

Preservation PROGRESS



FOR THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF CHARLESTON

Winter 2007 • Volume 51 • No. 3

Rescue *at* Sea



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Cynthia Cole Jenkins

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings,
 Everyone who attended the Preservation Society's Fall Lecture and Reception in November received a very special treat. We had the opportunity to hear an internationally recognized expert in preservation doctrine address the issues facing our city as we finalize a new Preservation Plan for Charleston.

W. Brown Morton III, Prince B. Woodard Chair of Historic Preservation and Professor of Historic Preservation at the University of Mary Washington, appeared in part through a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. His stirring address was timely and relevant on several levels. He called it, "Charleston As Truth? Charleston As Cliché? Why Our National Rehabilitation Standards Are Good for Charleston."

Those in attendance that evening were left with no doubt his remarks constituted a remarkable gift. He illuminated the responsibilities carried on the shoulders of Charleston's preservationists working in the here and now, but also carried by those who will forge on in the critical years that lie ahead. For this reason, we made the complete transcript of Professor Morton's talk available to the public on our website {www.preservationsociety.org}. It is my conviction that we will return to his sage advice again and be sustained by his words:

"I love Charleston. I don't just like it. I love it. Charleston is, in my opinion, a near perfect mixture of geography, history, architecture (and) tradition. (with) a lively and informed population who care about their city."

"What do you want? Charleston as Truth or Charleston as Cliché? You owe nothing less than the TRUTH of Charleston."

"There will never be one cubic inch more of historic fabric in Charleston than there is at this very moment. Indeed, by tomorrow morning there will be less. And no amount of designing and building 'look alike' can change this."

"Tricked-up, cuter-than-cute, or over-scaled, new buildings masquerading as the real thing won't do. Charleston is NOT Disneyland."

"Charleston's enemy is not change Charleston's enemy is not development per se. Quite often change IS progress. Charleston's enemy is change or development that destroys the quality of this place rather than enhances it."

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE CONTINUED. PAGE 12

Cover photo courtesy of Ron Anton Rocz whose latest book, *Seeing Charleston, a Field Guide to Photographing a World-class City*, is available at our Book & Gift Shop.



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The Preservation Society of Charleston was founded in 1920 with its purpose being to cultivate and encourage interest in the preservation of buildings, sites and structures of historical or aesthetic significance and to take whatever steps may be necessary and feasible to prevent the destruction or defacement of any such building, site or structure, such purposes being solely eleemosynary and not for profit.

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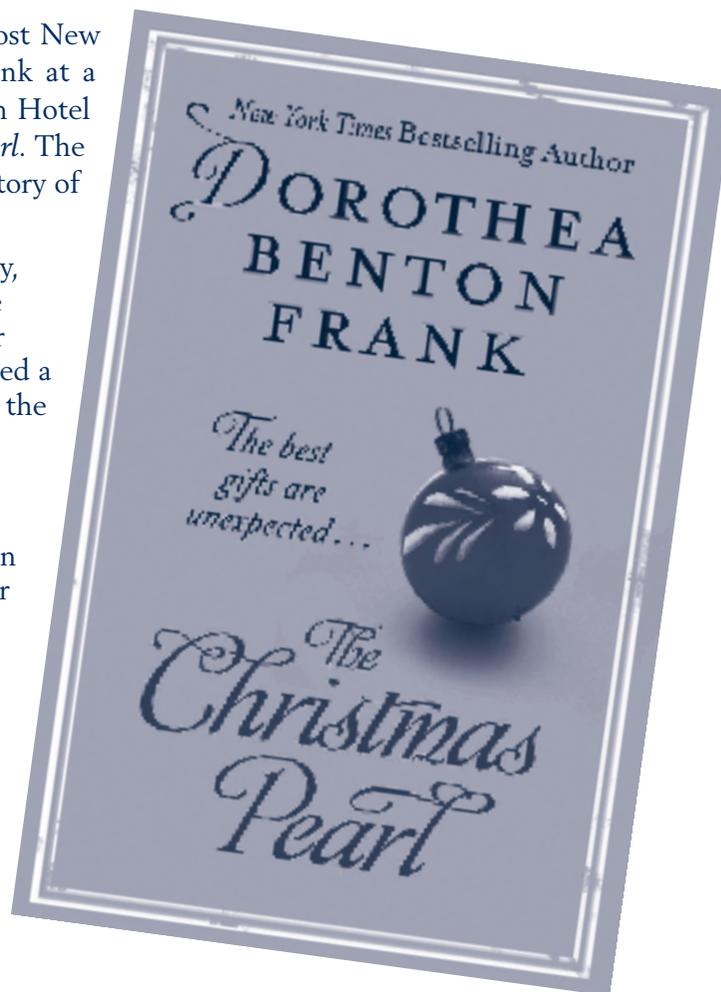
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“A CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON” WITH AUTHOR
Dorothea Benton Frank
BRIGHTENS THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The Preservation Society of Charleston was proud to host New York Times best selling author Dorothea Benton Frank at a holiday luncheon on November 27th at the Francis Marion Hotel where she presented her newest novel, *The Christmas Pearl*. The novel is set in Charleston in 1920 and it is a heartwarming story of Christmas in the Holy City.

