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Susan Robertson to Retire
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SOCIAL MEDIA MOMENT



Sangeeta Kumar, @sangeeta.pix
on Instagram

Visitors enjoying a bench
near the Mansion.



Tea & Absinthe, @teaandabsinthe
on Instagram

Guests dressed for our Jane
Austen Garden Party.

Share your memories and photos
with us. Tag @goreplace on
Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.



From the Collection of Gore Place Society. Photo by Eric Workman | TMP Images.

A city in transition: the rural present and industrial future collide in this painting of downtown Waltham and the new Boston Manufacturing Company, circa 1813.

To Cultivate a Garden

Robert Murray's Quest to Improve the Lives of the Working Class

By Donnie Weisse, Farm Historian and Educator

Waltham, 1834

Sheep grazing on a pasture, corn silk dangling from green husks, fields of tall golden wheat and brown-tipped grass: the August sun beat down on everything, including farm manager and head gardener Robert Murray. On hands and knees, Murray pulled weeds in the kitchen garden just south of the Boston Post Road. Not a hundred yards behind him was a brick house almost two hundred feet from end to end, its windows open to a slight breeze.

Behind the house were more fields—rows of peas, cucumbers, potatoes, and other crops—that rolled gently for another half mile before reaching the banks of the Charles River. Much of what was harvested in these fields was eaten in the brick house overlooking them, but the surplus, like the river, made its way east: it traveled by wagon down the Post Road running parallel to the river, to the downtown Boston markets where it was sold. The farm crew made this trip often, almost always returning with a cartload of manure to spread in the fields, and, as their employer hoped, some profits.

A Gentleman's Farm

"My Farm at Waltham," as Christopher Gore called it, was a sprawling gentleman's farm of over three-hundred acres. In addition to the fifty-room brick house, it boasted a marble-floored greenhouse, a coach house, and scenic walking paths shaded by ornamental trees. But as farm managers and laborers knew well, it was also a working farm, and a productive one at that: "The grounds... are not improved merely to gratify personal feelings, or attract observation and receive applause," one visitor wrote in 1815, "but they are devoted to the raising of every variety of horticulture, grass, corn, wheat, barley... and while this variety itself delights the eye of the beholder, it makes him feel that utility is the main design of the exertions there displayed..." Put simply, this was no ordinary farm—and while Christopher died in 1827, this remained true for many years after thanks to Robert Murray, a gardener and landscape architect from Scotland hired in 1834 by Theodore Lyman, who purchased the Gore estate after Rebecca Gore's death.

To Cultivate a Garden
is continued on page 4



GORE PLACE

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Letter from Our Board President

Dear Friends of Gore Place,

In each issue of *The Agrarian*, we seek to make Gore Place history relevant to today's readers by showcasing our historians' scholarly research. In this fall's feature article, farm historian Donnie Weisse takes us behind-the-scenes to the fields, cottage gardens, and marketplaces where farm managers and laborers worked in the 19th century. These workers on the Gore estate were living and working as the agricultural economy was overtaken by the Industrial Age. We surely can relate to great change.



Credit: Eric Workman | TMP Images

Today the Gore estate's landscape looks very different surrounded by modern suburbs. But the estate retains many of the Gores' landscape choices. Gore Place preserves 50 of the Gores' original 300 acres as a working farm with many features still in place, including three historical buildings, gravel pathways, stone walls, and 200-year-old trees. Every day, visitors can step into an agrarian landscape from 200 years ago. With your support, we recently completed our new period-reproduction barns, designed in a 19th-century style, for the care of our heritage farm animals.

Gore Place operates one of the last farms in Waltham and Watertown. The land remains an oasis of open space that you can visit every day for free. Your support helps us thrive, whether you attend a program, make a donation, become a member, or tell a friend about Gore Place. We hope you will do all four.

With best wishes for pleasant fall and winter seasons.

