



While some old buildings may have only their past as the future before them, this cannot be said about Hyde Hall. The successful partnership between New York State and the Friends of Hyde Hall, now Hyde Hall, Inc., has guaranteed a future for the great mansion that promises to be even more vibrant than its storied past.

With funding now in place to restore Tin Top, our gatehouse, so that it will become our new visitor center, Hyde Hall will soon gain a much better-defined point of entry. This is important because the visitor experience, like any good story, should have a beginning, middle, and end. Beginning at the entrance off Mill Road, the drive through fields and woods to Tin Top mirrors the 19th century traveler’s experience coming to Hyde Hall. At Tin Top, visitors will view exhibits

and other visual information aimed at educating them about the relationship between Hyde Hall and the English-style picturesque park that surrounds it. The origins of the Clarke family’s fortune, their extensive landholdings in New York State, and images showing the important players in the history of Hyde Hall will help us tell our remarkable tale. It is a story about birth, maturity, and decline before Hyde Hall was preserved at the last minute through a partnership formed in 1966 between a small group of concerned citizens and the governor of New York, Nelson Rockefeller, who began working together to avert the loss of this significant part of our state and national history.

While Glimmerglass State Park is a wonderful recreational asset for visitors, Hyde Hall is an equally important legacy to all New Yorkers. With its elegance and sophistication, comfort and luxury, and with its technological features, including the vapor light chandeliers, the first water closet west of the Hudson River, and the early central heating system in the Great House—Hyde Hall reminds us of what made New York the Empire State. The ongoing restorations call upon the skills and talents that originally built Hyde Hall, and the rebuilding done by local artisans shows that we still have the abilities right here that lead to excellence. Gaze at the beautifully

restored ceilings in the great rooms and the functioning vapor light chandeliers and you will see why Hyde Hall has been justly called the Monticello of New York State. The work we plan for the next few years, now not just a dream but actually happening thanks to major grants and your support, will bring us much closer to the recreation of George Clarke’s masterpiece.

Once the private home of the privileged few, Hyde Hall has become a time machine that can transport us all to the future as well as to the past. By improving access and the ways we educate and orient visitors, by hosting cultural and community events that foster outreach and partnerships, and by continuing to work toward the integration of Hyde Hall into its original setting as a country manor within a park with access to Otsego Lake and the world, we restore understandings and relationships that enrich us all.

*Jonathan Maney*

--Jonathan Maney,  
Executive Director, Hyde Hall, Inc.

GEORGE CLARKE'S AMERICAN EMPIRE

When young George Clarke arrived in New York from England in April 1789, he must have been filled with great expectations. He and his brother, Edward, had just inherited \$6,000 acres scattered about New York from their grandfather Edward Clarke, and their great uncle George Clarke. Their great grandfather, also a George Clarke, had arrived in New York as the appointed secretary of the Province of New York in 1703 and finished as acting governor in 1743. Colonial officials were not here “to take the air” but to possibly gain an estate. By any estimation, Acting Governor George Clarke was highly successful. His estate in America amounted to approximately 120,000 acres in what is today New York and Vermont.



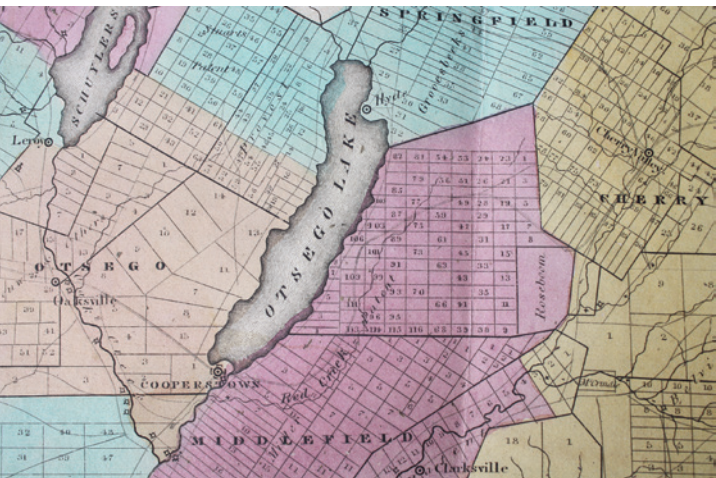
Young George Clarke petitioned the New York State Legislature in 1791 for “the privilege of holding land within this state, notwithstanding the want of Naturalization.” After granting this petition, the legislature also made it lawful for him to “buy, sell or dispose of land as could any natural born citizen.” In 1793, although back in England where he was starting a family, George Clarke

acquired his brother Edward’s share of the inherited lands.

For the next thirteen years Clarke must have developed plans for his American empire. In 1806 he returned to New York and rented a house in Albany. In 1815 he purchased three acres of land there on which to build a dwelling. Philip Hooker was engaged to “delineate the design of George Clarke, Esq.” Despite this, the proposed Albany house was never built.

