



The Joe Wheeler Home

Fall, 2010

The newsletter of the Friends of the General Joe Wheeler Home Foundation



Major construction work is underway on the main house with renovations expected to be complete next year.

Progress being made on home and with our support group

By Milly Caudle
Foundation President

After many years of struggle and persistence, significant progress is being made toward the restoration of the General Joe Wheeler Home (see site director's and curator's reports in this issue).

Commensurate with physical restoration is an expansion of activities by the board of directors of our foundation.

Recently we have created an Advisory Committee of experts and enthusiasts who are pledged to helping us not only preserve the legacy of General Wheeler, his daughter Annie, and many others who have occupied the

Wheeler site, but also to creating a major tourist attraction in North Alabama.

Members of the committee are: Bill Dukes, Jeanette Dunnavant, Ginger Grantham, Kim Hood, Laura Lynn Kerner, Mary Morris, Annette Philpo't, Tami Reist, Luke Slaton, Thomas M. West Jr., and Suzie Wiley.

Several members are already working on our behalf. Tommy West has offered suggestions for promotion and display of artifacts; Kim Hood has agreed to serve as events committee chair; Annette Philpo't is soliciting legislative interest; and Luke Slaton has agreed to edit this newsletter.

We are grateful for their contributions and we look forward to working with all members of the committee.



Curator Kara Long discovered this silk pennant from a Congressional trip while going through trunks.

Every day brings surprises for curator

By Kara Long
Curator

Books and magazines from the late 1800s, hand painted porcelain china, large jingling sleigh bells, turn of the century farm equipment – only a few of the many objects in the Wheeler collection.

Each day as curator, I organize, research, clean, and store many items from the site that illustrate the history of Pond Spring, General Wheeler, his family, or the people of north Alabama. Needless to say, I love my work. Being able to preserve history and also present it to the public when the Wheeler home reopens is a dream come true.

The collection of Pond Spring is massive. Thousands of objects have been cataloged, and I find more items to process into the collection every day. While the Wheeler home site is

impressive on its own, it is rare for a historic house museum to have such a complete material culture collection with original ties to the home and family.

When the home reopens after the restoration, it will be authentic down to the smallest detail – from the books on the shelves to the table linens in the dining room. It will be as if Miss Annie Wheeler has just stepped out of the room. This authenticity makes the Wheeler home special, and a place that I know visitors will love.

The work is hard, yet rewarding. Every time I open a dusty trunk and begin to organize its contents, I get another glimpse into the lives of General Wheeler, Miss Annie, Joseph Jr., or other family members.

Recently I found a cotton eyelet lace dress with a high collar and puff sleeves from the turn of the century.



Which of the Wheeler girls wore this dress found in one of the trunks?

Please see CURATOR, page 3

Restoration of house enters its final phase

By Melissa Beasley
Site Director

I know it's been a while since you've heard from me, but we have been busy. I am thrilled that the Wheeler Foundation has found a volunteer editor with so much experience and who is willing to publish this newsletter for our supporters.

The Wheeler House is currently undergoing a final phase of restoration and will be ready to reinstall the collection sometime next year. Still no firm date for the reopening party, but no one will be happier than I to have it open to the public once again.

New HVAC units, climate control, smoke detection systems, insulation, original windows restored, plaster repair, painting, and foundation repairs are going on as I work on this letter to you all.

Our curator is also hard at work at the storage building with the collection. Paintings have been cleaned, photographs re-matted, furniture conserved, and other artifacts restored. Please don't misunderstand; there will be more work to be done.

Once the General's house has reopened, it will create renewed interest and bring folks to the site to see for themselves, the Southern architecture and precious artifacts that belong to the citizens of Alabama. As the site director and one of the caretakers of this heritage, I will be proud to have you all as guests.



A bedroom on the second floor last month as workers stripped down to the bare walls to install new insulation and interior finishes.

Curator, continued from page 2

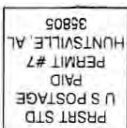
I wondered which Wheeler girl wore the dress and for what occasion? I also found mementos from a trip to China including a white silk pennant which says in red lettering "Welcome American Congressional Party Nanking."

Nanking was the capital of the Republic of China before the revolution. This pennant is most likely from Senator William J. Harris' trip to China circa 1921. Senator Harris married General Wheeler's daughter

Julia, and many Harris family belongings can be found in the Wheeler collection.

These objects are just examples of the many diverse and historically significant pieces in the Wheeler collection.

My job as curator is to preserve these items for the education and enjoyment of the public. That I too get to enjoy working with these pieces of history, well, that's just the icing on the cake.



The Wheeler Home
Newsletter of the Friends of the
Gen. Joe Wheeler Home Foundation
P.O. Box 367
Moulton, AL 35650

We're almost there!

The Friends of the General Joe Wheeler Home Foundation has played a key role in the restoration of the Home. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel, but we continue to need your help. There are several projects we are helping to fund that must be completed before the home can reopen to the public next year. Renew your membership today with a tax deductible contribution. Thanks for your generosity.

Membership Categories

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 |
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Make checks payable to: Friends of the Gen. Joe Wheeler Home Foundation

Mail to: Friends of Wheeler Home
c/o Marilyn Clark
P.O. Box 125
Courtland, AL 35618

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Quarterly Board and Membership Meetings

Saturday, Dec. 4

Wheeler Chapel Church
Ala. 20 just west of the
Gen. Joe Wheeler Home

Board meeting at 1:30 p.m.
General Membership meeting
at 2:00 p.m.

Newsletter Suggestions?

We welcome your feedback. If you have an idea for the next quarterly newsletter, please let us know.

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