

Oneida Community JOURNAL

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The ONEIDA COMMUNITY MANSION HOUSE

A National Historic Landmark

The ONEIDA COMMUNITY MANSION HOUSE (OCMH) was chartered by the New York State Board of Regents as a non-profit museum in 1987. It is the only site to preserve and interpret the history of the Oneida Community, one of the most radical and successful of the 19th century social experiments. OCMH publishes the *Oneida Community Journal* to inform the public of the cultural and educational activities at the Mansion House and to present articles about social and historical topics of interest within the context of its mission.

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COVER ILLUSTRATION

The great blizzard of March 10, 1892 (gift of Robin and Rhoda Vanderwall)

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR(S)

Patricia A. Hoffman and Christine Hall O'Neil

PAH

How good it feels to whole-heartedly welcome Christine O'Neil as Executive Director, and to revel in the knowledge that I can retire again knowing the organization is in good hands. Chris possesses an innate sense of the longtime culture of this remarkable place. Her knowledge and experience with local foundations, with state and local tourism agencies, and with regional historic and cultural sites are tremendous assets. She will serve you well.

I thank everyone who supported me during the leadership transition and responded so generously to our year-end appeal for contributions. I also want to thank the newly elected trustees (see article by Jonathan Pawlika) for accepting the challenge and privilege of serving this organization. All these positive things almost make me wish I weren't retiring.



*Executive Director
Christine Hall O'Neil*

CHO:

It is a privilege to be part of the Oneida Community Mansion House organization. From the stories of intentional improvement to the dedication displayed by supporters today, there is much to emulate and honor within this community.

My path to the Mansion House is connected to a docent. Like countless other students, I was inspired by Joe Valesky's passion for cultural history. This led me to study art history at Cornell University. After my internship at the Johnson Museum of Art and several sales and nonprofit jobs in the Northeast, I returned to Fayetteville to start a family. Once here, I reconnected with the landscape, the spaces, and the enlightened history of Upstate New York. After raising three children, I returned to the museum field. For the last six years, I helped lead the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum through a period of growth. Currently, I serve on the Madison County Tourism Board. In my free time, I cycle, kayak, and snowshoe while enjoying the natural beauty of Central New York.

My goal is to work with and for all of you to serve the mission and ideals of the Oneida Community Mansion House. I will work to listen, to learn, and to navigate the museum and nonprofit environment. I will work with the guidance of a talented Board of Trustees, the assistance of a talented staff, and the commitment of devoted members and volunteers.

Thank you to the Board of Trustees for their support and to Pat Hoffman for being an accessible and generous resource. The Oneida Community is and always has been an ambitious endeavor—and we would not want it to be anything else.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

by Jonathan Pawlika, Chair, Board of Trustees

The Mansion House has more than new trustees joining its family. Our search for an Executive Director ended not far from the Mansion House when we hired Christine Hall O'Neil at the end of January. Chris has served as Executive Director of the Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum for the past six years where she received a 2014 Museum Association of New York Award of Merit for "Community Engagement for Tuesdays on the Towpath," a recreational and interpretive bike ride program, and the museum received an award for Outstanding Education Program by the CNY Council for the Social Studies.

Chris' work in and knowledge of the community is extensive and includes serving on the board of Madison County Tourism where she chairs the Cultural and Heritage Tourism Committee, and serves on the CNY Citizen Trail Council, and the Canal Trail Association of NY. Chris is a founding member of the Old Erie Canal Community Working Group and advisor on the REDC Local Waterfront Revitalization Grant program, and a 2015-2016 alumna of the CNY Community Foundation's Marsellus Executive Development Program. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in History of Art from Cornell University and resides nearby in Fayetteville,

Cont'd. next page

We also want to welcome a new staff member to a newly created position. A couple of years ago the Board of Trustees retained consultant Elizabeth Leibrick to conduct an organizational assessment. After extensive review, one of her recommendations was to add an Operations Director to oversee the areas that don't directly support the non-profit mission. This new position would have the responsibility of managing and increasing revenue in the areas of residential apartments, overnight lodging, facility rentals, and lease of the dining rooms and kitchen. The Board accepted the consultant's recommendation as vital to the Executive Director's time and ability to cultivate donors, build membership, obtain grants, increase the visibility of the organization, and work with the Board to plan for and secure its future.

With Chris in place as the new Executive Director, the time was right to add an Operations Director and we are pleased to welcome Maria Skinner to that position. Maria earned a Bachelor

degree of Fine Arts from the Cleveland Institute of Art and served as a trustee of the OCMH in the early 2000s. She has run and operated her own business as a Special Event Planner (weddings, corporate events, and not-for-profit fund raising events). Recently, she lived in Buffalo working as a Showroom Designer for a major northeastern furniture company and has been working as a freelance designer, specializing in residential interior decorating, space planning, and color design. Maria grew up in Kenwood. Her parents met when they lived at the Mansion House, as did she for a short time. She also followed in her father's footsteps when she worked for Oneida LTD Silversmiths in the late '90s. Maria volunteers with several local community organizations, including Oneida Healthcare, Kallet Civic Center, and Madison County ARC.

We look forward to working with Chris and Maria and to the realization of our present and future goals.



ON ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

By Pierrepont B. Noyes (1930)

One of the most persistent of human phenomena is the struggle waged by every generation to perpetuate those things it has created and loved. The only phenomenon more persistent is the struggle of each succeeding generation to destroy the past and build in its place an environment suited to its own ideas and ideals--forever new. The first is the passion of age; the second of youth. The struggle between these two is as old as the human race; and always youth had triumphed.

