



ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021
NICHOLS HOUSE MUSEUM





J & T Edwards, Whiteware English Platter, ca. 1841.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Nichols House Museum is a private, nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation with the following mission:

The Nichols House Museum preserves and interprets the 1804 Federal townhouse that was home to landscape gardener, suffragist and pacifist Rose Standish Nichols and her family. Their home and its original art and furnishings provide a glimpse into life on historic Beacon Hill from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. The Museum educates and inspires the public through innovative programs, and it continues the conversation on the social concerns the Nichols family embraced that are still relevant today.

Front cover image: Close-up of a color lithograph of "Camellia Princesse Baciocchi" designed by Bernard Léon and printed by G. Severyns.

All images in this report are from the Nichols House Museum Permanent Collection unless otherwise stated.

LEADERSHIP REPORT



Thank you to our members, donors, friends and neighbors for your support through a remarkable pandemic year. We are grateful for your kindness, generosity and participation.

After first closing our doors in March of 2020 in response to COVID-19, along with the entire community of Boston area museums, we quickly learned that normal operations would be completely reconfigured over the following months. We calculated square footage of the Museum rooms to understand the number of people we could accommodate on a tour per the city of Boston re-opening guidelines; we re-envisioned a tour that would maintain at least 6 feet of distance between tour visitors and tour guide; and we moved to an online reservation system called FareHarbor to bypass in-person transactions.

We pivoted to a virtual platform in order to be able to offer lectures and other programs and over 400 people joined us online. We offered programming with our partners, the House Museum Alliance of Downtown Boston and the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America/Prescott House. We developed a new book club program with the Gibson House Museum which included a first-ever joint membership. We

LEADERSHIP REPORT

welcomed guest speakers Dr. Allison Lange of the Wentworth Institute of Technology, the Gravestone Girls, and Cindy Brockway and Christie Jackson of The Trustees.

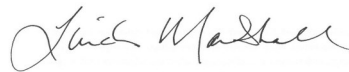
As with most public-facing organizations around the globe, we learned that our pivot to virtual programming had positive impacts in allowing us to reach much broader audiences geographically, and therefore increased accessibility to the Museum. The new normal for public engagement will be a combination of in-person and virtual opportunities for our audiences – a silver lining!

We transformed our beloved Holiday House Tour to an outdoors-only, curated walking tour of Beacon Hill, highlighting wreaths and window displays.

Throughout the past year we opened and closed for periods of time as regulations and safety measures required, and maintained a virtual presence. Through the generosity of our donors, through grants received, and through cost-saving measures at the Museum, we're happy to report a stable year at 55 Mount Vernon Street. We re-envisioned a new museum landscape which continues to evolve and we look forward to sharing that with you.



Sandy Steele
President, Board of Governors



Linda Marshall
Executive Director

Opposite page: Detail of fire screen embroidered by Rose Standish Nichols.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Julie Solz, Chair

Over the past year the Building and Grounds Committee worked with the Executive Director on completion of the final aspects of the Collections Conservation Project (which was our multi-year HVAC improvement project). The final work included discussing and obtaining quotes and plans for a platform over the staff kitchen for maintenance access to system condensers, and finalizing the installation of the Runtal units (paneled radiators) in the staff kitchen and lobby. To improve the visitor experience the lobby was also repainted and next we will be gathering painting quotes for the stairwell.

For the year ahead we will be focusing on exterior building work including: repainting the sandstone belt course; planning for some painting of window pediments on the south wall; and continuing with the shutter restoration plan.



Exterior of Nichols House Museum showing Flemish bond, recessed arch, lintel, and stringcourse.



Nichols House Museum, ca. 1950.

COLLECTIONS

Nonie Gadsden and Christine Root, Co-Chairs

In FY21, the Collections Committee continued to execute best practices in collections care. Highlights of the year include:

- Reviewed the documentation and sample archiving of seven de-accessioned mattresses following a method used by Historic New England. COMPLETED
- Reviewed the continued progress of the HVAC project including impacts on hanging system for window sheers due to new interior storm windows. Discussed options for window treatments. IN PROGRESS
- Recommended the conservation of seven wood objects in the collection involving light repairs. COMPLETED
- Discussed de-installation of kitchen-related implements in the visitor lobby space in light of re-paint and visual refresh as a visitor center. Recommended retaining soapstone sink (not original to the Museum collection) in case there is future interest in re-creating the Nichols family's kitchen. COMPLETED
- Discussed options for replacing carpeting on the stairs. Painting of the stairwell will be scheduled prior to replacement. IN PROGRESS



Mahogany library table, German, mid to late 19th century.

