

Oneida Community JOURNAL

VOL. 31 NO. 1

MARCH 2017

ONEIDA, NY



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 impressive OCMH South Garden in autumn.

(This and other photographs by K. Coffee unless otherwise indicated.)

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By Kevin Coffee

Spring is nearly here! With it the gardens and lawns and woodlands surrounding the Mansion House come alive and remind us of one of the reasons why, in the mid-1800s, this region was attractive to those seeking to build a better way of life.

As Kathy Garner writes elsewhere in this issue, the Mansion House grounds are diligently maintained by volunteers and seasonal gardeners who tend those green spaces. Last summer, we also began experimenting with raised bed gardening in a small lot alongside Skinner Road. Several volunteers developed vegetable plots there, despite repeated efforts by deer helping themselves to a free lunch. Space is available for other gardeners – please contact Michael Colmey, Director of Buildings & Grounds.

On the topic of buildings, the next installment of our Historic Preservation workshop series is about slate and slate roofs. The facilitators for this excellent learning opportunity April 8 are the well-respected preservationists Jeffrey Levine and Julie Palmer of Levine & Company, Ardmore, PA.

The slate workshop follows close upon the completion of a Building Condition Assessment of the Mansion House by preservation architects Crawford & Stearns, led by Ted Bartlett. They have carefully inspected the Mansion House exterior and identified a set of repairs that need to be made over the next few years. You will be hearing much more about this in coming months as we digest the implications of the report.

We look forward to other outdoor activities this April, on Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 29). On Earth Day, we sponsor an outdoor photography excursion and litter clean up along the edge of Sunset Lake and through the former O&W/O&M railroad right-of-way — all-important features of the Mansion House site. On Arbor Day, we have a variety of activities planned, including a tree climbing demonstration by Bartlett Tree Services and the planting of dozens of black walnut seeds that were harvested last fall by BO-CES students at the Mansion House. Those seeds have been germinating over the winter in preparation for planting alongside Oneida Creek.

Our public program schedule has increased greatly in recent months, in large part through the efforts of Molly Jessup, Curator of Education, who has expanded both the range of topics and the frequency of events, to better explore the history and contemporary relevance of the Oneida Community. This spring she has organized a series of discussions about women and gender, funded in part by an action grant from Humanities New York. This program series intersects the centennial commemoration of women's suffrage in New

York State and the Oneida Community's advancement of social equality between women and men. Our current program schedule is now printed on the inside back page of this *Journal*, so save those dates! Most public programs are free for members. Keep apprised of them by subscribing to our email list or our Twitter feed.

Since joining the staff in October as Registrar, Courtney Bastian has been diligently conducting inventories of displayed and stored collections, and editing and expanding our digital catalogue with updated condition reports, images, and provenance information. In December, the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation awarded OCMH with an important grant to rehouse more than 600 volumes in our rare book collection; a project co-designed by Ms. Bastian.

The November 2016 meeting of the Board of Trustees reelected as officers Jonathan Pawlika (chair), Ellen Kraly (vice-chair) Kirsten Marshall (treasurer), Hugh Bradford (assistant treasurer), and Peter Gebhardt (secretary). Eric Noyes, having completed his term of service on the Board, has left the Board. Recruitment of new Trustees is underway. At their February meeting, the Board unanimously elected Tina Wayland-Smith; she previously served on the Board (2001–2007) as Vice Chair (2003) and Chair (2004–2007).

We have received a good deal of coverage by print, on-line and broadcast media in recent months, thanks in large part to the marketing efforts of Pauline Caputi. Notably, the *Oneida Dispatch* has featured the Mansion House twice on the front page of its Sunday edition, and in several stories further inside the 'A' section. Likewise, the *Rome Sentinel* and *Syracuse Post-Standard* have reported on the Mansion House to their readers, for which we are grateful and hope the increased visibility connects us with new and underserved audiences in the coming year.

In February, Frankie Nicole Weaver joined the organization as Curator of Collections. Dr. Weaver is a scholar of 20th century history with special focus on cultural expressions of political resistance in trans-national communities. She has an impressive teaching record and a passionate interest in public history. She has also assumed principal editorial responsibility for the *Journal* and brought new expertise to our on-line presence. When not immersed in the collections, or leading a tour, she may be found in her office on the third floor of the 1862 building.

None of this is possible without our Members and we thank you again for your support! We are always interested in your suggestions and observations; reach me at kcoffee@oneidacomunity.org. Or follow us on Twitter @OCMH1848.

NOTES FROM LAWNS AND GARDENS

By Kathy Garner

In November 2016, Steve Blair of Bartlett Tree Experts once again generously volunteered to lead a fall pruning “bee.” This year efforts were devoted to pruning the trees along the north face of the house. Thanks to Steve for his time and expertise and to Patrick Traynor for his help with this much needed project.

The past year has been especially hard on the Mansion House trees. During the Strawberry Jam Festival, in June 2016, attendees were astonished to hear a loud crack and witness the crash of a large branch of the Norway Spruce at the corner of Kenwood Avenue and Chapel Street as it fell across Kenwood Avenue. Later, in October, the remainder of the tree toppled over, blocking traffic for several hours. The Oneida DPW responded quickly to the scene to clear the tree from the road. Fifteen feet of the trunk still stands showing a hollow center and the scars incurred from a lightning strike many years ago.

Another large Norway Spruce – this one located in the cemetery – had a similar fate in the winter of 2015-16. It too broke off several yards above the ground and, amazingly, fell without damaging any of the nearby grave markers. Steve Blair reports that Norway Spruce are particularly

susceptible to this problem. They are a soft wood tree that wick moisture up the center of the trunk, a process that can lead to decay on the inside of the tree with no apparent outward indications of something amiss. One can see evidence of this decay process in the hollow center of the Norway spruce’s stump in the cemetery.

The night of January 10, 2017, proved particularly devastating to our trees. High winds, heavy snow, and icy conditions resulted in major damage to three more large trees on the Mansion House grounds. The tall Blue Spruce on the North Lawn near the Copper Beech tree snapped off toppling towards the woods. A large lateral limb on the Black Maple tree located on the crest of the front hill broke off and dangled dangerously by its cable before it was removed by Mike Helmer and his crew from Complete Landscape Systems. And the tall Hemlock, which grew crookedly in the shade of the aforementioned Norway Spruce on the South Lawn, also became laden with heavy wet snow and ice, and snapped off.

Several other large trees have fallen across the paths in The Larches and the East Park Nature Trail. Fortunately, however, our two New York State Champion trees—the Black Walnut on the



A view of the Mansion House from the South Garden.



A Spruce tree that succumbed to January 2017 storm.

South Lawn and the Tulip Tree in the Quad (see OC Journal December 2007 and March 2009)—have so far remained intact.

