



THE VINE

News from Wistariahurst Museum

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Winter 2009

Wistariahurst Celebrates Fifty Years



William and Sarah Skinner on Wistariahurst's porch, c. 1900.

2009 will be an exciting year for Wistariahurst as the museum celebrates its 50th Anniversary as an important cultural and historic site in the City of Holyoke. Two generations of the Skinner family owned Wistariahurst and the entire block of land until 1959, when Katharine Skinner Kilborne, Mr. Skinner's youngest daughter, and her heirs gave Wistariahurst to Holyoke to be used for cultural and educational purposes. The 26-room mansion was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 and remains a valuable asset to the City of Holyoke.

In a letter to the public in 1959, Katharine stated "After a series of conferences it seemed evident that our home would be of true value to the City in its far sighted approach to future planning in cultural and educational fields. Therefore, my children and I take great pleasure and are willing to deed Wistariahurst to the City of Holyoke in memory of William and Sarah E. Skinner. It is our sincere hope, as Wistariahurst has served our family, it may now continue to serve our community."

Commenting upon the passing of Wistariahurst from the Skinner Family to the City of Holyoke, Katharine said, "It is not without a touch of regret and a tinge of sadness that Wistariahurst passes from the Skinner family. It is truly the end of an era for my children and myself. I was the youngest of William Skinner's children and I know that nothing would have pleased my father more than to know that the family home is to carry on as both a seat of culture and education and as a museum and a

place of educational endeavor. When I returned to Holyoke eight years ago, I found it growing and has the normal demands for increased educational facilities. All the members of my family join me in wishing Wistariahurst well as it is transferred to the cultural service of Holyoke. It is like taking leave of an old friend who is going higher."

Today, Wistariahurst Museum is a premier historical, educational and cultural site. Wistariahurst engages public audiences and inspires an appreciation of history and the arts. The Museum Archives provide valuable insight into local history and serve as a resource for scholars, educators and researchers. The Music Hall is a magnificent setting for musical performances, lectures, theatrical productions and dances. The building itself is a living artifact that stands as a testament to the rich architectural and historical landscape of the city. Over the past decades, Wistariahurst has played a vital role in enriching the wider community by presenting the history and culture of a New England industrial city.

As we prepare for the future, we invite you to help continue the Wistariahurst mission. Please support all the efforts at Wistariahurst with a donation of \$15 or more. You will receive an Anniversary Calendar! These special calendars contain historic photographs taken from Skinner Family photo albums and scrapbooks from the Wistariahurst Skinner Family Archives. The calendar also details memorable moments of Skinner Family members and highlights events taking place at Wistariahurst over the past five decades. Join us in celebration of this wonderful anniversary year!

Wistariahurst Museum

238 Cabot Street, Holyoke, MA 01040
413-322-5660 www.wistariahurst.org

The Fabric of Our Lives: Pieces from Wistariahurst's Costume Collection



Dress c. 1860s. Gift from the Bachelor Family.

Gallery Exhibition: January 7 through the end of February

Throughout history, perhaps from the moment man discovered clothes as protection against nature, clothes proved to be a vehicle for expressing oneself outwardly. Societies have used clothes and other adornments as a form of nonverbal communication to indicate occupation, gender, locality, class and group affiliation. What we wear and how we wear it provides shorthand for others to read our social positions. In January and February of 2009, Wistariahurst Museum will open its closet doors to display pieces of its costume and textile collection. The exhibit, entitled "The Fabric of Our Lives: Pieces from Wistariahurst's Costume Collection" showcases the most spectacular pieces of over 50 years of collecting textiles. Come explore with us vintage clothing from the 1830s to the 1940s, including Skinner Silks. Also on display will be various accessories such as fans, combs and purses from the collection.

Opening Reception—Wednesday, January 7 at 6 p.m.

Vanessa James, Professor of Theatre Arts at Mount Holyoke College and Resident Designer/ Producer of Mount Holyoke's Rooke Theatre will explore the history of vintage clothing from the 1830s to the 1940s. Reception to follow. *Cost is \$10.*

Preserving Textile Workshop—Wednesday, January 21 at 6 p.m.

