

# 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

How many young artists does it take to circle the giant Black Walnut Tree? Leaves from the tree were some of the many used for their art projects, as seen inside this Journal.

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## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

*Christine Hall O'Neil*

**T**his year marks not only the 160th Anniversary of the Main House, it also marks the 35th Anniversary of the creation of OCMH, the non-profit organization. OCMH was boldly founded by a prescient group of individuals seeking to preserve the Mansion House. (Geoff Noyes writes more about this later in the Journal.) These founders recognized the hurdles but prioritized preservation—of the story and the building—over fears of failure.

Admittedly unsure of the organization's ability to maintain and preserve the enormous Mansion House, the founders were extremely wise in taking steps to establish the nonprofit. The nonprofit designation announced OCMH's commitment to a public purpose and willingness to protect the Mansion House for the public's benefit.

Without this designation and its demonstrated commitment to a public purpose or mission, OCMH would not be eligible for grants from government agencies and foundations. This includes two NYS/REDC EPF grant awards totaling over \$1.1M; multi-year foundation grants for over hundreds of thousands of dollars, not to mention charitable gifts from individuals seeking favorable tax considerations. **This September, OCMH was awarded another preservation grant—a \$500,000 Save America's Treasures grant from the National Park Service.** *OCMH would not be eligible for any of these funds without its nonprofit purpose.*

The foresight of OCMH's nonprofit founders made it possible for the Mansion House to secure these grants and funds for all manner of projects and programs. Millions of dollars in gifts came to OCMH as a result of this nonprofit status. Countless visitors were inspired by the story of the Oneida Community and its legacy as a result of the founders' commitment to preserve and share the story.

Because of these recent grants, coupled with generous individual support, OCMH is completing the Phase 1 Preservation Project and planning a Phase 2 Preservation Project. Phase 2 will be a continuation of the roof, cornice, facade repair and water management work. (See more information later in this journal.) The preservation grants require OCMH to match the government funds, requiring us to raise one dollar in order to get a grant dollar.

Planning and grant administration takes considerable time—months if not years. OCMH's Building Committee is working closely with historic preservation architect, Crawford & Stearns, combined with the oversight of NYS Historic Preservation's Office, to plan and prioritize the projects. The Finance Committee and Board of Trustees carefully review OCMH's financial ability to complete work.

**How can supporters help? Help OCMH plan ahead!** If you or someone you know can make a multi-year commitment to the Mansion House, we can dramatically improve the planning of the exterior projects and better protect the building from further damage.

The preservation of the Mansion House requires multi-year planning by architects, Board, staff, historic preservationists and contractors—as well as from supporters. Multi-year commitments or pledges from those who love and care about Mansion House can help OCMH plan the amount of work that can be addressed. **The Mansion House needs supporters to pull together as a COMMUNITY to make the most effective impact on the Mansion House.**

**A huge thank you to the army of volunteers who step up for the Mansion House.** These volunteers serve out front and behind the scenes at OCMH and bring skills not otherwise available to the organization. OCMH is indebted to those who share advice on insurance, finances, guest services, marketing, banking, car clubs, oral history and education.

Trustees take a leadership role by serving together on the Board and through committee work, bringing needed professional skills, creativity and oversight to the organization. OCMH is grateful for the years of service given by **Ellen Wayland-Smith** and **Sarah Wayland-Smith**. Ellen and Sarah created and championed the 2019 Save the Roof campaign, helping bring attention to the needs of the building. OCMH thanks both of these individuals for their service and for their passion for the Mansion House and its mission.

**The Board of Trustees welcomes the following Trustees to serve OCMH: Hugh Bradford** (former Assoc. VP of Budget and Financial Aid at Colgate University, former OCMH Treasurer); **Ellen Percy Kraly, Ph.D.** (recently Interim Provost/Dean of Faculty at Colgate, former OCMH Trustee); and **Carolyn Strobel-Larsen** (Director of Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programs at Colgate). We thank the new Trustees for agreeing to serve on the Board and for sharing critical skills with OCMH.

OCMH is grateful for help guiding guests and beautifying the Mansion House inside and out. Summer brought extra attention to OCMH's gardens, grounds and interiors. The grounds are enjoyed by countless locals and visitors and are an important interpretive feature of OCMH. We thank all those who help nurture the organization and the property.

OCMH's success is due to its many advocates. Like bees in a hive, OCMH's network provides expertise, spreads the story and extends the umbrella of support further than otherwise possible. *OCMH is a modern day COMMUNITY in action.*



## A COMPRESSED ACCOUNT OF THE FOUNDING OF OCMH

*Geoff Noyes*

First, a brief summary: The drastic notion of separating the Mansion House (MH) and its environs from Oneida Ltd arose, dimly, in the early 1980s. First, one descendant, then three descendants, then many descendants and 'friends-of-the MH' engendered this notion, nurtured it, and finally realized it in fact, by the mid-1980s. Oneida Community Mansion House, became a 501 C-3, with a profit-making subsid and a functioning Board of Directors.

The driving purpose in commencing this transformation was, and now is, four-fold: first, and early, protecting the Mansion House from a possible take-over by, or sale to, a large resort-type corporation [the "Sheraton Nightmare"], by a financially weakened Oneida Ltd.; secondly, and concurrently with the establishment of a legal form, the Mansion House as a historically educational museum under the NYS Board of Regents, with tours, seminars, etc; thirdly, a great expansion of this educational mission with support of scholars, with formal collections, more events, media, outreach, even entertainment; and fourth, the CURRENT primary mission preservation of the house itself.

To expand: the first descendant to perceive, and vocalize the Sheraton threat was John Z. Noyes "JZ". By the late 1970's, JZ was telling his relatives, this author included, in heated terms, that we'd better wake-up. No action ensued.