The Mansion House is beautifully landscaped with a large variety of old and stately deciduous trees; the downside of this beautiful landscape is that millions of leaves fall to the ground every autumn. For several years we have been fortunate to have the help of a crew of BOCES students under the guidance of teachers Amy Walker and Brenda Frost. The students have been indispensable every spring and fall in helping to rake and remove these leaves.

Recently, the students have embarked on a reforestation project with the help of Mike Comey, OCMH Building and Grounds Director. Some background: As local residents know, Kenwood and the surrounding area is heavily populated with Black Walnut trees, many of which are no doubt descendants of the NYS Champion Black Walnut tree on the South Lawn, planted during the original Community days. In 2011 and 2012, OCMH sold several dozen large Black Walnut trees which were harvested and removed from the East Park and Sunset Lake areas leaving many open spaces. Pody Vanderwall, who was familiar with a commercial Black Walnut tree farm, suggested we consciously grow these very desirable hardwood trees to create a future revenue stream for OCMH. This is about to happen on a small scale.

In the fall of 2016, the BOCES students collected walnuts from the grounds (perhaps to the

chagrin of the local squirrel population) and are in the process of preparing them for planting. The nuts were first soaked in water and the softened exterior husks were removed by hand (easier said than done!) releasing the interior nut – the seed encased in a hard shell. The nuts were then submerged in water. Those that floated were discarded; those that sunk were retained, as they are more likely to germinate. In

order to germinate, the walnut seeds must be subjected to cold temperatures (34 – 44 degrees F) for 90 to 120 days, a process called stratification. At this writing, the nuts are being stratified in the refrigerator in the Mansion House kitchen preparatory to planting this spring. To prevent our large squirrel population from eating the newly planted nuts, they will be encased in a tin can (not aluminum) with an X cut in the top and flared to create points to prevent predators from stealing the seed but allowing the seedling to grow upward. And assuming these seeds germinate and grow, in 50 to 75 years, OCMH will have a new generation of trees to harvest, trees that will be offspring of the NYS champion or of its offspring.

As I write this, the North and South Gardens are resting quietly under a blanket of snow. Volunteers are crucial to the maintenance and preservation of these Mansion House treasures. Thanks to all our current volunteers whose dedication and commitment is essential to the upkeep of the gardens: Ann Raynsford and John Swift, Mary Perra, Kate Wayland-Smith, Claudia Wiley, Tim Cumings, Cheryl Daily and Barbara Reese. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer to help in the gardens, please call Michael Colmey at 315-363-0745, or Kathy Garner at 315-363-2414.

Look for upcoming information about events being planned to celebrate Earth Day on Saturday, April 22, and Arbor Day on Saturday, April 29. Happy spring to everyone.

Best Quilt LOANED TO MUNSON WILLIAMS PROCTOR ARTS INSTITUTE

By Kevin Coffee

For the last month the feminine part of the O.C. has been busily engaged in a unitary plan. They resolved themselves into an impromptu school of design, and some astonishing work of art have been produced.¹

So reads an announcement in the March 24, 1873, edition of the *Oneida Circular*. The unattributed author (presumably editor Tirzah Miller) goes on to describe the collective process through which the *Best Quilt* came to be.

It appears that the genesis of the *Best Quilt* involved an invitation from Harriet Noyes to other commune members that they collaborate on producing a bed quilt. The subsequent project would thereby comprise squares designed and sewn by multiple designers, and indeed consists of 45 figurative squares and 21 border triangles containing floral motifs. According to Tony Wonderley and Walter Lang, it is unclear how the specific panels were selected for this quilt – as many more squares were produced during the project – but the *Circular* notes that the *Best Quilt* met with an ‘astonished’ reception due to its unusual design.² The *Second Best Quilt* in our collection is comprised solely of geometric designs produced by the same ‘school of design,’ and so it seems that the designers sorted narrative from abstract compositions when deciding how to compose the two quilts.

The *Best Quilt* is a textile with which several of our docents are quite expert, and a favorite stop on house tours. For several years it has hung opposite the staircase next to the business office.

If you’ve noticed its absence in recent weeks, rest assured it is safe and sound. From February 18 until April 30, 2017, the *Best Quilt* is displayed in the exhibition “American Quilts: Sewn Stories,” at the Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute, in Utica. Please visit it there!

¹ “Community Journal – Oneida,” *Oneida Circular* 10 no.13 (1873): 102-103.

² Anthony Wonderley and Walter J. Lang, “Women’s Work on the Best Quilt,” *Oneida Community Journal* 24 no.1 (2010): 8-11.



Art handlers from Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute carefully protect the framed quilt for moving.



Best Quilt displayed at Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute.

MUSEUM PRESERVATION: THE RARE BOOK PROJECT

By Courtney Bastian

One extensive project in collections care and historical preservation, currently underway, is relocating a subset of our library collection (~ 700 of our rare books) that belonged to the Oneida Community. The Community library books are special and important for many reasons, but especially because they provide evidence of community members' interest in life-long learning, individuality, and issues outside the religious sphere. The books that we are relocating are unique, not only because they are about diverse subjects, but because, as 19th century books did, they vary in appearance. For example, some are very small and measure less than 4 inches tall, whereas others exceed 14 inches. Some texts are also embellished with decorative details, such as gilding on the covers and pages.

The Community library arose from the materials brought together as persons joined the commune—bringing their different personalities, interests, and books – and combined those with specially purchased volumes. A passage from *The Circular*, published February 8, 1869, discusses the significant size of the Community library:

The library of the Community contains about 4,500 volumes. Of these only 2,546 are now catalogued. Common school-books are not counted. This Collection has always been rather more accidental in character than premediated.¹



"The Library, Oneida Community." Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly (April 16, 1870) OCMH Archives #98.560.002.

Currently, the library book collection is stored in several rooms in the Mansion House. While the 'outer library' on the first floor displays a large number of the collection, the current project centers on books stored elsewhere in the Mansion House and which are also part of the original Community library. It is that subset of the collection that has been subject to various environmental stresses and has not been fully cataloged. Preserving the entire book collection is valuable and vital for our organization's mission to maintain and preserve the historical integrity of Oneida Community artifacts and primary source materials.

Early stewards of the library collection recognized that the growing library collection reflected the Oneida Community members' interests, as is evident from the 1869 article. As written in *The Circular*,

Since its foundation, the library has grown by the contributions of new members, and by purchases made to suit emergencies of the Community. Many books have been bought to meet the requirements of individual taste and talent. These contributions of new members have often been of great value, and are interesting as showing the mental capital we severally had to start with. The books added by purchase are doubly interesting. They show the comings and goings of the Community heart and mind.²

Today's books still reflect the Oneida Community members' interests. Topics range across religion, the sciences, poetry, and classical literature. In 1991, an internal inventory reported that the library – which at that time included more than 2,500 books, pamphlets, periodicals, and broadsides – "is a remarkable artifact of the intellectual life of the Oneida Community."³ According to the report,

Members sought information in diverse fields—horticulture, silk culture, medicine, architecture, music, theology, history, astronomy, phonography – and eagerly read the latest novels of Dickens, Hawthorne, Melville and others. There are strong collections on mesmerism, physiognomy, phrenology, spiritualism, dress reform and other topics that interested advanced thinkers in mid-19th century America.⁴

The Community did not solely focus on religious readings, which is validated by the library inventory.