Debbie Gates
Interim President, Board of Governors

Farewell from Tom Thaler

Dear Friends of Gore Place,

It was almost ten years ago when I joined the Board of Governors at Gore Place, then filling the vacant seat occasioned by the death of my wife, Grace. What appealed to me then (and now) is the great sense of history that exists at Gore Place and the reverence for the Gores' refined living and lovely home.

The people—fellow Governors, volunteers and staff—all create a sense of family. In my six-year term as your president, I enjoyed working with leadership volunteers such as Debbie Gates, Beth Hagopian, and Jim



Hunnewell, to name a few. I followed Scott Clarke and Rocket around on his tractor and regularly marveled at how well he maintains both the landscape and structures on our campus. Together with Event Rentals Manager, Linda DeFranco, we hosted scores of organizations and families on our 50 acres. Dina Roberts and I worked hard as a great fundraising team.

All under the executive directorship of Susan Robertson, we pivoted when needed to best steer Gore Place in the right direction. Of special note, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we seized the opportunity to share our pastoral setting with a public that literally needed space. On my watch, we brought the landscape and the Mansion together to put Gore Place at the edge of a new frontier! Thank you for your support and the fabulous ride.

Thomas W. Thaler

Supporter Spotlight: Gina White

Gore Place thanks Gina White's mother for introducing young Gina to Gore Place when she was just a teenager growing up in Cambridge. Years later Gina married her husband Steve White, and the couple lived in the D.C. area before moving to Brookline, Mass. and then to Dover, Mass.

When Gore Place Governor, Jim Hunnewell, invited Gina to join the Board of Governors nearly a decade ago, she quickly became an enthusiastic volunteer. In the past nine years, she has served on the Buildings and Grounds Committee, the Development Committee, and the Executive Committee. In addition to serving on committees, Gina has twice co-chaired the Spring into Summer Party, in 2014 with former Governor Karen McFarlan and in 2023 with Governor Jennifer Drayton.

Gina and Steve have been actively involved in many prominent nonprofit organizations in the Boston area. We are grateful for their annual support of Gore Place and the recent Campaign to Raise the Barn. Although she has stepped down from her Board duties this year, Gina will stay involved at Gore Place. She calls the Board "a group of wonderful volunteers." Now that the new barns are up and running, Gina looks forward to a great future at Gore Place.



Gina and Steve White

Photo by Eric Workman | TMP Images

Fundraising Success with Your Support



Winiker Music brought guests onto the dance floor at Spring into Summer.

Photo by Eric Workman | TMP Images.

In fiscal year 2023, Gore Place celebrated a number of well-supported fundraising successes.

Several anonymous challenges and a gift from the Elizabeth T. Fessenden Charitable Foundation allowed the **2023 Annual Fund** to exceed its goal by \$3,000, topping out at just over \$228,000. The goal for 2024 is \$250,000, an increase of 11%, our highest goal ever.

The Raise the Barn Campaign successfully met its goal of \$1,140,000.

With the campaign's funds, two new period-reproduction barns were completed.

There were a number of successful special events this past year. In September 2022, Governor Kimberly Amsden chaired the **Summersault into Fall Party** highlighted by a musical Conga line. In May 2023, Governors and event co-chairs Debbie Gates and Michael Carter welcomed more than 40 guests to the Mansion for a **"Crème de la Crème" evening** to learn about our special collection items. In June 2023, more than 100 guests attended the 7th annual **Spring into Summer Party** co-chaired by Governors Gina White and Jennifer Drayton.

Gore Place raised \$33,000 in the acquisition of new and renewed memberships. The **Community Partners program** remained steady at \$8,000, mainly from sponsors associated with the Sheepshearing Festival. Sponsors included Central Square Realty Group, East Cambridge Savings Bank, On the Mark Archery, D. J. Snyder Company, Stanton Insurance, WBUR, and The Tea Leaf.