Apparently George Clarke had other ideas. He was clearly committed to building his life in America, as shown by his subsequent purchases of land in lot 32 in the town of Springfield, sixty-three miles west of Albany. We think that during this period he developed a serious interest in what was to become the beautiful and picturesque site for Hyde Hall overlooking Otsego Lake. On May 3, 1817, George Clarke purchased from Mary and William Gilchrist for \$6,600 the land that Gilchrist had purchased the same day from the estate of the late William Cooper for \$2,590. The description of the land is:

*All that lot of land situate, lying and being in the Town of Springfield and being the west part of lot thirty two in the Springfield Patent, bounded as follows. Beginning at the mouth of Springfield Creek where it empties into Lake Otsego and runs thence northeasterly by the west bounds of Robert Riddle’s lot about fifty three chains to the south bounds of lot number thirty one in the patent aforesaid, thence along the said south bounds North fifty-Eight degrees West one hundred fourteen chains to*



Burr Map 1825

*the Lake Otsego, thence Southerly along the Eastern shore of said Lake to the place of beginning. Containing three hundred forty acres of land more or less. Excepting always nevertheless eight acres on most southern part of said premises, being a point of land running out into said lake and marked out in a map of said Lot Number thirty two...*

On November 16, 1818, George Clarke purchased from the heirs of the late William Cooper the reserved eight acres referred to in bold above, thus completing and rounding out this real estate purchase. This is the fishing point called “Shad Can” on Otsego Lake and was originally meant to be inherited by “the youngest Elizabeth Cooper.” William Cooper had similar provisions for “Three Mile Point” or “Myrtle Grove,” the picnic area that was meant to be inherited by “the youngest William Cooper.”

The eastern portion of this same Lot 32 had been purchased by Robert Riddle from William Cooper in 1796 and was subdivided and described as containing 250 acres. Some of this land was purchased by George Clarke during his lifetime. The remainder was purchased by his son, also George Clarke, from James Gilchrist and the Dutcher family.

A Springfield tax receipt dated January 5, 1830 indicates that George Clarke had paid \$2.94 tax for Homestead Cary’s Patent and \$50.32 tax on 503 acres valued at \$12,581, this being his home farm tax of the year 1829. This tax would have included the fifty plus acres that he purchased in 1828 in Lot 31 from Hannah and Pacefor Dutcher for \$325.00.

By the time he died in 1835, George Clarke had not established “Hyde” as a population center as indicated on the 1829 Burr map shown here. Nevertheless, he had nearly completed his family seat, what historian Levi Beardsley called the “baronial establishment” of Hyde Hall with its park, orchards, and gardens. He had also become a United States citizen and had married his American daughter, Ann, into the upper echelons of New York society. Thus George Clarke had successfully woven himself into the tapestry of New York and its history.

--Noel Dries  
Collections Committee Chair and Trustee

2013 Hyde Hall Gala Pictures



1. A dour Scot 2. Lucy Townsend & serving staff 3. Staff members Jon Maney, Pam Wightman, John Bower 4. Sen. & Mrs. Jim Seward 5. Edwardian beauties 6. James Gwynn, Rich Miller, Tony Esposito 7. Sally Graumlich, Joan Kegelman, Emily Daunis 8. Henry & Rebecca Weil 9. Tier French, Matthew Zwissler 10. Nancy Russell, Cathleen Edidin, Gemma Hall 11. Chris & Jennifer Hulse 12. John & Gretchen Piasecki, Bill & Brenda Michaels 13. Allison Hill-Edgar, Henry Cooper 14. Joan & Brian Kegelman 15. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Stearns 16. Flis Blum 17. Angelica Romano, Lewis Hall 18. J.T. Closi, Janie Closi, Sabrina Thomas, Fielder Thomas 19. Bob & Pat Hanft 20. Noel Dries, Susan Huxtable 21. Andy Timmerman, Christine DiModica, Jennifer Joyce, Laura Nicklas, Brent Nicklas 22. Lisbeth & Jason McCoy 23. Carol Waller, Jessica Carlson 24. Meryl Erlanger, Eric Lysdahl 25. Jean Robert, Laird Elting

Photos by Patrick McMullan Company

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I/We would like to contribute to the preservation of Hyde Hall with a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please make checks payable to Hyde Hall, Inc.  
Mail to: Hyde Hall, Inc. PO Box 721, Cooperstown, NY 13326

Hyde Hall, Inc. is a 509(a)3 nonprofit organization. Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you





It is with tremendous excitement and gratitude that we present a generous gift of art & antiques recently made by Rebecca Grafstein of New York City. having decorated homes in New York City and Bridgehampton for Mrs. Grafstein and her husband, Larry, Trustee and Collections Committee member Eric Lysdahl was perfectly poised to suggest a gift to Hyde Hall when a recent move necessitated the paring down of the Grafsteins’ extensive collection of early 19th century art and antiques.

Fortunately Eric proved persuasive, and in June 2013 we received our largest donation for the museum collection to date, outside of the Clarke family and their relations.



