



On The House

News from the Gibson House



GIBSON HOUSE MUSEUM

Historic ✱ Authentic ✱ Illuminating

LOCATION:

137 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02116
617.267.6338

HOURS:

Currently closed due to COVID-19. Usually open year-round, visits by guided tour Wednesday through Sunday on the hour at 1:00, 2:00, and 3:00 p.m.

Reservations are required for group tours of 12 or more; please contact us at info@thegibsonhouse.org

ADMISSION:

members free; adults \$10; students and seniors (62+) \$8; children (under 12) \$3

MEMBERSHIP:

to become a member, [please visit our website.](#)

MUSEUM STAFF

Museum Administrator
Michelle Coughlin

Curator

Meghan Gelardi
Holmes

Museum and Curatorial Assistant

Barbara Callahan

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Susan Ashbrook,
Secretary

Gibson Society, Inc. 2018-2019 Annual Report

October 1, 2018-September 30, 2019



Saoirse Ronan, as Jo March in *Little Women*, approaching the Gibson House

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for your support of the Gibson House over the past fiscal year. What a special year it was for the museum, marked by increased outreach, enhanced educational initiatives, and a positive financial footing. Not to mention being featured in a major Hollywood motion picture! Among the year's highlights were:

*The museum's role in Greta Gerwig's star-studded, Oscar-nominated *Little Women* (standing in for Jo March's New York boardinghouse and publisher's home). In addition, the Gibson House's interior served as a backdrop for the Boston Ballet's beautiful promotional video for *The Nutcracker*. In yet another creative use of space, we hosted our first wedding! (See photo below.)

*The introduction of innovative new tours and programming, including an LGBTQ specialty tour, "*Charlie Gibson's Queer Boston.*" Also, for the first time, the museum participated in the national ArtWeek celebration, with a participatory outdoor chalkboard project and a mini-exhibit/program, "Sketch the Story: Fashion History at the Gibson House Museum." With our Boston House Museum Alliance colleagues, we explored Boston's medical history in a collaborative tour, "Picture of Health: Untold Medical Histories in Boston's House Museums." We waived admission on Smithsonian Museum Day and International Women's Day, and met local families at our "Flower Power" free children's program and Holiday Open House.

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William Pear II (Emeritus)

TRIP ADVISOR REVIEWS

"Great tour! This is an interesting house with a unique story. All of the rooms on the first three levels are accessible, and the rooms are authentically arranged with mostly original Gibson family furnishings. Though there is a tour guide, you can go at your own pace and are given a chance to walk around each room. Tour guide was friendly and relatable."

Reviewed July 2019

"I had the best time at the Gibson House Museum. The tour guide was super-friendly and knowledgeable. The house itself is charming [and] well preserved and there is so much to see....If you love history and museums, then you will enjoy this tour.... Highly recommend!"

Reviewed April 2018

"It really is a beautiful house and the tour guide was fantastic! If you love history and the Victorian era, this is the perfect tour for you. It really is like stepping into a time machine. Great museum!"

Reviewed May 2017

"Step back in time as you enter this house. Everything looks like the owner just stepped out. Simply amazing tour. See what it was like to live in 1860. Full of antiques, a must see."

Reviewed May 2016

"A really interesting hour spent with a great guide looking all around a house still furnished with genuine furniture and items from [the] mid 19[th] c[entury]. The kitchen alone is a treasure trove, with cookware and utensils. Excellent."

*The strengthening of our ties with the educational community. We hosted interns from Boston University, Simmons College, Suffolk University, and Tufts University, as well as student groups from the Boston Architectural College, Boston College, the Ivy Street School, the North Bennet Street School, Northeastern University, Stonehill College, Suffolk University, the Mount Ida Campus of UMass Amherst, UMass Boston, and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

*The continued maintenance of the collections and building and progress on preservation initiatives. We digitized over 1,000 objects in the collection (a sample is now **available online**) and, with the help of generous donor Robert Bayard Severy, conserved an important painting, *The Singers* by William Morris Hunt, and refurbished an early dining room chair. The historic carpet restoration projects funded by benefactors Diane Gipson and Rosamond Warren Allen remained well underway, with completion dates scheduled for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

*A successful Annual Benefit, held at Boston's historic St. Botolph Club, honoring longtime friend Robert Severy, who has underwritten the restoration of numerous items in the Gibson House collection. The Robert Severy Collections Conservation Fund, established at the Benefit by generous donors, will provide additional resources for collections care.

*Continued enthusiasm from local, national, and international visitors, who consistently remark upon the museum's beauty and authenticity. As one visitor wrote on TripAdvisor, "If there was ever living history, this is it!"

We sincerely appreciate your generosity and your part in ensuring our continued success. Thank you, as always, for your friendship and support.