I have always believed it possible to avoid this struggle, or at least to greatly modify the poignancy of regret and exasperation which it entails.

If in the heyday of their active years men would recognize that just as they had inherited the earth so another generation would later inherit it and would surely willy-nilly alter it--deface it, if you will--in spite of protests or entailing prohibitions, if, recognizing this, those men would see that their greatest chance of influencing the world of the



Pierrepont Noyes and son, Pete Noyes, 1937.

next generation lay in educating youth in their ideals, there would be more hope and less bitterness when the time came to turn over to their hands the cherished creations of a lifetime. I would add to this, as an effective means of influencing the future, selection from each rising generation of young men who had ideals.

All of which has a special application to the Oneida Community, Ltd. During the last two decades of the 19th century, those fine old religionists who had, for half a century, made salvation of their souls the primal concern of their

lives, could not but look with suspicion and regret upon the

new generation then arising which, with collegiate agnosticism was rationalizing religion and, frankly enthused by worldly ambition was entering the lists of a militant materialism. It did not seem to occur to their elders that these youngsters might, as a result of their early associations, insist on working out a new industrialism and commer-

cialism which would encourage while it supported a simple democratic kind of living such as they themselves had attained as a sort of by-product of Christian aspirations. It is probable that even this would have seemed to these worthy men and women a sorry exchange. The old was dying; the new was strange; "Alas for these degenerate times!"

Now those young people of the "Gay Nineties" are between fifty and sixty years of age. They have had their turn at creating. The Oneida Community, Ltd. of 1930 is an expression of their ideals and they are approaching that difficult time of transition when their work will pass into younger hands. Will they repeat the age-old error? Will they try to "set" in firm concrete the structures they have built and forge into iron hands those traditions which they inevitably love? If so, they will cheat themselves and hamper a generation possessing just as valid ideals as their own.

We built the Oneida Community, Ltd. along certain lines. If in the future it is to be a virile institution and not a tombstone, a useless monument, the new generation must have a free hand to make of it what they will. Tradition must not be a law but an affection. What is must not be sacred or compulsory but a foundation on which youth may be free to build a better Oneida Community, Ltd. along its own lines, even though those lines are new and perhaps suspiciously strange to a generation whose ideals hark back to youth lived in a very different world.

So we will ask does this mean we must say goodbye to all those principles and hopes for which we have lived. Not at all, unless all these

years we have failed to make wise use of our opportunities. There have always been two ways in which we could influence the future--selling our principles to rising youth and selecting personnel.

I do not think it is an exhibition of that incurable optimism of which I am often accused, that I should believe the future Oneida Community, Ltd. likely to be an improvement on the past; and for the following reasons:

As I have observed the rising generation here, they are sold on Kenwood, on Kenwood life, and--on the "Big House." Beyond this, I believe that they are, most of them, sold on such a distribution of whatever prosperity comes our way, as will make possible comfortable living and happiness throughout the whole industrial group; and that they accept the corollary of only moderate wealth for those in a position to take the lion's share.

Again, our selections for important positions have been, I think, exceedingly fortunate. I have noted that managing men who have come to us from the outside take the lead in protecting misfortune in our industrial ranks. Only the other day one such manager pled earnestly with the executive committee for permanent financial aid entirely beyond our legal or moral responsibility for certain old men in Wallingford who lost their jobs when we closed that plant. I have myself been rebuked for "hard-boiledness" by young men who did not get their traditions from the O.C. or the "Big House." In short, we have in the new management of the Oneida Community, Ltd. a lot of young men with ideals and sympathies we would be fools to distrust.



Noyes (seated at right) at Oneida Ltd.'s centennial celebration in Noyes Park, 1948

NEW AND RETURNING TRUSTEES ELECTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

by Jonathan Pawlika, Chairman of the Board

We welcome the following trustees who were elected to the Board at the end of 2017 for three-year terms. Some are new and others served previously. According to the organization's by-laws, trustees may serve two terms and once they take a year off they may be re-elected. I may be biased but I think it's a good sign that several have returned to serve again.

A past OCMH chair, **Tina M. Wayland-Smith, Esq.** is a principal in the Central New York law firm of Campanie & Wayland-Smith PLLC and a graduate of Elmira College and Nova University Law School. Tina was the first female principal in the 40-year existence of The Kiley Law Firm, joined S. John Campanie in 2000 and formed Campanie and Wayland-Smith PLLC that same year. Tina is also the Madison County Attorney, a position she has held since January 1, 2017 and was the First Assistant County Attorney since 1990.

Greg Owens is returning to the board after serving previously as Treasurer and on the Executive, Finance and Budget committees. He became involved in the Mansion House shortly after moving to Oneida in 2005 when he and Matt Roberts started up Sherrill Manufacturing. His role at the company started out mostly in administration and finance but has since switched to sales and marketing which he studied at Minnesota State University. Greg and his family live in Oneida. He is an active member of Oneida Rotary and plays a mean guitar.

Jeff Garner is a long-time Kenwood resident and currently resides there with his wife, Michael. He graduated in 1988 from Vernon-Verona-Sherrill High School, and went on to receive his bachelor's degree in Graphic Design from Rochester Institute of Technology. He was employed for many years in the Advertising Department at Oneida Ltd, but today works for Seifert Graphics in Oriskany, NY. Jeff is starting a new term with the Board of Trustees after serving two terms previously. He is a member of the Mansion House's Historic Preservation Committee and on the board of the Kenwood Benevolent Society. Jeff is an Oneida Community descendent through Dr. Theodore Noyes.

