

BARD COLLEGE THE MONTGOMERY PLACE CAMPUS

January 2018–19 Year-End Report



Cover: Montgomery Place, northwest summer view. Photo by Sylvia Falcón.

The Stage at Montgomery Place: Gathering on the Banks, Hudson River Jamboree: A Celebration of Americana Music. Photo by Christopher Kayden.



Over the past three years, Bard College: The Montgomery Place Campus has found ways, as an institution of higher learning, to manage and use its vast resources effectively. In our third year of ownership, the Montgomery Place campus (MP) has truly come into its own as a “campus.”

The Environmental and Urban Studies Program offered its first class in landscape design; the Photography Program used Montgomery Place as a backdrop to study “site interpretation”; a biology professor utilized the grounds to research the effect of solar panels on birds’ flight behavior; and two professors, in studio arts and written arts, worked with a group of six students to produce the first-ever Montgomery Place field guide (now available; it can be picked up at the Visitors Center). In the cultural sphere, Montgomery Place welcomed and inspired visitors year-round. The Fisher Center produced three outdoor events in dance, music, and film on the front lawn that were free, open to the public, and attended by hundreds. The sold-out Salon Series presented two new topics—on the architecture of A. J. Davis and regional agriculture—and a bronze sculpture by Deborah Kay Butterfield was donated and installed in the field that greets visitors upon their arrival.

These are but a sampling of the academic and cultural work that happened this past year, and are by no means inclusive. Just as our Annandale main campus couldn’t thrive without the work of so many, neither could our campus at Montgomery Place. Staff members continue to maintain the beauty and significance of the buildings, grounds, and gardens. We are continuing to make strides in inventorying and cataloging the collections, and our fund-raising efforts brought in our most successful year to date: a 31 percent increase over the prior year.

The College is proud to present this summary report of our 2018 accomplishments.



OPERATIONS: BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS, SAFETY AND SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Previous years' accomplishments on Montgomery Place's buildings and grounds have targeted the structures and landscapes most often used by visitors and staff. This past year, work has been expanded and has focused on several outbuildings. Capital improvements, renovations, security upgrades, maintenance projects, and sustainability initiatives are highlighted below:

- Visitors Center building improvements included a complete painting of the exterior, as well as decking, rails, and bathroom interiors; new signs were installed indicating Bard College as the owner of the property; where needed, decking, ramps, and railings were repaired or replaced, with old deck lighting removed and new lighting installed; the bathroom heating system was upgraded; an electric car-charging station was put in place; and repairs were made to parking lot lighting.
- Gardener's Cottage was partially renovated to include new split AC/heating units, cables for underground phone and fiber cabling, a new bathroom floor, and additional outdoor lighting.
- Swiss, North, and Spurr Cottages received a complete cleanup of nonconstruction-related materials, and all locks were changed to comply with Bard's campus-wide security system.
- Coach House second floor was thoroughly cleaned and debris discarded.
- Farmhouse kitchen and bath flooring were upgraded, fuel tanks were replaced per code requirements, electrical repairs were made to the bee house, and a doughnut machine was installed in the commercial kitchen.



- Butler Building South received a grant for installation of a new split system to regulate heating and cooling for humidity control in the main room and in the gun safe, old shelving was removed and new shelving and new painting rack installed; lighting was upgraded and heat tapes put on the roof.
- Thompson Barn roof was replaced and structural upgrades were made to support the building structure.
- Mansion House upgrades included installation of new underground phone cable, fiber cabling, and rebuilt condensation pump; basement kitchen area was repainted and gutters were cleaned.
- Montgomery Place Orchards' Farm Stand electric service was upgraded; existing floor and telephone pole were removed and related roof repairs were made, as well as repairs to the back sections of the roof; building foundation was inspected and replaced where needed; new rough-cut floor was installed; and interior walls and siding were painted.
- Miscellaneous improvements included installation of an emergency phone at the Squash Court, a new air compressor system in the Big Barn, upgraded lighting system in the bottom of Coach House, and Deborah Kay Butterfield horse sculpture on grounds near Visitors Center.
- Throughout property, completed a mapping of the power grid's existing conditions; worked with two firms to develop a proposal for design and installation of a lighting system.
- Investigated the possibility of building a pedestrian bridge across the Saw Kill to link campuses (project terminated due to high cost).
- Continued work on 2016 NYSERDA grant regarding the use of hydropower on the Saw Kill dams; scientific research on the Annandale dam is ongoing while the permitting process proceeds.
- Completed research regarding painting analysis of the Farmhouse so that work would begin in spring 2019.

