

Double-Length Issue

July/August/September/October 2022



Photography by Jessi McConnell

President's Message

Clayton Spears | Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation

Since accepting the position as president of the Cottonwood Mansion Preservation Foundation in March of 2021, the time has come to reflect back on what has transpired in the past eighteen months. While there have been major cosmetic upgrades on the interior of the Mansion, the main transition has been with the deaccession of many artifacts in order to recreate the era (1870-1903) when the Holmes family occupied the site and provide its visitors an insight as to how they lived during this period. This was not undertaken without a considerable amount of discussion and to ensure proper protocol was followed, due diligence was taken and some items on loan

were returned to the owners. Even prior to the Covid crisis it was obvious the Cottonwood that many of us knew, enjoyed and loved had reached the point where it could no longer sustain itself and its future was quite bleak. Fortunately, Brittany Van Dalen agreed to accept the position of curator and backed up by her educational background and experience with other museums of a similar nature, she immediately undertook the task of rehabilitating Haldimand's treasure. Needless to say, her drastic and straightforward approach raised a few eyebrows; however, based



on her tenacity and drive which is being emulated by Iona Whatford, Cottonwood is enjoying a positive upheaval with a brighter future. This has become increasingly evident based on the number of people who are looking to Cottonwood as the venue for their weddings plus the bookings for its various events. In closing, while the positive vibes are certainly creating a rewarding atmosphere, the need to finance some of the ongoing structural repairs and general maintenance are still paramount in the minds of those directly involved with Cottonwood and Iona has been diligently searching for every possible source of additional revenue. She has also put together an outline of exciting events for the remainder of this year and 2023, one of my favorites being the return of a Murder Mystery night. Naturally, she will be reaching out for volunteer support with these events.

Cottonwood Mansion is Larry Hamilton's legacy to Haldimand County and it's important that we keep his vision alive for future generations.

Clayt Spears, *President*



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Past Events

Since the beginning of the summer, Cottonwood has held numerous fundraising events including the Garage Sale (pictured right), the Dinner in the Countryside, Afternoon Tea in memory of Catherine Stidsen, Cottonwood's Classic Car Show, the Farmer's Market, Craft & Tractor Show, and the fall Bouquet Workshop & Cream Tea. Alongside these events, we have also hosted a number of private bookings, weddings and rentals, which have together raised over \$17,000 to help with the museum's running costs, needs, and projects that come up. With over 15 events planned for the rest of the 2022 year, Cottonwood intends to keep up the momentum!

Cottonwood celebrated its Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant of \$77,400 on Wednesday, July 3rd. The grant will fund three portable washroom units, one of which is fully accessible, which will be placed on the grounds at Cottonwood for use year-round at events and for private bookings.

Local MPP Bobbi Ann Brady, former MPP Toby Barrett, local news reporters, and a small gathering of Cottonwood supporters attended the event. "This investment by the Ontario Trillium Foundation to procure outdoor accessible washrooms is great news for many in our community," said Bobbi Ann Brady, MPP Haldimand-Norfolk. "Visitors from near and far will benefit from this investment as it ensures that the space remains accessible for all." The trailers are now onsite and will be fully functional by the spring of 2023.



Past Events Continued

Dinner in the Countryside

Friday, July 22nd 2022

This event was very popular and sold out quickly, and the food was said to be spectacular! Thank you to all of the volunteers who helped with this event.



Afternoon Tea in Memory of Catherine Stidsen

Saturday, July 23rd 2022

It was an honour to pay tribute to our late board member Catherine Stidsen, and the tremendous work she put into Cottonwood over the years. This event sold out and many of Cottonwood's past supporters were present.



Cottonwood's Classic Car Show

Saturday, August 6th 2022

The Car Show was a huge success with over 80 cars registered! We would like to thank to all the businesses and individuals who contributed support and prizes for this event.



Farmer's Market, Craft & Antique Tractor Show

Saturday, August 27th 2022

This event was advertised as a free event, and helped raise quite a bit in donations for the mansion. We offered free tours and had 10 vendors onsite, along some awesome tractors! We were happy to meet new community members and establish a positive relationship with those around us through this event.

Updates

Cottonwood Mansion is very excited to announce the *Cottonwood Heritage Tea Blend*, which will be served at Afternoon Tea events and will be available for purchase at our new Gift Shop.