Ms. Frank, a longtime member of the Preservation Society, charmed the gathering with her warm humor and unique literary charm. She told the luncheon crowd some of her favorite Christmas memories and everyone attending received a signed copy of the book. Proceeds from the event benefited the Preservation Society of Charleston. *The Christmas Pearl* is available for purchase in our Book and Gift Shop at 147 King Street.

Special gratitude goes to Croghan’s Jewel Box, Charleston Florist, The RSVP Shoppe and The Francis Marion Hotel for their sponsorship of this popular event.



Ginger Scully, Dottie Frank and Cynthia Jenkins share a moment admiring the Christmas tree at the Francis Marion Hotel

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CYNTHIA C. JENKINS ATTENDS ATTINGHAM SUMMER SCHOOL ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF HER 10TH YEAR LEADING THE SOCIETY

In appreciation for her decade of service to the Preservation Society of Charleston, the Board of Directors presented Executive Director Cynthia Cole Jenkins with a grant to attend the 2007 Attingham Summer School sponsored by the Attingham Trust. For three intensely focused weeks of study, a small, select group of 44 scholars from around the world traveled the English countryside around Sussex, Nottingham, and Norwich,



Above: Cynthia Jenkins and Attingham class mate Kristie Lalire of the George C. Marshall International Center in front of Uppark

Below: Attingham scholars in the waterfall at Chatsworth

England absorbing architectural, historical, cultural and social history. The following are excerpts from her final Attingham report on this journey of discovery:

A dear friend, respected colleague and Attingham alumnae from the 1980's (Jonathan Poston) called me just before I left for England. He said 'You will be forever changed by this experience. I cannot begin to tell you how much you will learn nor the lifelong friendships and associations you will make.' Even with that counsel I had no concept of the true accuracy of his words. In short, the 2007 Attingham Summer School was the most phenomenal professional experience I could ever imagine.

Charleston's connections to England and the pattern of life in townhouses and country houses (plantations) date to the earliest time of South Carolina's settlement under Charles II and the rule of the Lords Proprietors beginning in 1663. A few weeks ago, another Attingham alumna from Charleston (Valerie Perry) sent me a transcript of Joseph Daniel Aiken's Travel Diary recording his month long visit to English country houses in May 1849. Aiken was a member of one of South Carolina's most important land owning families in the 19th century. He visited many country houses during the month including Chatsworth and Hardwick Hall (which our group studied in depth) and he described them all in detail. Of his favorite, Chatsworth, he wrote:

"The fame of this place had prepared us for much of the rich and Elegant (sic), but "the half had not been told us."....

Reading Mr. Aiken's words written 158 years ago strongly reinforced the long term value of historic preservation. The partnership between the British National Trust and owners of country houses is a concept that might assist us in dealing with a growing problem in Charleston: How to ensure significant historic properties remain in the ownership of family's that have lived there for generations.

The many correlations between the English country house and the southern plantation as well as how each relates to a town house provide multiple tiers for research. I am confident that I will draw from my Attingham experiences for the rest of my career. The opportunity to study with professionals representing complementary disciplines from around the world was most rewarding and added significantly to the experience. I can think of no more appropriate commemoration of my decade with the Preservation Society than the gift to attend the Attingham program – a life-long dream I'd never taken time to pursue. I thank you (The Board of Directors of the Preservation Society) for this opportunity.