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Courtney Bastian and Frankie Nicole Weaver examining and rehousing rare books.

Members of the Community were encouraged to buy books that pertained to their interests, and to share their knowledge and reading materials with other members. In the subset of the collection that we are relocating, we see proof that within the Community there was a curiosity about science and nature. A few examples include Horace Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural* (1858), Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1868) Elisha Kent Kane's *Artic Exploration* (1838) and John Robertson's *Views of Microscopic World* (1831). These texts suggest inquisitive persons who valued the world beyond Oneida. History is another popular theme in the original Community library; books which discuss different topics ranging from the Middle Ages to U.S. History. A few examples are Rev. Michael Russell's *Views of Ancient and Modern Egypt*, (1831), Miss Berger's *Memoirs of the Life of Anne Boleyn* (1822), and F. S. Eastman's *History of the State of New York* (1831). These books discuss history from Africa, Europe, the United States, and demonstrates an interest in past societies.

Preserving our library book collection and making it more readily accessible are essential responsibilities, and so we undertook the necessary steps to relocate and to furnish a new collections storage room specifically for these materials. The 'new' room will offer a more stable environment,

and enable us to closely monitor the room's relative humidity and temperature. Each book will be stored in its own pH neutral box, and each box will be labeled with the book's title and new accession number. This rehousing process also allows us to prepare condition reports on each book and to assess further conservation needs. Those condition reports include detailed descriptions of each object, its measurements, and a photograph of the book. This information will be entered into the museum's collections database, and these improvements will help

staff and outside researchers to easily locate books for research and interpretation.

The goal of our project is to stabilize and catalog these books so they are available to study because they serve as a narrative for the individuality and uniqueness in the Community. Additionally, the new storage room is equipped with shelving and flat file cabinets to protect oversized materials such as architectural drawings.

This phase of the relocation project will be completed by the end of September. Support for this work is made possible in part by the Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, with additional in-kind support from OX Group LLC. However, further funding is required to complete the outfitting of the new storage room, and contributions are most welcome. Please contact the OCMH office to discuss how you can advance this vital historic preservation work.

¹ A. B., "Our Books," *The Circular* (February 8, 1869): 875.

² *The Circular*, 875.

³ Oneida Community Mansion House, "The Living Museum: A Five Year Report," (1991): 6.

⁴ Oneida Community Mansion House, 6.

THE GREAT BREAKTHROUGH IN STAINLESS STEEL AT ONEIDA LTD. Part II

By Langford J. Hatcher

Lang Hatcher's book about corporate leadership and economic failure at Oneida Ltd. is available now. The following is extracted from that work: Oneida (Community) Limited: A Goodly Heritage Gone Wrong (iUniverse).

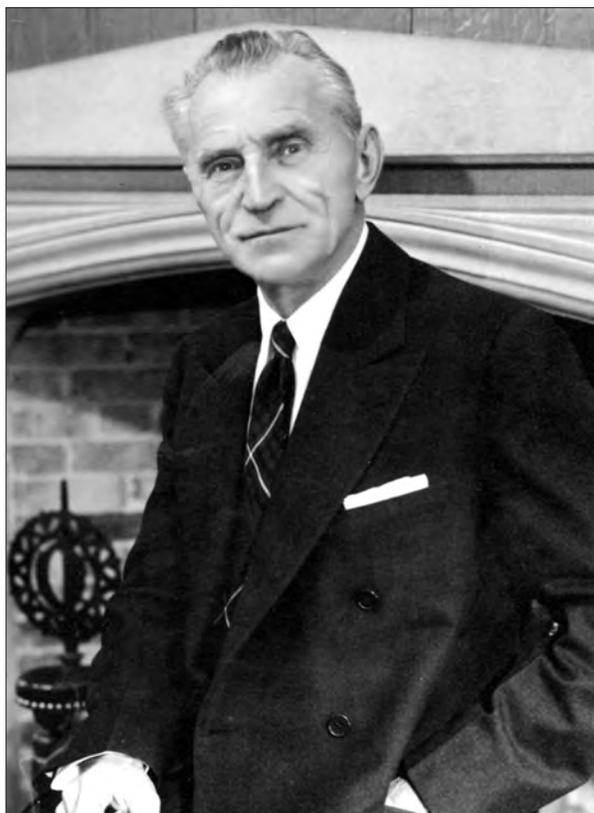
The rise of stainless steel was coincident with great improvements in photographic representation of the product and advances in printing processes. Jim Colway saw to it that Oneida always had the best-looking merchandising materials and set packaging in the industry which greatly reinforced the image of the product among both the trade and consumers. Later on, Oneida took on the Deutsch agency and, with it, a full-color advertising format that long kept the Oneida name regularly in front of prospective purchasers in clever and memorable ways. No one, it was widely believed, came close to Oneida Ltd. in terms of the money and messaging put into national advertising.

Considerable and consistent attention was always given to point-of-sale promotion. Free product trays, traffic builders, related products, etc. were regularly offered to the public as an inducement to buy Oneida stainless. Such promotion and product was tastefully done so that it did not detract from the attention to or image of O. L.'s stainless.

In the 1950s, corporate identification was just beginning to be stressed rather than brand names (except for packaged goods). The theory was that the corporation goes on forever (presumably) whereas brands and trademarks may come and go. At about this time, Oneida began to develop its stainless lines which were considered pretty declass  by those who sold products with the Community trademark. Bob Landon mentioned how, at a Community Plate sales meeting, the salesmen were told stainless was a metal made for sewer pipes!

Thus, the early lines of stainless were relegated to backstamps that said Oneidacraft Deluxe and Oneidacraft Premier. And, as things turned out, this turn of events played directly into promotion of the corporate name to the consuming public. "Community" was left with a dying product and a dying promotional concept, while "Oneida" became the umbrella beneath which all product eventually was promoted.

Adding significant factory volume with consequent opportunity to lower unit costs and learn new manufacturing techniques, Special Sales under George "Carload" Kramer drummed up some early stainless business. In the mid 1950s, a Lever Bros. promotion moved several million units of



Dunc Robertson, 1954. Photograph courtesy of John P. L. Hatcher.

product and, though bid below full cost, returned enough profit so that (legend has it) Oneida gave some money back to Lever.

