THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

To preserve, share and continue the American story
A Message from our Leadership

Here at The Gables, we take a short break from public hours at the beginning of each year. It’s a time for us to think about the months ahead, and to lay out what we hope to accomplish. The excitement is infectious. At the risk of spoiling the surprise—I can’t help but to give you a preview.

Our Preservation & Maintenance team has been overseeing the installation of environmental monitoring equipment using funds from the Coastal Zone Management grant we received last year. Data from this equipment will help us to prepare and adapt for climate change. In the next few months, we will begin making critical repairs to our seawall. We have also applied for grants to replace the aging Teahouse roof and to upgrade our outdoor lighting. These much-needed improvements will allow us to host more evening programs and events.

I have had the privilege of sitting in with our Visitor Services team as they revise and update our programs. I am so impressed with the new activities we will be offering students who visit The Gables, and the changes we are making to the Mansion Tour to better tell the stories of the women and the indigenous, indentured, and enslaved people who once lived here. And that’s only the beginning! On your next visit, look for a brand-new experience at Kids’ Cove and a new space in the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion that highlights our history as a Settlement House.

Our Settlement work will grow this year to meet the unprecedented demand for our English as a Second Language (ESL) and Citizenship Preparation classes. With full enrollment in our classes at the Peabody Essex Museum, we are adding classes at the North Shore Community Development Coalition’s Espacio Community Center. One of these classes is a new offering, combining ESL skills with computer literacy skills. Keysi De Los Santos Gomez, a graduate of both our Citizenship and ESL classes, will teach this new class.

On the pages that follow, you’ll see even more upcoming projects from The Gables. I can’t tell you how excited I am about what’s still to come. 2023 is going to be a great year to stop by, take a tour, stroll the grounds, attend a program, and experience The Gables all over again. I hope to see you here.

With appreciation,

[Signature]
On February 11, 2023, The Gables reopened after our annual winter shutdown. To kick off this season, we partnered with Salem Main Streets and Salem Park, Recreation and Community Services for Salem So Sweet! This Valentine event included an outdoor scavenger hunt featuring chocolate facts and historical facts about The House of the Seven Gables, free grounds passes, and a Valentine’s card workshop with local artist Linda Abbene in the Visitor Center. We hosted almost 200 people on this first day. What a great start to the year!

March is International Women’s History Month and to celebrate those women who have lived and worked in The Gables, we are hosting two programs. On International Women’s Day, March 8, Women’s History Tours are scheduled at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.. On March 29 at 2 p.m., Gables’ board member Robin Woodman presents “The Women of The House of the Seven Gables and Their Community.” Woodman’s lecture presents details about the Turner women who occupied the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion from 1668 until 1782 when Captain Samuel Ingersoll purchased the mansion. She will also touch on the Ingersoll women and The House of the Seven Gables Settlement Association founder Caroline Emmerton. All these women played a role in the Salem community and witnessed many important moments in history.

Beyond this, The Gables has a full year of collaborations planned for 2023! We will be working with Salem Sound Coastwatch, Preservation Partners, The Daniels House, History Alive Inc., The North Shore Community Development Coalition, The National Parks Service, Cinema Salem, Cape Ann Museum, Wild Sea Wellness, and many more regional organizations. This is sure to be a robust year of programming, and we hope to see you!

Celebrate Women’s History Month at The Gables!

By Zoë Quinn, Director of Visitor Services and Public Programs

Visitors at the Counting House on opening day.

Valentines created during our Salem So Sweet event.

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‘...with the Ferocity of Tigers’ ...

By Robin L. Woodman, Trustees

...is how Susanna Ingersoll entered into her maturity, according to Rev. William Bentley, the prodigious chronicler of Salem history, whose four-volume diary captures the daily life and times of Salem from 1784–1819.

Although the Rev. Bentley was writing about a singular situation regarding the transfer of property from one family member to another, he articulates, in his vivid style, the larger question of a woman’s right to own property during the 19th century.

Susanna and her mother, Susanna Hathorne Ingersoll, descendant of the infamous witchcraft trial judge, John Hathorne, were living in the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion when the mother died by consumption in 1811. Together they had weathered the tragic loss of Samuel Ingersoll, the husband and father, as well as four children. Two had died in childhood, an older son died at sea, and the last son, 23-year-old Ebenezer, died of yellow fever while quarantined in Salem harbor. He had just returned from the West Indies after captaining one of his father’s ships in 1804. His father, Samuel, died at sea of the same fever. Susanna was to be the sole heir to the estate. Immediately an epic battle over ownership of the house would ensue between Susanna and her mother’s brother, Col. John Hathorne, because Mrs. Ingersoll died without a will. Thankfully, we have the diary entries of the Rev. Bentley to illuminate the events.