Amy Stone Gebhardt currently lives in Nashville, TN. She owns a home in Kenwood, NY with her husband Paul Gebhardt, a descendent of the Oneida Community, and summers on the St. Lawrence River in the Thousand Islands region. She attended

The University of Buffalo's Business School, and Cazenovia College for Retail Management and has her national HR certification with the Society for Human Resource Management. Amy has held various senior level management positions at The Disney Corporation and Rite Aid Corporations, and led Oneida's Retail and eCommerce business as Vice President of Kenwood Silver. Currently Amy is a partner in Gebhardt Creative LLC, where she provides innovative consulting services in the areas of human resources, eCommerce, digital marketing and management. She serves on the OCMH Executive and Guest Services committees.

A Cornell anthropologist (Ph.D.), **Anthony Wonderley** also holds a Masters degree in historical archaeology. His archaeological work in Central and North America focused on material culture—what objects tell us about their makers and users. Prior to Mansion House involvement, Wonderley served the Oneida Indian Nation as agent for its cultural management and preservation programs as well as acting director of the tribe's museum. Syracuse University Press issues his books on Native American archaeology, history, and mythology. During nine years as Curator of Collections and Interpretation at the Mansion House, he supervised guides, curated more than twenty exhibits, authored a cultural landscape report ("Oneida Community Buildings, Grounds, and Landscape"), and collected an immense trove of Community and company history for the OCMH from the Oneida Ltd. Sales Office. Wonderley edited two Oneida Community books and wrote a history of the Oneida story recently published by Cornell University Press ("Oneida Utopia: A Community Searching for Human Happiness & Prosperity"). He is a Fulbright Fellow, a Fellow of the New York State Archaeological Association, and a trustee of the Madison County Historical Society. Tony serves on the OCMH Historical Preservation Committee.

James D. Trevvett, AIA, joined Bell & Spina, Architects and Planners in Syracuse as a Project Architect after nine years with Klepper, Hahn and Hyatt and has 18 years of professional experience with an expertise in specialized roofing and waterproofing systems and building façade restoration. A resident of Dewitt, Jamie is on the board of the Community Library of Dewitt and Jamesville and volunteers his time with several other organizations. Working with the Central New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects Emerging Professional task

group, Jamie planned educational lectures and seminars to help a wide spectrum of emerging professionals learn new skills and be better prepared to practice architecture. Jamie was appointed Chairman of the OCMH Historic Preservation Committee.

Mark Strong, CPA, currently serves as Treasurer on the Board of Trustees and is on its Executive Committee. He has been practicing public accounting for over 20 years. His areas of practice expertise include: multi-state taxation, consolidated tax returns, research & development credit studies, and tax planning and compliance for

estates, trusts, small businesses and individuals. Mark holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Utica College of Syracuse University. He is a member of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants (NYSSCPA). Mark has also been a member of the Oneida YMCA Board of Directors and was the 2004 Oneida YMCA Volunteer of the Year. In his free time he enjoys volunteering his time coaching youth sports like basketball and soccer, playing golf or enjoying a relaxing day at his camp with his family.



PHOTOS



Curatorial Assistant, Kim Hoffman, tells Behind the Scenes guests about the book collection



Historic Preservation Workshop: Scott Lupini (Lupini Construction) sharing masonry materials



I Love NY staffer flying a drone for a tourism promotion video



Marcia Robinson, Religion Professor at Syracuse University, at our 2018 Discussion Series



Oneida High School's AP U.S. History class on a visit



Graduate students from Winterthur on a house tour

A MIDWESTERN VISITS THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY, 1866

From the Sterling Gazette (Illinois), as reprinted in The Circular, Sept. 10. 1866, pp. 205-6.

Having heard a great deal about the "Oneida Community," I repaired to that celebrated place today, and think that your readers may be interested in what I saw and heard there.

Arriving at Oneida station, you find a hack in waiting to convey all visitors to the "Community," distant about four miles, through a most beautiful section of country. When in the vicinity of the farm, I was truly surprised at the thrift and enterprise displayed by this singular people—for I have no doubt your readers will agree with me that they are a peculiar sort indeed. Arriving at the large and spacious brick mansion in the center of the farm, I alighted in front of what one might well suppose was a splendid hotel at some celebrated watering place.

We were kindly and courteously greeted by a gentleman in the office, who informed us that the house and grounds were free for our inspection. Not being satisfied to look about the premises alone, we soon found a young and very intelligent lady in short dress and pantalets, who very kindly consented to act as our guide, and explain such questions as might be asked, provided they were proper for her to answer. She took us to a splendid hall in the second story of the building, where pupils repair to receive music lessons, and the singers to display their vocal and instrumental qualities. This hall is one of great splendor, and is capable of holding about six hundred persons. It has a gallery on three sides, a large orchestra at one end, and the fresco painting is not excelled by even the Chamber of Commerce in Chicago. It is well seated, nearly all of them being cushioned, and well arranged for heating and lighting. It is the most gorgeous room of the kind I ever beheld. This hall is used for dances, lectures, and all deliberations of the Community, and a splendid brass band discourses the choicest music for the benefit of all visitors.

From the hall our lady guide took us through the large and spacious parlors, which are furnished with great expense and taste. The carpets are of the very best, the furniture of the most costly kinds, sofas, settees and tête-a-têtes in great abundance and the wall hung with elegant and



The main buildings viewed by the visitor in 1866

costly paintings. The number of bedrooms is almost legion—large, airy, and furnished in a style that would do credit to the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York.