But, by about 1982-83, Richard (Dick) Noyes, although not an OL employee, had internalized these fears. He clandestinely approached me in the Mansion House several times, to express his well-considered fears (still Sheraton,) but also his well-considered thoughts on what to do about it. It was quickly realized that financing would likely be a major part of a solution, so Dick approached Robert Wayland-Smith, then a senior executive of a Rochester bank, to join us. Bob did so, and the three met on occasions, in the Mansion House as well as by phone.

Gradually, over 1984/85, more descendants and 'Friends' were convinced, and brought on-board, even some early resisters who had argued that OL would never let the MH and environs go. Importantly, as a group, the belief arose that OL, via CEO Bill Matthews, would welcome the transfer. It was also when a formal board was organized to guide, and to find financing for, the entity. This Board enjoyed the advice and counsel of both descendants and "Friends of," as it has until today.

Two events stand-out from this period: former OL CEO, Pete Noyes, agreed to meet with, and sound out, Bill Matthews about the deal. He did so, and Bill was favorable, even agreeing that OL

could sign a 3-year contract with the now-official/legal OCMH to HELP support the MH as OL had been doing for 100 years. OL was genuinely engaged in helping OCMH with all aspects of start-up.

The other less-known, under-estimated thread lacing together this "drastic" transformation was a very high-level Wall St. lawyer, Francis Musselman. As an imposing 6' 8" teenager from up in the Carthage, Lewis County area, Fran found summer employment in the 1950's OL Knife Plant for two summers. He boarded in the Dorm and loved the MH. We lose knowledge of him after that, until he turns up in about 1986. Thanks to a descendant, Fran hears about what we are up to, and calls us to say he will help with the proper legal formalization of OCMH. A sub-committee of the group working on the set-up of OCMH asked if it could meet with him on Wall St. He agreed. So this sub-committee found transportation on, believe it or not, the Oneida Ltd. Falcon Corporate Jet, (it came with the purchase of the Camden Wire Co. by OL) and flew to New York City. To call Fran's office and professional prestige "elite" is an understatement to say the least. As the group was ushered into his office, above the door of the office next to his was the name-plate "Richard Nixon" ...the former U.S. President. Fran didn't have to spend much time coaching the group: 501-c 3 under NYS Board of Regents; set up a For-Profit subsidiary; go for Albany-based state and foundation grants; do not be lazy or haphazard in your educational role in NYS; use outreach and more. Fran said he would help us, gratis, if we needed help in Albany.

Two memos from formal meetings recount the final organizing done to set OCMH up legally, to get onboard with OL support in early years, and to roll out the beginnings of our educational actions. (11/3/1986 - detailed history prior to formal organization; 11/25/1987- minutes from meeting of the formal full OCMH Board)

Tours date from this 1985-87 period, as do the advertised seminar/Big Hall events. The acceleration of the tour/collections/outreach (and preservation) enterprise came apace mostly in the 1990s and after. The memos are available for interested readers who might want to dig deeper than this screed, into the formative years.

One big deal: On Thanksgiving 1986, with the whole 100+ crowd of descendants and 'Friends' milling about the Lounge after the dinner, one of the early 'worker bees' climbed up on the big oak table and announced to the assembly, "I'm announcing here for the first time that we are taking over the Mansion House from Oneida Ltd."



## UNDERSTANDING PRESERVATION

*Michael Colmey*

The year 2016 marked the centennial of the National Parks Service. It also marked the 50th anniversary of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act which set forth standards and guidelines for the treatment of historic properties, as delegated by the Secretary of The Interior. Ironically enough, it was the same year we embarked on the beginning of our Building Envelope & Condition Report, which has led us to today's multi-year, multi-million-dollar Preservation project. In keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with guidelines for preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, and reconstructing historic buildings, one must first have an accurate understanding of how these treatments are addressed.

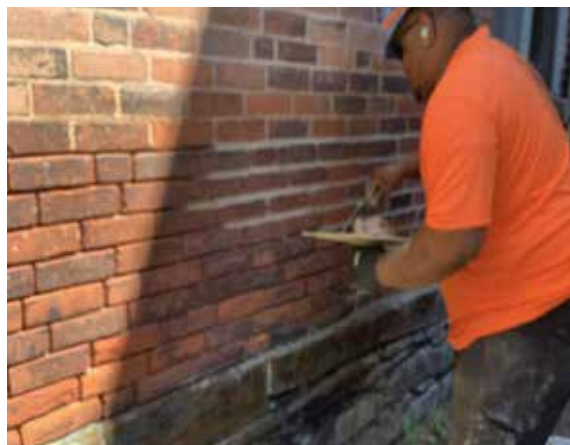
**Preservation** is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. **Rehabilitation** is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repairs, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. **Restoration** is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. **Reconstruction** is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Thus far on our building facade project, we are focused primarily on the treatments defined as



*Intersection of the 1862 Building and the South Wing, East Elevation*

*Removal of hard non historic mortar which causes damage to the bricks, and then re-pointing with historic mortar which was duplicated in composition, color and texture. West Elevation of the 1862 Building. (Rehabilitation)*



rehabilitation and preservation, and in our case, we can't obtain one without the other. That is if we don't rehabilitate it, then we can't preserve it. Here are some examples of the rehabilitation and preservation treatments being performed today, during our Phase 1 Project.

