Girl Scout Troop 67911 (Lighthouse Service Troop) lovingly cares for their special gardens on the hill behind the museum. May 2018

The museum providing a narrated history of life on both sides of the Thames River’s working waterfront. Summer 2018

New storm windows help protect the historic glass and keep the weather on the outside of the museum. August 2018

Children play with historic toys on the museum’s expansive lawn during the annual Groton Bank Day celebration. June 2018.

Guess who? Costumes and masks at the museum’s First Annual History Mystery Gala. October 2018

Herbs for Hearth & Health continues to be one of our most popular programs. We teach how herbs were used historically for medicine & cooking. November 2018.

Interpreting the Past to make sense of the Future | 154 Thames Street | Groton, CT 06340 | www.averycopphouse.org
2018 ANNUAL REPORT

President’s Message

On a lovely summer evening in August of 2018 board of directors & staff members gathered at a potluck supper hosted by board member Shawn Hoar, who is renovating a house on Thames Street across from the museum. We sat on his dock on the Thames River well into the evening, discussing a new direction for the Avery-Copp Museum.

The c. 1800 building itself is a marvel for a museum in that it contains a wealth of objects that are original to the house and its many owners. The collection can be a treasure trove for research and those studying material culture. But a museum needs to be more than a collection of objects. Staff and board members decided to change the museum’s direction to encompass a broader role for the organization.

The Avery-Copp House is now a museum of social history. This is a broad topic, under which we plan to develop programming that will be of interest to the many people within and outside the Avery-Copp community. There are numerous definitions of “social history” encompassing everything from economics to humans’ attitudes towards nature. This is a new and exciting venture for the board and staff, and we are grateful for the amazing support of the Copp family as the museum moves in this new direction.

We accomplished much during 2018. The year saw a wide range of programs, including a fairy garden tea, garden history & wellness, several water taxi tours, and a fascinating presentation by a forensic evidence examiner. Children learned about pirates & sailors, and we held our usual October Ghost Tours and December Holiday Open House.

In November we hosted a ‘pink tea’ related to the suffrage movement. Historically, these kinds of gatherings were an essential forum for women to organize and strategize in pursuit of women’s rights.

A fundraising highlight was our first-annual History Mystery Gala, held in late October at the Shennecossett Yacht Club in Groton. The event included a mystery raffle basket, masks to make, and many guests in costume. The Tom Brown Six provided live music and a special cocktail was made from an historic recipe with rum donated by The Real McCoy®. Planning for our 2019 event is already underway and scheduled for October 26, 2019. Staff and board members worked very hard to make the event a wonderful success.

Community outreach included a wonderful day of events at the first annual Groton Bank Day, held on June 9, 2018. This community collaboration was organized and run by eight local cultural and historic preservation organizations to celebrate the rich history of the historic Groton Bank neighborhood.

As a catalyst organization in the creation of the Thames River Heritage Park (THRP), Connecticut’s first heritage park, the Avery-Copp House Museum has an active interest in preserving and expanding the vitality of the cultural and historic heritage in the area. The THRP water taxi ferries visitors back and forth across the Thames River between New London and Groton during the summer season. The Avery-Copp Museum is represented on the board of trustees and the museum often partners with area individuals and/or organizations to offer special historic water tours along the Thames.

The Avery-Copp Museum continued to benefit from a dedicated group of staff. The museum is a stronger organization because of the talents of Museum Director Leslie Evans, Archivist Kathy Leuze, and Natalie Livingston, Museum Assistant. Molly McElroy joined us again as a summer docent, and fundraising and membership goals and results grew under the management of Development Director Jacqui Copp.

The museum staff works with a broad range of age groups. The Avery-Copp House remained involved with the Connecticut College Museum Studies Program.

President’s Message, continued on page 4

Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President’s Message</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happenings</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living History</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources &amp; Investments</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 Supporters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustees &amp; Staff</td>
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Interpreting the Past to make sense of the Future

154 Thames Street, Groton, CT 06340
averycopphouse.org

March 2019
**Community**

**Thames River Heritage Park**
Successfully launched and well under way

It is with pleasure and pride that the Avery-Copp House serves as a founding partner and sustaining member of the Thames River Heritage Park, a group whose collaborating members are dedicated to promoting the numerous cultural and historic resources on and around New London Harbor. The idea for this park is not a new one; many people have promoted the idea over the past two decades, but only in the last few years has the dream become a reality.

Being such a young organization, each year brings some exciting new developments and innovative ways for the public to connect with the river. Harbor History tours aboard the Water Taxi have been a very successful outreach opportunity for the Avery-Copp House and for other member organizations, with several groups offering thematic events to appeal to a variety of interests. Perhaps even more important is the regular water taxi service offered Friday - Sunday from late May until mid-September. This service marks a return of the regular and affordable water transportation link that was enjoyed between Groton and New London in centuries past, allowing many people to experience our harbor from the water in a way that they have not been able to before. If you have the opportunity, take a ride on the river - and watch for more good things to come in the near future!
President’s Message, continued from page 2

and also had visits from the Riverfront Children’s Center. The Connecticut Master Gardener students worked on eradicating invasive plants from the hillside in back of the Carriage House.