City Historian and Curator Kate Thibodeau will lead a workshop on how to preserve textiles. Textiles can be simple in structure and composition, or they can be composite objects incorporating materials like quills, beads, paints, bones, feathers and leather. Caring for textiles can be equally simple, if you know some basic facts. Bring in a sample of what you need preserved. *Cost is \$10.*

You Can't Work in a Corset: Examining Fashion through Social History - Wednesday, February 4 at 6 p.m.

Deborah Miller, textile and costume historian will use the Wistariahurst Costume Exhibition as an entrée into examining the social history of clothing from the Civil War to the Roaring Twenties. Hear how women's domestic lives, pastimes and contemporary attitudes informed the fashions of the day. *Admission is \$3.*

Featured Programs

Victorian Crafts - During February school vacation Wistariahurst will host Victorian crafts from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. All participants will leave with something to remember the day by! Cost is \$5 per person. Reservations are suggested.

Tuesday, February 17 Victorian Fans

Thursday February 19 Secret Diaries

Wednesday, February 18 Victorian Hatboxes

Friday, February 20 Victorian Bookmarks

Tea & Textiles - Join us for tea and a look at the costume exhibit on Sunday, February 22 at 2p.m. We are also offering this program at 1pm on February 17-20 for \$15. Reservations are required.

The Skinner Servants' Tour

A Living History of Wistariahurst

Written by Priscilla Kane Hellweg and Rachel Kuhn

Presented by Enchanted Circle Theater

More than a house tour. More than a play.



Patricia Mew as Hattie Riley.

Wistariahurst will once again host a popular and wonderfully entertaining theatrical production of the Skinner Servants' Tour. The servants that were employed by the Skinner family throughout their years in Holyoke were numerous and played an invaluable role in managing the Skinner family estate. Using primary documents as sources to understand the lives and experiences of the Skinner household and dramatic interpretation, these characters come to life. This play takes a dramatic look at the life of the Skinner family, wealthy industrialists and philanthropists, through the memoirs of the family servants. Find yourself behind the scenes of Wistariahurst!

Along with the tour, please come visit our gallery, which will have an exhibit, *A Million Things to Get Done*, compiled from oral histories of former Skinner servants, diaries, photographs and the small pieces of history that the Skinner servants left behind.

"A fascinating time capsule - a triumph of logistics. Entertaining, informative and thoroughly delightful." Chris Rohmann, WFCR

Friday, **March 6th** @ 7:30

Saturday, **March 7th** @ 7:30

Sunday, **March 8th** @ 2:00

Friday, **March 13th** @ 7:30

Saturday, **March 14th** @ 7:30

Sunday, **March 15th** @ 2:00

Tickets: \$20/\$16 students.

For reservations call Wistariahurst Museum (413) 322-5660

February Features:

I Wine

On Friday, February 13 from 7-9 p.m., Wistariahurst will be hosting a wine tasting in the spirit of Valentine's Day. The event is sponsored by Liquors44 and will feature a variety of wines. Light refreshments are included. All proceeds will benefit Wistariahurst Museum. Tickets are \$25 each and \$40 per couple if you buy before February 13th. Tickets will be available at the door for \$30 each and \$50 per couple. Please RSVP to admin@wistariahurst.org or call us at 413-322-5660.