HORTICULTURE

The grounds at Montgomery Place continue to be cared for in the same stellar manner as the main campus. In addition to physical maintenance, staff have undertaken a significant amount of research on the history of the gardens, landscape design, and related book collections that has resulted in class projects and public exhibitions, all of which help expand knowledge of the historical importance of the property.



Students planting in the Greenhouse.
Photo by China Jorin '86.

- Major capital improvements included repair and realignment of bluestone walkway on west side of Mansion House, installation of 10 tons of pea gravel on formal garden pathways, and renovation of Rough Garden waterfall.
- Removed dead and dying trees from grounds; maintained perennial borders alongside herb garden; cleared out overgrown vegetation in and around Annandale dam and removed 12 trees; planted historic roses in Rose and Formal Gardens; added dozens of annuals, perennials, and herbs to Formal Gardens; planted sugar maples along main driveway to replace removed ones.
- Managed garden volunteers, Abilities First student and supervisor, and 13 student/work-study workers helping with maintenance and special projects.
- Hosted three volunteer field trips and luncheon.
- Assisted visiting professor in landscape design class.
- Research work included locating *Begonia* 'Gilsonii' (plant created by Alexander Gilson, MP's 19th-century African American master gardener) and received cuttings from Botanic Garden in Belgium; researched *Iresine herbstii* 'Gilsoni,' another plant created by Gilson, and currently collaborating with a nursery to grow a variety ("Red Heart") to trial for the 2019 growing season.
- Researched Violetta Delafield's plant collection and found *Epidendrum ciliare* ("Fringed Star Orchid"), the only surviving plant that Delafield donated to the New York Botanical Garden [NYBG]), and received a donation from NYBG of orchid pups from the original 1939 mother plant. Researched designating South Woods as a future preserve and bird sanctuary.
- Hosted multiple guided garden and arboretum tours, open to the public, including monthly walks, VIP tours, and academic class tours.
- Mounted "Trees Under Threat" exhibition in MP Greenhouse, July–October 2018.
- Researched and planned "The Gilded Garden," spring 2019 exhibition on MP's garden furniture and ornament collection.
- Special projects included planting and selling terra-cotta pots of flowering annuals and herbs at MP Farm Stand; and managing part-time staff to organize and systematize a large collection of property, garden, and grounds maps and surveys.

MATERIALS COLLECTION, VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES, AND TOURS

Great strides were made this year in taking an inventory of the entire collection of accessioned objects; approximately 90 percent of the collection accounting is complete and entered into the database. At the current pace, this three-year-long project is expected to be finished in late 2019. Inventorying and other housekeeping projects included the following:

- Inventoried 2,072 accessioned objects and 293 non-accessioned objects and added them to database.
- Photographed 556 accessioned objects and 22 non-accessioned objects, and fully documented eight rooms.
- Prepared a plan for Coach House basement storage for garden ornaments and sculpture collection.
- Inspected all textile boxes and replaced packing materials.
- Revised and updated photography documentation workflow procedures.
- Installed, uninstalled, and cleaned collections and first-floor exhibition area; completed deep cleaning of main staircase and eight rooms.
- Installed data loggers to monitor temperature and humidity in six rooms.
- Identified, documented, and treated mold found on 17 objects.
- Trained and supervised four students and 16 volunteers.
- Cleaned all 42 accessioned and nonaccessioned rugs in the collection in preparation for appraisal.
- Disposed of three nonaccessioned modern and unregistered handguns. Items were brought to a gun dealer, and one was turned over to the Dutchess County Sheriff's Office since it was recorded as having been destroyed.
- In exchange for conservation of valuable accessioned collection garden sculptures, traded 11 non-accessioned objects (or sets of objects) considered property (not collection material) to cover the cost of restoration. The traded objects represented duplications of current accessioned objects or were beyond the College's capacity for repair.
- Collaborated with Clermont State Historic Site to reproduce the Livingston family livery suit and reproduce buttons for an upcoming Clermont exhibition.
- Conducted 72 public tours by staff and 16 community volunteers, for a total of 384 people touring the house during the summer season.
- Enlisted volunteers to assist with special events, administration, inventory collection, and photography documentation.
- Hosted two volunteer appreciation lunches and one field trip to Edgewater.