One could say that we are always in preservation mode, and in fact we are. However, we are about to transition from the care and maintenance of how many band-aids we need to apply and care for, to the care and maintenance of the building facade as it was meant to be. In fact, preservation is



*Replacing section of masonry wall and cornice which was too deteriorated for repair. South Wing, South Elevation, left of South Tower (Rehabilitation)*

*Cont'd. next page*

the most appropriate treatment when the objective of the project is to retain the building as it currently exists. Protection, maintenance, and repairs are emphasized. Not only is preservation an historic treatment, but as our buildings transition from their band-aids, to sutures, to the actual healing of its wounds, preservation will become the focus. It will become the focus to ensure the success of everything we have embarked on. It will need to be attainable and sustainable. It will need to be well thought out, categorized and cyclical in nature. Every team member past and present has done a

fantastic job caring for this National Historic Landmark and has contributed enormous amounts of their time and energy, which thankfully has gotten us to where we are today. Moving forward, our motto will transition into "Preservation, Always in Action" .



*Installation of gutters to address water mitigation which contributes to wood rot and infiltration (Preservation)*



*Replacement of deteriorated slates and trim (Preservation)*

Keep up to date with our progress by visiting the preservation page:  
<https://www.oneidacommunity.org/preservation>

- Sign up for our e-newsletter or watch an episode of OCTV while you're on the preservation page!
- Scroll to the bottom of any page on our website for links to our Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn pages.
- Stay tuned and stay in touch!

## SHARING A STORY OF THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY

As we slowly emerged from our Covid induced isolation and winter chills, the Oneida Community Mansion House began to see an influx of visitors from all over the country. Thanks to the resourceful work of Kelly Becker and Lauren Pawlika, we were able to look back at the past few months to get an idea of how many visitors came for a tour, either led by a guide or self-guided. Putting their zip codes into Google maps showed us that people traveled here from almost every state!

In addition to visitors from the United States, we have hosted people from many foreign countries. On a recent tour that Kelly Rose led, she reported that she took through a Russian couple who provided a translation to the Russian newspaper we have in the Curio Cabinet. Since the newspaper is folded in half, they struggled but were fascinated that we had it in our collection. They could not determine the date of the newspaper—another piece of history to unfold!

May 1–July 7  
Total #: 239 visitors  
(11 guided tours & 80 self guided tours)  
Not including @ 200 people  
during the Car Show!

July 8–August 25  
Total #: 345 visitors  
(14 guided tours & 123 self guided tours)

August 26–September 15  
Total #: 72 visitors  
(7 guided & 65 self guided)

For a grand total of 656  
(+ @200) and counting!

## GUEST SERVICES

*Chelsea Scheuerman*

In the springtime I recall looking forward to a fun and engaging summer. Little did I know, engaging would be an understatement. *The Inn at the Mansion House* has been incredibly fortunate to serve a national and international audience this summer.

According to our booking software, we have had visitors from the following countries in 2022:

Peru	Netherlands
Brazil	Colombia
Germany	Austria
Norway	Canada
Philippines	China
Italy	New Zealand

This summer we hosted a group of three from Germany. They were in Central New York biking the Erie Canal Trail and despite being seven miles off of the trail, they chose to stay at the Inn! The German visitors were gracious enough to give some of their time to explain what drew them to take the detour to visit and stay at OCMH. They said, “We wanted to avoid something like a chain hotel...it’s a little bit off track, but not a problem... We should have taken two days! We didn’t know

about the existence of the golf course, or the history of this place. Two days, minimum!” Around 70% of visitors who filled out the guest room survey participated in either the self-guided or guided museum tour.

People who visit OCMH, museum and Inn guests alike, are fascinated by the story of the Oneida Community, the history of Oneida Limited and the architecture of the building. Throughout the summer we often ran into phone calls or emails from people looking for a place to stay overnight, and we had to tell them we were fully booked! The Inn was at full capacity for overnight guests nearly every weekend. This Fall, *The Inn at the Mansion House* will be adding six guest rooms to increase our capacity and continue spreading the story of the Oneida Community. Renovation is in progress and the rooms will be located on the floor directly above the current guest rooms in the New House.

In addition, two new apartments will be renovated and added in the next year, maintaining OCMH’s commitment to keeping the Mansion House a home.

## NORWEGIAN CONNECTIONS

*Dean Gyorgy*

In the fall of 1923, a dashing 20-year-old with a thick foreign accent arrived in Kenwood via Ellis Island and a 10-day transatlantic voyage. He knew no one and nearly nothing of the place, except that he'd been promised a job in the mail-room of the old company sales office.

That man retired from Oneida Limited 40 years later with a gold watch and a legacy that endures today. His name was Fredrik Hartwig, a native-born Norwegian and the father of Mansion House resident Cindy Gyorgy.

A handful of Cindy's younger cousins from the old country (Fred's great-grand nieces and nephews) retraced his steps last July and had a wonderful visit to a place of family lore.

They enjoyed a thorough tour of the Mansion from Curator, Tom Guiler, a look at the sales office with Jody Hicks, a walk to the Community cemetery to see the family headstone, and a catered dinner in the old dining room.

Cindy's son, Dean, crafted a Big Hall presentation from photos and letters that was equal parts biography and personal reflection on how a bold and youthful move to Oneida resonated through future generations.


Fred was a gregarious sort with an easy laugh and firm handshake, a natural for a career on the company sales force. He met local girl and Community descendant Harriet Skinner, and they were married in the Big Hall in 1927. After a honeymoon trip back to Norway to meet his family, they headed west to begin their life together. He was



*Fredrik Hartwig*

an OL salesman (later manager of the Heirloom Sterling Division after '48) his whole career.

Cindy was born in Vancouver in 1930, and sister Greta Hartwig Sanderson arrived in 1935 when the family was living in Los Angeles. The Depression, World War II and the post-war boom years kept the Company and the Hartwigs on the move: Minneapolis to Vancouver to California to Kenwood to Long Island and back. They returned "home for keeps" in 1948. Fred was elected to the Board of Directors in 1953, retired in '64 and died in '65. Harriet moved to the Mansion House and passed away in 1969.