Be Mine, Valentine

On Valentines day from 1 - 3 p.m., learn about the Victorian art of valentines and make one of your own. This fun and creative Victorian Valentine program is appropriate for all ages, inspiring the artist in everyone with hands-on projects from collage to paper-cutting and original crafting of valentines. *\$5 per person and \$10 for families*

Wistariahurst Museum Winter/Spring Events 2009

Wednesday, January 7 through February 28 – Exhibition: *The Fabric of Our Lives: Pieces from Wistariahurst's Costume Collection*

In January and February of 2009, Wistariahurst Museum will open its closet doors to display the best pieces of its costume and textile collection, showcasing the most spectacular pieces of over 50 years of collecting textiles. Exhibition on display in the Music Room until the end of February. *Admission \$10.*

Wednesday, January 7 at 6:00 p.m. – Costume Exhibition Opening & Reception: Vanessa James to speak

As part of *The Fabric of Our Lives*, guest speaker Vanessa James, Professor of Theatre Arts at Mount Holyoke College and Resident Designer/ Producer of Mount Holyoke's Rooke Theatre, will be on hand to help explore vintage clothing and its history, from the 1830s to the 1940s. *Admission \$10*

Sunday, January 11 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. – Exhibit Opening and Reception: "Romance a Guyama, Holyoke and Puerto Rico:" The Truth as Seen by the Teen Mothers of The Care Center of Holyoke

Wistariahurst will showcase a collaborative effort between painter and muralist Alvilda Victoria Martinez-Anaya and the teen mothers of The Care Center. The exhibit will be on view in the gallery through January 26. Gallery hours for Wistariahurst are Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons from 12 – 4. *Admission \$3*

Monday, January 19 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. – Girl Scout and Youth Program: Architecture

Scouts and youth will study floor plans and learn how to create and design a box city through a hands-on activity. Please bring a bag lunch: refrigeration provided. *Registration Fee \$7 per youth or scout, chaperones free. Call the Museum to register*

Wednesday, January 21 at 6:00 p.m. – Workshop on Textile Preservation

City Historian and Curator Kate Thibodeau will lead a workshop on how to preserve textiles. Caring for textiles can be simple, if you know some basic facts. Bring in a sample of what you need preserved. *Admission \$10*

Friday, January 23 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – "I Choose to be the One" The Adventures of Belle Skinner

From her youth in Holyoke to travels to far-reaching areas of the world, Belle Skinner was one of the most forceful and intriguing women of the early 20th century. A thoroughly enjoyable one woman play by Ann Maggs will be followed by lunch and a tour of Wistariahurst. *Admission \$20, includes lunch and tour Reservations required.*

Friday, January 23 at 6:00 p.m. – "I Choose to be the One" The Adventures of Belle Skinner

Come see a thoroughly enjoyable, one - woman evening performance by Ann Maggs. *Admission \$15. Reservations required.*

Wednesday, February 4 at 6:00 p.m. – Historical Perspectives: *You Can't Work in a Corset: Examining Fashion through Social History*

Guest speaker Deborah Miller, textile and costume historian, will use the Wistariahurst Costume Exhibition as an entrée into examining the social history surrounding women's domestic lives, their pastimes, and how the contemporary attitudes of society informed the fashions of the day. *Admission \$3*

Thursday, February 5 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. – Artist Reception and Award Presentation for Celebrating 90 + Years of Creativity: The Holyoke Creative Arts Center

Wistariahurst will exhibit the 6th annual juried art show by students of the Holyoke Creative Arts Center throughout the month of February. Join us for an artist reception and awards ceremony and view the variety of local art that make up the exhibition. Gallery hours for Wistariahurst are Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons from 12 – 4. *Admission \$3*

Friday, February 13 from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. – I Love Wine Event

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, Wistariahurst will host a wine tasting sponsored by Liquors44, featuring a variety of wines. All proceeds benefit Wistariahurst Museum. *Tickets are \$25 each and \$40 per couple if you buy before February 13th. Tickets at the door are \$30 each and \$50 per couple. Please RSVP to admin@wistariahurst.org or call the Museum to register*

Saturday, February 14 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. – Be Mine, Valentine

This fun and creative Victorian Valentine program is appropriate for all ages, inspiring the artist in everyone with hands-on projects from collage to paper-cutting and original crafting of valentines. *\$5 per person and \$10 for families*

Monday, February 16 from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Girl Scout and Youth Program: Textiles

Work with a local artisan and create hand embroidery, and complete a small quilting project such as a pillow or purse, and discuss how historians preserve textiles. Please bring a bag lunch: refrigeration provided. *Registration Fee \$8 per youth or scout, chaperones free. Call the Museum to register*

Tuesday through Friday, February 17th to 20th from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. – School Vacation Victorian Era Crafts

Tuesday: Victorian Fans Decorate fans with pictures, lace, and many other accessories to generate a fan worthy of any young lady.