The **CHRISTOPHER and REBECCA GORE LEGACY SOCIETY**

Make supporting Gore Place part of your legacy with a planned gift.

goreplace.org/support

Gentleman farming, or farming for pleasure rather than subsistence or profit, was a common pastime among the Bostonian elite in the early nineteenth century. As opposed to common yeomen farmers, gentleman farmers were wealthy men who picked up farming as a hobby, typically after making their fortune through other means.

As lawyers and wealthy urbanites like Gore and Lyman were well aware, farming was a widely trusted and respected occupation for a man in 19th-century Massachusetts. These estates were not just symbols of wealth and status. By associating themselves with the agrarian lifestyle, and by working to improve local agricultural practices, wealthy urbanites hoped to earn the respect of the average yeoman farmer while gaining legitimacy as members of the ruling class. To this end, gentleman farmers used their land for experimentation, imported animal breeds and tools from Europe, and belonged to organizations dedicated to improving agriculture.

But yeomen were still suspicious of gentleman farmers, and they had good reasons to be. Firstly, gentleman farmers didn't push their own plows or work their own fields, which tainted their agrarian pursuits with a hint of superficiality. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, these gentleman "farmers" were the same men building factories and financing the region's industrialization, which exacerbated wealth inequality and pushed more and more of the state's population from fields to factories.

From Fields to Factories

With a rising population, a limited amount of land, and a growing number of mills and factories, by the 1830s Massachusetts was in the beginning stages of a major transformation in how things were produced, who produced them, and who profited from them all changed radically. Small-scale artisanal labor was being replaced by wage labor oriented towards mass-production. Though both required long hours, wage labor workers were required to work away from home and were compensated not with the profits of their production but with a predetermined wage.

The consequences of this transformation became apparent in the 1830s, as mill towns turned into industrial cities and the percentage of people living in urban areas and working as wage laborers soared. The landscape, especially



From the Collection of Gore Place Society.

The Farmer's Cottage was built by Robert Murray on the south side of "the Back Road"—now Grove/Waltham Street—in 1835. (Photograph circa 1895)

in places like Waltham, began to look different, and not only because of the massive brick buildings popping up along the Charles River. With a growing population of wage laborers working long hours away from home, many gardens and lawns became neglected and unsightly.

This highlighted the hypocrisy of some gentleman farmers: at the same time they maintained beautiful estates for themselves and preached the virtues of keeping an attractive and productive property, they, in their capacity as factory owners or investors, demanded long working hours that prevented laborers from doing the same for themselves. Despite being employed by a gentleman farmer and being a wage laborer himself, Lyman's farm manager Robert Murray—who had just built a beautiful floral garden on the north lawn and a farm cottage just south of the Back Road—decided to speak out, and wrote an article that called out the hypocrisy of the wealthy class and advocated, in words that remain relevant today, for the rights of workers.

Miserable Appendages

"In this free and happy country, where every man's person and property are protected, why is the cottage garden neglected?" Murray wrote in the *American Gardener's Magazine*. "Wherever you take your walk, you will see numbers of beautiful cottages, with miserable appendages... whereas, if those spots of ground were cultivated with economy, they might yield wholesome food, and cooling shade..."

Along with this eco-conscious consideration for home-grown food and cooling shade, Murray also gave a nuanced—and even romantic—description of the virtues that come with maintaining a garden: "It... creates an attachment to home, and encourages sober and industrious habits in all the members of a family. It would likewise give them an opportunity to display their taste and skill in floriculture."

A gardener and laborer himself, Murray knew firsthand the difficulty of working for a wage while also maintaining a neat and productive parcel of land. Caring for and making good use of one's land is a rewarding relationship, through both the attachment to the land it creates and the artistic expression it allows, but it's also a demanding one—and, as Murray argued, the growing class of wage-laborers was largely prohibited from cultivating this type of relationship, meaning its many benefits were enjoyed only by the wealthy.