MEMORIES OF IRELAND

A PHOTO ALBUM OF OUR JUNE STUDY TOUR TO THE EMERALD ISLE

No amount of wintertime dreariness can dim the vivid memories of those 15 members of the Preservation Society who joined our June 12th through 20th study tour to Ireland. The trip included eight days of rare and intimate visits to some of the Emerald Isles' finest castles, museums, distinguished country homes and celebrated gardens.

As usual, first-class accommodations were planned for the group who were guided throughout the tour by well-known former Charleston resident Tom Savage, Director of Museum Affairs at the famous Winterthur Museum and Country Estate in Delaware. The small size of the group allowed for unprecedented access to private country estates with outstanding furniture and art collections. Everyone who made the trip will long remember this connoisseur's tour of Ireland.



Italian Ambassador's Home in Dublin



Gardens at Churchill House.

Top row left to right: Ford Reese, Tom Savage, Lorraine Perry, Caroline Ragsdale, Leilani DeMuth, Charles Huff

2nd Row Left to Right: Cynthia Jenkins, Jane Waring, Maurice Thompson

1st Row: Churchill House guide, Dana Sinkler, Marti Atkins Mary Black, Betty Anne Tate and Simmons Tate

Rescue at Sea:

SAVING THE MORRIS ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE

By J. Michael McLaughlin

Somewhere between Edward Hopper, television Soap operas, and “Captain January,” the lighthouse evolved from being just a mariner’s navigational tool into something much more. It became an icon for guidance, a symbol of direction, a safe haven from life’s inevitable storms. The image of the brave and stalwart lighthouse, it would seem, comforts that part in all of us that sometimes feels lost and threatened by the dark. Thus it follows that the lonely lighthouse – especially a threatened one – evokes powerful emotions.

Nowhere is that more evident than just off the northeast coast of Folly Beach near the eroding shore of Morris Island. There, now completely surrounded by water, stands the abandoned 1876 Morris Island Lighthouse – still defying the sea which laps ominously at its very heels. A race is currently being run against time and tide to save this historic relic of the Lowcountry’s storied maritime past. A determined group of people hopes to rescue this reminder of a time when ships from all over the globe navigated into Charleston Harbor with the makings of American history in their holds. This is Charleston, after all, where history is part and parcel of our daily lives. It should be a given that this icon be rescued from an unforgiving sea – as proof of Charleston’s belief in second chances for historic architecture and happy endings for a troubled past.

Not surprisingly, Charleston’s romance with lighthouses reaches back much farther than this post Civil War sentinel standing off Morris Island today. After the colony was founded in 1670, the first navigational aid improvised to guide subsequent ships to the fledgling colony came along three years later. It was described as a “fier ball” of burning pitch and oakum kept lit in a hanging iron basket on a nearby beach. The first real lighthouse came along in 1767 while Charles Towne was still a British colony. It was built on what was then called Morrison’s Island, the largest of three separate sand bars near the mouth of the

colonial harbor already booming with trade from Europe and the West Indies.

By 1837, a new lighthouse was built (this one 102 ft. tall) and soon it was fitted with a state-of-the-art Fresnel lens to magnify its beam much farther out to sea. As this version, at the north end of the island, overlooked nearby Ft. Sumter, it proved to be too valuable a military

target during the Civil War and it was summarily destroyed by the Confederates early in the conflict lest it fall into the hands of Union Forces.

It wasn’t until 1873 that Congress – slow-moving in their reticent Reconstruction mood – appropriated funds to rebuild a lighthouse on Morris Island for the safety of ships entering Charleston Harbor. Construction began in 1874 and finished two years later.

More than 200 wooden piles were driven fifty feet into the ground and an eight-foot-thick foundation of poured concrete was built on top of that. The cylindrical, brick tower rose 161 feet in the air and was designed along the same lines as the Bodie Island Lighthouse, built in 1872 on North Carolina’s Outer Banks. Its base diameter is sixteen feet, eight inches.

The focal plane was 158 feet above sea level with a visibility of eighteen and three-quarter miles. At present the tower’s faded paint scheme is alternating black and white horizontal stripes for use as a daymark. Photographs from ca. 1900 indicate that it was historically marked in this manner early on. Single light windows with segmental arched heads are located at alternate levels on the east and west faces of the lighthouse. Inside the tower, an iron spiral stair with nine flights leads to the light room, which has an external gallery with an iron parapet.

