



## GORE PLACE

# THE AGRARIAN

THE NEWSLETTER OF GORE PLACE | SPRING 2017 | ISSUE NUMBER 2

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Volunteer Stu Rubinow leads a guided tour through the second best chamber in the Gore mansion.

## Where I Lay My Head

In 2016, Gore Place took another important step toward restoring the 1806 Gore mansion. We began the research required to furnish the best chambers in the home. Our goal is to transform the second floor of the mansion to better reflect the taste and vision of the Gores.

The importance of bed chambers in the early 19th century is evidenced by inventories of homes of the time. The best chamber was second only to the best parlor and would be furnished with the finest, most stylish furniture that the owner could afford. Far from being just a place to lay one's head, the best chamber also served as a sitting room as well as a place for reading, working and sharing meals, particularly breakfast and tea. The second best chamber was set aside for important guests and would likely have been furnished with good, if slightly older, furnishings. Unfortunately, the Gores left very few clues as to how their best chambers and parlors looked! There are no surviving Gore inventories and of course, no photographs.

We have assembled a team of experts to survey what is known and to see what might be uncovered. Our original consultants are Clark Pearce on period furnishings; Natalie Larson on window treatments and textiles; Christine Thomson on finishes and window treatments; and Jeff Baker on architecture. Along the way we will need to speak with others with specific knowledge on features such as early flues and historic wallpapers.

Achieving results is time consuming and can take a certain amount of luck. In examining the baseboards in the north center chamber, a carpet tack with carpet fibers still attached was found. It may have been hiding behind the molding for almost 200 years!

Throughout this project, our collections manager, Lana Lewis, continues to comb through letters and information from other similar homes of the time. Gore family letters are a particularly rich resource.

In 1816 Gore, returning from his service in the Senate in Washington, goes to great lengths to winterize his mansion in Waltham. He writes,

*"We have been putting up our house in a state for winter quarters by some double windows, repairing stoves & making flues for the smoke which by inattention had been covered up. And by laying down some woollen carpets & have no regrets at being absent from Washington..."*

In 1820, the Gores undertake a makeover of the second floor. The account books show an entry for \$868 (a great sum at the time) paid to S. Gore (his brother Samuel) to repaint the trim and floors throughout the second floor. He writes to his friend Rufus King, Governor of NY, regarding the French glazed wallpapers which he has acquired in Boston,

*"The following Mrs. G. communicates...(The) Papers, French good & good borders, price 1 dollar each roll some plain and some with small figures, suitable in her judgement, for (your) drawing room*



Photo by Erin Halvey (Instagram @goreplace)

### Social Media Moment!

Can you believe this will be our 30th Sheepshearing Festival?

What was your first Sheepshearing? Share your memories and photos! Post on our Facebook page or tag us at @goreplace on Twitter and Instagram.

### We Love our Volunteers!

Our volunteers lend their expertise and talents to Gore Place in so many ways. New volunteers are always welcome. This summer, we will be introducing new learning experiences for our volunteers. Come join us! Email Catie Camp at [volunteers@goreplace.org](mailto:volunteers@goreplace.org) to find out more.

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## GORE PLACE

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 Lana Lewis, Collections Manager  
 Linda DeFranco, Rentals & Private Events Manager  
 Erin Halvey, Social Media Manager  
 Emily Robertson, Marketing Manager  
 Susan Katz, Education Specialist  
 Kali Noble, Membership & Annual Fund Coordinator  
 Catie Camp, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Brendan Sullivan, Grounds Crew  
 Bob Brown, Prentice Crosier, Mike Dudal, Sue Martin, Cheryl Mezack, Anna Newberg & Stu Rubinow, Guides



## Letter from our Board President

Dear Members and Supporters,

Strategic Planning plays an important role at Gore Place. Recently, the board and the staff held a retreat to analyze our current plan and formulate implementation ideas and strategies. There was a robust debate and the resulting menu of action items is outstanding. Gore Place is so fortunate with its team! In particular, there is an updated version of the Wheatland Landscape Master Plan entitled An Agrarian Vision. The staff, working with each of the standing committees, is energetically putting all the ideas into motion.