Detail of a garden sculpture.
Montgomery Place collection.



ARCHIVES COLLECTION

A major leap forward came this past year with the drafting and adoption of a policy document acknowledging that the Montgomery Place Archives Collection will fall under the auspices of the Bard College Libraries and Archives rather than as a stand-alone collection. As a result, the process of separating out archival material from the MP Materials Collection has been initiated. All archival material not on display in the Mansion House will eventually be housed in the Butler South archive building, the designated home for this collection. This decision was the result of the start of a College-wide strategic plan for Bard's library system. Along these lines, major accomplishments for 2018 included the following:

- Initiated a College-wide strategic planning process that includes setting priorities for Montgomery Place Archives Collection.
- Continued inventory of accessioned and nonaccessioned manuscripts, Violetta Delafield's watercolors of mushrooms, photographs, estate blueprints, historic maps, and architectural landscape maps.
- Dismantled excess library shelving at the Stevenson Library and installed at Butler South.
- Unpacked, physically assessed, and shelved 2,200 books of the Edward Livingston Law Library from Historic Hudson Valley; catalogued approximately 400 titles in this collection.
- Inventoried Violetta Delafield's collection of garden books, located in the Mansion House.
- Began moving uncatalogued books from Mansion House to Butler South.
- Worked with Bard staff, departments and programs, faculty, and local researchers to make materials accessible for classes and other internal and external researchers.
- Processed and published 2017 oral history of Richard "Dick" Jenrette and Elliott Lindsley '52 regarding the history of Montgomery Place.
- Supported research activities regarding 2019 exhibition on 19th-century African American MP master gardener Alexander Gilson.
- Participated in local history consortium, representing the MP Archives.
- Researched the Livingston papers held at the Princeton Library archives.

DATA MANAGEMENT

This past year the management of MP's database and photography systems received significant new support with the assignment of the Visual Resources Department. This department now manages the EmbARK database of materials-collection information and images, and also manages all photo image requests for the Materials Collection. With a support system in place, monitoring and managing on a day-to-day basis will greatly improve and expedite operations. The data can be input consistently and professionally and extracted on a timely basis. Most important, efforts to publish information for the Bard community and general public will be greatly enhanced. Work this year included achievements in the following areas:

Database and Inventory Management

- Updated object inventory, status, and location of 2,269 accessioned objects.
- Tracked and updated object moves.
- Entered conservation and condition reports into database.
- Performed database searches and research for MP staff and faculty.
- Generated targeted reports for faculty, staff, and potential donors.
- Identified and corrected metadata issues and inconsistencies.
- Worked as part of inventory team to update location and inventory records in EmbARK.
- Created custom spreadsheets for inventory and location tracking.

Digital and Image Asset Management

- Maintained image files on the EmbARK sever.
- Evaluated digital photographs for database inclusion and primary image selection.
- Managed the linking of digital images to records in EmbARK.
- Worked with MP photography staff on file-naming best practices.
- Audited and organized copies of MP collection images on Google team drives.
- Advised on collection copyright issues and worked with team to create copyright statement for MP items published in Artstor and Omeka.
- Mapped and imported records from EmbArk to the public database, JSTOR Forum.

Project Management

- Supervised Experimental Humanities student work to review and edit Violetta Delafield's mushroom-drawing inscriptions, published collection images in public database Artstor (<https://library.artstor.org/#/collection/87732479>) and edited and expanded online Omeka exhibit (<http://omekalib.bard.edu/exhibits/show/mushroom-drawings>) for inclusion on MP website.