[We imagine that the Oneida house-keepers on reading the above paragraph will be somewhat astonished to learn of the luxurious style

of their surroundings, and will ask what sort of magic it is that has transformed in the eyes of this writer their plain and in part home-made furniture into the sumptuous surroundings of the "Fifth Avenue Hotel," and their few tolerable engravings into "elegant and costly paintings." Our visitor evidently saw things in rose-color. ED. CIR.]

We were conducted to the observatory, and a most magnificent sight presented itself to our gaze. Look in any direction you will, and nothing but beauty and loveliness is to be seen. The farm is composed of five hundred and twenty-eight acres, and is under the most perfect state of cultivation. The wheat, corn, oats, rye, barley, potatoes, and other crops, are on the outer edge of the farm, and are the best I have seen anywhere. Nearer, towards the center of the farm you come to the vineyards, orchards, vegetables, berries of every variety known, fruits in great abundance; and as you approach the center where stand the most prominent buildings, your eyes rest upon flower-gardens of great beauty and variety, and lawns, walks, rustic seats, alcoves, groves, carriage-drives, green-houses, hedges of various kinds, until you are bewildered with the profuseness and beauty spread out before you.



Looking west from the South Tower. With the exception of the ice house in the center of the photo, our 1866 visitor would have seen the structures pictured here



*"Their barns are very large, and are built in the most modern and substantial manner."
This was the "Ark," a dairy barn constructed in 1863.*



"Their book-keeping is comprehensive and perfect."

Our guide conducted us to a splendid library of over two thousand volumes, a capacious reading room, and the nursery, where the children play and enjoy themselves in a great variety of sports. One room particularly arrested our attention. It was a class of small girls, from five to ten years of age, learning to sew, by piecing up calicoes for bed-quilts. They were dressed with exquisite neatness, and their sewing would shame many ladies who have followed it for a living. They have a large establishment for canning fruits and vegetables of all kinds, about eight tons of which were put up last season. They are canning peas to-day, and I was much interested in seeing them shelled by machinery. The fruit department, laundry and printing office are all in the building, and a steam engine aids them in these various employments.

Having ordered dinner, our guide announced it ready, and we sat down and partook of the best meal it was ever our fortune to pay our compliments to. I should fail were I to attempt a description of this dinner, and yet I am told that it is the same way they get them up for all who visit them and are willing to try and eat seventy-five cents' worth. The main building is of brick, three stories high, very large on the ground, and is a marvel of architectural skill and beauty. Their barns are very large, and are built in the most modern and

substantial manner. They have a very extensive trap factory, where they manufacture every kind known, from the mouse-trap up to the largest-sized bear trap. This is done by machinery, and is very ingenious and handy. They also have an extensive factory of traveling-bags and ladies' fancy reticules, and exhibit great taste and skill in all things they manufacture.

None labor here unless they feel disposed to do so, yet they inculcate the love of labor in all who join them. They have and own everything in common. They do not believe in marriage. They claim to be bound together only by love and their better nature; that coercion is unknown among them; that the children are brought into obedience and subjection by kindness and persuasion. Whether this is so or not, it is true that everything runs like clock-work all over the premises, and their buildings, farms, walks, grounds, and in their dress, all exhibit the utmost care and neatness. The females all wear short dresses, and look neat, tidy and clean. None of the members eat meat of any kind—do not drink or use intoxicating liquors; and tea, coffee, tobacco and snuff are prohibited. They are all smart, intelligent persons, and their capability for all kinds of business is truly remarkable. Their book-keeping is comprehensive and perfect, and no firm in any county can show better-kept books than these people. All branches of education are taught among them, even to languages, and the old learn as well as the young. Their studies end only with the grave.

There is much more that could be said in reference to this people that would be interesting, but the extreme length of this letter precludes it now. They are truly a remarkable people, and my advice to all is to pay this place a visit when they are East, and see their wonderful exhibitions of skill, beauty of buildings and grounds, and the strange doctrines they profess and practice. They publish a weekly paper at an expense of \$10,000 a year, which all can have free, by writing for it.



GUIDE NEWS

by Molly Jessup, Curator of Education

**Mary Jo Astrachan**

The Jessie Catherine Kinsley Braiding collection is a favorite of many visitors. Mary Jo Astrachan, a docent at the Mansion House since 2007, enjoys “seeing the tourees really appreciate the braidings: the storyline, themes, and uniqueness.” Although the braidings have been conserved through generous contributions, some are faded from light exposure years ago. As a lifelong educator, Mary Jo was inspired to find a way to show visitors the vibrancy of the *Tree of Life* and *Things Not of Man’s Devising* after seeing Pody Vanderwall’s images of the braidings at a Mansion House program.

Mary Jo came to Pody’s presentation on Jessie Catherine Kinsley on May 21, 2016 (a date Mary Jo remembers well because her granddaughter was born later that day!). In the talk, Pody narrated the story of Kinsley and shared images of many braidings, including *Tree of Life* and *Things Not of Man’s Devising*. When the images appeared on the screen, Mary Jo recalls that people gasped because “the braidings were so vivid.” After the program, she immediately thought “we have to find a way to get these” images and share them with visitors. Mary Jo talked with her husband, Howard, an accomplished amateur photographer. Vintage negatives from the JCK Collection, donated by Robin and Pody Vanderwall, were lent to Howard who had them scanned and digitized at Industrial Color Labs in Syracuse. Using photo software, he was able to restore some of the colors in the original braidings.