Long Hours

Murray was born in rural Scotland and lived in both Edinburgh and London during Great Britain's industrialization, meaning he'd already witnessed, in multiple settings, an economic and social transformation similar to the one underway in Massachusetts. He was an experienced gardener as well, and was trained by a landscape architect in London before finding work as a gardener on the estates of English noblemen. He had a worldly perception and an informed class consciousness, both of

which he utilized as he fashioned his argument and pointed it towards wealthy men like his own employer.

"It is well known that there are many tradesmen and manufacturers in Great Britain that excel professional gardeners in growing florists' flowers... ; and might not men *in the same sphere of life* in this country, where property is more equally distributed, not excel in the same flowers, if they would make the trial?" In other words, why were British laborers able to grow flowers and maintain their gardens while New England laborers couldn't, despite having more land and living in what was ostensibly a more equitable society? The answer, or at least a great part of it, lay in the demands of the laborers' work: "...one great impediment to the general cultivation of cottage gardens," Murray wrote, "is the *long hours* that the laborer has to work, which, you must allow, deprives him of one moment's time to cultivate his little garden, however desirous he may be to do so..."

The Waltham-Lowell system, which was a model of production used in mills owned by a group of investors called the Boston Associates (of which Christopher Gore was a member) was demanding and restrictive of its workers. Mill girls, typically poor young women recruited from rural areas, worked eighty hours a week, and had highly-regimented schedules while living in company-owned housing. Their fathers and brothers, meanwhile, either remained on the farm—where the girls' help was sorely missed—or found work as wage-laborers themselves, perhaps in shipbuilding, metalworking, or printing. Regardless of age or gender, the demands of wage-laborers were growing, and family-owned farms were suffering.

To solve this, Murray argued, and to foster more beautiful neighborhoods with healthier and happier residents, wealthy men who employed laborers had to look beyond their own farms, and beyond their desire for profits.

"An evil that can be easily remedied"

"...If gentlemen, that are anxious for the spread of horticulture, and the beautifying of the country, will allow those men in their employ, that may be possessed of a garden, two or three hours in the week to cultivate them; such men would not only be friends to humanity, but patrons of art and science," Murray wrote, before adding, perhaps with a hint of veiled contempt, "I am sure that such a slight sacrifice as I have mentioned, would be amply compensated to the wealthy class of citizens, in having the privilege of visiting the numerous cottage gardens that would be found wherever they would choose to take their walk."

We don't know whether Murray's words were genuinely deferential or slightly sardonic, but either way his message is clear: the wealthy can remedy this problem they often lament and improve their workers' lives with a very small sacrifice. Gentleman farmers like Lyman and Gore, whose fortunes came from trade or industry, might have used their wealth to found agricultural organizations and experiment on their properties, but what good is that, Murray implied, if it comes at the expense of the worker and his property? Then and now, it must have seemed less benevolent than selfish.

"Warmly attached to Waltham"

Murray had worked hardly a year under Lyman when his article was published. It's unknown what Lyman thought of the article, or if he even read it, but it seems that Murray's job was safe: twenty years and two owners later, Murray was still working at the Gore estate, living in the cottage he'd built just across the Back Road. He'd become a fixture at the estate, and numerous visitors—including a committee from the Massachusetts Horticultural Society—complimented his work. He was described by the MHS committee as a "very industrious, intelligent and zealous cultivator, as well as a capable and most worthy man." In his obituary, which appeared prominently in two Waltham newspapers, Murray was described by a friend as "a man of fervid, impulsive temperament, frank and open in the expression of his opinions, and... always a warm and zealous defender of them." The article he wrote on behalf of his fellow workers was a testament to this fiery temperament, as well as to his warmth and compassion.