Shortly after her mother’s death, Susanna was set upon by family members who were determined to take control of the only home she knew. The Rev. Bentley recorded that he was called to assist Susanna, writing:

“this morning I was with her only daughter who has been beset by the Col’s family with the ferocity of tigers. They insisted upon entrance into the house and apartments. The daughter had swooned upon the death of her mother and was very low. I took such charge as she desired me for which I expect their vengeance. No prohibition could keep them out of the house. We talk of savages. What are we without our Laws and penalties...”

The following day the Rev. Bentley continued the saga:

“Funeral of Madam Ingersoll. The Col’s family insist upon keeping the house...I first hid the money & then the keys. So much for hungry expectants and for having the intended heirs debtors. It was a curious scene to me. The daughter sick, as she says, in her prison...”

Soon thereafter, the court ordered an inventory to determine the value of the estate. Eventually, the court named Susanna sole inheritor. In 1811, there was no guarantee of this outcome. As it was, the final execution order was not issued until late 1813.

The 19th century had long-established, defined roles based on gender. In theory, men were solely in charge of business and law, while women delivered babies, raised children, and acted as helpmates to their husbands. Of course, these roles were upset when unforeseen events occurred. Many women in Salem lived outside of these pre-determined rules since many were widowed, abandoned, or had disabled husbands due to the hardships of Salem’s long maritime history. Many
women ran the family finances, created cent shops in their homes or worked outside the home as sole support of the family.

Due to widowhood, Susanna Hathorne Ingersoll could maintain a slightly less rigid adherence to these expectations. Upon inheriting Samuel’s estate, she ran the shipping business, and, presumably, maintained the family finances. Had she done that all along? Eventually she expanded her business role and began acquiring real estate in Salem.

As far as we know, her brother, Col. John Hathorne, did not interfere with his sister’s assumption of the property or running of the business upon Samuel’s death. This could be simply because Samuel did leave a will behind. It could also give us a glimpse into the character of Susanna Hathorne Ingersoll that he didn’t attempt to force his will; he certainly had no qualms about intimidating his niece.

And, what about the daughter, Susanna? What effect did her uncle’s brutish behavior have upon her? She was a 26-year-old unmarried woman who had lived her entire life within the house Hathorne tried to take by force. We can only speculate as to the reasons for the uncle’s behavior—debts, entitlement, male dominance; although intimidating this grieving, sheltered women speaks volumes.

Susanna’s strength is exhibited in her actions. A year after her mother’s death, the War of 1812 was declared. This maritime war was fought mostly off the coast of New England and the Great Lakes. We can assume that Susanna could catch a glimpse of British ships from her second-floor windows. The British shelled the coast of Salem and the surrounding area many nights. Salem’s citizens were terrified, and many fled to interior towns for safety. Susanna had the opposite reaction. She did not leave her vulnerable home. Susanna began what would become a lifelong practice of buying real estate. Some properties she mortgaged for her neighbors, perhaps her way of helping them relocate with the hope of returning to Salem. Some properties she bought outright. Her business sense was astute; by the 1840s her property portfolio was valued at well over $250,000.

Inevitably, when I give my “Strong Women of the Gables” talk, questions arise as to why Susanna remained single. There certainly are many theories we can speculate upon—did she not find the love of her life, was she jilted at the altar, was she a lesbian? There is no evidence of the latter two theories and perhaps the first speaks for itself. There is also the harsh reality that Susanna watched as her parents buried four of their five children. That was a sober reality of the time. Did she remain single because of 19th century law that maintained a married woman could not own property in her own right? Frankly, women did not even have rights over their own children at this time. Was this the lesson she learned from her uncle, to maintain independence? Throughout her life, Susanna signed all of her deeds as Susanna Ingersoll, Singlewoman.

I continue to believe that Susanna, as shaped by the early tragedies she endured, remains not only a strong woman of the Gables, but of Salem and her era.

Susanna’s strength is exhibited in her actions.