After decades in Maine raising her family, Cindy moved to the Mansion as a part-time resident in 2005 and spent several years as a tour guide. She's here year-round now (mostly) and remains, for her children and grandchildren, the anchor of a proud Oneida heritage that her father adventurously pursued nearly a century ago. 

## JAMES R. COLWAY: FROM CENTRAL NEW YORK TO THE WORLD

*Tom Guiler*

The Oneida Community Mansion House is thrilled to announce the opening of a new exhibit that celebrates the work of Central New York artist James R. Colway, internationally recognized artist who also served as the Art Director and Director/Vice-President of Advertising at Oneida Limited.

*James R. Colway: From Central New York to the World* displays works that highlight Colway's love of Central New York with landscapes of Oneida, Sherrill, Knoxboro, Cazenovia, and other locations throughout the region. These pieces present



quintessential scenes of America by a born-and-raised Oneida resident who lived and worked near the Mansion House. However, these paintings did not remain in Central New York. They were part of the "Art in the Embassies" program wherein the US government placed American art in American embassies worldwide. To program promoted the culture of the United States abroad during the Cold War. These paintings have not been seen together in years and it is the first exhibit solely dedicated to the life and work of James Colway.





Though he was not a descendant of the Oneida Community, Colway became one of the most important figures in Oneida Limited. He was a critical part of some of the most innovative and iconic ads in the history of Oneida Limited and continued the tradition of renowned artists associated with the Community and Company that goes back to figures like Charlotte Miller, Jessie Catherine Kinsley, and Kenneth Hayes Miller.

The exhibit is displayed in a new gallery space for the Mansion House: the first floor of the New House that contains the newly renovated guest rooms. This allows us to tell the story of the Oneida Community and its many legacies to our overnight guests.

This exhibit would not be possible without the generosity of Community Bank, N.A., which in 2020 donated this collection of Colway's work to the Mansion House. Appropriately, Community Bank's gift was donated to honor Mike Kallet, former Director of Community Bank, who originally acquired the collection for Oneida Savings Bank (now Community Bank) and has served the region for decades. Many thanks also go to the Thompson/Colway Family for sharing their collection of Colway papers and memorabilia for use in the exhibit. A special note of thanks to Rick Stickels who was instrumental in bringing this collection to the Mansion House.

This exhibit will be on display through December 2023.



## SPRING AND SUMMER PROGRAMMING

*Tom Guiler*

Throughout the Spring, thanks to the generous support of Humanities New York, the Mansion House celebrated women's suffrage through its "Votes for Women" Reading and Discussion Group. Every three weeks, a group of dedicated readers met in various spaces throughout the Mansion House to discuss women's struggle for the vote and how it related to the lives of women in the Oneida Community.

In May, the Mansion House hosted one of its biggest events in years: the First Annual Kenwood Sherrill Classic Car Club Car Show. The event drew hundreds of people to the Mansion House for an amazing day of classic cars, great music, and food truck delights. The Mansion House had over 70 classic automobiles on the North Lawn, including classic British sports cars, Corvettes, Mustangs, and more. Guests gave the show high praise and they especially enjoyed the opportunity to tour the Mansion House—indeed about 200 people took a tour with our amazing guiding team. The second annual show will be held on May 20, 2023!



The Mansion House also hosted three special hybrid events in the Spring and Summer both in person and simultaneously on Zoom. In the Spring, the Mansion House welcomed Dr. Laura Ping, who gave a talk to a live and virtual audience on the history and importance of the "Reform" Dress that Community women wore. She dove into what inspired



this fashion trend and how it was similar to, yet departed from, the Bloomer costume which was developed in nearby Peterboro.



Later, Eliza West gave an interactive talk about women's work wear in the early 20th century. As she dressed (and undressed) in the library, she enlightened the crowd on what women would have been wearing in Oneida Community, Limited factories, and how high fashion of the day influenced flatware patterns and vice-versa. These programs were generously sponsored by Humanities New York.



As many of you know, the Mansion House can get warm during the Summer. To get outside and beat the heat, Tom Guiler, Director of Museum Affairs and Mike Colmey, Director of Buildings and Grounds, developed a brand-new Architecture and Landscape tour of the Mansion House and the Kenwood neighborhood. The tour highlighted the unique architecture of the Mansion House, our ongoing historic preservation project, and then dove headlong into the surrounding area to hear about the architects, owners, and builders that made their homes in Kenwood.

The tour finished up at the Oneida Community Golf Course for a brief history of this storied course and some light refreshments.



Historic Preservation took on a whole new meaning at the Mansion House this summer. Thanks to the support of CNY Arts and local artist Jennifer Krawiec, the Mansion House hosted two “Art and Historic Preservation” events. The preservation project left the Mansion House with pallets of discarded slate that could not be reused on the historic mansard roof. Therefore, we “upcycled” these slate tiles as a canvas for art work. Each session featured a short architecture and preservation tour followed by an art project. For children, this consisted of gathering leaves from the amazing tree and plant collection at the Mansion House which were used as stamps on the slate. Later in the Summer, adults tried their hand



at painting the slate, this time transforming the tiles into decorative house number plaques! This past September, the Mansion House continued to take the OL Oral History Project on the road at the Oneida Public Library. Thanks to a grant from the Museum Association of New York, the Mansion House partnered with the Library for “Oneida Limited Day.” This event featured a lecture by Project Director, Dave Hill, who reported some of the initial findings of the project complete with some choice stories that were recorded over the last few years. In addition, volunteers were on



hand to help people sign up for interviews and learn more about how they can contribute to the project. Staff set up a “listening station” where attendees could listen to selected clips from recorded interviews. Finally, we used some of the Library’s scanners to digitize attendees’ photos, advertising, and other memorabilia from their working days for Mansion House Museum exhibits and researchers.

