as a series for *Cornhill Magazine*. Gaskell died suddenly in 1865, and Frederick Greenwood completed the novel. It tells the story of a young Molly Gibson who has been raised by her widowed father, Dr. Gibson. As Molly grows older, she attracts one of Dr. Gibson's apprentices' attention, so she is sent to stay with the Hamleys of Hamley Hill. While she is away, Dr. Gibson remarries; Molly is not fond of her new stepmother but does find an ally in her new stepsister. The novel weaves an intricate tale of romance.

Cost: \$6 <https://ebenezermaxwellmansion.org/literary-parlor/>

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



UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY



LITERARY PARLOR – *MISS MARJORIBANKS*

Sunday, July 18, 2021, at 1:30 pm

Miss Marjoribanks is an 1866 novel by Margaret Oliphant. It was first published in serialized form in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine from February 1865. It follows the exploits of its heroine, Lucilla Marjoribanks, as she schemes to improve the social life of the provincial English town of Carlingford. Join 19th-century bibliophile Kate Howe for what surely will be a fascinating discussion.

Cost: \$6

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

AUGUST



LITERARY PARLOR – *CLOTEL*

Date to be announced.

Clotel; or, The President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the United States is an 1853 novel by William Wells Brown about Clotel and her sister, fictional slave daughters of Thomas Jefferson. Brown, who escaped from slavery in 1834 at the age of 20, published the book in London. He was staying after a lecture tour to evade possible recapture due to the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act. Set in the early nineteenth century, it is considered the first novel published by an African American and is set in the United States.

Cost: \$6

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

LOOKING BACK - EARLY DAYS AT THE MANSION



From left - Irene Garson, Michelle Lanshie, Elisabeth Gentieu, Katie Giomi, Margaret Hawley, Howell Heaney, unknown lady

Mary Meloscia shared this great photo and information from the 1980s. Elisabeth Gentieu is holding a portrait of Charles Dickens. The holiday readings from Dickens were the high point of the Mansion's Dickens Christmas. Howell Heaney was one of the readers. Listening to Harold Rayvis read Christmas at Dingley Dell from *The Pickwick Papers* was worth the admission price, if only to hear him speak as the Fat Boy. He was side-splittingly funny. Even in the earlier days before the Mansion was restored, the greens and decorations made the house seem an enchanted piece of yesteryear. The first Dickens Christmas celebrations occurred before much of the work that has made the Mansion the historic beauty it is today. Neighbors pitched in to clean and decorate the house, Claire Kofsky made her famous wassail-dispensed in the current library, known that day as the Blue Lion Inn, where shots of spirits could be bought and added to the wassail.

PLEASE SELECT MEMBERSHIP LEVEL:

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- Same as above with special silver acknowledgement.

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- 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

Views of the Mansion

Early Days at the Mansion


EBENEZER MAXWELL MANSION
Victorian House Museum & Garden

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