The restored images will be a valuable educational tool. Visitors will see not only the beauty of Kinsley’s art, but also the importance of preservation and collections care. The braidings are just one part of the rich tapestry that is Oneida Community history. As Mary Jo noted, “the most enjoyable thing [about being a docent] is that people are interested in history and have the time to appreciate the many layers here.”

**Linda Evans**

Although not a descendant, docent Linda Evans has her own family connection to the Mansion House. When Linda started as a volunteer at OCMH in 2004, her mother Margaret Zema Rosbrook shared a pamphlet about the Oneida Community that she had found in 1934, when she was thirteen years old. It was tucked away in an attic trunk of a house Rosbrook’s brother purchased in their hometown of Barberton, Ohio.

Rosbrook found the Community fascinating, and held on to the pamphlet. Years later, after joining the WACs and meeting her husband Harry while the two were stationed in England, she returned stateside and settled in Sherrill, New York near Harry’s hometown of Clark Mills. Linda recalls her mother marveling at the coincidence, saying “Who would have thought I’d come here to live someday?”

Linda has the same enthusiasm for history and the Oneida Community. She began volunteering at the Mansion House before she retired as an art teacher at North Broad and Oneida Castle Elementary schools in Oneida Castle, New York. For Linda, the most enjoyable part of guiding is “seeing their reaction to such a big place, learning about how the people here were one family, and watching their surprise at learning about a place they’ve seen before but never realized what it was.”

Recently, Linda commissioned a replica dress reform costume from designer Jody Luce. The dress reform clothing can be used by docents when visiting elementary schools for pre-field trip visits. A recent visit to McAllister Elementary in Sherrill reminded Linda of what she enjoys most about OCMH children’s programming: “seeing the enthusiasm of the kids, teaching them as much as you know, and helping them learn [about] something historical that’s right here.” Fittingly, Linda has donated the dress to OCMH education in memory of her mother, Margaret Zema Rosbrook.



EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

by Molly Jessup

Educational programs at the Mansion House have received contributions from many sources over the years. This year, our work will benefit greatly from the family of Leota Hill. Hill was an active volunteer at the Mansion House for many years and her enthusiasm for OCMH will continue through this generous gift. We are grateful to the Hill family for their support of our educational mission.

Guided Tours

This winter, we have moved to a new format: guided tours by appointment only from December-March. The museum exhibits remain open for self-guided tours via audio or brochure. Regularly scheduled guided tours with our wonderful team of volunteer staff will resume from April-November.

Walt Lang, an enthusiastic and dedicated tour guide, passed last fall. It is certainly a loss for our institution. Walt's passion for the Oneida Community impressed many visitors, and he graciously shared his knowledge in ways both large and small. It was a pleasure to know him and to work with him. His family donated items for our museum collection that will further enhance our research materials; and in turn, our educational programming.

2018 Discussion Series

Our 2018 Discussion Series is "Beyond Belief: Religion in American Life." Our discussion series is envisioned, as the name suggests, as a means of engaging in conversation about historical and

present-day issues related to the theme of religion. All discussions will be held on Sundays at 1:00pm. Although the discussions address different content, each speaks to the role of religion in society.

With the Oneida Community's history as our starting point, our series will place special emphasis on historical and contemporary issues of religion. Our **March 18** discussion, "Designer Babies of the Nineteenth Century," will explore the spiritual motivations behind stirpiculture, and the ways in which the Oneida Community practices relate and deviate from the larger history of eugenics. On **April 15**, we will welcome Lynne Barnes, a poet and former member of the Kerista Commune of San Francisco. In "Living in Utopia," Barnes will discuss her experiences with communal living and spirituality. Colgate's Fund for the Study of the World's Religions is supporting the program. **May 20** is "Religion and Identity in Today's America" which will include a panel of speakers to consider how religion affects our society.

Also, thank you to Emily Swift for her beautifully designed poster for the series. We hope to see you at the discussions!

Conclusion

We have a wide variety of programs on the schedule from now until September, including a historic preservation workshop, a concert, and outdoor nature programs. Check our website or Facebook page for updates and come join us!



UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE MANSION HOUSE

Some programs include advance registration or program fees. Please check our website or Facebook for information and updates

March 8 & 10: International Women's Day (10am and 2pm)

In recognition of International Women's Day, we will have guided tours at 10:00am and 2:00pm that explore the role of women and gender equality within the Oneida Community and their interactions with the encompassing world.

March 11: Film Screening: Connie Cook: A Documentary (2pm)

*In recognition of International Women's Day:
"As one of only three women in the New York State Assembly in the 1960s and 70s, Connie Cook led extraordinary efforts — against the odds — to create change within a male-dominated government. As a Republican Assemblywoman for New York's 125th District, she sought equality and fought for women's rights. She authored legislation in 1970 that decriminalized abortion in New York State, which paved the way for Roe Vs. Wade in 1973. Connie Cook — pilot, legislator, advocate and attorney — was indeed a woman ahead of her time."*