## NEWS FROM THE COLLECTION

Tom Guiler

The Mansion House has been lucky enough to acquire a number of important items for the museum collection this summer thanks to the generosity of our donors and supporters. Here are a couple of highlights.

This June, long time Oneida collector, Jack Wallace and his family donated a number of original hand-drawn illustrations that were essentially prototypes for early 20th century Oneida Community, Limited advertisements and packaging. When he stopped by to donate them, Jack regaled Mansion House staff with the story of how he found these drawings, virtually untouched, behind a bookcase at his home on Main Street in Oneida. Because they were kept



in a dark and stable environment, these drawings are in impeccable condition for being over 100 years old.

Every year, thousands of avid collectors and dealers make their way to Antiques Week in Madison and Bouckville. Sometimes, those folks find treasures that could only find a home at the Oneida Community Mansion House. During that week

an anonymous donor gifted two amazing objects to the Mansion House collection. The first is a monumental ca. 1950s advertisement for Oneida Limited Flatware. Continuing in their tradition of innovative ads, this poster was likely installed at a gas station and enticed buyers to pick up a set of flatware for only 99 cents with the purchase of \$3.00 worth of gasoline. (In the late 1940s and 1950s, a gallon of gas was between 26 and 31 cents per gallon.) The genius behind this strategy was that many people needed far more than just one



place setting, so it allowed customers to take it home, try it out, and then, if they liked it, buy a full set for the whole family.

Another find came from the original Oneida



Community. Though the OC was first and foremost an industrial outfit, they still did their fair share of farming. As dairy was and still is a staple in Madison County agriculture, the Community produced its own milk for members' own consumption as well as for sale to the

outside world. This is a rare example of one of those milk bottles. One curious thing about this object is that the bottom of the bottle has an "A" molded in the glass. This stood for the "Adams Dairy" which cleaned the bottles and got them ready for reuse. The OC seemingly did not have their own bottling facility, so they contracted this out with Adams and they marked the "A" so they knew it was their bottle to clean.



## PRESERVATION IN ACTION: COLLECTIONS EDITION

*Emily Stegner*

If you have visited or even driven past the Mansion House this summer, you have no doubt seen the scaffolding inching its way around the building. While this visible progress for the building's historic preservation is underway, more behind-the-scenes preservation work in the museum's collection has also begun.

Part of OCMH's historic preservation plan involves finding a permanent home for the collection of nearly 10,000 objects. As Collections Fellow at the Mansion House this fall, my task is to secure and relocate a portion of the collection to make way for apartment renovations. The portion of the collection I am working on are Oneida Ltd. items salvaged from the old Sales Office by former curator, Anthony Wonderely. The collection includes silverware, steel traps, World War II products, design books, and other ephemera.

Perhaps the most significant piece of this collection is the nearly 300 packettes, binders that store design samples of flatware patterns. These binders are a valuable glimpse into the design and manufacturing process at the company. Occasionally, the packettes will contain unfinished pieces of flatware or notes on changes to designs. But more than anything the collection is a testament to the wide variety of designs the company had to offer throughout its tenure—an indicator of Oneida Ltd.'s unmatched success in the tableware business at the time.

A critical part of ensuring a museum collection is both useful and usable means, keeping records current. Moving part of the collection is the perfect opportunity to inventory and update documentation on collection objects. Before moving each object to its new home, I update the catalog entries and add images into our museum database, PastPerfect. These tasks make sure our information about each object is as complete and up to date as possible, which will be invaluable for researchers and future museum programming in the years to come.

Inventorying a museum collection also means discovering its quirks. So far, in addition to hundreds of packettes, I have seen many novelty spoons, from Care Bear and Gerber to Mr. Peanut and Niagara Falls; an (inactive) hand grenade; and mysterious old film reels. As someone who has worked on many cataloging projects for different organizations, my favorite part of digging into a collection is seeing what oddities and valuable stories I can find.

In the short time I have been working as Collections Fellow, I can already see that the Mansion House has a wealth of resources—resources they are eager to share with the community. After all, the point of preservation is to be able to continue sharing into the future. I am pleased to play a small part in this behind-the-scenes preservation, part of a much bigger project to protect the OCMH's resources for another 160 years.



## ONEIDA LIMITED: MORE THAN A SILVERWARE COMPANY

Tom Guiler

This year, OCMH has been concentrating on adding to and promoting the **Oneida Limited Oral History Project**. The goals for the Spring and Summer of 2022 were twofold: to recruit more people to share their stories with us and to report some of the amazing stories that have been shared through the program.

We wanted a tangible way to share these stories and to bring the project to a wider audience outside the Mansion House. Thanks to Madison County Historian Matt Urtz, the Mansion House was offered a large museum case at the Madison County Courthouse for a temporary exhibit. I was joined in curating by Stuart Spoko, a junior at Colgate University who interned at the Mansion House as part of the Upstate Institute Summer Field School. This program places students in institutions throughout Upstate New York to work on research projects. As Colgate states: "Through a Field School Fellowship, students strengthen their skills while building the capacity of the community organization with which they are working. The Field School allows students to develop a deeper understanding of the issues facing Upstate New York and a stronger appreciation for what the region has to offer." We were incredibly fortunate to have Stuart on board for this project as he dove right into the work. He learned about the history of the Oneida Community and Oneida Limited, met community partners, and helped populate the exhibit case, write label copy, and actually install the exhibit.