Robin L. Woodman is a member of The House of the Seven Gables Board of Trustees. She will be presenting her Women of The Gables lecture on Sunday, March 19. For more information, please visit 7gables.org/events
A good time was had by all at January’s sold-out pierogi-making fundraiser for Ukrainian Humanitarian Aid. Salem resident and Ukrainian native Galyna Shlapak led the demonstration, and attendees tried their hands at making a variety of pierogies to eat and take home. Not only did attendees have fun making pierogies, they also learned about the food’s history and cultural connection with Ukraine. The event was a collaborative community effort with Dobro New England and the North Shore Community Development Coalition.

In January, the Settlement program debuted three new classes in collaboration with our friends at the North Shore Community Development Coalition. We are so pleased to be able to offer daytime ESL classes as well as computer literacy classes in both English and Spanish. The ESL program provides English classes for adult learners, many of whom were unable to attend our evening classes due to family or work obligations. The computer literacy classes focus on the basics of computing in order to give students a foothold into the world of technology. All of the classes are held at Espacio on Congress Street in Salem. We are grateful to the Saab Family Foundation grant for providing the funding to make the additional classes possible.

Our evening ESL and Citizenship classes continue to draw a large number of adult learners from the North Shore area. One of the highlights and joys of the program is to see our students, on a monthly basis, pass the Citizenship test and go on to become naturalized U.S. citizens.
The House of the Seven Gables continually strives to be a welcoming site for visitors of all ages. We’ve upgraded activities and programs for an even more family friendly, fun, and educational experience.

Younger visitors will discover new activities in Kids Cove, located in the Counting House. Go through a merchant’s desk to find out what he traded and how he kept track of his cargo! Play nautical tic-tac-toe with a set of spinning blocks. Learn more about local sea life, sea navigation and items traded at sea. Explore a ship’s hull, hoist a sail and steer into the horizon! Use the telescope to look across the harbor to see the famed Friendship at Derby Wharf. And there’s more to come this year. As part of our 2022 Coastal Zone Management grant, kids can engage with activities to better understand climate change and what it means for The Gables.

Our staff has also been working to improve our programming for field trips and other school-age groups. Our field trips were reviewed and updated for greater accuracy and inclusivity. Recently, we updated the program formerly known as “World Wide Trading” and renamed it “Across the Wide Atlantic.” The new version includes additional trading partners not mentioned in the previous version so that the intricacies of Atlantic trade during the colonial period is better represented. Students role play and trade with each other to understand supply and demand, the treacheries of trading across the ocean, and the inherent disadvantages or advantages particular groups had. Our field trips are perfect for groups from 5th to 8th grade.

To learn more and book your program, please contact Liam Jones at ljones@7gables.org.
Meet Our Newest Staff Members

We are pleased to welcome Pamela Feltus, our Development Director! Originally from Hartford, Connecticut, Pamela spent most of her adult life in Washington, D.C. There, she worked at various museums—with a curatorial focus on military and aviation—and administered the American Alliance of Museums’ accreditation program. She moved back to New England a few years ago and has since worked in various roles at the Orleans Historical Society, the Cape Symphony in Hyannis, and most recently, the Mystic Museum of Art.

In her private life, Feltus is a state-fair-winning knitter who loves travel, airplanes, and exploring cemeteries. She also earned an apprentice stone mason certificate while repairing drystone walls on Iona in Scotland.

“I love fostering connections between funders and projects that inspire them,” Feltus says. “I’m excited to be working at The House of The Seven Gables and living on the North Shore. In college, I did a research project on Hawthorne and his interpretation of American history—so I guess it was meant to be!”

We are happy to welcome Julia Wacker, our Marketing and Communications Manager! Prior to joining The Gables’ team, Julia worked in theatrical marketing at the Emerson Colonial Theatre in Boston and Gordon College Theatre Arts in Wenham. Julia is a vital part of the Visitor Services team and is primarily responsible for managing external communications, advertisements, social media strategy, assisting with graphic design projects, photography, and handling media requests.

Originally from Andover, Massachusetts, Julia grew up visiting Salem each year with her loved ones. When not at The Gables, Julia enjoys video games, spending time with her family (and their dog), photographing performances, illustrating, and exploring the North Shore area. She is thrilled to be able to work in and help promote her favorite city.