Cont'd. next page

- March 18: Discussion: Designer Babies of the 1800s (1pm)**
The Oneida Community practiced family planning in the hopes that their children would inherit spirituality. Join our discussion about how religion influenced their family planning and how their ideas relate to and diverge from the larger history of eugenics and reproduction.
- March 24: Historic Preservation Workshop: Caring for Historic Windows (1pm-3:30pm)**
Led by stained-glass expert and window restorer, Jerome Durr of Jerome Durr Studio LLC, this workshop will emphasize identifying issues with historic windows and best practices for the care and repair of windows.
- April 15: Discussion: Living in Utopia (1pm)**
Can Utopian Communities succeed? Lynne Barnes, poet and former member of the Kerista Community in the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, will join our discussion on the experience of communal living.
- April 22: Earth Day at the Mansion House**
Hike the pathway around Sunset Lake and pitch in to take care of our environment in this annual litter clean-up!
- April 28: Arbor Day at the Mansion House**
The Oneida Community planted many varieties of trees at their home. Today, we have over thirty varieties! Join us for nature-based activities and demonstrations for all ages.
- April 29: Book reading with Michael Doyle, "The Ministers' War: John W. Mears, the Oneida Community, and the Crusade for Public Morality" (1pm)**
A riveting account of Presbyterian minister John W. Mears's crusade against the Oneida Community.
- May 20: Discussion: Religion and Identity in Today's America (1pm)**
Since the founding of the country, Freedom of Religion has shaped political discourse, influenced beliefs about equality, and led to a plurality of faith practices, including utopian groups like the Oneida Community. In this panel discussion, we will consider the role of religion in American society today.
- June 3: "The Irish and the Erie" with Craobh Dugan musicians (3pm)**
The story of how the Irish immigrants helped to build the Erie Canal in an entertaining one hour presentation featuring the traditional Irish music they played and songs they sang.
- June (date tbd): Anthony Wonderley, "Oneida Utopia: A Community Searching for Human Happiness and Prosperity."**
Author Wonderley will share information from his recent book about the Utopian Community.
- June 16: Path Through History: Kid's Day Out at the Mansion House**
Bring the entire family for a special guided tour of the house and grounds.
- July 16-20: Oneida Community Mansion House Summer Camp (9am-1pm)**
Day camp for young people age 7-12, with indoor and outdoor activities connected to the themes of: nature, archaeology, and history.
- August 11: Industry and Manufacturing, Then and Now**
Learn about industrial history of the Oneida Community by viewing objects from our collection that were used in the Community's factory (built 1863) and then tour the historic factory to see Sherrill Manufacturing's Liberty Tabletop, the only domestic manufacturer of silverware. Don't wait, advance registration required!



SALES OFFICE UPDATE

by Jody Hicks

The old Oneida Ltd. Sales Office has undergone some exciting changes over the past three years. You may have noticed that a large cherry picker graces the front lawn of the property throughout the summer. We are currently in the 3rd year of a 10-year plan to repair, repoint, or replace all the stone work around the building. We apologize to all people seeking a location to take prom shots, the front stairs are in bad shape, but they are on the short list of items to be addressed soon.

A few portions of the roof have been replaced over the past couple of years and that process will continue over the coming years. As for the interior of the building, there have been some major changes which may make some areas unrecognizable to people who have worked there their whole lives. The first floor has been completely remodeled to temporarily house the Madison County Courts. The courthouse in Wampsville is undergoing an 18-month renovation to become ADA compliant. Once the courts move back, the areas vacated in the Sales Office will be rented out as offices space to smaller tenants.

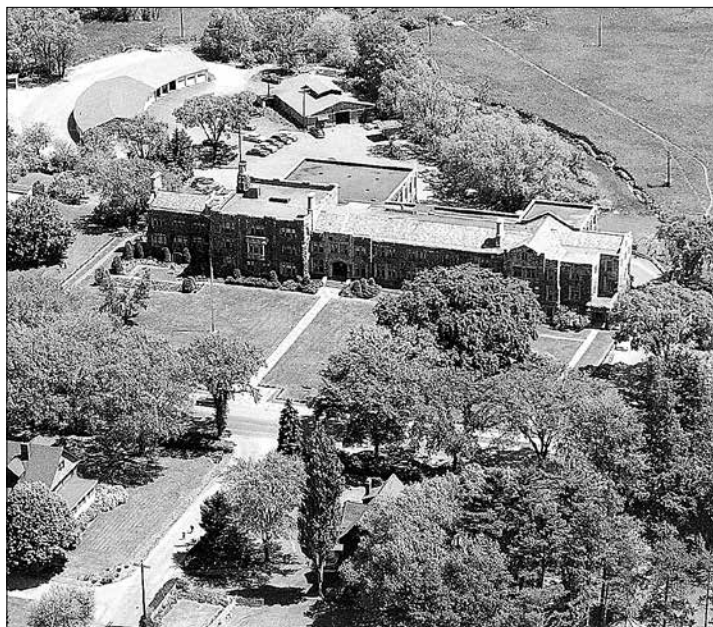
The ground floor houses multiple tenants. The old photography studio was converted into a yoga studio for Bloom Yoga. FPM Remediation, Inc., an environmental remediation company, is located on

the eastern and southern side of the ground floor. Natural Alternatives, a day spa providing facials, massages, acupuncture, and more is located off the main hall. BJK photography, a company that takes school pictures, sports photographs, and more is located just outside the newly renovated cafeteria. There are a couple of other small businesses throughout and there is still space for future tenants.