The completed lighthouse was surrounded by dry land on which stood a handsome three-story keeper’s house with elaborate gingerbread trim. In it lived the lighthouse



The Lighthouse and keeper’s residence, circa 1914.

keeper and his family plus his two assistants and their families. A number of smaller outbuildings completed the Victorian compound which even included a small school in which the children of the lighthouse staff attended classes through the week. A schoolteacher from Charleston took a boat over to Morris Island every Monday and returned to the mainland on Friday throughout the school year.

Only months after the new lighthouse was commissioned, the building of jetties at the entrance into Charleston Harbor began. This was deemed necessary at the time for deepening the channel to accommodate larger ships. While the jetties helped the main channel, they caused a cascading rash of erosion problems for Folly Beach, Sullivan's and Morris islands. In 1880, the lighthouse stood 2,700 feet from the shore. By 1938, it was virtually at water's edge.

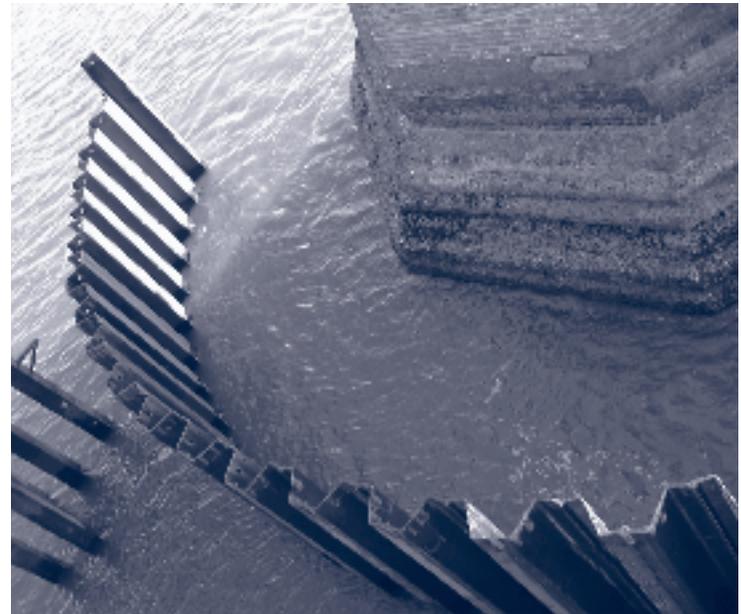
As the sands of Morris Island slowly melted away, it

Now surrounded by water, the old lighthouse passed through a number of developer's hands before a group of lighthouse aficionados named "Save the Light, Inc." bought it in 1999 for \$75,000. In turn, these preservationists sold the property to the State of South Carolina for \$1 with the stipulation that they be allowed to lease it for 99 years (free of charge) and supervise its stabilization and restoration. As the lighthouse is now a property of the State, it is in no way affected by the ownership of other parts of Morris Island which are currently the subject of news headlines.

The actual job of saving the Morris Island Lighthouse will involve at least six separate work phases at a total price tag of \$3.3 million in funds raised from a variety of sources. Federal, State and private dollars all play key roles if this ambitious rescue at sea is to succeed. The first phase – stabilization of the foundation – is currently under



The lighthouse's location requires the use of unique maritime construction and restoration techniques.



Construction of the Cofferd Dam is one of the many preservation phases for stabilization of the Morris Island Light House.

was obvious the lighthouse would need to be automated. The ornate light keeper's house was dismantled and moved ashore, while the smaller outbuildings were razed. Finally, the tower's giant Fresnel lens was removed and replaced with a modern optic. By 1956, the Coast Guard announced plans to replace the aging lighthouse with a new, high-tech version on Sullivan's Island. The Morris Island Lighthouse was officially decommissioned in 1962 and its light went dark for the first time in 86 years. The structure along with 140 acres of land remaining on Morris Island was auctioned off into private hands for sum of \$3,303.03.

On June 18, 1982, the Morris Island Lighthouse (also called "The Charleston Main Light") was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Funding dollars in hand are being augmented by sales of group memberships, merchandise, and "Save the Light" license plates. All donations are greatly appreciated. For more information about how to help, visit www.savethelight.org or write Save the Light, Inc., P.O. Box 12490, Charleston, SC 29422.