Kramer's low-quality order of conventionally made product taught nothing new technologically. Oneida did learn, however, that money could be made with stainless. That clarified things for Dunc Robertson who worried that fewer manufacturing operations meant less opportunity to add value to stainless as compared to plate.

During the period the company was still wedded to silverplate and keeping the "Community" name from being tarnished by contact with stainless flatware, various customers such as Stanley Home Products and General Mills were beginning to inquire about stainless availability from Oneida. In 1958, Kramer set up a dealer loader promotion with AC Spark Plug involving about 30,000 gross of Oneidacraft Deluxe product.

Whether O. L. wanted to keep the Community trademark sanitized or not, when General Mills was nearing the end of its consumer premium contract for silverplate (*Queen Bess*), it was agreed that

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Jim Colway and David Deutsch (c. 1982), founder of an ad agency which worked closely with OL for many years. (Photograph gift of Steve and Mary Thompson).

their new stainless line would be backstamped "Oneida Community Stainless." Apparently, this was accomplished on the spot by General Mills with the approval of Dunc Robertson and the O. L. executive committee. The first stainless pattern made for "The General" was *Twin Star* which was followed two years later, in 1963, by *My Rose*—an enormously successful pattern which stayed active until 1977. When launched, *My Rose* was expected to pull fewer than 400,000 place settings from its initial advertising. In fact, it pulled over 600,000.

Finally, it should be emphasized that Dunc Robertson organized the Stainless Steel Manufacturers Association to fight the flood of Japanese imports. This effort was successful to the point that Oneida was able to focus on competitive efforts against domestic makers such as Ekco, International, Wallace and National Silver. Ekco had been an early leader in stainless flatware but withdrew after Oneida got rolling and the other organizations never did catch up with Oneida's multi-faceted program.

Someone at International Silver was heard to say that he hoped Oneida would sell a lot of *Cha-*

teau at its then current price as O. L. would go broke in the process. Pete Noyes liked to relate how, in the mid 1960s, some competitors had gotten into O. L.'s sales suite at a closed sales exposition. Since they were already there, Pete showed them the new pattern and said something like, "Not bad for \$39.95." One of the competitors said O. L.'s retail price was more like his cost price. As the decade of the 1960s wore on, O. L.'s sales lead and product development continued to increase. Domestic competition continued to wither and finally more or less ceased with International's attempt in the early 1970s to send a spy into the Oneida factory to see how we did things.

By the mid sixties, Oneida was well ahead of the field. Given the sales volume generated by the total program and the improvements in production efficiency made by the factory, O. L.'s unit costs were the lowest in the domestic industry. Also, its retail prices were the lowest and its gross profits the highest.

In sum, I do not think a corporate decision was ever made to shift the company's focus from silver-plate to stainless. Rather, it was a gradual process as the consumer drifted away from plate to a more carefree product--stainless. Once this drift gathered momentum, with stainless sales gaining and silver-plate resuscitation attempts unavailing, more and more corporate resources were put behind stainless. Gradually seeing economic salvation in stainless, it was natural for management to encourage these trends as the 1950s progressed. Fortunately for Oneida, the right ingredients came together at the right time: Oneida seemed to have the people needed to develop the programs necessary to exploit evolving opportunities. Thanks to them, a fully developed capacity to make and market stainless happened earlier at Oneida than elsewhere in the country.

WOMEN AND GENDER PROGRAMS 2017

By Molly Jessup

When visitors come to the Oneida Community Mansion House, they often comment on how women's lives in the utopian community appear to be significantly different from those of their nineteenth century female counterparts. Through our audience research, it has become clear that many visitors leave wanting to know more about social history. As historian Laurence Foster noted, gender relations in the Oneida Community were altered more than in other communal experiments.¹ This places OCMH in a position to speak to important issues in social history. Last year, as we reflected on appropriate programming themes during the strategic planning process, women and gender stood out as a particularly salient topic.² With the Oneida Community's history as our starting point, our public programming in 2017 will place special emphasis on historical and contemporary issues of gender and sexuality, in concert with the centennial commemorations of women's suffrage in New York State. OCMH received an action grant from Humanities New York to support these programs.

In the OCMH strategic plan, we have identified themes that were important to the history of the Oneida Community. Annually, public programming will focus on a given theme. This year's theme is Women and Gender. Rather than limit the specific programming content to the Oneida Community alone, or to nineteenth century history, the theme will be applied to different historical issues, and to pressing contemporary challenges. This is a



Photograph of Oneida Community members in Quadrangle, circa 1870. OCMH Archives. Available online from: Syracuse University Library Department of Special Collections.

means of situating the utopian community's experience in a larger framework of history, arguing for the importance and relevance of the ideas brought forth by the Perfectionists. Certainly, discussions of gender roles, women's rights, and civil equality continue to be significant.

Women and Gender

Our programming will use women's history and gender as categories of approach, which will provide an engaging historical interpretation. "Gender" is not synonymous with women's history and is important to our interpretation of the Oneida Community, and other historical phenomena. Using gender as a category of analysis means that women's and men's experiences are not separate from one another; they are considered together to create a deeper understanding of history.

Women's history is of clear importance to the Oneida Community. Few other nineteenth century societies offered the level of equality found at Oneida. In terms of labor, women in the Oneida Community had prospects to undertake opportunities rarely enjoyed by women outside of the Community. Whereas women dominated those work areas most often associated with their gender in mainstream society, some women were editors of the Community's newspaper, while others supervised production in the silk thread operations.

Importantly, gender provides a means to understand the power structure of society. For example, Joan W. Scott theorized that gender is "a primary way of signifying relationships of power" and can be used to shed light on important subjects such as class, race, ethnicity, and "any social process." In the nineteenth century, women were subject to *feme covert* status upon marrying. This meant that their husband was their political, economic, and legal representative. There was also an understanding that a women's sexual and reproductive rights were also under the control of her husband. In this way, marriage perpetuated a social system that limited women's autonomy.

For the Perfectionists, complex marriage was a system of greater gender equality. In the "Bible Argument," John Humphrey Noyes criticized a desire for monogamous marriage, alongside with possession and property, seeing all as selfish desires. We see in that the Community's practice of complex marriage altered gender roles for both men and women. With the absence of monogamous marriage, a Perfectionist woman's standing was not determined by her husband's status in society. Of course, for men, complex marriage altered their societal roles; they did not all have "head of household" status.

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Discussion Series

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 women and gender. All discussions will be held on Sundays at 1:00 pm. Although the discussions address different content, each speaks to the importance of gender and power in society. As the Oneida Community conceptualized a more equal social system, they challenged many common practices of the nineteenth century. Our discussion series encourages us to question how our beliefs and assumptions are constructed.