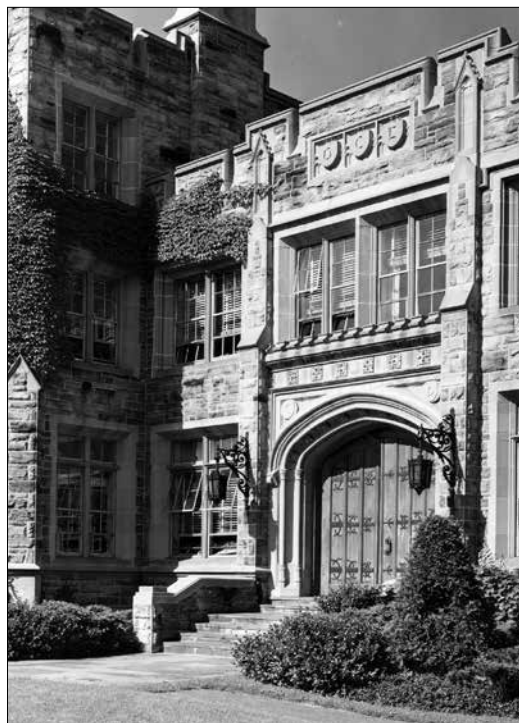
The Blue Room is still blue but now it looks more like a game room and lounge, complete with video games, ping pong table, poker table, couch, and TV. The small room off the Blue Room had been converted into an exercise room with ellipticals and exercise bikes, a treadmill, and a weight machine. These areas are open to the current tenants and designed as community space for tenants of the future.

The top two floors are soon going to be converted to apartments. It is our plan to design these spaces with retirees in mind. All apartments will have one or two bedrooms with safety features designed to accommodate any special needs for senior living. The plans are under review and construction should be underway by spring.

If anybody has questions or would like information, please contact me at 315 663-1850 or check out Kenwoodcp.com.



Aerial view, about 1950



The front door, by Samuel Chamberlain, 1947



MEMORIES OF PUTNEY

by Harriet Skinner

Excerpted from the *American Socialist*, August 21 and August 28, 1879

The precursor to the Oneida Community was a small band of disciples assembled by John H. Noyes in his hometown of Putney, Vermont. From 1838 to 1847, the group printed religious tracts, studied doctrinal matters, and began to take up communal living. This reminiscence is by John's younger sister by six years (born 1817) who gave up marriage prospects and a teaching job when she accepted her brother's religious teachings. Harriet's nephew, Pierrepont Noyes, remembered her as beautifully homely "with many freckles, sandy hair and almost masculine features." The quality of being "masculine" often was applied to her, possibly because she looked like her older brother and, like him, was a systematic thinker with an eye for practicalities. The most organized of John Noyes' siblings, Harriet would become, effectively, the manager of the Oneida Community. [AW]

The responsibility and general popularity of the Noyes family was one of the prepared conditions for the safety of the Community germ. Though it was the wealthiest family in town, it was one which always attracted the good-will rather than the envy of the less fortunate. It was unostentatious, approachable, hospitable. Everybody who knows anything about the founder of the O. C. [John H. Noyes] knows that he finds his own happiness in making others happy; and that his appreciation of merit is without respect of persons. Something of the same spirit characterized the Putney stock. The father was in his element as host and patron, and the mother took into her heart with her own children all the boys and girls of the neighborhood. The father was scholarly, the other was spiritual. Every lecturer that came into town, every artist or cultured notability of any kind that stopped in the place, was a guest in the mansion of the Noyeses. It was the house of clergymen in particular, but whether they were more attracted by Mrs. N.'s spirituality or Mr. N.'s varied knowledge and conversational power, it was not easy to tell. The open door, cordial hand and generous board entered into the charm no doubt. Mr. N.'s business integrity and the moral purity of the whole family were unblemished...

In 1838, when J. H. N. married his wife and came to Putney to live...he found a little band of disciples ready to gather around him as the twelve did around Christ, and give themselves in whole-hearted devotion to what he was about. The organization took the form of a School at first. Instead of keeping the Sabbath in the usual way, we gave a seventh, yes, two or three sevenths, of every day to the study of the Scriptures, and our meetings



Harriet Skinner in
later (Oneida
Community) days

were more like a Bible-class than any other form of gathering. The school continued several years, and then developed into "The Corporation," by which name we were known when our business interests were publicly united. After two or three more years, when our households were combined, we were called "The Association." And lastly, when we entered into our new social order, we stood forth a confessed Community...

Our number at the time of the dispersion [to Oneida] was thirty-one, twenty-one adults and ten youths and children. The adults were all between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, except three, one the mother of the Noyes's, and two others less by two years than twenty-five. Eleven of the adults and most of the children, were born in Putney or adjoining towns. The rest came from different parts and at different times, three from New York City, two from Northern Vermont, two from Belchertown, Mass., one from Meriden and another from New Haven, Conn., one from Newark, New Jersey; in all of which places Perfectionism appeared as one of the fruits of the Great Revival, and Mr. Noyes's writings had many readers.

The Putney Community was never self-supporting. It had a farm, a store, a printing-office, and twelve or fifteen thousand dollars in the bank. It had no mills or factories; nothing that ran by "power." Its press was a hand-press, hardening the muscles of J. H. N., which were indifferently developed by his earlier training....Our first printing was done in a loft over a saw-mill. We got a press and type before we had built an office, and a friendly neighbor offered us the use of a roughly-finished room over his mill, which we occupied several months.



Locust Grove: home of John Noyes' parents and, later, one of the houses of the Putney Community, about 1898

The farm fell to us in the settlement of the Noyes estate, but none of our men were farmers. They were scholars, tradesmen and mechanics. And there was no money in the farm for the best of farmers; at least a New York man would say so. It supplied our table with milk and butter, vegetables and nice garden stuff, with apples, nuts, etc., and filled our barn with hay. It had several dwelling-houses on it which were convenient for our families. It furnished eligible lots for our store and chapel. It was a blessing in many ways; but we never could have afforded it if we had not felt rich.

We published a paper in the printing-office. There we had an industry, a pleasant family industry, but not a productive one. Our paper was then, as it is now, an enterprise of benevolence, and stood in our accounts on the debit side.