Together, Stuart and I spent much of June listening to each of the some two-dozen interviews, reading books and articles, combing the Mansion

House's collection, and soliciting help from the Sales Office and Liberty Tabletop. Many themes from the interviews emerged that lent themselves nicely to a large case exhibit. Each shelf was dedicated to a theme and then populated with objects from the Mansion House and private collections as well as printed quotes from the interviews. This included a section on **Innovation**, which celebrated the cutting-edge technology that went into manufacturing tableware and the pioneering advertising strategies OL employed. Another section, entitled **Tradition**, draws a throughline between the values that sustained the original Oneida Community with the ideals that made OL one of the most successful silverware makers in the world. Ideas of **Community** rang loud and clear through these interviews. Therefore, that shelf examines how working for OL was in many ways like being a part of a big family with benefits and services like the CAC, Lewis Point, and even a traveling nurses program. Finally, we wanted to show off the product itself: tableware. Therefore, the final section is called **OCQ - Oneida Community Quality**, and creates a tablescape that shows off some of the most iconic patterns while celebrating the pride employees took in their work.

A special thank you to all who made this exhibit possible: the Madison County Clerk's Office, Liberty Tabletop/Sherrill Manufacturing, the Hicks Family, Project Leader Dave Hill, and the many people who shared their stories with us. This exhibit will be up until December. Go and check it out!



## DISCOVERING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

*Stuart Sopko*

This past summer, I had the opportunity to work at the Oneida Community Mansion House via Colgate University's Upstate Institute Summer Field School program. I was paired with the Mansion House as a research fellow to work on an exhibit highlighting the Oneida Limited Oral History project. I was neither a history or museum studies student and my previous work experience consisted mainly of landscaping in the summers, so I was a little out of my comfort zone to say the least. Nonetheless, I was welcomed with open arms to the Mansion House and its community, from descendants of the original Oneida Community to former employees of Oneida Limited. My specific project entailed researching and curating the "More than a Silverware Company" exhibit, but I got much more out of the experience than just that.

When I first got to the Mansion House, I was taken aback by the physical building and the surrounding grounds. Inside, the Mansion House can feel like a sort of maze at first and I spent much of my first few weeks either sticking to the library and the areas I knew, or wandering the halls trying to familiarize myself with everything. My research started with a similar phase of familiarization. I was given about ten books to read and take notes that would provide me with the background knowledge I needed for my project. I was fascinated by the Oneida Community, but I was reminded that my project was more about the company. I soon realized the company has received much less scholarly attention. It was off-putting to me at first, but I quickly became excited by the fact that my project was going to be more novel and entering new territory.

Since there was less work done prior to the Oral History project, the interviews conducted as part of the project were a major source of information for my research. This was a new and fascinating way for me to work, and I felt as though I was engaged in the creation of knowledge. Additionally, I was looking through the Mansion House collections for objects to compliment the interviews in the exhibit, and the search for objects took me out of the Mansion House. I went on tours of the Sales Office, the Sherril factory, and many other spots to see where else there could be relevant information. These experiences outside of the Mansion House, exploring the area and engaging with the community, were truly some of my favorite times of the summer.

By the time I had conducted my preliminary research and gathered objects from the collections, I was ready to begin putting the exhibit together.

However, this curation process took way more time than I would have expected. This was especially true with the graphic design and label copy I worked on with Theresa Batty. I never knew there were so many font options! All that hard work did really pay off because the exhibit looks great and I have been given a newfound appreciation of the time and effort that goes into creating a museum exhibit. I was very happy with the results of the project, and though it

took up most of my time, it was not my favorite part of my summer experience.

What I truly loved about working at the Mansion House was the sense of community and profound connectedness that I felt. The Mansion House/Sherill/Kenwood/Oneida Limited community, a tough thing

to give a name to, has a particularly rich history and out of that history has grown a unique thing that can only be described as community. It is a community built on various ideological traditions that have been able to transcend the physical form and persist through adversity and change. I grew up in a community that has similar characteristics in terms of its history, strong traditions, and intergenerationality. I had never felt that sense of community anywhere else until I was at the Mansion House. Not only was I experiencing this in real time, but I was researching the history, and I came to feel as though I was existing in a living history that transcended time.

I did not achieve this sense of community and interest just by conducting research. I spent multiple late nights at the Mansion House, watching guest lecturers and eating dinner with the residents. I also had wonderful guidance from Tom Guiler and his wife, Giovanna, who welcomed me like part of the family. They took me out to eat, showed me the area, and introduced me to many important and interesting members of the community. I was able to engage with the local community in a way that I think very few Colgate students ever get the opportunity to do and I think it is much to their detriment. Not only do I now have a greater sense of place when at school, but I have made connections that I hope will last a lifetime. My research was fascinating and engaging, don't get me wrong, but this experience would not have been the same without this added sense of community. I can truly say that I loved my summer at the Mansion House and I will continue to visit as often as possible. As many who visited the Oneida Community and Oneida Limited said, there was something unique and undefinable in the air. I can say I certainly felt that.







# LIVINGSTON TAYLOR CONCERT Presented by Oneida Performing Arts & OCMH

*Christine O'Neil*



*Livingston Taylor*

*Volunteers assembling "goodies" before the Livingston Taylor concert  
L-R: Jim Tuggey, Carrie Hood, Livingston Taylor, center back, Deborah Dunn, Linda Tuggey, front*



*Rachel Sumner*

Last fall, after 56 years, Oneida Performing Arts ceased its operations as a cultural community based nonprofit and donated the remainder of the funds to OCMH.

OPA funds will go to help support cultural performances by supporting a concert annually as part of the Mansion House Music Series.

OCMH is grateful to OPA for entrusting their funds to the Mansion House and proud to continue OPA's legacy of providing the cultural performances to the community.

To honor and thank their supporters, OPA helped OCMH bring Livingston Taylor and Rachel Sumner to Oneida. Livingston performed a rousing set after Rachel opened to an enthusiastic crowd.