Wednesday: Victorian Hatboxes Victorian women never went anywhere without a hat and had decorative hatboxes to hold and protect them. On this day, decorate a hatbox!

Thursday: Secret Diaries Create a diary for your secret thoughts.

Friday: Victorian Bookmarks Create a bookmark and decorate it with pictures, ribbons, and drawings.

Each program is \$5 per person

Tuesday through Friday, February 17th to 20th from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. – Tea and Textiles

Enjoy tea and view the magnificent exhibition *The Fabric of Our Lives* showcasing the most spectacular pieces of over 50 years of collecting textiles. *Seating is limited. Cost is \$15. Call the Museum to register*

Saturday, February 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Master Class: Portrait Demonstration

As part of the Holyoke Creative Arts Center's exhibit, instructor Deb Barboza will give a master class portrait demonstration in oil painting. *Admission \$10. Registration required. Please call the Museum to register*

Sunday, February 22 at 2:00 p.m. – Tea and Textiles

Sample tea and view *The Fabric of Our Lives* exhibition showcasing the best pieces of Wistariahurst's costume and textile collection. *Seating is limited. Cost is \$15. Call the Museum to register*

Wednesday, March 4 at 6:00 p.m. – Historical Perspectives: The Joseph Skinner Museum

Meghan Gelardi Holmes, Assistant Curator of the Skinner Museum in South Hadley, will give a talk regarding the Skinner Museum and its colorful history. The Museum, containing local artifacts and curiosities from all over, has an incredible past. The building was moved to South Hadley in 1946 from Prescott, now submerged beneath the Quabbin Reservoir. *Admission \$3*

March 7 through March 31 – Gallery Exhibit: A Million Things to Get Done

Maintaining Wistariahurst required the labor of many people. Enjoy an exhibit that looks at the housekeepers, nurses, nannies, waitresses, maids, personal assistants, gardeners, butlers, valets, chauffeurs, and maintenance staff all worked in a structured hierarchy to keep Wistariahurst comfortable for the Skinner family. Gallery hours for Wistariahurst are Saturday, Sunday and Monday afternoons from 12 – 4. *Admission \$3*

March 6th, 7th and 8th & March 13th, 14th and 15th – The Skinner Servants' Tour: A Living History of Wistariahurst

Back to you by popular demand! Wistariahurst hosts the *Skinner Servants' Tour*, performed by Enchanted Circle Theater, based on the journals, diaries, photos and oral histories of the Skinner family servants. Friday & Saturday performances at 7:30 p.m. Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. *Tickets \$20, \$16 students. For reservations, call the Museum*

Wednesday, March 11 at 6:00 p.m. – Garden Talk: Seed Starting for Spring

Master Gardener Julie Abramson will provide information for seed starting and planting, as well as light and soil requirements. *Garden talks are a \$5 donation to benefit garden restoration projects at Wistariahurst. Garden Workshops are presented by Wistariahurst Museum Gardeners & the Western MA Master Gardeners Association*

Saturday, March 14 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Girl Scout and Youth Program: Communication

Learn to communicate through different means: using Braille, images, words and signs. Scouts will learn to convey messages using different ways of communication. *Registration Fee \$5 per youth or scout, chaperones free. Call the Museum to register*

Saturday and Sunday, March 21 and 22 – CLOSED for Parade Weekend Celebrations

Saturday, March 28 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – For Kids of All Ages: Trash to Treasure

Let your imagination run wild in this hands-on session with a local artist. Use your creativity to turn castaways into fun and functional stuff, from treasure chests to bottle cap jewelry. *Registration Fee \$7 per youth or scout, chaperones free. Call the Museum to register*