COLLECTIONS PROJECTS



Shaving Stand, Italian, late 19th-early 20th century. In the bedroom of Rose Standish Nichols.



Mattress sampling as part of the de-accessioning project.

DEVELOPMENT

Beth Campanella and Kimberlea Jeffries, Co-Chairs

ROSE STANDISH NICHOLS AWARD EVENT

The Museum honored June Hutchinson with the Rose Standish Nichols Award in 2020. Although unable to hold an award event due to the pandemic, the Museum recognized June's dedication to the field of landscape design, her extensive research on 55 Mount Vernon Street resulting in the publication of *At Home on Beacon Hill*, and her committed service to the Museum and the community. An announcement of the award was published in the Beacon Hill Times and sent out as part of the Annual Appeal mailing and approximately \$16,000 was raised in honor of June as the RSN Award honoree.

HOLIDAY WREATH TOUR

We would like to thank Chair Paula Stookey and the entire Holiday House Tour Committee for organizing a wonderful Tour despite so many challenges. This pandemic year required a pivot from the fundraiser's typical format to an outdoors only, self-guided wreath tour. The tour included 14 homes plus the Museum, all of which featured festive wreaths and window displays, as well as house histories written by board member, Brigid Williams. The Museum's decorations were donated by Wisteria & Rose. In addition to the walking tour, ticket holders also enjoyed a virtual program featuring the Nichols House Museum at the holidays.

Due to the generous contributions of event sponsors, as well as ticket purchasers, the Museum netted approximately \$32,000. We are tremendously grateful to the gracious homeowners who decorated their homes for this festive event.

ANNUAL APPEAL

The Annual Appeal supports the Museum's on-going operations and programming. Since this fund is unrestricted it also helps with the preservation work needed to maintain the 1804 townhouse. In FY21 we raised approximately \$66,000 which included \$16,000 donated in honor of this year's RSN Award honoree. This is a 100% increase over annual appeal donations in FY20. Eighty-six households donated. We wish to thank our friends and the communities of Beacon Hill and beyond for their ongoing and generous support during this extraordinary year.

DEVELOPMENT

Beth Campanella and Kimberlea Jeffries, Co-Chairs

MEMBERSHIP

The Museum's general membership program which includes individual, family, friend, and sponsor levels, involved 67 active member households. 5 of these memberships are new joint memberships with the Gibson House Museum through the Read the Room Book Club. General membership renewals continue on a monthly rolling basis. Members enjoy reduced rates on admission to Nichols House programs and special events, as well as discounts on gift shop items. A new benefit for members at the friend and sponsor level is North American Reciprocal Membership (NARM) which offers free admission and shop discounts at over 1,000 institutions across North America.

PATRON MEMBERSHIP

Through the generous support of our Patron member households, the Museum is able to continue its important work preserving both the building and collection to the highest standard.

During August of 2020, Patrons enjoyed a virtual lecture by Cindy Brockway, Program Director for Cultural Resources at The Trustees – “Unearthing Mabel Cabot Sedgwick’s Garden, Month by Month.” And in January of 2021, Christie Jackson, Senior Curator at The Trustees, presented a virtual talk for Patrons on the artist Polly Thayer Starr, friend of Rose Standish Nichols who painted her portrait which hangs in the Museum’s library.

Patron membership is on a rolling basis as with general membership. The Museum continues to develop special opportunities for our Patron members and to promote cultivation of new members in this critical Museum membership program. Patron membership also now includes North American Reciprocal Membership (NARM) benefits.



“Walking Dress” Print, from Ackermann's Repository of Arts, 1810.

GOVERNANCE

Kate Enroth, Chair

The Governance Committee worked conscientiously to confirm the Nichols House Museum's slate of officers for 2021-2022 and identified promising candidates to join the Museum's Board of Governors. With the help of the Executive Director, the Governance Committee identified the needs of the Museum and extended invitations to Lynda Schubert Bodman, Leah Rosovsky and Gregory Van Boven to join the Board of Governors. The Committee thanked retiring Governors: Jim Bordewick, Kimberlea Jeffries, Christine Root, Bill Sherden, Julie Solz and Meghan Weeks, for their service on the Board. The Board of Governors voted on and approved the slate at the annual meeting held on May 11, 2021.

