

About CDA

The Headquarters of The Colonial Dames of America is located in New York, New York, on grounds that include our accredited museum, The Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden.

Every chapter, except the Parent, is governed by its own elected officers and reports to the Society's Board of Managers. The chapters invite new members, plan chapter meetings and events, and direct their own projects. The Parent Chapter, the original chapter of the Society, is governed directly by the Society's Board.

There are chapters across the United States, as well as in London, Paris, and Rome.



"The Mount Vernon Hotel"
Watercolor by Christine Y. Rother

Historic Preservation and Mission

Founded in 1890, The Colonial Dames of America has as its mission:

- 1) To maintain its headquarters as a museum, and to maintain other restorations, for educational purposes;
- 2) To provide educational opportunities and scholarships;
- 3) To collect for preservation manuscripts, traditions, relics, and mementoes of American history;
- 4) To commemorate the great historical events of the thirteen original Colonies;
- 5) To diffuse scholarly information and create popular interest in American history.

Donate to CDA

Your contribution to CDA is vital to our commitment to the preservation of American history. Your donations to CDA, a non-profit organization, may be tax deductible to some extent. Please consult your tax advisor.

1890 Society

Established in 2014, the 1890 Society will recognize any contribution of at least \$1890 to The Colonial Dames of America and/or the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden within any given fiscal year.

Chapter Honor Roll

The Chapter Honor Roll recognizes those Colonial Dames Chapters contributing a total of \$500 or more to the Society or The Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden within a single year.

Major Gifts & Bequests

The Colonial Dames of America welcomes major gifts and bequests, including naming CDA as a beneficiary of your Individual Retirement Account or Annuity ("IRA"). If you wish to make a gift of appreciated securities, it may reduce your after-tax cost of giving. Your estate planning professional may be able to assist you with naming the CDA as a beneficiary under your will. For procedures to follow to make a gift of appreciated securities, please contact the CDA Office.

Contact The Colonial Dames of America

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the colonial dames of america

"Let Us Found a Patriotic Society
of Women, Descended from
Colonial Ancestry."

With these words, Maria "May" Demming Van Rensselaer (Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer) of New York initiated what was to become the oldest colonial lineage society for women in the United States.

Welcome to The Colonial Dames of America, a Society established May 23, 1890 to commemorate the history of the thirteen American colonies and the men and women who founded them.

Our mission is to preserve historic sites and objects, award scholarships, educate the public about American history, inspire patriotism, and promote fellowship among our members.



Book Awards

Since 1951, The Colonial Dames of America has presented its Annual Award to an author and publisher who have produced a book that broadens the understanding of American history, politics, or culture. An award is also given to an author writing children's or young adult fiction or non-fiction with an American theme.

To be considered for the Annual Award, a book must be non-fiction, in one volume, and published during the current year. Both author and publisher must be American. The book may be focused on history, biography, economics, politics, ecology, education, or the arts.

Scholarships and Grants

Each year The Colonial Dames of America provides grants to several institutions for graduate student fellowships and awards. These include Jamestown Rediscovery, the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and the Graduate Center of History at City University, New York. In addition, many individual CDA chapters award their own scholarships.

The President's Award for Excellence

The President's Award for Excellence is given to one or more chapters on an annual basis in an effort to recognize the many projects supported by chapters throughout the country and abroad. Each interested chapter is asked to submit a full description of its project and a budget outlining the proposed use of the \$1,000 award.

The Maria K. Van Rensselaer Award

The Van Rensselaer Award for Distinguished Service ("VRA") is named in honor of a principal founder of the Society, Maria Demming "May" King Van Rensselaer (Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer) and will be bestowed upon a member of The Colonial Dames of America for distinguished service to her chapter, to the Society, and to her community.

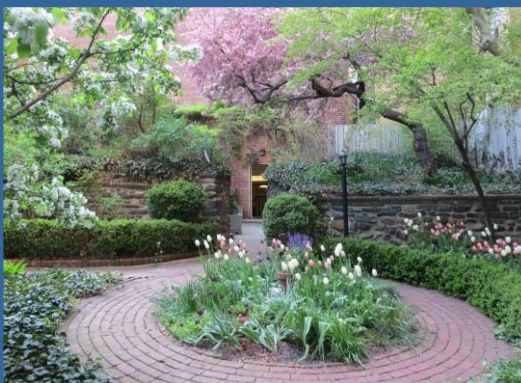


The Courtesy of the Litchfield Historical Society, Connecticut
Mary Perkins Quincy (1866-1921)
By James Wells Champney, 1892

Membership Eligibility

Membership in The Colonial Dames of America is by invitation only. Our members trace their families to ancestors who held public office at the colonial level, were commissioned officers in the armed forces, or served in other capacities specified by the Eligibility List of the Society, which may be obtained on the CDA website (www.cda1890.org).

Candidates join through one of our CDA chapters. As with other lineage societies, approved candidates must provide a chart documenting each generation of descent from their colonial ancestors.



Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden

Owned and maintained by The Colonial Dames of America, the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden presents the period of the Mount Vernon Hotel, which operated from 1826 until 1833. Constructed in 1799 as a carriage house for a 23-acre estate, and converted into the Mount Vernon Hotel in 1826, this stone building sits on land originally owned by Colonel William Stephens Smith, and his wife Abigail Adams Smith, daughter of John Adams, second U.S. President. It is the eighth oldest building in Manhattan and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The museum is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday. (www.mvhm.org)

Proprietors

Each CDA chapter is invited to select a member of the Council of Proprietors of the Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden. Proprietors are involved in promotion and development efforts on behalf of the MVHMG. Every member of the Colonial Dames is, by right, a member of the museum.

Facility Rentals

Conveniently located at East 61st Street between 1st and York Avenues, the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium offers a calm and elegant venue in the heart of New York City. A perfect choice for wedding receptions, dinner dances, and holiday gatherings, as well as corporate events, this unique and distinctive space can accommodate parties of up to 200 guests. Contact the CDA offices for further information.

Garden

A walk through the garden takes the visitor out of the bustle of the city into a quiet, beautifully ordered oasis of shrubs, plants, and flowers. The garden is open to visitors to the Mt. Vernon Hotel Museum and is available for rent for functions such as weddings and receptions, either independently or with the Abigail Adams Smith Auditorium.