

## President's Report, GCBMA Annual Meeting, November 13, 2023

2023 continues the progression of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association and Presidential Library. The Board Members of the GCBMA are very proud of their accomplishments.

We continue and value our relationship with Grover Cleveland Birthplace Administrator Sharon Farrell, and Museum Specialists Meggan McGuire and Patty Hyland. The staff provided additional research on many Grover Cleveland topics for both tours and our social media posts. The staff also revised **educational programs** for neighboring schools including use of items from our traveling trunks. (We wish Meggan McGuire the best in her new home in London.)

Our traveling trunks were lent out to neighboring schools and the Van Riper Hopper Museum in Wayne.

We held our **Annual Grover Cleveland Week** in March. Speakers included Michael Miller, author of High Bridge and our own Board Member and Presidential Historian Louis Picone speaking about Grover Cleveland. There was also a special presentation prepared by Dr. David Cowell on Native Americans. There were also many virtual presentations such as games and quizzes. We plan to have our Grover Cleveland Week in April this year.

Our new, revised website at <https://presidentcleveland.org/> continues to inform the public about our activities. Maintained by Francesca Picone, there are also links on the site to our Presidential Library. Our social media specialist Akiko Axe continues to keep the public informed with Facebook and Instagram. Information on membership and donations can be found on our website.

In May, the first Caldwell **"Homefront Heroes Day"** attracted over 50 people. The event was initiated by World War II Veteran Lucky Luckado and Board Member James Gardner. Participation was provided by speakers Caldwell Councilman Kris Brown, Grover Cleveland Middle School Student Chris Walter, Katie DeFrank, the Dapper Dans, Boy Scout Troop 6, and GCBMA President Paul Maloney..

Under the direction of James Gardner, our First Annual **Presidential Trivia Family Night** was held with great response last April. We plan to have another trivia night this April.

Our **Memorial Day Parade** participation continues with our own "Grover Cleveland", Board Member Matt Rollins.

Our "rain" **Fourth of July Ice Cream Social** continued to provide house tours from the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Staff; children's games; refreshments from Cloverleaf, Guerriero Gelato, West Caldwell ShopRite, and Jack's Foodtown; mini lectures from Board Members James Gardner and Paul Maloney; the postcard collection of Richard and Linda Gibbs; and presentations from the Caldwell Police Department and Street Department. Contributions and volunteer help from the Caldwell Women's Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, and Boy Scout Troop 6 also made the day a success. We are very grateful to Msgr. Emery and St. Aloysius Church for the use of their gymnasium for our rain site. State Museum Administrator Elizabeth Dowd was also on hand to help with the birthplace activities.

With our colleagues from First Presbyterian Church and the West Caldwell Historical Society, the GCBMA is working on festivities for the **250th Anniversary** of the United States. Stay tuned in 2024, 2025, and 2026. Stay tuned!

In July, the GCBMA Board Members participated in the third annual retreat designed to write and review policies for displays and building planning. We appreciate the help of State Administrator Elizabeth Dowd for assistance with the day.

Due to the direction of Akiko Axe, the GCBMA Gift Shop continues to be very profitable. In October, the Gift Shop was on hand at the Kiwanis and Rotary Club Street Fair.

Last spring, Presidential Memorabilia Specialist Larry Cook spoke about Presidential Deaths at a GCBMA event. For this year's Annual Meeting, Presidential Descendant Ulysses Grant Dietz is scheduled to speak.

We continue being registered as an Officially Recognized Friends Organization, hold all regular monthly meetings, resubmitted our five year plan with the Department of the Environment, Division of Parks and Forestry, and created and passed a new budget.

Details about membership are provided in an upcoming report by Board Member Don Stevens.

Income taxes are prepared for the GCBMA. For details of the income taxes write to Paul Maloney, GCBMA President at [EssexNewsMaloney@aol.com](mailto:EssexNewsMaloney@aol.com).

It is anticipated that renovation of our Carriage House, the last phase of the building of our Visitor's Center will be completed by the summer.

Appropriations money sponsored by Senator Richard Codey was awarded to the GCBMA to upgrade exhibits and displays in the first floor of the birthplace.

A committee was established to begin reviewing procedures for when the Visitor's Center is rented to public and private groups.

Last December 2022, Board Member Marjorie Jameson led the West Essex Garden Club and high school students for the Kiwanis Club and Essex County Holiday House Tours. Due to the anticipated renovation of the Visitor's Center scheduled from the state, the grounds will not be available to have the tours this year. We're looking forward to having the program in 2024.

Goals in 2024 include finishing the final phase of the Visitor's Center, developing museum displays, and continuing programs. Thank you for your support!