To view the Morris Island Lighthouse, drive along East Ashley Street on Folly Beach until it ends in a parking lot. Walk about a quarter-mile to the northeast end of the beach to get the closest view. Warning: Don't be tempted to wade or swim the several hundred yards over to the base of the tower (even at lowest of tides and the best of weather) as the currents are very swift and extremely dangerous.

SOCIETY MEMBERS GIVEN FREE ADMISSION TO MAGNOLIA PLANTATION'S CAMELLIA FESTIVAL

On Sunday, January 20th, members of the Preservation Society of Charleston are invited to attend – for free – Magnolia Plantation’s Annual Winter Camellia Festival.

This event is very popular with local and regional gardeners as well as lovers of the camellia, itself.

This special day will feature a lecture on the growing of camellias by Magnolia’s staff horticulturalist, Tom Johnson, and a tour of the gardens. It is anticipated that the plantation’s famous collection of rare camellias will be in full bloom and the display will be spectacular in variety as well as abundance.

Admission is free to members of the Preservation Society who show their membership card at Magnolia’s entrance gate (3550 Ashley River Road). The lecture will begin promptly at 1:30 PM in the Carriage House with the Camellia Walk scheduled to follow at 2:30 PM. The gardens will be open for your enjoyment all day and, as usual, the Peacock Café will be open for lunch.

Our sincere thanks is extended to the Hastie family and to Magnolia Plantation for this gracious gesture of hospitality and support for the Society. For more information, call (843) 571-1266 or visit www.magnoliaplantation.com.



FOR HOMES THAT MADE HISTORY...Thank you.

From the Battery to the Beaches, to the Old Village of Mount Pleasant, the perseverance and passion of the Preservation Society of Charleston are what keep our city alive and vibrant while insuring the history of our city and its buildings are kept intact. We, at Daniel Ravenel Sotheby's International Realty, support the Preservation Society and highly commend them on their hard work and success in honoring the Lowcountry's material and cultural heritage. We thank you for helping Charleston, our great city, continue to be one of the most historical and preserved cities in the United States.



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TRENDS IN TICKET SALES AFFECT FALL HOUSE AND GARDEN TOURS

The tradition of Charlestonians opening their homes and gardens for public tours to further the goals of preservation is as popular as ever. The Tours themselves seem to get more comprehensive and interesting with each passing year. The internet has streamlined the ticket sales process considerably as more visitors to Charleston plan their visits to the Holy City online.

As the Preservation Society's 31st Annual Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens drew to a close, an analysis of ticket sales showed subtle changes in the buying patterns of those attending this popular Charleston event. As more and more travelers use the internet to plan their vacations, our website becomes a more important sales tool. We strive to make our on-line interaction with ticket buyers convenient and efficient. When we succeed, it's a win-win situation for everyone. In general, the public is more comfortable



these days booking specific tours, taking care of lodging accommodations, and even making dinner reservations online.

"We watch these trends very closely," says Ginger L. Scully, Director of Tours and Special Programs. "Anticipating the needs of our ticket buyers helps us build a more user-friendly website and the better we know our tour guests, the more focused our marketing effort can be."

"For instance, this year saw a marked increase of Sunday tour ticket sales..." she added. "Our Sunday tours were extremely popular with weekend visitors. So this is something we will bear in mind as we plan for next year."

Clearly, the strength of our tour program depends on the continuing generosity and cooperation of our homeowners and volunteers. Our gratitude goes out to them, as always, as the planning for the 2008 tour season has already begun.



The Preservation Society of Charleston's 54th Carolopolis & Pro Merito Awards Program

Recognizing outstanding achievement in exterior preservation,
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2008 Annual Membership Meeting
Thursday, January 31, 2008 • 7:00 PM
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227 King Street • Charleston, SC

PRESERVATION SOCIETY
of CHARLESTON

SOCIETY ANNOUNCES NEW RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE ALFRED O. HALSEY MAP OF CHARLESTON

The Preservation Society of Charleston has long valued Alfred O. Halsey's May 1949 map of the Charleston peninsula as a historic resource and is proud to sell it in our Book and Gift shop. The Halsey map is a great documentary resource of Charleston through its founding, development, and experiencing of natural disasters. The staff routinely refers to the map titled *Historic Charleston on a Map* because it is such an instant source of reference information. It is convenient and useful for fact checking and historic documentation.