On **February 19**, our program was “The End of Marriage: Adultery in the Nineteenth Century” with historian and author Carol Faulkner. Currently, Faulkner is a Dean at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Her current research on adultery uncovers a contentious legal and social debate about what marriage should be and who can define marriage—issues relevant to the Oneida Community, and still debated in the United States.

Our second discussion is **March 19**, titled “Uncle Johnny’s Girl Farm: Escapism Through utopian Fantasy.” In the 1950s and 1960s, the Oneida Community became the subject of several articles and a pulp book targeted to a male audience. When these highly fictionalized articles were published about the Oneida Community, they were considerably controversial and perhaps understandably so. The materials bear little resemblance to historical truth and speak more to twentieth century culture than the Utopian experiment. In particular, the materials dismiss the agency and equality experienced by women in the Community. It is striking that the OC can be considered more progressive in the 1860s than mainstream American society in the 1950s. This discussion will address ideas about masculinity, monogamy, and misogyny in the twentieth century.

On **April 23** our discussion will be “Reproductive Freedom: Who Decides?” Political and civil equality for women has historically and explicitly turned on the question of who controls a woman’s body: the individual woman? the married woman’s husband? the encompassing society? This ability to control has been hotly contested throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in America, and was one of the pivotal matters of principle for the utopian Oneida Community. Beth LeGere, will be the discussant. The issue of reproduction is one that Perfectionist history speaks to strongly. The Oneida Community had a strong interest in birth control, and was unique among utopian groups for their practice of male continence.

Our fourth discussion on **May 7** is titled “Teddy Roosevelt Among the Lumberjacks: Elite Views of the Working Class Body in the Gilded Age.” Historian Jason Newton will examine Theodore Roosevelt’s early adult experiences in the Maine woods and at Harvard in a discussion of urban elites’ views of masculinity. Significantly, many elites were defining masculinity through labor and an idea about “ruggedness”—concepts that later shaped everything from immigration policy to imperialism. Newton’s discussion will be an opportunity to consider how masculinity is constructed, which in the Gilded Age often meant the dismissal of femininity.

Our fifth discussion on **June 18** is titled ‘It Saved My Life:’ AIDS & Reproductive Rights Activism in the Creation of Queer Politics.” Tamar Carroll, a professor of history at the Rochester Institute of Technology, will discuss the coalition between gay men AIDS activists and reproductive rights feminists in New York City in the late 1980s and early 1990s. She will describe how members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP New York) and Women’s Health Action Mobilization (WHAM!) joined together to fight for universal health care.

Conclusion

As a cultural institution, OCMH has both an opportunity and a responsibility to address pressing social issues. We appreciate the support of our members and Humanities New York. Thanks also to those who have volunteered their expertise and time to help realize these programs: Rebecca Lo Kohler (Four Virtues Consulting, and former Mansion House resident), Omar Franceschi, Mario Colon, and Jessica Bowes. We look forward to the engaging discussions about the important ideas that challenged the Perfectionists of the nineteenth century, and remain with us today.

¹ See: Lawrence Foster, *Women, Family, and Utopia: Communal Experiments of the Shakers, the Oneida Community, and the Mormons* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984).

² “Oneida Community Mansion House Strategic Operating Plan: FY 2017 through FY 2019.” See: http://www.oneidacommunity.org/sites/default/files/pdf/governance/2016_plan.v7.rrr.pdf

³ Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis” *The American Historical Review* 91-no. 5 (December 1986): 1069.

⁴ John Humphrey Noyes, “Bible Argument: Defining the Relations of the Sexes in the Kingdom of Heaven,” from Anthony Wonderley, ed., *John Humphrey Noyes on Sexual Relations in the Oneida Community: Four Essential Texts* (Hamilton, New York: Richard W. Couper Press, 2012), 63.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY MANSION THROUGH THE EYES OF A TEENAGER: Part II

By Keerthi Martyn

*Keerthi Martyn of Oneida, New York is in the 11th grade at Manlius Pebble Hill School.
In Summer 2015, he studied the Oneida Community and developed a tour for high-school age students.*

In the tour that I created for my classmates the first part of the Mansion House that I emphasized is the environment itself. The environment played a very important role in the utopia as Noyes and his community were trying to create "Heaven on Earth" with their home. The tour begins outside, giving the group a sense of the environment. They should be shown the summer house, turtle rock, the South Lawn, the two New York State Champion trees: the Tulip tree of 1851 and Black Walnut of 1870, and the South Garden, all of which were crucial to John Humphrey Noyes's dream of making heaven a reality.

The second main point in my tour is about shared possessions and mutual criticisms. When initially reading about it, the purpose of the mutual criticism and the fact that possessions were shared was quite appalling to me. I could not understand why everything had to be shared by everyone and that selfishness was worth a mutual criticism. Even acts that I would not consider selfish were subject to criticism in the Community. In an interview with Giles Wayland-Smith, he recalled a story of a talented violinist who would take part in concerts that were held every so often in the big hall. However, because the violinist spent too much time practicing, it had to be taken away from him and he underwent a mutual criticism because it was said to have been a selfish act. Another lamentable example included relationships between mothers and their children. The relationships between mothers and children were thoroughly diminished in comparison to relationships between mothers and their children outside of their society. Also, in this relationship, the time spent between them was limited because it would be considered selfish to take ownership of a child. It was interesting to see that the children were not seen by members of the community as children of particular people; instead, they were seen as children of the Oneida Community itself.

It was only after I read more into the ideology of John Humphrey Noyes and the fact that he placed a great deal of emphasis on selflessness, that I understood better the purpose and context of mutual criticisms within the Oneida Community. I understood that Noyes and his followers believed that most of the problems in society were caused by selfishness, and the desire for more power, land, and possessions. By having everyone share their possessions, it would eliminate selfishness, which was "the greatest sin," thus making the society pure which further contributed to Noyes's original plan: to recreate heaven, on Earth. In my tour, I show Noyes's theory that

selfishness was the greatest sin by creating my own mutual criticisms, where a member of the tour group undergoes a mutual criticism in the great hall based on a situation that might have actually occurred in the utopia. Then, I create another mutual criticism, this time in a present day situation, to show them what it was like for members of the Oneida Community at the time of John Humphrey Noyes, and what it is like in our society today.

Another third point of interest in my tour was the upper sitting room. In my research, I spent some of my time reading and analyzing the historical structures report. One of my favorite rooms in the entire house was the upper sitting room because it seemed like it was a bustling place of activity in the early days of the Oneida Community. From various tours that I tagged along on, I heard that the Upper Sitting Room was a main hub of socializing but also, interestingly enough, a surveillance point to make sure that men were not spending too much time with a single women, which could cause special love. The way that the Upper Sitting Room was designed gave an open view of who was going into who's room, and to monitor cases of special love, which were worth a mutual criticism. The detail that was captivating to me was the fact that John Humphrey Noyes wanted his community to be so perfect, that he even took care on the architectural designs of the building to carry out his beliefs of the monitoring of selfishness in his utopian society.