The mission of the “**Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum at his Birthplace, Caldwell, New Jersey, USA**” is to preserve, collect, and make available material documenting the public and private life of Grover Cleveland (1837-1908). Manuscripts, artifacts, and exhibits will cover his life from his birth in Caldwell, to his presidencies in the White House, as well as his post-presidential years in Princeton, New Jersey. The Library also includes archives related to First Lady Frances Folsom Cleveland (1864-1947).

### **Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum Committee Members**

- Louis Picone (GCBMA) – Chair
- James Gardner (GCBMA)
- Akiko Tawarada-Axe (GCBMA)
- Sharon Farrell (State of NJ) - Grover Cleveland Birthplace Caretaker
- Patty Hyland (State of NJ)
- Paul Maloney (GCBMA President, Ex officio committee member)

The committee wishes to thank Meggan McGuire (State of NJ) for her enthusiasm, expertise, and important and lasting contributions to the Grover Cleveland Presidential Library & Museum. Meggan resigned from the board in October 2023 to relocate with her husband to London.

### **Annual Report:**

The initial concept for the **Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum at his Birthplace** was first discussed thirty years ago, but for various reasons was unable to gain traction. With the new visitors center and the recent establishment of Presidential Libraries for our early (pre-Herbert Hoover) presidents as an impetus, the concept was rejuvenated in 2020. Plans for a Grover Cleveland Presidential Library were approved by the GCBMA board of trustees in 2021 and by the State of New Jersey in spring 2022.

The Grover Cleveland Presidential Library Committee was established in August 2022, and meets monthly. However, due to uncertainty over the carriage house construction and the Grover Cleveland Museum, the committee did not meet from April through August 2023. Once the Grover Cleveland Museum was approved by the GCBMA board, the committee resumed meetings in September 2023. Even with the sabbatical, the hard-working and enthusiastic Committee members have accomplished a lot! The “**Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum at his Birthplace, Caldwell, New Jersey, USA**” can be separated into three elements:

## Grover Cleveland Presidential Library & Museum Committee 2023 Annual Board Report

Louis L. Picone

November 13, 2023

1. **Grover Cleveland Research Library:** A Grover Cleveland Research Library has been established in a room at the Visitors Center and is available to scholars upon request via <https://groverclelandpresidentiallibrary.org/research-copy-copy/>. The room includes books directly and tangentially related to Grover Cleveland which, while individually owned by either the GCBMA or State of New Jersey, are collectively available to researchers regardless of ownership. Work is in progress to review boxes of folder material owned by the GCBMA to make pertinent papers available in file cabinets. As well, work is also in process to make limited physical archives available to researchers (under proper supervision) and all archives available digitally.
2. **Grover Cleveland Museum:** While a research library is mandatory, no Presidential Library is complete without a museum for visitors to learn about the president's life, administration, and lasting significance. In summer 2023, the GCBMA board voted to dedicate a room in the Visitors Center as a museum interpreting Grover Cleveland's life, achievements, and guiding principle "A PUBLIC OFFICE IS A PUBLIC TRUST," in historical context and its significance to a modern audience. Work is in process on the board-approved Exhibition form with plans to send to the Interpretation Committee for review.
3. **Online digital presidential library:** The Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum established a website at <http://groverclelandpresidentiallibrary.org/>. We have a dedicated webmaster & pages are dedicated to the research room, pending museum, and a collection of Grover Cleveland papers and videos. We also have created a digital archive for sharing the GCBMA collection online. At present we have 51 items digitized, including 4 items from the private collection of GCBMA members Vincent & Robert Gardino. Digitizing the remaining archives, including a historically significant postcard collection, is ongoing. The Grover Cleveland Presidential Library Digital Archives is accessible from the Grover Cleveland Presidential Library website or can be accessed directly at <https://groverclelandpresidentiallibrary.omeka.net/>.

It is noteworthy that since the website has been established, we have fielded numerous inquiries and donation requests.

Pending work will include creating the Grover Cleveland Museum, prominent road sign & building signage, promotional material, and an impressive statue of Grover Cleveland on the property. However much of this work is dependent on the yet-unknown carriage house construction timeline.

The grand opening for the "Grover Cleveland Presidential Library and Museum at his Birthplace, Caldwell, New Jersey, USA" is dependent on the carriage house construction, museum completion, signage, etc. We are optimistically targeting late 2024, but that date may prove too ambitious.

Stay tuned!