The store was a source of income. It was a popular store, notwithstanding some crotchety arrangements. It kept no intoxicating liquors, and was closed at 8 P. M., that hour being then, as in all our Communes since, sacred to the family meeting. As much as the profits of our store came short of our expenses, which was [sic] considerable, so much we sunk of our money in the bank. But we were like a boy in his minority going to school. We knew our father was rich and would set us up in business when we were old enough; and meanwhile we were not afraid to spend the pocket-money which he freely gave us.



Youthful John H. Noyes from an early daguerreotype, about 1840



The Perfectionist store (left) and chapel in Putney, about 1898

SHERRILL HIGH SCHOOL



Pep rally, about 1920

AND THE CREATION OF THE VVS SCHOOL DISTRICT

by Pody Vanderwall

Nearly seventy years ago citizens in the area that comprises Sherrill-Kenwood, Verona, and Vernon embarked on discussions that turned into quite a ruckus. The ruckus eventually was resolved by the populace agreeing to centralize their schools—VVS was created. But, it might never have happened. The successful merger in 1950 was only accomplished by a lot of hard work.

In 1975 Paul Noyes suggested that the emotional story of centralization was in jeopardy of being forgotten. Dwayne Wilbur, a VVS Social Studies teacher, was hired to spend that summer researching and making a written history of the centralization. What Wilbur wrote is a fascinating record paying tribute to the vision and hard work of those who championed centralization and worked hard to implement it.

Wilbur's readable history can be purchased in the Mansion House gift shop.



*Destroyed by fire on February 9, 1942
(gift of Paul V. Noyes)*



KENWOOD NOTES & SUBTRACTIONS

In the last issue, the questions were posed: how many Kenwood houses have sleeping porches and how many have or had staircases? The answers--gentle yet non-responsive readers—are sleeping porches 12, back stairs 15.

□ Hope Owen McMahon (1937-2017), Portland, Maine. Hope was the daughter of Florence Ackley and Tudor Owen. Her sister was Dee Owen Kiefer. Hope grew up in Kenwood, was an artist and art teacher in public schools in New Hampshire, Arizona, and Massachusetts and, for many years, in Portland. She was an inspired artist who inspired her students. Her daughter is Tara McMahon Brophy of Beverly, Massachusetts, also a teacher. Hope had two grandchildren and several Ackley cousins.

□ Gregory R. Burdick (1982-2017), Portland, Oregon. Greg, son of Mary and Dr. Robert Burdick, grew up in Kenwood and was a dedicated outdoorsman and skilled fisherman who became a licensed fishing guide on the Salmon River. He was a passionate music lover and artist. His brothers are Ryan and Andrew; his sister, Kate Burdick Graft. [Pody Vanderwall]

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

August 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018

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Rhoda Molin
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August 1, 2017 - January 31, 2018

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Linda & Robert Wayland-Smith

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Rhoda Vanderwall (*With Christmas Wishes to Paul & Judy Noyes and Lang Hatcher*)

Grants

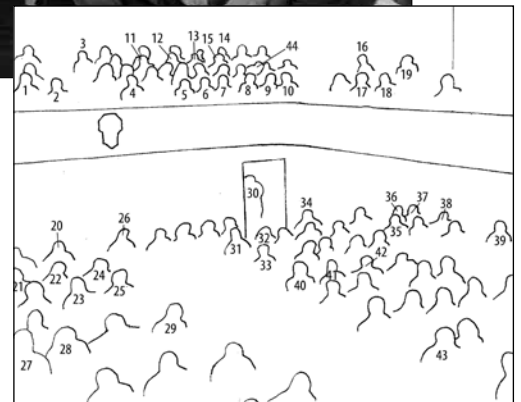
Central New York Community Foundation

In-Kind

Patricia Hoffman (*Blue Ray Disc Player*)

FROM THE PAST

It was hot in the Big Hall the day Oneida Ltd. announced the release of the new sterling pattern, Damask Rose (about 1946). Identifications provided by Lang Hatcher and Pody Vanderwall.



- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Cliff ("Father") Inslee | 17. Betty Boyd |
| 2. Edith Inslee | 18. Flosie Allen |
| 3. Lang Hatcher? | 19. Dorothy Willard Ackley? |
| 4. Mrs. Adelaide Marks | 20. Mrs. (Marjory) Reay Milnes |
| 5. Eliot "Cot" Orton | 21. Grosvenor Allen |
| 6. Jim Austin | 22. Mae Townsend |
| 7. Richard Wood | 23. Camilla Life |
| 8. Lettie Sanderson | 24. J. J. (Jim) "The Bomber" Townsend |
| 9. Dud Sanderson | 25. Helen Noyes Wood |
| 10. Pete Noyes | 26. Pierrepont B. Noyes |
| 11. Ray Noyes | 27. Les Smith |
| 12. Bill Earl | 28. Edie Smith |
| 13. Bob Wayland-Smith | 29. Mart Kinsley |
| 14. Ab Kinsley? | 30. Roy Morgan? |
| 15. Orville Cumings | 31. Bill Raynsford |
| 16. Albert Noyes | 32. Mary Raynsford |

- | |
|--------------------------|
| 33. Barbara Noyes Bolles |
| 34. Rachel Griffith |
| 35. Martin Keller |
| 36. Winifred Hamilton |
| 37. Margaret Kinsley |
| 38. Tirzah Noyes Orton |
| 39. Anita Raynsford |
| 40. Corinna Noyes |
| 41. Lil Landon? |
| 42. Vi Bloom |
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| 44. Dunc Robertson |



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