INVESTMENT

Mark Rickabaugh, Chair

The outlook for the NHM Endowment for this fiscal year (3/31/21-4/1/22) is positive. The last fiscal year ended on a happy note as improvement in the economy and financial markets, post Covid-related shutdowns, led to new valuation highs for the NHM Endowment. The outlook for equities remains bright going forward since forecast economic growth and profits are likely very strong in both 2021 and 2022. However, actual performance in the next year will likely be more measured than last since most equity valuations are full by historical standards.



Sampler (detail), Bernardina Iglecias, Latin American or Spanish, mid-19th century.

FINANCE

James R. Bordewick, Chair

OVERVIEW

Notwithstanding the challenges and shifting uncertainties imposed by the pandemic, the Nichols House Museum's operations and activities produced another financially strong year in FY 2021 (April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021). These results were driven by continued fiscal discipline by our staff, strong endowment results and from the generosity of our many friends and supporters. These strong results occurred despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the operations of the Museum.

Measured on the basis of its net assets, the Museum's net assets increased by almost \$900,000 to over \$3.6 million as of the year-end March 31, 2021. This significant increase is largely attributable to higher cash positions and the increase in the value of our endowment.

OPERATING RESULTS

From an operating perspective, the Museum's total revenue and support was \$231,000 versus \$335,000 in FY 2020. These results largely reflect the impact of higher contributions to the annual fund offset by lower fundraising revenue, membership dues and admissions resulting from the pandemic. The Museum's operating expenses decreased from \$268,000 in FY 2020 to \$194,000 in FY2021, mostly as a result of lower personnel, fundraising and program-related expenses and management and administration expenses.

Members and friends of the Museum continue actively to support its fundraising events, pay dues as general members or as Patrons, fulfill outstanding pledges to the Collections Conservation Project, contribute to the annual appeal and attend various virtual events and programs scheduled throughout the year.

From a budgeting perspective, operating revenues during the year fell short of our initial budget by about 25%, largely due to the overall impact of the pandemic on admissions, fundraising events and membership dues. Total expenses were recalibrated against budget throughout the year and managed carefully and came in at \$194,000 in FY 2021 versus our budget of \$300,000. Net operating income of approximately \$37,000 exceeded the budget of \$8,000 by over \$25,000.

NON-OPERATING RESULTS

This year's non-operating results include the one-time revenues (contributions) and expenses (HVAC equipment and installation, interior storm windows, window restoration, and insulation) relating to the Climate Control Project. Looking at non-operating results against budget, non-operating income of slightly over \$1 million was substantially ahead of our budget of \$143,000 by over \$860,000, largely attributable to the impact of realized and unrealized gains in the endowment portfolio for which we do not budget and the receipt of grants and the amounts received and then forgiven under the paycheck protection program (PPP). Non-operating expenses of \$142,000 were favorable to the budget of \$267,000 by \$125,000, driven mostly by the positive impact of the lower than budget remaining expenses incurred to substantially complete the Collection Conservation Project.

Taking the various operating and non-operating items of revenue and expenses into account, the Museum completed its FY 2021 year generating impressive surplus of \$898,000 versus a budgeted deficit of \$116,000, again largely driven by approximately \$750,000 in realized and unrealized gains in our endowment portfolio at the fiscal year end.

ENDOWMENT AND OTHER MATTERS

Turning to the endowment, the market value of the Museum's investments increased from \$2.1 million at March 31, 2020 to \$2.8 million at March 31, 2021. The increase in the net value of the endowment reflects both the impact of higher market values at the fiscal year end offset by draw down, in accordance with a board-approved formula, of approximately \$103,000 during the recent fiscal year to support its operations. Investment income and gain from the endowment, budgeted at 4.65% of the average endowment balance over the prior three years based on the monthly ending endowment value, finances a portion of annual operating and capital expenses. The Museum expects its endowment over the long term to grow at an average of one percent annually above the current spending policy. This is consistent with the objective to maintain the purchasing power of the endowment assets held in perpetuity or for a specified term as well as to provide additional growth through new gifts and investment return.

FINANCE

James R. Bordewick, Chair

We would like to thank Mark Rickabaugh, our very talented and devoted Chair of the Investment Committee, for his continuing service as the Chair of this important committee and for continuing to steer our endowment through changing and novel market and economic conditions and producing consistently strong returns based on our risk tolerance and profile.

The Museum's endowment is held at Fidelity Investments and its operating account is held at the Cambridge Trust Company.