The neglected cottage garden that Murray lamented was a metaphor for the worker's entire home and family. The industrial economy demanded, and continues to demand, a great deal of time and effort from workers, often at the expense of everything that is not work. What Murray proposed was what we'd call a "work-life balance," and the benefits he anticipated from it — healthy food, an attachment to home, and opportunities for artistic expression — remain relevant two centuries later.

"He was upright and honest in all the relations of life, and this community is better for him having lived in it," another of Murray's obituaries read. After living and working at the Gore estate for over twenty years under two owners, he retired in 1857. Two years later he built a house on Crescent Street in Waltham, which still stands today, overlooking the Charles River just a block away from the old mills.

RESOURCES

"The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation" by Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude

"Cultivating Gentlemen" by Tamara Plakins Thornton

Waltham Public Library newspaper archives



From the Collection of Gore Place Society.

The flower garden designed and built by Robert Murray on the North Lawn at Gore Place. (Photograph circa 1850)

Celebrating 37 Years of Leadership: Susan Robertson to Retire

Gore Place's Executive Director, Susan Robertson, will retire in December after 37 years at Gore Place. Susan served as Assistant to three previous Directors before being appointed Director in 1993 and Executive Director in 2001, making her the organization's longest-serving Director since Gore Place Society was founded in 1935.

Raising Critical Funding for Historic Preservation and Restoration

During her tenure, Susan has focused on strategic planning, capital infrastructure, and interpretive programs. She established a grant writing initiative at the museum that played a significant role in raising \$8,000,000 for the preservation and restoration of Gore Place's three historic buildings and the recently completed construction of two period-appropriate barns on the Gore Farm. She spearheaded the process to earn sustaining annual grants from the Mass Cultural Council's (MCC) Cultural Investment Portfolio, as well as many matching grants from the MCC's Cultural Facilities Fund.

Focusing on Serving Visitors

Keeping the museum focused on serving visitors has been a central tenet of Susan's leadership for all 37 years. This focus is demonstrated by the success of the Sheepshearing Festival at Gore Place, now in its 37th year. What began in 1987 as a small event with 100 people has grown into an annual New England spring tradition welcoming 10,000 visitors from all over the region each April. Visitors often tell us that spring begins with the Sheepshearing Festival.

In 2019, Susan guided Gore Place to earn the UP (Universal Participation) designation from the MCC for accessibility and inclusion at Gore Place, prioritizing the museum's commitment to serving all visitors, in particular people with disabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the grounds at Gore Place remained open and Susan led the museum's staff to create innovative and engaging socially-distanced programs that served thousands of visitors during a time when most museums were closed.

Achieving Accreditation

Accreditation from the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) is the field's highest mark of distinction, and approximately 3% of museums nationwide have achieved this level of professional excellence. Susan guided the museum in achieving accreditation from AAM three times, initially in 2003 and then re-accreditation in 2013 and 2023. In the interest of giving back to the field all that she has learned, Susan served as an AAM accreditation reviewer for other museums throughout the United States as they seek accreditation.

Serving the Community

Susan was the President of the Board of the New England Museum Association (NEMA) from 2004 to 2006 and received NEMA's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2020. She has served the museum field by leading countless professional development trainings and strategic planning initiatives for NEMA. Susan served on the Board of the Waltham West Suburban Chamber of Commerce (now Waltham Chamber of Commerce) from 2003 to 2018. She received the Chamber Chairman's Award in 2001 and 2003.

Susan will be named Executive Director Emerita of Gore Place upon her departure. The search for the next Executive Director is being conducted by Museum Search & Reference, Londonderry, New Hampshire.



Thanks for the memories!

Photo by Eric Workman | TMP Images

“Susan’s career inspires awe. Her tenure here has been transformative for our campus. Susan’s retirement is a seismic moment at Gore Place.”

-DEBBIE GATES

PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS
OF GORE PLACE

“I am honored to have been Executive Director during such a transformative time at Gore Place. I am very proud of the Gore Place team and all that we have accomplished to move the museum from a hidden gem to a vibrant destination.”