Sincerely,

Michelle Coughlin

Museum Administrator



Gibson House board member Susan Ashbrook gives a tour at Smithsonian Museum Day.

Treasurer's Report, FY 2018-2019

By Lorraine D. Hanley

The Gibson House Museum's operating budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 was \$120,000. While the museum ended the year with a

deficit of \$5,894, no funds were withdrawn from the endowment, despite a budgeted withdrawal of approximately \$11,500. The museum Board of Trustees takes very seriously its efforts to preserve and increase the endowment, which totaled approximately \$467,000 at the conclusion of the fiscal year.

The museum earns revenue from individual and group tours; programs and events (including the Annual Benefit); rental income; and generous donations from members and patrons. As in the previous fiscal year, the museum earned approximately \$20,000 from house tours. While rental income is not typically a significant source of revenue, this year it dramatically increased to approximately \$23,000, primarily due to the filming of *Little Women*, the critically acclaimed and Oscar-nominated movie directed by Greta Gerwig. The Boston Ballet filmed at the museum, too, producing a promotional video for *The Nutcracker*.

The museum's largest source of revenue continues to be its Annual Benefit held each spring. The 2019 event was held at the elegant St. Botolph Club and honored longtime supporter Robert Severy. Mr. Severy's generous donations over the past several decades have made it possible to restore and repair numerous objects and paintings in the museum's collection. In recognition of Mr. Severy, the Trustees established the Robert Severy Collections Conservation Fund, dedicated to the care and restoration of the museum's many artifacts. More than \$6,100 was raised at the Benefit for the new fund.

The Gibson House Museum earned nearly \$5,000 in revenue from events and programs. One of the most popular events each year is the Repeal Day celebration held in December. Approximately 40 people attended Repeal Day 2018, many of whom contributed to a special ask for funds that will enable museum staff to develop specialty tours. The special ask raised a total of \$1,600.

Museum expenses were generally in line with the 2018-2019 budget. The year-end deficit was largely due to an unforeseen expense. Deteriorating joists are causing the ground floor of the museum to sag, and the Trustees approved spending \$5,000 for a structural assessment. This assessment was necessary for grant-funding applications for ground-floor repairs. The investment proved beneficial, as the museum was recently awarded a Community Preservation Act grant from the City of Boston.



List of Donors

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Gibson Society President Samuel H. Duncan, past Benefit honoree Anthony M. Sammarco, and master of ceremonies Robert B. Dimmick welcome guests to the 2019 Annual Benefit at the St. Botolph Club.



A local family enjoys visiting during an open house.

Donors for Fiscal Year 2018-2019

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A happy couple ties the knot at the
Gibson House in 2019.

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Nancy Jane and Samuel H. Duncan
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Emily Shick
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Donors in Recognition

Laura M. and James Alleyn Duncan,
In memory of Dr. Henry Allen
Susan Gifford Fay,
In memory of Nelson Gifford
Robert Bayard Severy,
In honor of Edward W. Gordon
Robert Bayard Severy,

In memory of Alexander K. Severy
Mark Thompson,
In honor of Samuel H. Duncan



Museum and Curatorial Assistant Barbara Callahan gives the popular LGBTQ Pride Tour, "Charlie Gibson's Queer Boston."

Designated Donations/Matching Gifts

Susan Ashbrook for Benefit award frame
Susan Ashbrook and Lauren Thomas for Benefit flowers
Sheila Donahue for Benefit musicians
Frances Duffly for Boston Preservation Alliance membership
Diane Gipson for conservation
NVIDIA Corp. Employee Giving Program for Samuel H. Duncan
Ryan & Wood Distilleries for Repeal Day donations
Robert Bayard Severy for painting restoration

In-Kind Services

Fisher College, for snow removal and lawn maintenance
Jim Hood, Jim Hood Design, for benefit invitation design
Carlos A. Soto-Chaves, Garden Club of the Back Bay, for exterior floral plantings

Restricted Donations

Robert Bayard Severy Collections Conservation Fund (2019 Benefit "Special Ask")

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Donations to Support Digitization of the Collections (2018 Repeal Day "Special Ask")

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Samuel H. Duncan
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Kim Lesly Hunter
Jim Lundy
David O'Dowd
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*Donations to the Gibson House Museum may be made **online** or mailed to 137 Beacon St., Boston, 02116. Please also feel free to contact us about planned giving at info@thegibsonhouse.org or 617-267-6338.*

Be sure to like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Instagram](#)



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Mary Prince Photography of Boston

The Gibson House Museum is an authentic Victorian row house located at 137 Beacon Street. Built in 1859, it is one of Back Bay Boston's earliest houses and stands as its historic house museum. The Museum is open to the public and preserved as a time capsule of the daily life of a well-to-do family and its domestic staff. The Gibson House Museum is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places.

Gibson House Museum
A National Historic Landmark