The Museum's accountants are Bacall and Conniff, Inc. who completed a review of the financials for this past fiscal year and issued an unqualified review report.



Sterling silver teapot, Dublin, Ireland, late 18th century, made by Robert Breading.

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

Nichols House Museum, Inc. Statements of Financial Position March 31, 2021 and 2020

	<u>Assets</u>	
	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
<u>Current Assets</u>		
Cash and cash equivalents	460,187	281,867
Grants and pledges receivable	10,000	15,000
Inventory	<u>21,626</u>	<u>21,572</u>
Total current assets	<u>491,813</u>	<u>318,439</u>
 <u>Investments</u>	 <u>2,798,963</u>	 <u>2,065,514</u>
 <u>Property and Equipment</u>		
Land	160,000	160,000
Buildings	587,195	587,195
Building improvements	557,327	557,327
Furniture & fixtures	18,000	18,000
Office equipment	<u>14,036</u>	<u>14,036</u>
Subtotal	1,336,558	1,336,558
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(1,018,791)</u>	<u>(1,000,213)</u>
Total property and equipment	<u>317,767</u>	<u>336,345</u>
 <u>Total Assets</u>	 <u>3,608,543</u>	 <u>2,720,298</u>
	<u>Liabilities and Net Assets</u>	
<u>Current Liabilities</u>		
Accounts payable	<u>3,175</u>	<u>28,071</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>3,175</u>	<u>28,071</u>
 <u>Long-Term Liabilities</u>		
SBA loan - Paycheck Protection Program	<u>19,979</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>23,154</u>	<u>28,071</u>
 <u>Net Assets</u>		
Without donor restrictions	3,212,032	2,438,220
With donor restrictions	<u>373,357</u>	<u>254,007</u>
Total net assets	<u>3,585,389</u>	<u>2,692,227</u>
 <u>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</u>	 <u>3,608,543</u>	 <u>2,720,298</u>

OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

Nichols House Museum, Inc.
Statements of Activities
For the Year Ended March 31, 2021 with
Comparative Information for the Year Ended March 31, 2020

	<u>Without Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>With Donor Restrictions</u>	<u>Total 2021</u>	<u>Total 2020</u>
<u>Revenues and Support</u>				
Contributions	66,196	5,000	71,196	518,808
Special events revenue, net of expenses	31,799		31,799	126,401
Membership dues	23,768		23,768	31,206
Admissions	523		523	13,371
Grants		131,110	131,110	2,500
SBA loan forgiveness	21,747		21,747	-
Other income	4,679		4,679	4,917
Investment income	87,793		87,793	86,860
Realized/unrealized gains/(losses) on investments	748,927		748,927	(332,108)
Net assets released from restrictions	16,760	(16,760)	-	-
Total revenues and support	<u>1,002,192</u>	<u>119,350</u>	<u>1,121,542</u>	<u>451,955</u>
<u>Expenses</u>				
Program	111,402		111,402	399,888
Management and general	86,310		86,310	106,569
Fundraising and development	<u>30,668</u>		<u>30,668</u>	<u>37,681</u>
Total expenses	<u>228,380</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>228,380</u>	<u>544,138</u>
<u>Change in Net Assets</u>	<u>773,812</u>	<u>119,350</u>	<u>893,162</u>	<u>(92,183)</u>
<u>Net Assets, Beginning</u>	<u>2,438,220</u>	<u>254,007</u>	<u>2,692,227</u>	<u>2,784,410</u>
<u>Net Assets, Ending</u>	<u>3,212,032</u>	<u>373,357</u>	<u>3,585,389</u>	<u>2,692,227</u>

The Nichols House Museum adopted the financial reporting standards of its peers in fiscal year 2012. The Museum will no longer capitalize its permanent collection in its financial statements.

These represent final financial statements submitted by Bacall and Conniff, P.C. and are available at the Nichols House Museum.



Elizabeth Nichols at the family's summer home, Mastlands, in Cornish, New Hampshire, ca. 1892. Rose Nichols designed the garden. Nichols Family Photograph Collection, I.22.