-SUSAN ROBERTSON

Contribute to the Tree Fund
Plant a tree at Gore Place.

goreplace.org/support/tree-fund

SPRING *into* SUMMER

JUNE 14, 2023



Christian Gudmand, Michelle Gilman



Tom Thaler, David Thibodeau, Susan and Jim Hunnewell



Debbie Gates, Barbara Beale



Linda Cabot Black, Tom Thaler, George Beale



Greer Candler, Barbara Beale, Happy Rowe



Jennifer Morss Drayton, Gina White



Hadley and Mike Stephens, Emily Grisct



Kimberlea Jeffries, Lydia Kimball, Stephen Jeffries

Noteworthy shares news about Gore Place. Our Board, staff, and volunteers continue to produce many accomplishments for Gore Place, so we devote this page to these highlights!



Our Angora goats settling into their new Threshing Barn home.

Celebrate the Season at Gore Place!

- See the *Mansion festively decorated*
- *Shopping on Thanksgiving weekend*
- Party on *A December Evening*
- *John Muratore holiday concert*
- Music for the *Holly Days concert*
- Kids' activities at *Saturday Family Time*

goreplace.org



Eric Workman | TMP Images

Our new Governors include **Andrew Chin, Douglas Harding, Amey Moot, and John Quinn**. Not pictured are **Michael Aylward and Robert Storer**.

Welcoming New Governors

At the Annual Meeting on September 11, we welcomed six new members to our Board of Governors: Michael Aylward of Newton, Andrew Chin of Weston, Douglas Harding of Lincoln, Amey Moot of Dover, Robert Storer of Sherborn, and John Quinn of Boston.

Staff Updates

Donnie Weisse, Farm Historian and Educator, has traded the Gore House for the State House to become Director of Communications for Rep. Kevin Honan of Brighton. Donnie was a great addition to our staff and we hope to welcome him back soon!

Sheila Selby has joined us as our new Museum Shop Manager. Her background is in finance and interior design. Sheila has been the merchandise manager for the Boston Bluegrass Union for over 10 years.

Dina Roberts' third book, *Missing Parts*, a novel, will be published this fall and available on Amazon Books.

Recent Collections Acquisition

Thank you to Malcolm Rogers for the gift of three blue and white transfer printed pottery items in the Batalha pattern, circa 1840: a soup tureen, a ladle, and a two-piece sauce boat with a stand. Our visitors are enchanted with this pottery and often spend time looking for the transfer mark.

Aidan Swenson and Caroline White on the Farm at Gore Place

In Memoriam

Sue Jewell, wife of former Governor Pliny Jewell III, passed away in August. Pliny and Sue were long standing members of Gore Place and very involved with the restoration of the landscape at the estate.

Meet Our New Angora Goats

Angora goats (see photo on the left) are now in residence at the Farm. They look similar to our Leicester Longwool sheep but these goats are quite different. While sheep have wool, Angora goats have long hair called mohair and they are shorn twice a year. They also have horns. The breed dates back to the 5th century in western Asia.

Thank You to Our Interns

This spring we hosted Aidan Swenson and Caroline White, two seniors from Buckingham Brown & Nichols School. Projects included digitizing our rare tree catalog, planting in the greenhouse, and working with visitors at the Sheepshearing Festival. Hosting Caroline and Aidan brought a breath of spring to Gore Place. Best of luck to Aidan and Caroline!

Thank you to our summer intern, Tyree Bond. Tyree came to us through the Carroll Center for the Blind's internship program. Tyree plans to study aeronautical engineering, so he was the perfect person to research the history of the early air meets held at Gore Place during the occupancy of Charles Metz in the 1910s. We wish Tyree good luck in all future endeavors!

Abigail Warner led important efforts in our Museum Shop this summer. Abigail updated our shop inventory system and merchandise. We hope to work with her again during her college breaks. Come visit our shop to see her work in action!