Sunday, March 29 at 3:00 p.m. – Chamber Music at Wistariahurst: New England Originals

The series' end of winter concert, directed by David Perkins, will be a program with music by Edward MacDowell, Mrs. H.H.A. Beach, and Charles Ives. *Light refreshments will follow. Tickets \$15*

Saturday, April 4 – Pisanki Workshop: Session I: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Session II: 2:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Carol KostECKI will lead a hands-on demonstration in the tradition of decorating eggs, known as Pisanki – one of the most cherished cultural expressions of Polish heritage. Participants will leave with their own designed and hand-dyed Easter eggs. *Fee is \$30 per person. All supplies will be provided. Call the Museum to register*

Sunday, April 5 at 3:00 p.m. – Chamber Music at Wistariahurst: Love Triangle

The season's Spring concert, directed by David Perkins will be a program with music by Clara and Robert Schumann, along with Johannes Brahms. *Light refreshments will follow. Tickets \$15*

Wednesday, April 8 at 6:00 p.m.-- Garden Talk: Basic Garden Design

Master Gardener Nancy Howell will give a talk regarding garden spaces and how to design them. *Garden talks are a \$5 donation to benefit garden restoration projects at Wistariahurst. Garden Workshops are presented by Wistariahurst Museum Gardeners & the Western MA Master Gardeners Association*

Sunday, April 12 – CLOSED for Easter Holiday

Friday, April 17 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. – Annual Spring GALA at Wistariahurst

Thursday, April 23 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. – Victorian Era Days

Experience various aspects of daily Victorian life in several hands-on segments The Language and Decoration of the Victorian Fan, Victorian Etiquette, Victorian Crafts, and more. *Registration Fee \$7 per youth or scout, chaperones free. Call the Museum to register*

Saturday, April 25 – Skinner Excursion Tour

Wistariahurst is introducing a day-long tour to many historical and cultural sites with Skinner influences. Enjoy Wistariahurst Museum, the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum and Skinner State Park, to name a few. Stay tuned for more information.

Sunday, April 26 at 4:00 p.m. – Pioneer Valley Capella Concert: Two Hundred Years of American Choral Music

Join us for a program showcasing the great variety of styles, languages and cultures that make choral music in the United States what it is today. There will be classical traditions as well as folk genres, with some pieces as old as the republic itself! *Donations accepted*

“I Choose to be the One” The Adventures of Belle Skinner

A Performance by Ann Maggs

Two Showings on Friday, January 23



Ann Maggs

Explore the glamorous and exciting world of Belle Skinner! From her youth in Holyoke to travels to far-reaching areas of the world, founding of the Skinner Memorial Coffee House, and her restoration of an entire French village, Miss Skinner was one of the most forceful and intriguing women of the early 20th century.

Much of the monologue in this performance is taken directly from Miss Skinner’s letters and manuscripts. Ann Maggs combines her talents as an experienced singer and actress with detailed research of Miss Skinner’s papers. The result is a thoroughly enjoyable play that explores Belle’s inner life as well as her astounding public accolades. A 10:30 a.m. morning performance by Ann will be followed by lunch and a tour of Wistariahurst for \$20. There will be a second performance Friday evening at 6:00 p.m. for \$15. Reservations are required. Call the Museum for details

Restoration of Wistariahurst Lanterns



Lantern on Beech Street.

The students at Dean Technical High School are working to restore 4 iron lanterns that have adorned the front gates at Wistariahurst for decades. Since the time the Skinner Family occupied the property to present date, the lanterns have decorated the stone piers that welcome guests along Beech Street. The Vocation Director and Auto Body Department Head Bob Celi have begun working with the students restore and fabric the pieces and have completed about half of the project. The lantern restoration project is part of an ongoing effort to preserve historic elements of Wistariahurst. The Museum is constantly seeking the expertise of specialized craftsmen to assist with museum projects. If you are interested in sharing your skills, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Golden Gala: Celebrating 50 Years of the Skinners & Wistariahurst

Mark your calendar for Friday, April 17 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. to spend a festive evening in celebration of 50 years of the Skinner Family and their beautiful mansion, Wistariahurst. Enjoy the ambiance of Wistariahurst as it was when the Skinners lived here. The Golden Gala will feature delicious food, music, a festive ambience, and a silent auction that includes unique works from local artisans and more! Even better, all proceeds will directly benefit Wistariahurst Museum. There will be plenty of elegant cuisine to satisfy appetites prepared and served by students of the Culinary Arts Program at Holyoke Community College.