MUSEUM PATRONS 2020-2021

The Nichols House Museum would like to thank the following generous donors

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Mr. Paul S. Greenfield
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Stookey
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Stevenson
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Winthrop

HOLIDAY WREATH TOUR SPONSORS

The Nichols House Museum would like to thank the following generous sponsors

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Sarah and Walter Donovan
Kate Enroth and Dana Schmaltz
Barbara and Amos Hostetter
Beth Johnson
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Potted Up: Creating City Gardens
Wisteria & Rose

**ANNUAL FUND GIFTS IN HONOR OF
B. JUNE HUTCHINSON, RSN AWARD RECIPIENT**

The Nichols House Museum would like to thank the following generous donors

Emily K. and David C. Beal

Sarah Biller and Dean Gekas

Elizabeth M. Campanella

Flavia Cigliano

Frances Colburn

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Sandra Steele and Paul Greenfield

Sarah Bucknell Treco

Nancy Tye

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The Nichols House Museum would like to thank the following generous donors

Madeline and Robert Alexander
Charlotte Anderson
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Suzanne and John Besser
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Harold Weintraub
Mary Fran and Thomas Townsend
Elizabeth Townsend
Diane M. Van Boven
Joan M. Van Boven
Jessica and Hans Vaule
Meghan Weeks
Thomas Weesner



Wood and glass wall mirror, [possibly Boston, Massachusetts, United States of America], ca. 1800-1815

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Brigid Williams
Georgina Winthrop

We appreciate the work of the staff, interns and volunteers who are indispensable to the effective running of the Museum. Here we would like to give special recognition to the wonderful people who help us make our visitors' experience at the Museum the best possible.

VOLUNTEER DOCENTS
Anna Audycki
Veena Damodar
Kathryn Fields
Claire Kinder
Nadine Kirby
Frances McNamara
Steven O'Donnell
Evan Wenner

INTERNS
Rosanna Wright

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Jim Borden
Joe Nguyen, web developer

WINDOW BOX DESIGN & GARDEN MAINTENANCE
Donated by
Wisteria & Rose

STAFF
Linda Marshall
Executive Director

Laura Cunningham
Curator of Collections & Education

Stephanie Hall
Visitors Services Representative

Liz Weisblatt
Visitor Services Representative & Temporary Administrative Assistant

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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www.nicholshousemuseum.org

MUSEUM COMMITTEES 2020-2021

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Kimberlea Jeffries

Meghan Melvin

Christine Root

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RSN Award Subcommittee:

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Keeta Gilmore

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Linda Marshall, *ex officio*



Needlework mourning picture, American, early 19th century.

ROSE STANDISH NICHOLS AWARD



B. June Hutchinson

THE NICHOLS HOUSE MUSEUM
is pleased to present the

2020

Rose Standish Nichols Award

to

B. June Hutchinson

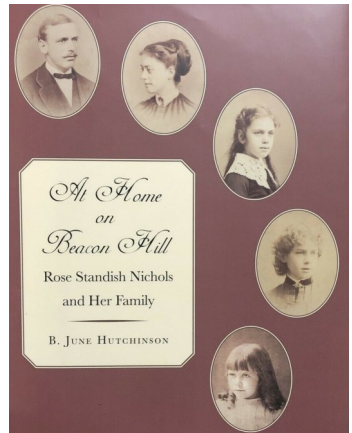
The award recognizes June's dedication to

THE FIELD OF LANDSCAPE DESIGN

RESEARCH ON 55 MOUNT VERNON ST
AND THE NICHOLS FAMILY

and

COMMITTED SERVICE
to the Museum and to the community



PATRONS' PROGRAMS



From *Unearthing Mabel Cabot Sedgwick's Garden, Month by Month*, August 26th, 2020. Lecture by Cindy Brockway.

Polly Thayer Starr with Christie Jackson, a virtual talk on January 25, 2021.



"Flowering dogwood" c. 1950. Polly Thayer Starr Charitable Trust.



Rose Standish Nichols by Polly Thayer Starr, c. 1927

PROGRAMS



Thomas Johnston (1708-67) attributed to Robert Feke (1707-1751), ca. 1741-1750. Oil on canvas.



Evening Waistcoat, 1755-1760. Silk, linen and paper. NSCDA. MA-CC-1985.26.

On July 7, 2020 the Museum held the virtual program, *Fashion in Portraiture at the Nichols House Museum*. Curator of Collections and Education, Laura Cunningham co-hosted with textile historian and Nichols House Museum Visitor Services Representative Elizabeth Weisblatt, with examples from the collection of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, MA.