The blend was created by Monarch Tea Co., a specialist tea company run by tea sommelier Katie Cyr. The blend consists of Assam & Sri Lankan black tea, with creamy vanilla notes and rose petals. This heritage blend was created with Cottonwood's history in mind, as the black tea base is the same type of tea that was often brought in to North America during the mid to late 19th century. The creamy vanilla notes were chosen to compliment Cottonwood's Afternoon Tea menu, and the rose petals and lavender buds add a touch of classic flair to the blend. You can try this blend at any Afternoon Tea event or purchase a 50g bag to take home for \$12.00 a bag.



Upcoming Events

Afternoon Tea

Saturday, October 8th 2022

\$55 per person

11:00am & 2:30pm seatings

Tickets are still available for this event! Visit our website or call to reserve your spot today.



Cottonwood Ghost Walks

Friday & Saturday evenings, October 22nd, 28th & 29th 2022

7:00pm, 8:00pm & 9:00pm time slots

\$30 per person

Come walk through Cottonwood like never before, alongside Spirit Hunters Ontario. They will be your guide to connecting with the spirits of Cottonwood Mansion in this hour long event. This event has been extremely popular, and only 2 tickets remain of the 90 available! Stay tuned as we may open another time slot.



Tastes of the Season: An Afternoon of Tea & Chocolate

Saturday, November 12th 2022

11:00am & 2:00pm seatings

\$60 per person

Kick off the holiday season and enjoy an afternoon with two of life's greatest pleasures: tea and chocolate! Join Tea Sommelier Katie Cyr in an educational and interactive workshop involving the art of pairing tea with locally sourced chocolate. Each ticket includes a one hour tea talk, a tea tasting wheel, tea and chocolate, and a take home bag of Cottonwood's Heritage Tea Blend.



Upcoming Events Continued

Tastes of the Season: Christmas Afternoon Tea

Saturday, December 3rd & 17th

\$60 per person

11:00am & 2:30pm seatings

Enjoy a Christmas themed afternoon tea and house tour in the beautifully decorated Victorian mansion.



Cottonwood by Candlelight: Evening Holiday Tours

Friday, November 18th, December 5th, 9th & 23rd, 5:00pm

\$15 per person

Enjoy an intimate evening tour in the beautifully decorated Cottonwood Mansion! Step back in time to a Victorian Christmas with a 45 minute-tour and enjoy apple cider and assorted Christmas cookies.



Cottonwood by Candlelight: Evening Holiday Tour Toy Drive

Friday, November 25th & December 16th 2022
5:00pm

In lieu of a ticket cost, please bring a new, unwrapped toy for a child in need this Christmas. One toy per admission.

Enjoy an intimate evening tour in the beautifully decorated Cottonwood Mansion! Step back in time to a Victorian Christmas with a 45 minute-tour and enjoy apple cider and assorted Christmas cookies.



Message from the Museum Manager



From the moment I began working at Cottonwood, I knew this job would require a great deal of learning. And although I had years of schooling under my belt, and 8 years of experience in the Museum and Heritage

Site industry, there was (and still is!) so much to learn about this site, its history, and all of the lives it has touched over the years. In the 4 short months I have been managing Cottonwood, I have dug into the history of Cottonwood Mansion as a museum site, and as I looked through those files and documents, it has become clear that without monumental efforts from the dedicated volunteers and supporters of the site, time and time again Cottonwood would have had to close its doors. It is imperative to Cottonwood's future that we keep engaging new generations of volunteers and supporters, and as I begin writing the site's 10-year plan, this will be the framework that everything is built upon. This plan will include small and large projects to help the site sustain revenue, and it will introduce new educational programs and initiatives to engage new generations of history lovers.

In our next Newsletter, you will get a more detailed list of the upcoming events, educational programs, revenue plans, and grant applications we have in the works for 2023.

Lastly, if I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting you in person, I encourage you to send us an email or phone us and book a time to come out and visit the mansion! I would love to meet you and hear your Cottonwood stories and memories.

-Iona Whatford, Museum Manager



A new acquisition: A Victorian Conversation Chair

Cottonwood Mansion is now booking
weddings for the 2023 and 2024 seasons!



For more details on Cottonwood's new wedding packages,
visit us at www.cottonwoodmansionmuseum.com or view
us on WeddingWire!