CLASSES, SPECIAL ACTIVITIES, AND EVENTS

In addition to continuing programs that began before this fiscal year, Bard continues to explore ways to integrate Montgomery Place into the College's curricular and cocurricular activities. Several professors used MP for their research activities or as a template for studying topics such as landscape design, history, or photography. One of the most exciting new ventures was a collaboration with Bard's Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts to produce a series of three summertime, outdoor events. By all accounts, the events were a great success and all drew large crowds. Another initiative was the launch of a special events program that will allow the public to rent Montgomery Place grounds for private parties. Income from these events will bring in much-needed funds to cover operating costs. In summary, here are highlights of this past year's activities:

Academic Activities

- Environmental and Urban Studies Program class on landscape design taught by Professor Margie Ruddick. Montgomery Place was used as a template for rethinking design elements of the estate.
- Associate Professor of Biology Bruce Robertson staged several research stations throughout the property, testing how birds react to solar panels.
- In conjunction with a Written Arts Program and Studio Arts Program tutorial, collaborated with students and professors to create a field guide for MP.

- Astronomy evening led by Physics Program, held at Visitors Center.
- Collaborated with Photography, Art History, and Environmental and Urban Studies Programs professors to give tours in conjunction with class curricula.
- Collaborated with the Fisher Center to produce three outdoor events on the Mansion House front lawn.
- Hosted the New York chapter of the Visual Resources Association and gave a presentation on housekeeping protocols to students from the American Institute for Conservation.
- Continued producing the Salon Series: in the spring presented a series of three lectures on renowned 19th-century architect A. J. Davis; in the fall held a daylong symposium on regional agriculture. Both series had full attendance. Sessions were led by faculty members and outside experts. The fall series was held in partnership with the nonprofit organization Hudson River Heritage.
- Hosted Fisher Center's 2018 SummerScape Gala.
- Scheduled open-house tours for First-Years Opening Day, Commencement, Family Weekend, Discovery Day, and Accepted Students Day.
- Participated in New York State Path through History program and Hudson River Ramble by providing outdoor, extended grounds tours.
- Purchased new film screen and projector for use in academic classes and public events held in the Mansion House.
- Hosted members of the Rhinebeck Daughters of the American Revolution interested in General Montgomery's trunk on display at the Mansion House.

MONTGOMERY PLACE ORCHARDS (MPO) AND FARM STAND COLLABORATIONS

As the relationship between the College and MPO continues to evolve, increasing opportunities to collaborate are in process. This past year, new initiatives included:

- Conducted soil samples on field site in collaboration with Pace and Cornell Universities, resulting in the development of trial soil-remediation strategies.
- Collaborated with Gabriel Perron, assistant professor of biology, and MP farmers Doug and Talea Taylor for a food science class on fermentation.
- Increased locally sourced food through Chartwells' purchases of MPO's apple and vegetable seconds.
- Held three student-focused "teaching kitchens," led by MPO staff.
- Held a public seed-planting event at the Greenhouse in conjunction with Earth Day.
- Prepared information for future negotiation and revision of MPO farm lease with the help of American Farmland Trust.
- Collaborated with Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University to investigate issues such as building a cold storage and other ancillary farm facilities.
- Researched possibility of expanding the current conservation easement to include farmland.

ADMINISTRATION

- Researched, prepared, and submitted application to Greater Hudson Heritage Network for conservation grant to undertake interior condition reports for Spurr, North, and Swiss Cottages.
- Received a prestigious New York State grant of \$300,000 for repairing Mansion House porches.
- Undertook a comprehensive review of the estate's easements.
- Engaged law firm Pearlstein McCullough & Lederman to draft an opinion regarding the disposition of nonaccessioned objects on the estate. Outcome of opinion determined nonaccessioned objects are considered "property" and can be donated, sold, traded, or destroyed without having to go through the traditional deaccession process.
- Prepared and received a supplies grant from Greater Hudson Heritage Network.
- Signed contract with architect John G. Waite Associates to prepare a report recommending various adaptive reuses for the Mansion House. Project funded by the Gerry Charitable Trust.
- Collaborated with the Environmental and Urban Studies Program to compile a program-wide memo on past and potential uses for MP and the program for developing a strategic plan.
- Partnered with the Dutchess County Department of Public Works, New York State Department of Transportation, and the Empire State Trail along the Hudson River Valley Greenway to develop a plan for the trail that would run through the Bard campus, including MP.
- Partnered with Bard's Council for Inclusive Excellence on research and development to mount an exhibition and lecture program focusing on the life of 19th-century African American MP master gardener Alexander Gilson. Program will open during 2019 Commencement weekend.
- Collaborated with the Office of Athletics and Recreation cross-country coach to map out a competition course for the upcoming academic year.
- In conjunction with Bard's Office of Transportation, assisted in developing a schedule for an expanded Monday-Friday shuttle service between main campus and Montgomery Place.
- Participated in staff development training in various areas of expertise.
- Continued to meet with local historians and preservation groups to build community relations regarding programming, accessibility, and preservation goals.