This newsletter describes exciting new research on the second floor of the mansion as outside consultants work with the collections committee to develop a furnishing plan for the bedchambers. A recent newsletter described the plans that are underway to make the mansion more accessible. All of this furthers our mission of strengthening interpretation and interest for visitors.

Simultaneously, plans are underway to improve the farm plan, provide better facilities for our animals, restore the farmer's cottage and replenish the landscape with new period-appropriate trees. The entire estate is being enhanced and transformed, in alignment with our new motto "fifty acres, three centuries". Fundraising for these exciting initiatives is already underway, and you'll hear more about this in the near future.

Even though we deal with the old, it never seems to get old at Gore Place. Come share our excitement and visit often to see the progress being made.

Sincerely,

Jim Hunnewell

## PAST, MEET PRESENT

### Sheepshearing Festival

This year, our **Sheepshearing Festival** will be 30 years young! It's hard to believe an event which began with an executive director shearing a few sheep for a classroom of kids from a local grammar school has grown into one of the major festivals of the region! The attendance last year was 10,000!

Having reached such an important milestone, we thought it would be fun to ask our friends what they remember about their very first Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival. Perhaps you'd like to share your early memories of this great event? We are collecting them at [events@goreplace.org](mailto:events@goreplace.org). We'd love to hear from you!

### BEQUESTS AND PLANNED GIVING

Remembering Gore Place in your will, trust or through an annuity is one of the most meaningful gifts you can give to an organization.

For more information, please contact Matthew Dickey, Director of Development, 781.894.2798.



Emily Robertson at the 1989 Festival.  
 Emily now serves as our marketing manager.

Photo: Todd Magliozzi





Photo: Bruce S. Allen

Shearer Kevin Ford

## SHEAR PERFECTION – THE ART OF KEVIN FORD

One of the perennial favorites among our visitors at the annual **Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival** is shearer Kevin Ford. Kevin is one of the few professional shearers who still works exclusively with blade (hand) shears (most shearers use electric clippers). Kevin has just returned from the Worldwide Shearing and Woolhandling Competition in New Zealand where he competed against the best shearers from around the world. It's remarkable that Kevin, who is 70, is one of the highest ranked shearers on the world stage performing this physically demanding craft. Kevin will be displaying his considerable skills again this year when the **Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival** returns on Saturday, April 29 (rain or shine).

## MANSION INTERPRETATION

### Take a Totally Touchable Tour on Sundays in July

Unlock a door, ring for the servants, take a turn at cards and learn the proper way to hold a handleless tea cup. This summer, experience all this and more on the Totally Touchable Tour of Gore Place. The tour focuses on items guests can feel, hear, smell, and even taste and is ideal for families with kids as well as anyone with limited sight.

"The idea of having touchable items grew out of our ongoing search for ways to make the tours more accessible to people who are blind or who have low sight" says Thom Roach, Director of Interpretation and Programs. "Adding touchable objects, sounds, smells, anything we can think of to help people experience the house is a challenge, but we're committed to making our buildings and grounds accessible to all."

*Totally Touchable Tours* will be offered July 9, 16, 23 and 30 from 1 to 4 pm for the special reduced admission of \$5 all ages. Of course, admission for members is free.

## FARM AND LANDSCAPE

The Wheatland Master Plan for the Landscape has guided our landscape activities for more than 20 years. This fall, we reviewed the plan and added new agrarian strategies to maintain and steward the entire landscape as interpretive space. Adding new period appropriate trees to the estate is an important part of the plan. Last fall, we planted an American sycamore near the mansion and two red maples near the carriage house. This spring, we will add Leicester longwool sheep to our flock. Soon, we hope to increase available pasture by fencing the north meadow. The visual impact of grazing animals along Main Street will be dramatic.

