

## Notes from the Nichols House Museum



### Letter from the Director

What a pleasure it has been getting to know museum members, friends, and supporters over the past three months. With the museum's annual Beacon Hill Holiday House Tour a few days away, I'm grateful for the dedication of our wonderful staff, volunteers, and the exceptional members of our Board of Governors present and past, who are all working together to ensure a successful event. I do hope you will take the opportunity to stop by 55 Mount Vernon Street during the event as well as the coming weeks to see our pop-up exhibition highlighting the tea traditions of Rose Standish Nichols, to meet staff, and celebrate our treasured museum dressed-up for the holiday season.

The Fall has been a busy one with a sell-out lecture by Bill Martin at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, the launch of a new after-hours program series, Nichols After Dark, which presents specially curated evening experiences based on the museum's collection, and a Patrons Program tour of the Eustis Estate in Milton highlighting the process of transforming a remarkable private residence into a museum.

2018 will feature an exhibition and related programming centered on the Nichols women as collectors of fine and decorative art. In January, the museum presents a new series highlighting tea traditions both local and international, a program that Rose Nichols would certainly have appreciated in her quest to facilitate peace and understanding between nations, and of course due to her love of tea.

Also in the new year the museum continues to move forward with planning for a much-needed upgrade of the climate control system. Grant opportunities are being reviewed as we select a firm to assist us in developing a system to suit the multi-faceted needs of the Nichols House and its treasured collection.

Wishing everyone joyous and peaceful holidays ahead, and I look forward to seeing you at the museum.

Handwritten signature of Linda Marshall.

Linda Marshall

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### Meet the new staff

**Charlotte Wittmann** is the new Communications and Administration Associate for the Nichols House Museum. She received her BA in Classical Archaeology from Bryn Mawr College and her MA in Decorative Arts and Material Culture from the Bard Graduate Center. In addition to overseeing the museum's day-to-day administration, Charlotte is responsible for managing member relations, communications, and marketing, as well as coordinating the museum's special events. She has especially enjoyed reimagining the museum's social media presence. Outside of work she collects antique jewelry, with a focus on mourning pieces from the 18th and 19th centuries. Her favorite object in the museum's collection is the needlepoint fire screen made by Rose Standish Nichols because it showcases both Rose's needlework skills as well as her love of historic decorative arts.



**Laura Cunningham** earned her BA in Art History from Boston University and her MA from Simmons College in Library and Information Science with a concentration in Cultural Heritage. She was recently appointed to the position of Programs and Collections Coordinator at the Nichols House Museum having previously served as the Collections Associate and the fall 2016 Archives Intern. As a Graduate Research Intern in the Art of the Americas Department at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, she gained invaluable experience working with one of the

world's finest collections of American decorative arts. Laura is responsible for the care and maintenance of the museum's collection, curating exhibitions and interpretive content, as well as educational programming. Laura sits on the board of directors at Gallery 263, a non-profit gallery in Cambridgeport that showcases the work of local and emerging artists. Alongside her passion for decorative arts and material culture she is keen to bridge the gap between historic spaces and art makers today. Her favorite object in the museum's collection is the seventeenth century blanket chest because of its ability to demonstrate how objects move through time.



## **Beacon Hill Holiday House Tour**

Sunday, December 10, 2017  
12pm to 4pm

Join us for this rare opportunity to experience a select group of remarkable private residences. The tour will showcase outstanding examples of historic preservation, as well as creative modern interpretation and adaptation in a broad range of architectural and interior design styles. In addition, this year the Nichols House Museum invites you to explore *Peace and Prosperity: Rose Standish Nichols and Tea*, a pop-up exhibition specially curated for the 2017 Holiday House Tour.

## **A Tale of Two Sideboards**

'Tis the holiday season and at the Nichols House Museum we have visions of more than just sugar plums. The museum is now decorated for the holidays and we invite you to visit 55 Mount Vernon Street to both experience and imagine Christmastime in the City over 100 years ago.

In the late nineteenth century, the house would have been decorated with bows of evergreen and other festoons during the month of December. This fell under the purview of Elizabeth Nichols, the family's matriarch, who choreographed the holiday decorating. In 1881, London based Cassell's Family Magazine instructed the lady of the house: "To bring about a general feeling of enjoyment, much depends on the surroundings... It is worth while [sic] to bestow some little trouble on the decoration of the rooms."

The dining room in particular was a space for merry-making and festivities centered on food and drink. This month's Object Spotlight features two pieces of furniture that operated as a backdrop for dining culture during this historical era. The dining room at 55 Mount Vernon is home to two sideboards which face one another on opposite sides of the room, making them ripe for comparison...

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## **Upcoming Events**

**December 10, 2017 -**  
Beacon Hill Holiday House  
Tour

**January 20, 2018 -**  
A New Leaf for the New Year:  
Tea Tasting with the  
Mark T. Wendell Tea Company

**February 15, 2018 -**  
Nichols after Dark:  
Corsets and Courtships

**March 29, 2018 -**  
Nichols House Museum Lecture Series:  
Brock Jobe, "Chippendale: The Man and the Myth"

## **Patron Events**

**March 7, 2018 -**  
Patrons' Cocktail Party

**April 18, 2018 -**  
Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Trip to the Currier Museum

For more details, please [click here](#)

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**Support the Nichols House Museum's  
Annual Appeal Campaign!**

Nichols House Museum | [www.nicholshousemuseum.org](http://www.nicholshousemuseum.org) | 617-227-6993

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