Press and Public Relations

- Website upgraded.
- Revised general brochure and Walking Tour Guide.
- Coordinated press releases for community programs with Bard's Office of Public Relations.
- Feature article on MP published in *The Magazine Antiques*.



FUND-RAISING

In 2018, a total of \$824,854 was raised from individual donors, private foundations, and earned income, representing more than a 31 percent increase over the prior year's activity.

Institutional grants received

- New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation
- James C. Chambers Fund of CFFGA
- Shyer Family Charitable Fund of Schwab Charitable
- Martin and Toni Sosnoff Foundation
- Hudson Valley Farm Hub LLC
- Capuano Family Fund of Schwab Charitable
- Greater Hudson Heritage Network
- Lifetime Learning Institute at Bard College

Individual grants received

- Fiona Angelini and Jamie Welch
- Andrew Torgove and Joni Friedman
- Lucie Rancourt

Institutional grants pending

- Preservation League of New York State: \$17,000
- Grants to be submitted: Greater Hudson Heritage Network grant to subsidize costs of archival and collections supplies; and Lifetime Learning Institute at Bard College to support operations
- Earned income: Mansion House tour income: \$2,380
- Salon Series and Tour admission fees: \$2,260



MOVING FORWARD

Several projects that began in 2018 are continuing into 2019. The largest of these projects will be the management of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historical Preservation grant of \$300,000 to restore targeted structural and decorative elements of the exterior porches. It is likely this project will take three to five years to complete. In addition, if funding is granted from the Preservation League of New York State, efforts will need to be directed toward completing interior evaluations of the three Annandale Road cottages—Swiss, North, and Spurr. Funding from the Lumina Foundation means work on the exhibition and programs focusing on Alexander Gilson will be finalized. Funding from the Plymouth Hill Foundation and the A. E. Israel Foundation will support the exhibition on garden furniture and ornamentation. The Salon Series will continue into 2019; the spring topic focuses on music of the Gilded Age.

The Horticulture Department is looking to start a seasonal garden education program. Seasonal garden and landscape tours will complement the Mansion House tours currently offered. In addition, funding will be identified to assist in restoring or uncovering formal garden paths and carriage trails, as well as restoration of the historic allee of trees, which needs replacing.

