



The Cottonwood Crier

Newsletter
July/August/September/October 2023



Late summer and early fall brings bright vivid colours to Cottonwood Mansion!

Welcome to the new format of the Cottonwood Crier newsletter! Continue reading below for some exciting updates and upcoming events.

Past Events & Updates



Victorian House Guest Experience

On July 15th we hosted our first (of many) Victorian House Guest Experiences! Guests were transported back to the Victorian era and had the opportunity to bake in the original kitchen, experience Victorian entertainment, sit down to a delicious afternoon tea, and get creative with Victorian pastimes. We cannot wait to host this event in October, November & December!

Cottonwood's Classic Car Show

We had a record-breaking 126 cars onsite this year for our Classic Car Show! The show is comprised of awesome vintage and classic cars, race cars, Shelley's Family Dining, house tours and more. A big thank you to Memory Motors and all of our supporters, donors, car registrants and attendees that made this show spectacular.



Victorian Garden Party

Cottonwood threw a successful Victorian Garden Party on August 27th, 2023, despite both changes to the event set up and the use of a rain date due to poor weather! Guests enjoyed a lovely Afternoon Tea indoors and were able to listen to authentic Victorian-era music. It was a delight to see so many beautifully costumed guests and hosts. We plan to do an outdoor version of this event again for 2024, please stay tuned!



Autumn Afternoon Tea

We had a lovely Autumn Afternoon Tea on September 9th, 2023. It was great to meet new guests and see some familiar faces! Thank you to all who attended and supported Cottonwood, and to all the volunteers and trustees that made this event possible. We couldn't have done it without you!





The Victorian House Guest Experience is live! Book your tickets today!

[Book Now](#)

Upcoming Events



Guided Mansion Ghost Walks

Saturdays, October 7th, 14th & 21st
6:00pm, 7:15pm & 8:30pm

Ghost Walks at Cottonwood Mansion are back for another year! In partnership with Spirit Hunters Ontario, Cottonwood will be hosting Guided Mansion Ghost Walks during the month of October! This one-hour event will include a tour of the mansion and information on the family members that lived at Cottonwood, and a guided ghost walk complete with ghost hunting equipment and expert guides from Spirit Hunters Ontario.

Cottonwood by Candlelight Tours & Toy Fundraiser

Fridays, November 17th, 24th, December 1st, 8th, 15th & 22nd
6:00pm

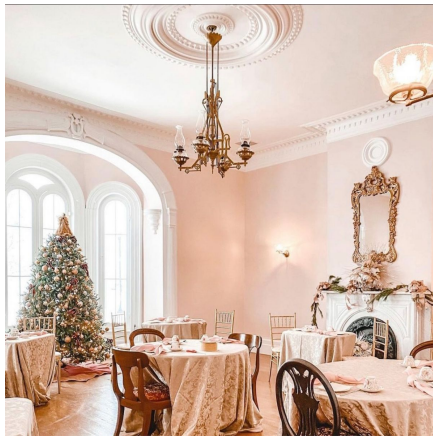
Explore the magic of Cottonwood during the Holiday Season with Cottonwood by Candlelight tours! Your costumed host will guide you through the mansion by candlelight. This event concludes with hot apple cider, Christmas cookies, and time in Cottonwood's Gift Shop. November 17th & December 1st are by donation of a new, unopened toy for a child in need.



Christmas Afternoon Teas

Saturdays, December 2nd & 16th
11:00am & 2:00pm

A favourite among our visitors, our Christmas Afternoon Teas are back for 2023! Enjoy a delightfully festive Afternoon Tea of sandwiches, freshly baked scones, delicious holiday desserts, and your choice of teas of course! This event concludes with a tour of the mansion all dressed up for the holidays, and time in our Gift Shop.



Public Paranormal Investigation

December 2nd, 2023
6:00pm & 8:30pm

Public Paranormal Investigations, run in partnership with Spirit Hunters Ontario, allow guests to explore additional spaces previously closed to the public, utilize more equipment, both traditional and high-tech, and opportunities for guided and independent EVP sessions and independent investigation. These events are limited, book your spot today!



Book Tickets

From the Desk of the Museum Manager

By Iona Whatford

It has been a blur of a summer season this year; I feel that I blinked and suddenly it was no longer May but suddenly October! The summer months bring on a flurry of activity at the mansion, from large-scale events that take months of planning like our Car Show, to overseeing and coordinating the venue for 8 weddings since May. And while these events and weddings bring in thousands of new guests who enjoy engaging with the mansion and its history, this season of jumping from activity to activity can take away the focus, even momentarily, from the curation and museum interpretation tasks that I love.

With that said, there were certainly a handful of moments this summer where I got to meet and hear from descendants of the Holmes and Hoover families and beyond, and help them reconnect with their heritage. These moments are so filled with passion and energy on both sides; it truly is magical to watch a descendant connect with the same painting their great-great-grandmother painted, or spot a distant relative on a carefully hand-written family tree.

Perhaps one of the most impactful examples for me was receiving a donation from a descendant of the Hoover family. This beautifully preserved afghan was made by Mrs Seabeck in 1851, on the Hoover family farm in Selkirk, Ontario. It now sits cozily in the Hoover Family Chest from 1688, the original chest that the Hoover family used to emigrate from Germany, first to Pennsylvania, and then up to Selkirk, Ontario by the 1790's. Together, the two pieces are strong links from Hoover descendants over the years, and the next time you visit Cottonwood, make sure you ask to see these wonderful collection items.



President's Message

Clayt Spears, Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation

As we have now entered the fall season, it is time to take a look back and reflect on our 2023 season at Cottonwood. Iona certainly scheduled some great events and these doubled with weddings and other pre-booked activities made our site not only a beehive of activity, but brought in increased revenue which enabled us to move forward with some much needed upgrades. The overall comments regarding our events and the mansion itself from those visiting were heartwarming and this created a feeling of happiness for those directly involved with each.

With regard to a feeling of happiness, for me personally, each time I enter the mansion I sense a welcoming aura exuding from within its walls. Having said that, when I remember how it looked when Larry Hamilton introduced me to it in 1988, what was an old house in ruins at that time and what it is today, it is small wonder this feeling is obvious.

I know that I speak for each of Cottonwood Mansion Museum's trustees when I say thank you to Iona and all the volunteers who are going above and beyond to keep Larry Hamilton's dream alive.

-Clayt Spears, *President*