### **Music Series schedule for 22-23**

- Saturday - September 24 Mike Powell
- Sunday - October 23 The Cadleys
- Saturday - January 14 Chuck Lamb
- Sunday - February 12 Mark Nanni
- Saturday - March 11 Joe Crookston
- Sunday - April 16: NATIONAL act: TBD



## YOGA, TEA & GARDENING

Linda Evans

While it is doubtful that Oneida Community members practiced yoga, they certainly experimented with growing and using various types of plants. One wonders if they ever tried dandelion tea?

The Thursday morning Mellow Flow yoga class, under the direction of Yogi Judy Mumford, a former Sherrill resident, has enjoyed a tea ceremony at the end of class. Judy scouts out new blends of tea from Natur-Tyme in Syracuse each week and steeps the tea in the “never ending teapot” while class members enjoy Savasana, the final restorative pose. Judy begins the tea ceremony with the gentle warming of small ceramic teacups, empties them out and refills each with the blend of the day. We try to guess what herbs are in the tea, by smell and taste. Sometimes we can guess right away, and other times we are stumped!! No one liked the dandelion brew!

After many weeks of different taste treats, we decided to grow our own tea herbs. One member, Tom Scoones, offered his dehydrator to prepare the leaves for steeping. Mansion House resident Tim Cumings suggested we investigate the neglected raised garden beds in a field behind the Mansion House. After permission was granted to use the space, class members weeded the four overgrown beds, enriched the soil, and began planting. With monetary donations from class members, and plant donations from others, several tea herbs were purchased and planted in the refurbished beds.

They needed lots of water all summer and were a little neglected, but the plants are coming along and eventually we had leaves of various flavors to be dried and then steeped into fresh tea. Our favorite, to date, was peppermint tea!

Painted rocks designated which plants were which, and since they are perennials for the most part, we will watch them grow next year in hopes of having a bigger harvest! Our tea ceremony also includes thoughts for meditation, a short prose piece or thoughts on various subjects from members. *Anyone is welcome to join the class which begins in the Big Hall at 8:30 on Thursday mornings.*



## SUPPORTING ONEIDA COMMUNITY MANSION HOUSE

*Laura Wayland-Smith Hatch*

### **M**y Community Experience

I, like thousands of others, am an Oneida Community descendant, and even though I left Kenwood in 1974 and have lived in many places around the world, I still think of Kenwood and the Mansion House as home.

The Mansion House was my childhood playground. With my friends, I played hide-and-seek throughout the many rooms, hallways, and the amazing basement. I practiced the piano on the Big Hall stage, with an occasional audience of one or two residents who would applaud when I mastered a piece. On that same stage I joined neighborhood thespians in creating impromptu plays. I broke in my Ouija board in the Mansion House trying to connect with my Oneida Community ancestors—with no luck—and spent hours in the library devouring Nancy Drew mystery novels.

Outdoors, the flower garden arbor was a favorite spot for tea parties with friends, and the swings were the place to burn off some energy. Thanksgiving mornings were spent at the log cabin, drinking cocoa and devouring donuts. I skated on the rink on the North Lawn, went sledding on the South Lawn, and the summer house was the home base for outdoor hide-and-seek games and a place to just sit and chat with friends.



*Thomas & Laura Wayland-Smith Hatch posed with their wedding party in front of the south facade of the Mansion House, July 27, 1974*

From a young age, I socialized with the many residents of the Mansion House. I learned how to play cribbage, watched hearts games, did craft projects with cigar boxes, and listened to stories of days past.

My first “real” paycheck was for working in the Mansion House Kitchen at dinner time, and I quickly learned what everyone’s favorite desserts were! My bridal shower was held in the lounge, and my wedding reception was held in the Quadrangle.

I introduced the Mansion House to my children

on visits to their great-grandmother in Ultima Thule, the apartment where she started her married life and spent her retirement. While the adults chatted, the kids would explore and were impressed with the maze of hallways and the places they led. Visits would always end with Great-Grandma Lee pushing them on the same swings their mother and grandfather swung on. Now my grandchildren have been introduced to the Mansion House, although they haven’t had the opportunity to spend as much time there as previous generations.



*Leonora “Lee” Wayland-Smith pushes her great grandchildren, Nicholas & Abigail Hatch on the Mansion House swings in the summer of 1983*

### **The OCMH Experience Today**

After many years away—raising a family, running a business, and exploring the world for business and pleasure with my wonderful husband—I am now retired and am refocusing on the Mansion House, its legacy, and its future going forward.

On trips back to visit family in Sherrill and Oneida, I wandered the building and grounds, and was concerned that time was taking its toll on the building. This prompted me to get involved with OCMH about three years ago—first committing my time and talents as a volunteer focusing on marketing, as a board trustee, and then making a decision to become a bigger financial supporter than in years past.

### **Why Support OCMH?**

Because I believe that the Mansion House can continue to be a magical and inspirational place for visitors of all ages. I want to help make sure that the resources are available to preserve the physical structure that is the Mansion House, making it safe

*Cont’d. next page*



*Aunt Carol Webb, 2nd from left, joins her nieces, Laura Wayland-Smith Hatch, Jennifer Wayland-Smith, and Tina Wayland-Smith Perkins on the front porch of the Mansion House for a family photo*

for today's residents and visitors and for many generations to come.

I also want to help provide the resources for the Community story to be shared with audiences within its walls and around the world; and, I want to help grow the OCMH Community, enabling it to welcome new followers and supporters, just as they did in the days past of the Oneida Community, Oneida Community Limited, and Oneida Ltd.

**How to Support OCMH?**

The first thing I did was increase my annual donations to OCMH. I know that not everyone can give large sums of money, but every donation counts, and many small donations add up quickly.