The final point of emphasis in my tour is the desire for knowledge that Noyes wished for the community to hold. The cabinet of curiosities outside of the big hall displays the extravagance of miscellaneous artifacts that were brought to the Mansion House on various journeys around the world. The community enjoyed listening to the countless stories of travelers who came through the Mansion House brandishing these extraordinary artifacts. Noyes believed that the cabinet of curiosities would not only attract outsiders to the Mansion House, but would also give his isolated community a rampant worldly education. In the vestibule and the library, there were books of all sorts ranging from various intellects from around the world to American authors, and their writings in the time of the revolution and later the time of the religious awakening. Fittingly, I conducted my research in the library, and read that Noyes also believed that each person was born with a capacity to learn, a capacity that could be filled through the sharing of information and the gathering of knowledge through books and other inputs.

REMEMBERANCES

LEOTA (LEE) C. HILL (1921 – 2017)

Leota C. (Lee) Hill passed away peacefully Tuesday morning January 31, 2017, at St. Luke's Healthcare Center. A longtime resident of Sherrill, she had resided at Preswick Glen in New Hartford since 2010.

Lee was active in Oneida Community Mansion House from its inception, in 1987, and during its formative years. Known to many as a thoughtful tour guide, she was first elected to the OCMH Board of Trustees in 1993, and served sequentially as Treasurer (1997 – 1999) and Vice President (2000 – 2002). Her dedication to the Mansion House also included helping to organize the OCMH's 1994 Communal Studies Association conference; service on the advisory committee for the J. C. Kinsley exhibit gallery (1998); the Long Range Planning committee (1994 – 1995); and the Interpretive Planning committee (2000).



Leota (Lee) C. Hill. Photograph courtesy of Elizabeth Hill Munroe.

Lee was born October 27, 1921 in Oneida, the daughter of Frank and Rose E. (Lanz) Cronin. She was valedictorian of the Oneida H.S. Class of 1939, and earned a degree with honors from Brown University, in 1943. She and Stewart M. Hill were married that year, and later moved to Sherrill where they raised their family and shared a loving union (over 68 yrs. together) until Stewart's death in 2011.

Lee was exceptionally civic minded. Besides her work with the Mansion House, she was active in Christ Church, volunteered at Oneida Hospital, and led the local League of Women Voters.

She enjoyed traveling with her husband and children, and visiting friends from across the country and in Europe. She is survived by her four children, Linda (Phil), David (Billie), James (Alice), and Betsy (David)), seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Remembered by Pody Vanderwall

I CAME TO KNOW LEE THROUGH THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS in about 1962. She took us younger Leaguers under her wing and all of us loved and admired her. I have many images and impressions when I think about Lee: her poise, her intellect, her graciousness, her warmth — genuine warmth, her articulateness, how she dressed. There are more recent images of her dealing with an insurmountable condition in her characteristically straightforward way — and with a smile. At life's end Lee still made you feel important to her, and you were grateful.

In the spring of 1969 or 1970 the League invited the Dean of the Maxwell School at Syracuse University to speak at our annual meeting at the Mansion House. \$50.00 would have been a likely remuneration to have offered him. (I don't remember precisely.) The Dean was sorry he could not meet with us that evening, but he suggested a young graduate student who turned out to be happy to come. Lee was President of the League that year. We invited the Utica LWV to join us, and 4 or 5 of them arrived at the front door of the Mansion House shortly before our speaker arrived. The Utica women introduced themselves to Lee who showed them into the front guest room (now the Bookstore.) The speaker came, coats were collected, and Lee made introductions. She introduced the Utica women by first and last names to each of us locals and all of us to our speaker, Donna Shalala.

Years later I asked Lee how she managed to introduce the five visitors and the rest of us by first and last names like that. She said "paying attention" and "concentrating" as if it were no big deal. I haven't a clue what the esteemed Donna Shalala had to say when she spoke to us after dinner, but, I've never forgotten what Lee Hill did that night.

Remembered by Kelly Rose

MANY YEARS AGO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of the greater Oneida area honored Lee Hill for her fifty years of service to the organization. About twenty former and current League members came together in the dining room of the Mansion House for formal tributes, casual exchanges, plenty of photos and a special cake for Lee. With a half century of service to the League, Lee joined Pru Wayland-Smith and Dottie Ackley as a very special "Lifetime Member". She held just about every office on the slate, some perhaps for multiple times. She hosted countless meetings, sponsored speakers and programs, and attended many non-partisan rallies and election forums. She always advocated for League supported causes on the environment, health care, women's issues, etc. and consistently supported the organization's mission to make democracy work for all citizens. Most of the local league's historical documents, now housed at the Madison County Historical Society, have Lee's name associated with them. I find it particularly touching that Lee, a dedicated member of the League of Women Voters, passed away in 2017, the year that marks the centennial of New York State women securing the right to vote.

IN PRAISE OF GILES WAYLAND-SMITH (1935 – 2016)

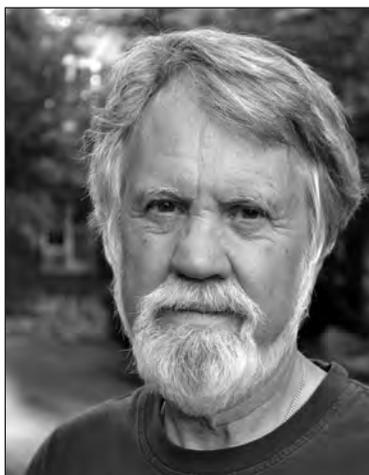
By Ellen Wayland-Smith and Kevin Coffee

Giles Wayland-Smith died at home in the Mansion House on October 28, 2016, after a brief illness.

Giles was foundational to the Mansion House as it is today; an organization devoted to history and the humanities. He was a strong and passionate advocate of OCMH as the sum of its many narratives, and of its mission to explore those narratives as they intersect with contemporary society. His view of history was propelled by an equally strong and sincere humanism, which he attributed to his lifelong association with the Oneida Community and its descendent community in the region. Giles was also a mentor to many and always a ready and willing advisor and collaborator.

When Giles graduated from Amherst in 1957, his father Robert Wayland-Smith was Treasurer and Vice President of the silverware manufacturer Oneida Ltd. Robert's own father had held the position before him. Giles was naturally tapped to come back and take his place in the family firm after his father's retirement. But he had different ambitions. Oneida Ltd. traced its unlikely origins back to the Oneida Community, a Christian communal utopia founded by Giles's great-great grandparents in 1848. Giles's own calling, as he discovered, lay closer to utopia theorizing than silverware making, proving the old adage that certain genetic proclivities skip a generation (or two).

After earning his doctorate in political science at



Giles Wayland-Smith. Photograph courtesy of Sarah Wayland-Smith.