Mark Your Calendar

Pisanki Workshop

Saturday, April 4, 2009

Morning Class: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Afternoon Class: 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.



One of the most cherished cultural expressions of Polish heritage around the Easter holiday is the tradition of decorating eggs, known as pisanki. Carol Kostecki, a well-known pisanki artist, will lead a hands-on demonstration of making pisanki in the style especially popular in Eastern Poland and Ukraine. Ms. Kostecki is an artist sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council and has been decorating eggs for over 15 years. Participants will leave with their own designed and hand-dyed Easter eggs. Call the museum for details. There is a limit on the number of participants each class can accommodate, so please register early. Appropriate for children 12 years and over (adults welcome). Cost is \$30, and supplies will be provided.

Skinner Excursion Tour

Saturday, April 25, 2009

Wistariahurst is introducing a day-long tour titled A Skinner Excursion. This tour will take you to the many historical and cultural sites with Skinner influences. You will enjoy Wistariahurst Museum, the Joseph Allen Skinner Museum and Skinner State Park, to name a few. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Wistariahurst Museum is the former home of William Skinner, a prominent silk manufacturer, and his family. Tour the home where Joseph grew up as a child and learn about how the Skinners earned their prosperity in the industrious city of Holyoke and the role Joseph played in the family company. The Joseph Allen Skinner Museum houses Joseph's wide-ranging collection of American and European furniture, decorative arts, crafts, tools, and geological specimens. The building was originally the Congregational church in Prescott, Massachusetts. When that town was flooded due to the creation of the Quabbin Reservoir, Skinner bought the 1846 building and moved it to South Hadley. The Summit House, a popular mountaintop hotel in the 1800's, is open for tours and programs on weekends and holidays from Memorial Day through Columbus Day, offering historical displays and special events. The park is named after Joseph Allen Skinner, a wealthy industrialist who donated the hotel and land to the state in 1940. Stay tuned for more information.

Dinner Theater at Wistariahurst

Saturday, May 9, 2009

6:00 p.m.

Join us and enjoy a dining experience at Wistariahurst with intrigue! Dinner will be served with a comical mystery theater production in the elegant Skinner mansion Music Room as a fund-raiser for the museum. This is a great Mother's Day outing! Reservations are required. Tickets are \$35 individuals, \$65 pair, or reserve a table for \$200 (6 people). Stay tuned for more information.



WISTARIAHURST MUSEUM

238 Cabot Street
Holyoke, MA 01040

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #125
Holyoke, MA

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Jerry Deschenes

Maintenance Associate

Thomas Wilhelmi

Support Wistariahurst Museum: Your Gift is Meaningful. Thank you for your Generosity!

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1000

The fulfillment of the museum's mission will happen through your gifts of time, talent and financial resources. We hope you will join Wistariahurst's growing number of friends in supporting the Museum through generous contributions. Please support all the efforts at Wistariahurst with a donation of \$15 or more. You will receive an Anniversary Calendar! These special calendars contain historic photographs taken from Skinner Family photo albums and scrapbooks from the Wistariahurst Skinner Family Archives. The calendar also details memorable moments of Skinner Family members and highlights events taking place at Wistariahurst over the past 5 decades. Join us in celebration of this wonderful anniversary year! To find out more about giving, please go to the support page of our website at www.wistariahurst.org/support.

The Museum is open for guided tours every Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 12-4 pm. The Gallery is open every Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 12-4 pm. For more information or a schedule of other upcoming events, please visit our website at

www.wistariahurst.org or call us at 413-322-5660.