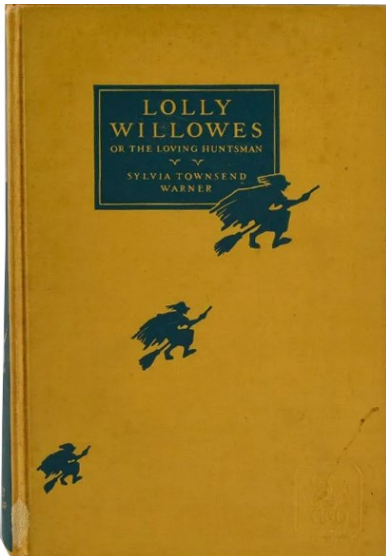
Age of Brass or the Triumphs of Women's Rights, Currier & Ives, 1869. Library of Congress

As August 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote, the Museum presented a virtual lecture with Professor Allison Lange on August 5th about the visual history of the women's suffrage movement.

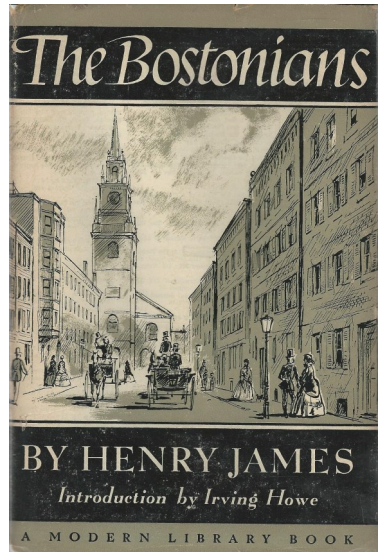


Professor Allison Lange celebrating the publication of her book, *Picturing Political Power: Images in the Women's Suffrage Movement*.

PROGRAMS



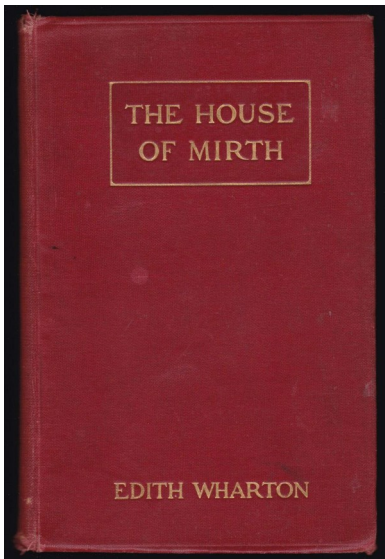
First edition cover from 1926.



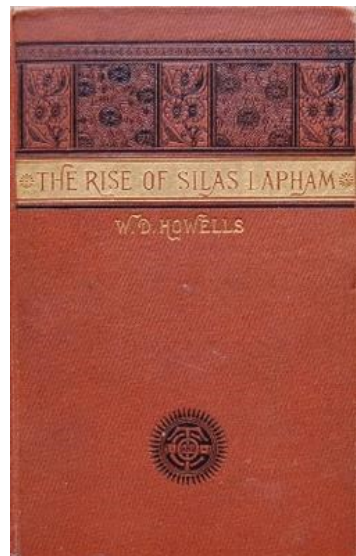
Cover from 1956 edition.

Read the Room

The Nichols House Museum and Gibson House Museum co-hosted a virtual book club inspired by the literary salons hosted in the houses' parlors.



First edition cover from 1905.



First edition cover from 1885.

Corsets & Courtships

A virtual talk on courtship was held on February 11, 2021 using images and other archival material that document Arthur Nichols and Elizabeth Homer's period of courtship and engagement in the late 1860s.

Intertwined with archival material were examples of period undergarments and lingerie from the collection of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, MA.



Print "The bashful lover makes his first call", 1850-1920. Boston Public Library.



Floral Silk Corset, c. 1885-90. French (Attributed). NSCDA-MA.

HOLIDAY WREATH TOUR

A Festive Walking Tour of Beacon Hill, December 6, 2020



WREATHS OF BEACON HILL

The Nichols House Museum presented an outdoors fundraising event throughout Beacon Hill, showcasing holiday decorations at select homes while also highlighting their history and individual architectural styles.

HOLIDAYS AT THE MUSEUM



Festive decorations were found inside the Museum as well, and viewed through a virtual tour which included stories of the Nichols family celebrating the holidays and late-nineteenth century decorating traditions.



THANK YOU, WISTERIA & ROSE!



Wiseria & Rose donated their time, materials and creative vision to bring beauty to the front garden at 55 Mount Vernon Street throughout the year including the holiday season.





P. Neefs, Flemish Oil Painting, 17th century. Oil on canvas in gilded frame.



Landscape View of Mount Ascutney, Vermont, Henry Fitch Taylor, ca. 1908.