Syracuse University in 1966, Giles became a professor at Allegheny College, where he spent the next thirty-two years doing what he loved most—teaching young people about the importance of social justice. He taught courses in Latin American politics, Liberation Theology, and Marxism. He founded the college's local chapter of Amnesty International, and in the 1980s was instrumental in petitioning the Somali government to release a former Allegheny alumnus who had been sentenced to death for criticizing the regime. He led a faculty movement pressuring the college to divest its holdings in apartheid South Africa in the 1990s. When he retired from Allegheny in 1998, Giles returned to his hometown of Oneida,

New York, to help build the fledgling Oneida Community Mansion House Foundation, a non-profit museum housed in the original Community Mansion House. Giles was a long-time Trustee of OCMH (1992 – 2016), serving as Vice-President (1993 – 1999), President/Chair (1999 – 2003), Interim Executive Director (2003 – 2004), and Secretary (2003 – 2016).

True to his Quaker upbringing, Giles believed in the 'inner light' of human goodness; he believed that through patient work, the world could be made a better place. As we grieve his passing let us also celebrate his many contributions to knowledge, to history 'with a capital H,' and to enriching the human spirit.



Giles explaining the architecture of Theodore H. Skinner at a program last fall.

Cont'd. next page

IN MEMORY OF JERRY GETMAN (1949 – 2016)

LONG-TIME MANSION HOUSE RESIDENT Ernest Gerald (Jerry) Getman Jr. died on November 3, 2016. Born in Oneida in 1949, he was a son of Ernest Getman and Fannie Warcup Getman. Jerry grew up in Cleveland, NY, and graduated from Central Square High School before attending SUNY Geneseo. Jerry's professional career was at Oneida Ltd, from which he retired as director of the Special Markets Division.

A standing-room-only memorial service was held in the Mansion House Hall on November 19.

For most of his adult life, Jerry dealt with the pain and the restrictions of rheumatoid arthritis. He fought so hard because he loved living – and he felt the small joys of daily life far outweighed any price he was asked to pay. Jerry was known for his love of sports and ever-present sense of humor.

In addition to the Mansion House, Jerry's life passion was Vernon-Verona-Sherrill (VVS) Dollars for Scholars / VVS Education Foundation. He took a personal interest in both students and donors and his leadership focus was always to help provide and promote a link between the two. The organization, which began in 1984, grew and flourished and has become what it is today, thanks in large part to Jerry's vision and dedication.

Jerry is survived by his daughter Sara Getman, son-in-law Peter Glover Jr., granddaughter Lily, his brother Tom and sister-in-law Kathy, and by many nieces and nephews.



Jerry Getman speaks to the assembled at a potluck dinner marking Patricia Hoffman's retirement, April 2016.

REMEMBERING EVANGELINE (EVE) JUBANYIK (1917 – 2017)

LONG-TIME MANSION HOUSE resident Evangeline (Eve) Jubanyik, died on Saturday, March 4, at her caregiver's home in Blossvale where she had resided for the past three years.

Born November 7, 1917, in Oaklyn, N.J., Eve was daughter of Felix and Mary De Santo D'Aloise. She graduated from Camden New Jersey Catholic High School and from the Charles Morris Price School of Journalism in Philadelphia.

She and her late husband Andrew Jubanyik lived in Merchantville, NJ, until 1962, when they relocated to Oneida so that her husband could take a job with Oneida Ltd. In Oneida, Eve was active with St. Patrick's Church, serving as Lector and Eucharistic Minister for many years, and as a member of the Altar and Rosary Society. She was also active with the Zonta Club of Oneida and served for a time as chapter president, district governor and on the Executive Board of Zonta International. In the early 1980s she also served as executive vice-president of the Greater Oneida Chamber of Commerce.

Eve is survived by her daughter, Anne Nyman (Duane) of Deerfield, MA, three grandchildren, Richard Lounsbury (Brenda) of Knoxville, TN, John Lounsbury (Tanya) of Danville, NH, and Elizabeth Nyman (Bryan Maleszyk) of Boston, MA, five great-grandchildren, her sisters, Marie Wing of Webster, NY, and Therese Donlan of Ocean City, NJ, and many nieces and nephews.

REMEMBERING FRANK R. PERRY (1922 – 2017)

LONGTIME OCMH MEMBER Frank R. Perry, 94, of Skinner Road, Oneida died peacefully at home on March 3, with his family at his side.

Born in Strasbourg, Saskatchewan, Canada in 1922, Frank was the son of John Somers Perry and Isabel Cochran Perry. After service in the Royal Canadian Air Force during WWII, Frank attended the Ontario College of Art in Toronto for his baccalaureate in Industrial Design. Frank then moved to New York City and studied at the Art Student's League, where Oneida Community descendant Kenneth Hayes Miller taught for decades. After moving to Oneida he continued his studies at Syracuse University and Munson Williams Proctor Arts Institute.

In 1951, Frank came to Oneida as a designer for Oneida Silversmiths, where he was ultimately promoted to vice-president of design and elected to the Board of Directors. While principally an industrial designer, he also engaged in other creative work including designing street lamps for downtown Oneida, designing the arbor on the North Lawn of the Mansion House, and co-designing the family home at 175 Skinner Road.

Frank is survived by his wife, Marie (Cerio), son Mark Perry of Phoenix, AZ, daughter Maria Skinner of Snyder, NY, daughter Melissa Manfred and son in law Charles Manfred of Westport, NY. He is also survived by his granddaughter, Sophia Skinner, step-granddaughter Emily Manfred and his brother Robert Perry and sister-in-law Lorraine Perry of Vancouver, British Columbia, and many other in-laws, nieces and nephews in the US and Canada.

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Gifts and renewals September 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017

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September 1, 2016 – February 28, 2017

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 Mary & Michael Weil (*In Memory of Giles Wayland-Smith*)
 Claudia Wiley (*In Memory of Giles Wayland-Smith, Jerry Getman, and Jeanette R. Hoffman*)

IN REVIEW



A teachable moment with docent Mary Jo Astrachan in the Vestibule.



*Winter campers exploring collections.
Photograph by M. Jessup.*



Carol Faulkner and Molly Jessup discuss a short history of adultery.



Anthropology students from Fayetteville-Manlius High School tour the Mansion House.



Visitors gather for a tour of the historic OC factory now used by Sherrill Manufacturing/Liberty Tabletop.



Volunteers are the life of the Mansion House. Essie Densmore, Mary Perra, Claudia Wiley, Pauline Caputi, Susan Haynes, Cindy Gyorgy, and Kate Wayland-Smith help with the December fundraising mailing.