Among the most important works from the Grafstein collection is a large French oil-on-canvas genre painting from the circle of Sebastian-Jacques LeClerc, circa 1800, depicting a dramatic domestic scene informally known as *The Conscription*, which now hangs prominently over the dining room sideboard. Its vivid coloring and handsome gilt frame make a striking impression in the dining room and is representative of the type of pictures which would have been fashionable when George Clarke was building and furnishing Hyde Hall in the early 19th century.

Some important items of furniture also came to Hyde Hall in this gift, including a very fine 1830s marble-topped mahogany center table (in the robust style of other J & J Meeks pieces in our collection) which currently occupies the center stairwell, a pair of elegant 1820s classical marble-topped mahogany pier tables which lend



grace to the passage behind the drawing room, an American wing chair from the late Federal period now ensconced in the library, and a very fine 1820’s mahogany armoire with curly maple and brass accents which awaits future placement in a prominent room. The fine quality and condition of these gifted pieces not only enhance the visual appeal of the house, but add value to our collection. It is Mrs. Grafstein’s hope that these fine additions will inspire

other potential donors to consider making similar contributions to complete the furnishing of the mansion.

--Eric Lysdahl  
Collections Committee member and Trustee



## HYDE HALL, Inc.

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**2013 Hyde Hall Season Pictures** 1 & 2. “The Haunting of Hyde Hall” 3. Bradley Weldon 4. Beth Heinrich, J.G. Hill-Edgar, Avery Aldrich 5. Garden party guests 6. Rapt listeners 7. Garden Party treats 8. Frank Kolbert, Frank Farmer, Andy Blum 9. Volunteer Jane Prior 10. Glimmerglass Festival artists 11. A full house 12. Readings on “Utopia” 13. American Romantics audience 14. After-reading reception

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# HYDE HALL

Cooperstown, New York

## 2013 Fall Newsletter

### From the Chairman’s Desk

We recently received exciting news about two grants that are crucial to our future. One is from the Scriven Foundation for administrative support. This will provide crucial assistance in allowing us to focus our efforts on serving the public more effectively. The second is from the New York State legislature at the instigation of Senator Jim Seward. This will underwrite the completion of the restoration of Tin Top. Built in 1820-21, it is the original gatehouse to Hyde Hall and the oldest gatehouse in New York State. The western wing of Tin Top will become the ticket office as well as a new bookstore and shop. At the Hall itself a second project will focus on masonry repairs. The steps and stone floor of the portico will be leveled and stabilized while repairing some of the missing pieces or those that have been inappropriately patched. The exterior of the stair tower in the courtyard will be repointed and the window to the water closet will be restored. George Clarke ordered a flush toilet from Thomas Bramah and Sons in London, England, which was delivered by Hudson River sloop to Albany, then up the Mohawk River to Fort Plain where it was shipped by wagon to Hyde Hall. It is the first documented flush toilet in upstate New York. We still have the original bill with handwritten instructions for installing the newfangled contraption. The floor and plaster walls will be restored in the water closet as well as the mahogany seat that surrounded the flushing mechanism and the vent for the hot air heating system. The reservoir, originally filled by rainwater from the roof, still survives intact.



Gib and Sen. Seward

Moisture in the walls and ground is one of the ongoing concerns at Hyde Hall, and the State grant will allow for the restoration of the original underground drainage system for the Great House. This involved 13 large and decorative tin leader heads or boxes under the drain holes in the stone gutters, which captured the rain water from the gutters and fed it to the downspouts rather than having excess rain spill over the gutters and down the limestone walls. The downspouts connected underground to a system of cast iron drains that moved the water away from the house to a large cistern that emptied under the bank to the east. In conjunction with this, the gravel driveway that originally surrounded the house for easy access for carriages and foot traffic before the invention of the lawn mower will be restored. Reinstalling the gravel will aid in drying the surrounding ground and will be historically accurate to the landscape of the 1830s. Hyde Hall has never had foundation planting, which did not become popular until the 1840s and 1850s.

A fourth project is the installation of wood floors duplicating the originals in the Maple Stair Hall, Main Kitchen, China Pantry, Servants’ Hall and rear corridor. This will be a welcome relief for visitors and staff alike from the swaying and creaking temporary plywood floors in this part of the house.

One of the treasures of Hyde Hall is our interpretive staff. Aply led by Larry Smith, our guides—John Bower, Randy Lamb, Carol Lewis, Gary Koutnik and Pam Wightman—are full of knowledge and enthusiasm and are continually adding to their expertise. We commonly receive compliments about the quality of our tours from many different quarters. Most recently a latter arrived that raved about “a terrific tour with your 5-star Carol.” Not only do our site interpreters keep our visitors happy and informed, but they also volunteer with all kinds of support from rewriting the visitor pamphlet to organizing our storage rooms. Please plan to take a tour in 2014. Not only will you enjoy the many changes to the interior, but you will also have the opportunity to learn more history from our site interpreters.

Gilbert T. Vincent

Chairman of the Board