My most recent decision was to make OCMH

a beneficiary in my will. It wasn't hard to do, and it feels good to know that my contribution will help OCMH preserve the Oneida legacy, even after I am no longer physically here.

**The Reward for Supporting OCMH?**

For 160 years, the Mansion House has grown and changed as the needs of the Community have changed. Rooms have been added, combined, and painted and wallpapered repeatedly to fit the taste of current residents.

By supporting OCMH and making a financial gift, we're ensuring that the Mansion House will continue to be a dynamic, living building, changing as needed to meet the needs of its current Community. Families will continue to be able to stroll the beautiful grounds; children will continue to peer into the curio cabinet and imagine where the wonderful artifacts



*Laura & Thomas Hatch celebrate their 48th wedding anniversary with an overnight stay in the Mansion House, July 27, 2022*

came from; residents will continue to live in and enjoy the apartments; and visitors will have exhibits to learn from, the Mansion House common areas to explore, and comfortable and attractive rooms to relax in.

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS AND DONORS**

*March 9, 2022 – September 14, 2022*

**Benefactor**

Eric and Deborah Stickels  
Barry and Sally E. Mandel  
P. Geoffrey and Kristi Noyes  
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**Donor**

Wilber and Christine Noyes Earl  
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**Contributor**

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Kate Wayland-Smith *In honor of Ellen and Sarah Wayland-Smith*  
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 Terry Tubbs  
 William Vartorella  
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**GIFTS TO OPERATING/ANNUAL FUND**

*March 9, 2022 – September 14, 2022*

**\$30,000 to \$400,000**

NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic  
 Preservation  
 Oneida Savings Bank Charitable  
 Foundation  
 Preservation League of NYS

**\$10,000 to \$20,000**

Kenwood Benevolent Society  
 Oneida Performing Arts

**\$6,000 to \$9,999**

CNY Arts  
 Katherine A. Garner *Lawns and  
 Gardens*  
 Museum Association Of New York

**\$1,000 to \$5,000**

Nigel and Ellen Bolland *In memory  
 of Francie Wyland*  
 Dave and Billie Hill Car Show  
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 Lang Hatcher Estate *For the OC  
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 Alan and Josephine Noyes  
*In memory of the Kenwood kids from  
 the 40's and 50's*  
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*Building Preservation*  
 Robin Vanderwall and Dan Strobel  
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 NYS Council For The Humanities

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 of Tom Guiler for the Questers group  
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 John Froass & Son, Inc. *Music Series  
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**\$100 to \$249**

Nigel and Ellen Bolland *For the OC  
 cemetery*  
 Robert and Mary Burdick *In honor of  
 Pody Vanderwall's Birthday on 8/10*  
 Cynthia Hartwig Gyorgy *In appre-  
 ciation of Tom Guiler for the Architec-  
 tural Tour*  
 Cynthia Hartwig Gyorgy *In appre-  
 ciation of Kate Wayland-Smith*  
 Barry and Sally E. Mandel *For the  
 OC cemetery*  
 Jim O'Mahony  
 Oneida Hospitality Group  
 Jeffrey and Nancy Prowda *In  
 memory of Ted and Helen Prowda and  
 Judy Prowda*

Barbara Rivette *For the OC cemetery*  
 Neal and Kelly Rose *In memory of  
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 Steve's Body Shop, Inc. *Car Show  
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 Rhoda Vanderwall  
 Victory Signs *Car Show Sponsor*  
 Paul and Judy Wayland-Smith *In  
 memory of Francie Wyland*  
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**Up to \$99**

Amazon Smiles  
 Theresa Batty  
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 Maria Curley  
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*In Appreciation of a presentation by  
 Tom Guiler and Pody Vanderwall*  
 Cynthia Hartwig Gyorgy *In honor of  
 Jody Hicks*  
 Annabel Smith Haley  
 John R. and Susan J. Kuterka *For  
 the Jessie C. Kinsley exhibit in honor of  
 Pody Vanderwall for Mother's Day*  
 Suzanne LaLonde  
 Daniel Lang  
 Mark E. Morris  
 Gary and Becky Onyan  
 James and Nancy Pawlika  
 John and Kim Raynsford *In memory  
 of Francie Wyland*  
 Christine Shackelford

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Carolyn Jane Strobel-Larson  
Edward and Ann Thoma  
Anthony and Jennifer Troilo  
Terry Tubbs  
Rhoda Vanderwall *In memory of  
Francie Wyland*  
Kate Wayland-Smith *In memory of  
Francie Wyland*  
John and Karen Wellman

**In Kind Items/Services**

Community Bank, N.A. *James R.  
Colway Art Collection paintings,  
donated in honor Mike Kallet*  
Kipp and Jody Hicks *Use of the Sales  
Office parking lot for OCMH events*  
P. Geoffrey and Kristi Noyes  
*Donation of Harden Furniture chair  
and loveseat*

James Trevvett *Awards for the 1st  
Annual Car Show, presented by the  
Sherrill Kenwood Classic Car Club*  
Don Cornue *Refinishing lounge/  
breakfast bar tables; building South  
garden arbor*

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Zoom your way into more episodes of ***From the Mansion House to Your House***, led by Tom Guiler, the Director of Museum Affairs, as well as other staff members as they share the updates and experiences of the Oneida Community Mansion House. Check the website for upcoming episodes of OCTV and other events.

**Reminder...** If you would like a digital color copy of the Journal, please send an email to [connect@oneidacomunity.org](mailto:connect@oneidacomunity.org).

Interested in learning more and/or participating in the ***Oral History Project?*** Find more information at [www.oneidacommunity.org/ol](http://www.oneidacommunity.org/ol).



Oneida Community  
**MANSION**  
**HOUSE**

A National Historic Landmark

170 Kenwood Avenue

Oneida, NY 13421

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
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