The Preservation Society plans to use the map as a starting point for a proposed 3-year preservation research project with the goal of establishing a web-based educational tool accessible on our website. This web-based resource will be available to the general public as a research tool and for school-age children working on history projects of Charleston and identification of architectural styles.

This multi-layered research project will emphasize the buildings, street patterns, and historic development on the peninsula.

Beginning with the annotations on the Halsey map, we plan to expand upon them with historic photographs of referenced buildings, sites, and streetscapes. Our hope is to exhibit layers of regional history highlighting the evolution of architectural styles and character defining features in Charleston. Additionally archival research on events, families, maps and other relevant resources will provide a more complete and accurate source of information.

Another goal of the Halsey map project would allow a

basic introduction to a study of the geography, topography and climatic history of Charleston. The project is currently funded in part by gifts from The Post and Courier Foundation and The Wilbur Smith Foundation. If you are interested in more information on this project or would like to assist with financial support please contact Lannie E. Kittrell at (843) 722-4630.

From the collections of the South Carolina Historical Society



SOCIETY OFFICERS SLATED FOR THE COMING YEAR

The Nominating Committee of the Preservation Society of Charleston presents the following candidates to serve as the Society's Board of Directors in 2008. The Slate will be voted upon at the Society's Annual Meeting and Carolopolis Awards on Thursday, January 31st in the Charleston Place Riviera Theatre, 227 King Street at 7:00 p.m.

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- Invitations to:
 - Special preservation lectures, celebrations, and events
 - Preservation *Journeys* to exciting architectural and historic destinations
- 10% discount in the Preservation Society's Book and Gift Shop
- 10% discount on tickets to the Annual Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens
- Acknowledgement of your support in the Annual Report

CATEGORIES

LIBRARY/STUDENT	\$35-49
PIAZZA	\$50-99
MEDALLION CIRCLE (The next generation of preservationists)	\$50-99
LANDMARK	\$100-499
COLONNADE All memberships over \$1000 are included in the <i>Society of 1920</i>	\$500-999
RESTORATION	\$1,000-2,499*
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* Members may choose to pay dues quarterly or annually.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE, CONTINUED.

"You must protect your city but you must not adopt standards and criteria for change that will create by faking the past...a false impression of an historic Charleston that in fact never existed."

"The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are the standards used throughout the United States at the Federal, State and Local level by both public agencies and many private organizations. These standards are nationally accepted statements of responsible preservation and planning policy. Many historic districts have adopted additional standards for local architectural review, but they are in addition, not in lieu of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards."

John Ruskin wrote in 1849 in The Seven Lamps of Architecture, 'The greatest glory of a building is in its age and in that deep sense of voicefulness...which we feel in its walls that have long been washed by the passing waves of humanity.'

"I urge you to look at Charleston's historic and cultural resources not as a 'collection' of artifacts for tourist-worship and local self-congratulation, but as tools for building an ever more effective community for those who live here now and those who will follow. Let's work together to make it happen."

I know Brown Morton's words encouraged and inspired me. I hope they will foster thoughtful participation from preservation-minded citizens throughout the Lowcountry as we move forward together encountering the changes and challenges facing us today and the many tomorrows ahead.

Cynthia Cole Jenkins
Executive Director



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www.preservationsociety.org

AUTHOR! AUTHOR!

11th Annual Book Signing Brings Out Literary Talent and Holiday Shoppers

December 6th marked the 11th Annual Holiday Book Signing party in the Preservation Society Book and Gift Shop at 147 King Street. Each year, this popular event celebrates Charleston's rich and varied literary tradition with a host of local and regional member authors on hand (all members of the Society) ready to sign their books for holiday shoppers. It's a great chance to meet and greet some of the area's writers and a gala gathering of colleagues for the authors, as well.

This year, 41 authors were in attendance throughout the evening while members and guests browsed through the stacks of books on display – eagerly shopping for the latest titles on their holiday gift list. Elegant trays of delicious hors d'ouvres were circulated and festive holiday spirits were served.