## **Building and Grounds Possible Projects**

- 1) **Fence Replacement** cost of \$65K is too much money right now. We could try and replace all the rotted posts but this would be a big job to do on our own and could not be done piecemeal. This is because we would not want to excavate all the old posts completely. The new posts would need to be placed into virgin ground, slightly offset from the old post locations. Best option in the short term is to continue to repair as needed. Painting the current fence would also make it look a lot better.
- 2) **Period Herb/Vegetable Garden** This is something that we have discussed for several years. One issue is the many, voracious deer that frequent the property may decimate any garden we plant. Building a "period appropriate" fence around the garden that stop the deer may be a challenge.
- 3) **Driveway Lighting and Outdoor AC Receptacles** It is desirable to add lighting along the driveway and around the parking lot. We also would like some AC receptacle added around the property for outdoor events so we do not need to run extension cords thru the trees. Any AC wiring would need to be buried at least 3' deep by code or put into conduit which can be buried much shallower. With low voltage landscaping lighting the wiring is easier. Turning the lighting on could be: manually from the Visitor Center, motion activated (deer may set this off) or a dusk sensor and a timer.
- 4) **Ground Signage** Adding outdoor signage describing the history of the Birthplace would enhance visits for off-hour visitors. Presumably the exact text would need to be approved by The State. Durable, long-lasting, outdoor rated signage could be expensive.

Greg Crump



## Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association

P.O. Box 183, Caldwell, NJ 07006-0183

[www.presidentcleveland.org](http://www.presidentcleveland.org)

[www.facebook.com/ClevelandBirthplaceAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/ClevelandBirthplaceAssociation)

email: [info@TheGCBMA.org](mailto:info@TheGCBMA.org)

November 2023

### MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

The membership committee of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace would like to report in 2023 a total membership count of 82. Of this number, there are 35 Individual/Family/Student Memberships, 44 Lifetime memberships and 3 Gratis memberships. The 82 members in 2023 represents an 8% increase from membership totals in 2022.

Membership forms were distributed at the July 4th Ice Cream Social and were available for other events during the year.

The membership committee has been diligent to distribute advance notice of events such as Grover Cleveland Week activities, the July 4th Ice Cream Social, Trivia night, Homefront Heroes, book talks and the Annual meeting.

Respectfully,

The Grover Cleveland Birthplace Membership Committee  
Don Stevens, Chair  
Adele Meyer

2023 Annual Report by Grover Cleveland Birthplace Museum Gift Shop Committee:

As of Nov 5th, 2023, we have sold 525 items, \$ 5,557.51 Revenue with a profit of \$2,537.95 in 2023. Profit Margin is 45.67%.  
I have attached a PDF of 2023 Sales Report.

The Birthplace was open by appointment only this year. The gift shop has participated in the 4th of July Ice Cream Social as well as the 1st Sunday of October Caldwell Street Fair.

The most profitable item this year so far is Grover Cleveland biography "A Man of Iron" by Troy Senik. We have sold 23 copies, which brought us \$ 379.39 profit.  
The second profitable item was "Where the Presidents were born" by our own Louis Picone, which sold 14 copies, \$ 162.40 profit.  
The Birthplace Original Magnet and bookmark set was also a hit as usual, sold 36 items, \$100.44 profit.  
We sold 24 pairs of Birthplace Original Grover sock, \$ 96.00 profit.

We have a new item this year. Birthplace Original Grover Cleveland Birthplace brass 3D ornament, sold for \$18 each. For GCBMA members with valid membership only, we are selling 3 of these ornaments for \$ 40.00 (\$ 13.00 each value). This special promotion ends on January 31, 2024.

Once we get a notice on the starting date of Carriage House renovation, we will pack up the gift shop and keep it in a storage until the construction will be done. We might sell few popular items when there is an opportunity. We want to thank the staff at the Birthplace as well as volunteers who have help during the year.

2023 Facebook and Instagram report:

We have been active on Instagram and Facebook with the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association account.

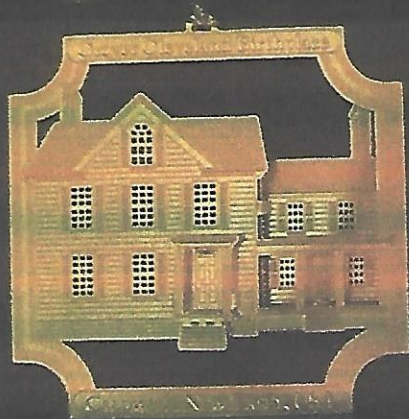
For Instagram, we have 482 followers, we have 53 posts as of Nov 5, 2023 for the year.

For Facebook, we have 1429 followers, 105 post as of Nov 5, 2023 for the year.

Respectfully,

Akiko Tawarada-Axe  
Gift shop Committee Chair





**President Grover Cleveland's Birthplace  
and Childhood Home**

**Address: 207 Bloomfield Avenue, Caldwell, NJ 07006 USA**

The 22nd and 24th President of the United States, Stephen Grover Cleveland, was born here on March 18th, 1837. The home was built in 1832 to serve as the parsonage for the local Presbyterian church. In 1913, it became a museum in honor of President Cleveland. The Grover Cleveland Birthplace State Historic Site is the only house museum in the country dedicated to public interpretation of President Cleveland's life, and displays a number of artifacts related to his personal and political careers. The home is listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

The Charleston Mint, Beaufort, NC  
[www.thecharlestonmint.com](http://www.thecharlestonmint.com)



The birthplace is under construction bids and I was told we would not be decorating for Holiday Tours this year.