The Archives holds a treasure-trove of information on 19th and 20th century life in Groton. Under the direction of Archivist Kathy Leuze, students from Connecticut College and UConn have continued the process of organizing the collection.

The ACH is privileged to have a solid core of volunteers who help in many different ways in the archives, on the landscaping, and on preserving our historic buildings.

I continue to be inspired by the abilities of staff and board members, all who willingly give their diverse talents and time to the museum. Thanks to them all. A special thanks goes to the Copp family for their continued support of the Avery-Copp House as we work to ensure the future of the museum.

A historic house museum has a special place in the community. By preserving the past, we guarantee that future generations can learn about, and from, the past. Certainly, without history there would be no future.

Susan J. Jerome
President, Board of Trustees

More than Just Fun & Games
Immigration Living History Program

School field trips are lots of fun, both for students and museum staff, and that’s as it should be, because we all know that children absorb lessons much more readily when they are enjoying themselves. In addition to making sure that students enjoy the time they spend with us, the staff at the Avery-Copp House wants to make sure that some important issues are addressed, and some meaningful lessons learned.

Several years ago, with a grant from the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut and with generous support from the Copp family, we were able to develop a Living History Program based on the lives of the Irish immigrants who settled in Groton in the late 19th century. Students who take part in this program learn about the immigrant experience as it played out in our region: the journey to America, the effort to find work, and the struggle to adjust to a new culture.

Using our museum house as the stage, students meet characters from the past and see where they lived and worked. Along the way, we are able to impart lessons about timely topics such as inclusion and tolerance. We encourage students to make connections with experiences in their own lives and to have empathy for others who may be facing some of the same challenges that were faced by others here on our house one hundred years ago.

It is truly heartwarming to hear the thoughtful questions and comments shared by these young learners; dialogue that reflects kindness and tolerance, and we can all use a little more of that!

Environmental Sustainability
What to do about invasive plants?

Caring for a large historic house and the museum collection inside it is a big undertaking, both challenging and rewarding at the same time, but the house and its collection are just one aspect of our custodial responsibility here. We also have three acres of land encompassing a steep hillside, historic stone walls, thirty-five large trees, wild meadow, river frontage, and several ornamental gardens. And like many landscapes in our region, both large and small, we are struggling with the issue of invasive plants.

These plants are problematic because they crowd out the species native to our region that are so important as a food source for birds and insects, including monarch butterflies. The invasives are tough and vigorous growers, not easy to eradicate, and spread quickly if left unchecked. Over the past two years, the Avery-Copp House has been supported by a grant from the McLean Foundation, enabling us to begin a program of invasive plant removal, and to undertake the planting of native species that we hope will eventually be able to re-colonize our property.

We know this will be an ongoing battle for years to come, especially since we are committed to refraining from the use of toxic herbicides, but we are thrilled to have been able to make a good start.

We are especially grateful to students from the Advanced Master Gardener Coastal Certificate Program for the many hours of labor that they contributed during the summer of 2018 as volunteers on this project.
### Resources & Investments

#### INCOME

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#### MUSEUM EXPENSES

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#### CARRIAGE HOUSE EXPENSES

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| **TOTAL EXPENSES**                                | **233,630.00** | **208,443.00** |
| **NET INCOME**                                    | **-35,918.00** | **-4,143.11** |
Many thanks to all our amazing workers.
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CT Humanities
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Julie Wilken
June & John Willson
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Karen Neild Accounting
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Tom Brown Six

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Deborah Bied
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Irene Watson & Norman Dupnis
Priscilla & Tim Wells

2018 Annual Report
Museum of Social History
Avery-Copp House
154 Thames Street, Groton, CT 06340
averycopphouse.org

Interpreting the Past to make sense of the Future
The vision of the Avery-Copp House is to be an integral part of the historic fabric of the region through the preservation, documentation and curation of the Avery-Copp family collection, the development and operation of a living history museum, and by serving as a community resource for education, events and research. The Avery-Copp House seeks to be recognized as a prominent historic destination and a contributing resource within the Thames River Heritage Park. It also endeavors to facilitate and catalyze Groton Bank’s revitalization to improve the visitor experience.

Mission

The Avery-Copp House celebrates, preserves, and documents the historic home, its collection, and the grounds belonging to the Avery and Copp families in Groton, CT. Our purpose is to engage the public in learning about the history of Groton through the study of domestic life as it was experienced in this house and the surrounding community.

How to Contact Us

860.445.1637
museum@averycopphouse.org
154 Thames Street
Groton, CT 06340
www.averycopphouse.org