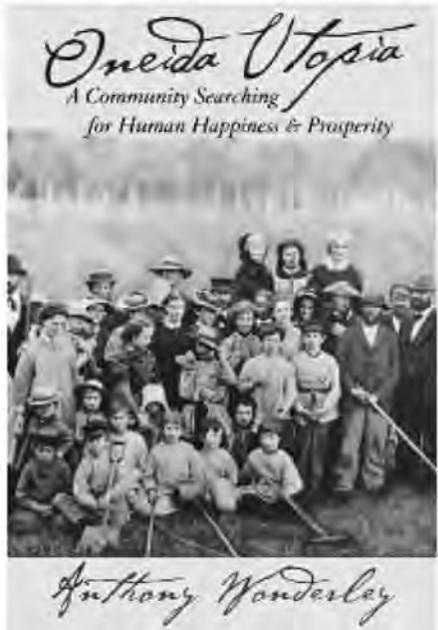
International Archeology Day tour of the historic OC site.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE MANSION HOUSE

- March 12: *Oneida (Community) Limited: A Goodly Heritage Gone Wrong Book Reading*
Former OL executive John P. L. Hatcher describes rise and fall of the tableware manufacturer.
- March 19: 'Uncle Johnny's Girl Farm': Escapism through Utopian Fantasy
Curator of Education Molly Jessup discusses 20th cen. notions of gender roles and marriage.
- April 8: Historic Preservation of Slate and Slate Roofing
Oneida Community Mansion House invites you to attend a historic preservation workshop about slate roofs and materials with Jeffrey Levine and Julie Palmer. Levine is recipient of numerous awards for his preservation work. Palmer is LEED Accredited and a leader in national roofing organizations. An excellent professional development opportunity for those who own or maintain buildings that employ slate roofing or interior materials.
- April 22: Earth Day at the Mansion House
Hike the pathway around Sunset Lake and pitch in to take care of our environment in our annual litter clean-up! Bring your camera and capture the woodland flora and fauna in photographs. The best pictures will be exhibited to the world on our Facebook page and at our public Arbor Day event on April 29.
- April 23: Reproductive Freedom – Who Decides?
Political and civil equality for women has historically and explicitly turned on the question of who controls a woman's body: the individual woman? the married woman's husband? the encompassing society? This ability to control was hotly contested throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and was a key matter of principle for the utopian Oneida Community. In this discussion, Beth LeGere, (Mohawk Hudson Planned Parenthood) and Molly Jessup (OCMH Curator of Education) discuss that contest for rights and equality.
- April 29: Arbor Day at the Mansion House
Discover how to identify trees by the shapes of their leaves in a nature scavenger hunt, build your own birdfeeder, learn about maple syrup production with the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill's FFA (2016 New York State Agricultural Society's "FFA Chapter of the Year") and see a professional Arborist climbing trees. Delicious food truck refreshments will be available. The first hundred participants will receive a white pine seedling courtesy of Bartlett Tree Service.
- May 7: Teddy Roosevelt among the Lumberjacks
Historian Jason Newton discusses how 19th c. elites imagined rural working class manhood by examining Theodore Roosevelt's early adult experiences in the Maine woods and at Harvard.
- June 17: Path through History Family Tours
Bring the entire family to explore the Oneida Community Mansion House, indoors and out. Experience life in the 19th century utopian community: sitting rooms, bedrooms, reading library, and meeting hall. And try your hand in one of the Community's favorite games—croquet!
- June 18: AIDS & Reproductive Rights Activism in the Creation of Queer Politics
Historian Tamar Carroll discusses the coalition between gay men AIDS activists and reproductive rights feminists in New York City in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP New York) and Women's Health Action mobilization (WHAM!) joined together to fight for rights to sexual autonomy and universal health care.
- July 2017: Month-long celebration of Oneida Community Mansion House 30th anniversary year!
Concerts and events throughout the month will commemorate the preservation and educational mission of this National Historic Landmark. Every thirtieth visitor will receive a family membership in honor of the anniversary.
- July 8: Factory Tour
Uncover 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!
- July 10-14: Mansion House Summer Camp I
Day camp for young people age 7-12, with indoor and outdoor activities connected to themes of: nature, archaeology, and history. Don't wait, advanced registration required!
- July 17-21: Mansion House Summer Camp II
Day camp for young people age 7-12, with indoor and outdoor activities connected to themes of: nature, archaeology, and history. Don't wait, advanced registration required!

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- July 29: Silverwood Clarinet Choir featuring Marco Antonio Mazzini
Original compositions performed in the Hall
- August 12: A Walk through Kenwood
Discover the architectural designs of Theodore Skinner and Ward Wellington Ward in this walking tour of the cultural landscape and architecture around the Mansion House.
- August 25: 'Off Base: The Great Peterboro Baseball Story' Theatrical Performance
Women at the origins of baseball, in a play written and directed by Thomas A. Murray.
- September: Behind the Scenes (Date TBA)
Guided tours of Mansion House hidden gems. Discover what's behind closed doors in the attic, basement, and towers. Don't wait, advanced registration required!
- September: Museum Day Live! (Date TBA)
Co-sponsored with the Smithsonian, free admission with SI voucher (available on-line).
- September: Historic Preservation: Masonry (Date TBA)
The masonry workshop will use the Mansion House as an educational tool to examine the principles of masonry, and the do's and don'ts of this important preservation practice.
- October 7: Factory Tour
Uncover 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!
- October 21: International Archeology Day
The Oneida Community built a communal home consisting of dozens of buildings and hundreds of acres of land, which they used to support their specific ways of life, work, and thought. Seek out evidence of those past uses and locate built evidence to re-imagine how life was lived by the Oneida Community, its regional antecedents and descendants, through an exploration the 19th century OC site (first Mansion House, Burt farmstead, O&M RR, etc.)
- October 28: Oneida Community Cemetery Tour
Explore 19th c. mourning culture in the OC Cemetery. Don't wait, registration required!
- October 31: Halloween Séances and 19th Century Spiritualism
Your opportunity to get in touch with departed luminaries of the Oneida Community.

Additional donation may apply. For further information, and reservations, please call: 315-363-0745.



COMING THIS FALL

Oneida Utopia: A Community Searching for Human Happiness and Prosperity, a new book by Anthony Wonderley, is a fresh and holistic treatment of a long-standing social experiment born of revival fervor and communitarian enthusiasm. The Oneida Community of upstate New York was dedicated to living as one family and to the sharing of all property, work, and love. Wonderley is a sensitive guide to the things and settings of Oneida life from its basis in John H. Noyes's complicated theology, through experiments in free love and gender equality, to the moment when the commune transformed itself into an industrial enterprise. Rather than drawing a sharp boundary between spiritual concerns and worldly matters, Wonderley argues that commune and company together comprise a century-long narrative of economic success, innovative thinking, and abiding concern for the welfare of others.

Oneida Community
MANSION
HOUSE

A National Historic Landmark

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