## Noteworthy

### Coming Soon!

The **Nature Play Grove** will be a new destination for Gore Place's youngest visitors and their accompanying adults. The play space with boulders, logs, sticks and stumps will be inconspicuously constructed in the woods near the Welcome Center and parking. Designed to encourage self-directed imaginative play, the Nature Play Grove will also be the site of our twice a month Preschool Playtime programs. This exciting new project is funded, in part, by the Belmont Savings Bank Foundation.

### New Grounds Guide Available!

Next time you take a stroll at Gore Place, stop by the Welcome Center and pick up the new Grounds Guide (Mon through Fri, 10 am to 2 pm; Sat 12 to 3 pm). The updated and redesigned pamphlet includes information about the major features on the property, a brief timeline of Gore Place through the years and a colorful, easy-to-read map that will help you find the open spaces and hidden places as you explore the 50 acres.

### Welcome, Linda DeFranco!

Welcome to our new Rentals & Private Events Manager Linda DeFranco. Linda brings more than 20 years of experience to Gore Place. Make your event an historic one. Contact Linda at [functionrentals@goreplace.org](mailto:functionrentals@goreplace.org).

### Calling All Nonprofits

Our beautifully restored carriage house is available for rental year round. It is fully equipped with climate control and wifi, has a capacity of 125 and comes equipped with tables and chairs. We are happy to make it available for any community non profit organization to use for a modest remuneration. Please call Linda DeFranco at 781-894-2798 to check available dates for your next gathering.



**Our 1793 Carriage House. Can you see your next party here?**

## Upcoming Programs—Join Us!

### Moonlight Tours

April 21, May 12 and 26, June 16, July 7 and 21,  
August 11 and 25, September 8 and 22, November  
10 and 24, 7:30 pm

### Living Salad Bowl Workshop

April 22, 10 am–12 pm, 12:30–2:30 pm

### Gore Place Sheepshearing Festival

April 29, 10 am–5 pm

### Mother's Day Tea

May 14, 3 pm

### Annual Plant Sale

May 19 and 20, 9 am–4 pm

### Raised Bed Workshop

May 20, 10 am–12 pm

### Concerts in the Carriage House

June 7 and 21, July 5 and 19, August 9 and 16,  
September 6 and 13, October 4 and 18, 7:30 pm

### Floral Days

June 8 to 10

### Father's Day Concert

June 18, 3 pm

### The Art of Puppetry

July 9 and 16, 11 am

### Totally Touchable Tours

July 9, 16, 23 and 30, 1–4 pm

### Archery at Gore Place

July 10, 17, 24 and 31, 6:30 pm

### Corn Roasts

August 11, 18 and 25, 5–7 pm

### Gore Place Fall Festival

September 23, 12–5 pm

### Gore Place Society Annual Meeting

September 25

### Frightful Fridays

October 13, 20 and 27, 7 and 8:15 pm

Visit [goreplace.org](http://goreplace.org) for details  
and to purchase tickets online.

*Where I Lay My Head*, continued from front page...

*and entry. The plain are of stone colour buff  
and a deep or full green. The ground of those  
with figures are all of a quiet stone color.  
The papers are all glazed. If you chose to  
have any please designate the colour and  
the number of rolls.... "*

It seems Mrs. G was advising King on deco-  
rating his own home in New York as well!

"This is an exciting time for Gore Place  
where many important projects are coming  
together," said Clark Pearce. He cites the  
work being done to return the grounds to  
Gore's vision of an English style estate and  
the documentation of the systems of the  
house during the Gore occupancy. He says  
that a project like this will also elevate the  
estate's visibility and interest to visitors.

This project is supported by a grant from The  
National Trust for Historic Preservation and  
matched by the Sunfield Fund at Gore Place.

Information for this article was taken from  
"The Gore Place Chamber Furnishing Plan"  
by Clark Pearce, November 2016.



FIFTY ACRES & THREE CENTURIES

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