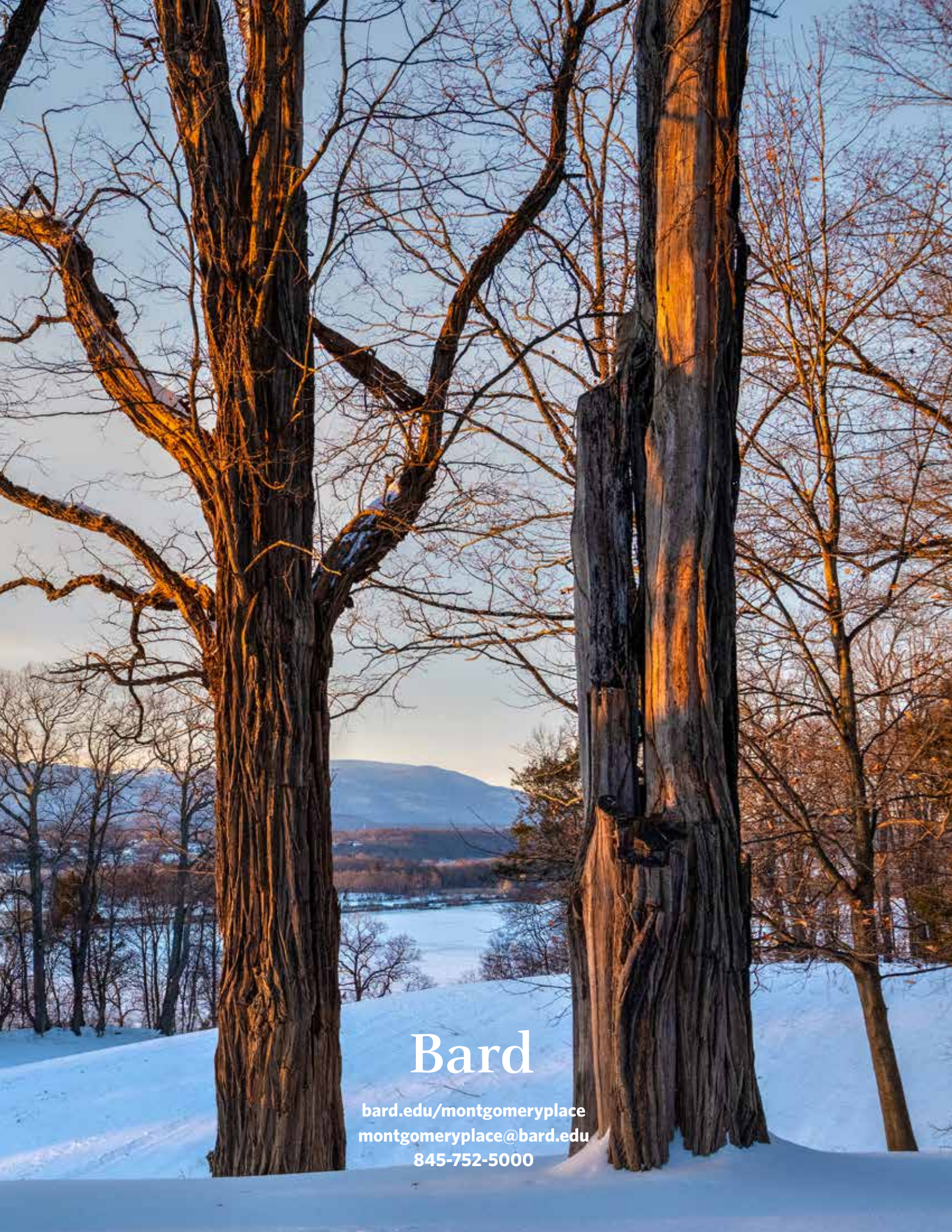
Now that paint-analysis research has been conducted, Buildings and Grounds will undertake a thorough painting of the Farmhouse.

With the Materials Collection inventory coming to a close, the next big endeavor will be the parsing out of accessioned and nonaccessioned items and reevaluation of best storage practices within the constraints of current building limitations. A priority for the coming year will be to adopt a formal collections management policy to guide the College in its future definition, use, and care of accessioned and nonaccessioned objects. Discrete, nonaccessioned groupings of objects such as textiles and chinaware will be reevaluated as to their value and significance relative to the existing accessioned collections and in accordance with the legal opinion received this past year from Pearlstein McCullough & Lederman.

After many years of maintaining the same public house tour, in the coming year we will start to rethink how the Materials Collection in the Mansion House can be interpreted in a more flexible and expansive manner to incorporate the stories and histories currently being interpreted. Consideration will be given as to how the space can be used by the College in ways beyond seasonal house tours and occasional special events.

Efforts will be made to make the Archives and Materials Collections more available to the public through publishing the collected information in public databases. Once the inventory project is complete, some of the Materials Collection will be made available online and to researchers. The same is true for the Archives Collection. As inventories are completed, the information will be made electronically available along with the College's other archival and special collections.

After three years of ownership, the collections, buildings, and landscapes at MP are better understood. In order to utilize the property to best suit the College's needs, we might take a step back from daily operations to consider how the site will be developed in the coming years. An in-house strategic plan will help guide a future building and funding campaign.



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