We will put together a budget for next year's decorating and work with the Garden club of Essex Fells to decorate the birthplace for the holiday tours 2024 and going forward.

The fundraising suggestion of Flower Power Fundraising is to be decided.

The suggestion is to sign up for 3 fundraising drives during the year.

Fall

Holiday

Spring

These drives are online efforts and will be marketed this way.

Facebook

Web

email to the GCBMA list

email to Trustee contact lists

word of mouth

The Flower Power Fundraising company does all the work

They provide high quality flower bulbs that are delivered to the purchasers directly

GCBMA is sent a check for 50% of the proceeds.

It is that easy.

Marjorie Jameson

Letter from Site Caretaker, Sharon Farrell

7pm, November 13th, 2023

Annual Meeting of the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association

Saint Peter's Church, Essex Fells

- Visitation and Programming: A Snapshot of the Future
- Site Operations
- Thank You

#### Visitation and Programming: A Snapshot of the Future

We are excited that very soon, within the next few weeks, construction to finalize the connecting of the carriage house to the visitor center will resume. As we wind down site operations, it's a good time to look over the past year. Despite our 'year of waiting' to hear when the next phase would begin, we developed new tours and continued events, with a mind to be able to stop when word came.

We have a snapshot of what future visitation might be!

During the past year, as we continued site activities, the Visitor Center has proven to be a welcome addition for tourists, educators, and students. Numerous class trips and scouts came here, taking part in fun and educational history experiences, so did local individuals and families. Turning to special events; the building provided public restrooms, a gathering place for light refreshments, and most importantly during special events, areas for lecture style historical presentations and small temporary exhibits.

The mainstay of our site during warmer months continued to be road trippers from out of state, and Jersey day trippers, while the cooler months brought higher numbers of local residents, class trips and scout groups. All of these daily tours began here at the visitor center. As a site still in transition, plastic tables were our orientation spaces for smaller groups. Staff and guests gathered around introductory graphics and research materials. Larger groups had chairs set up in circles or rows as needed, or we simply sat on the floor. But at the same time, permanent features were becoming more prominent. A museum gift shop, Venetian wooden blinds, attractive seating, oriental carpets, research materials for the presidential library, local history references, and small well-researched exhibits, provided guests with a sneak peek at the direction the building is taking.

This year has proven that the Visitor Center can accommodate a wide range of visitors. Very soon, construction will begin again. I'm looking forward to the next steps we will be taking to bring our shared vision into a reality!

#### Site Operations:

As owner of the site, the State of New Jersey continues to pay for repairs, construction projects, and any annual costs for site operations. And, as an Officially Recognized Friends Organization, or ORFO to the site, the Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association



continues its License Agreement issued by the Division of Leases and Concessions within New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. The Agreement runs on a five year term, and outlines the agreed upon uses and responsibilities related to the Visitor Center.

The site is managed cooperatively by the New Jersey Office of Historic Sites, and the New Jersey State Park Service Northern Region's chains of command, through Hopatcong State Park, all serving together as overseeing managers. I serve as the on-site manager, and the only full time staff on site. I am entering into my 44th year as Caretaker here.

This year, additional seasonal staffing funding was provided through Hopatcong State Park's budget. Two seasonal on site Historic Educators in particular, Meggan McGuire, and Patty Hyland developed outstanding research and educational programs, with resources for educators, families, and historians. Through their efforts, inventories and databases were set up for many items in the Presidential Library collection.

Our part time maintenance position is currently vacant, so maintenance has become a challenge. Clean-up days, volunteers-in-parks, staff, kind trustees, and crew members from Hopatcong State Park have contributed time as they are able, and I am grateful. So many have stepped in to help with much of the work, while we continue seeking a conscientious candidate to serve part time on-site.

Thank You:

Thank you to all who serve on the board. Your energy and talents have helped boost the site's engagement with the community, and provided a fun and educational experience for tourists and educators alike. I am also grateful to the many trustees' family members, friends and supporters. Many of you share affiliations with local schools and organizations that lend unselfish aid and support as well. Thank you all for answering the call. Through your, and their, combined support we all are encouraged and motivated us as we move forward together.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Sharon Farrell, Caretaker**  
Grover Cleveland Birthplace New Jersey State Historic Site  
207 Bloomfield Avenue  
Caldwell NJ 07006  
973.226.0001