All sorts of persons, and every individual, has a place to fill in the world, and is important in some respects, whether he chooses to be so or not.
— Nathaniel Hawthorne, The American Notebooks, 1836
Collections Corner: Call for Donations

By Susan Baker, Collections Manager

Looking to downsize? Have treasures in the attic?
We may be interested in taking things off your hands!

The Gables is looking to collect objects in two specific areas—parlor furniture from the 1840s (American Classical/Empire period) and Settlement objects, in particular things made or used in Settlement classes from the earliest days (1910) to the present.

Parlor

The parlor in the Turner-Ingersoll Mansion represents the 1840s, the time period when Susanna Ingersoll entertained her cousin Nathaniel Hawthorne in the house. Although we have some lovely pieces from that time period, we don't have many, and would love to add good examples of furniture such as center tables, chairs, and perhaps even a sofa.

Dining Room Chamber

The Dining Room Chamber (the room above the Dining Room) has been empty since the space underwent a major preservation project in 2015. We hope to use this room to describe our history as a Settlement House. If you have any items used or made in Settlement classes and are willing to part with them, we'd love to consider using them.

Please email information about your pieces and photos to Collections Manager Susan Baker at sbaker@7gables.org.

Your old treasures could have a long and useful life here at The Gables.

Top: Example of an American Classical period table. Bottom: Settlement students in a woodworking class.
2022 was a record-breaking year in Salem on a number of fronts and we are happy to report that includes The Gables’ Museum Store! Last year was the best financial year in Gables’ Museum Store history, breaking every record in sales, volume, and profitability. This is particularly impressive given the inventory deficit we had when emerging from the pandemic.

Store Manager Everett Philbrook and his team attended the annual Museum Store Association’s Boston Expo last year, where they found new vendors and customizable products. Many of these new products proved quite popular and gave great insight into what the customer looks for when they visit our Store. It is clear that The Gables’ identity is of great value to our visitors, and that our Store selections reflect that. Bestsellers included “The House of the Seven Gables,” Gables’ ornaments, puzzles and totes, as well as “I climbed the secret staircase” merchandise. One of the stars of the year was the return of the improved hardcover edition of “The House of the Seven Gables” that features enlarged print and photographs from the 1913 edition created for our site. The foreword to the story was written by our own founder, Caroline Emmerton, and each is hand stamped with, “Purchased at The House of The Seven Gables” and a facsimile of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s signature from our archives.

The Museum Store also received a grant from Salem State University’s Enterprise Center that allowed Philbrook and his team to work with Barry Horowitz, a business consultant from Horowitz & Company, to review some of our operations, merchandising, and advertising. The Store implemented many suggestions and is collecting data to assess the impact of these changes on sales and visitor experience.

Lastly, the Museum Store opened an online store! How many times have you visited a historic site only to have to cut your trip to the shop short to catch a bus or to move on to the next destination? Have you ever seen an item in the store only to leave it behind and regret it later? Do you have a friend who would love something from their favorite historic site, who lives too far away to make the trip? Well, to all those who have experienced these woes, our online store offers the solution! The online store features some of the most popular items from our physical store, including the items mentioned above. The selection is constantly updated, and members enjoy the same discount as they would on site. Shipping is available within the US only.

Check us out today at 7gables.org/shop!
Upcoming Member Events

2023 MEMBER EVENTS

SPRING
- Gables Movie Night
- Eric Pape Art Exhibition at Hammond Castle
- Visit to the Jeremiah Lee Mansion

SUMMER
- Literary & Art Nahant Walking Tour
  **Patron Level or Higher**
- Celebrate the Fourth
- Settlement House Lecture

FALL
- Nathaniel Hawthorne & His Novel Tour of The Gables

WINTER
- Member Holiday Shopping Weekend
- Fireside Chat & Tour at the Daniels House

Mark your calendars!

Our annual fundraiser party, Sips by the Sea, will be on Saturday, September 9th.

More details will be available soon!

Photos by Joey Phoenix
MISSION
To be a welcoming, thriving, historic site and community resource that engages people of all backgrounds in our inclusive American story.

VISION
To preserve, share and continue the American story.

VALUES
• We value Caroline Emmerton’s founding mission of preserving the legacy of our site to sustain our Settlement programs for local immigrants.
• We value our designation as a National Historic Landmark and the preservation of our buildings, collections and gardens.
• We value the literary legacy of Nathaniel Hawthorne.
• We value being a center of and for the community.
• We value education as a central tenet of our programming.