Our thanks go to the restaurants and retailers who graciously provided the hors d'ouvres for the evening. They were: Al di La, Chai's, Charleston Place, Cypress, FIG, FISH, Garibaldi's, Grill 225, High Cotton, Lana Restaurant, Magnolia's, Pane e Vino, Peninsula Grill, and Ted's Butcher Block.

The Yuletide enthusiasm proved to be a boon to retail sales in the shop as well as a fun event for attending authors and booklovers alike.



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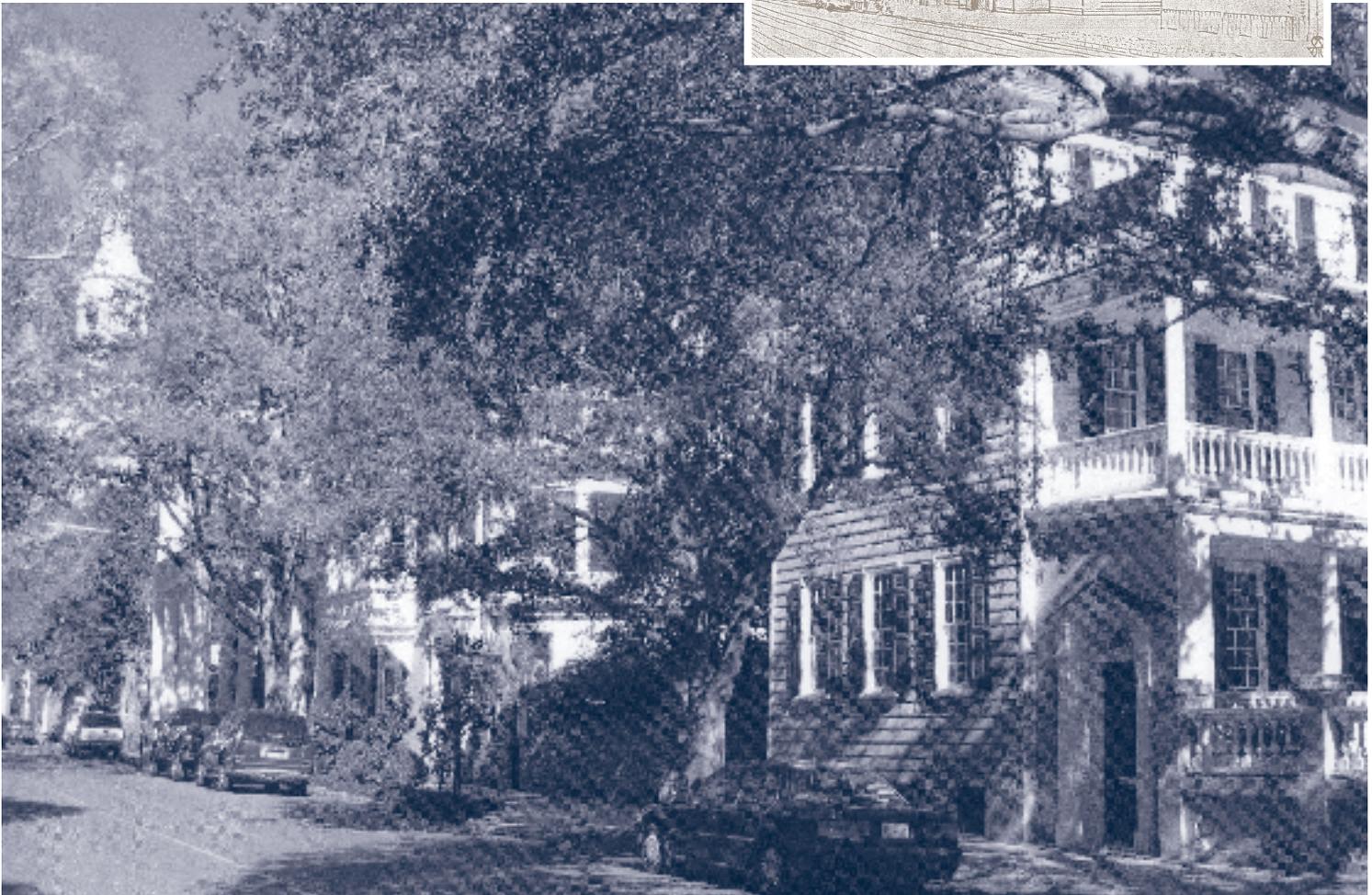
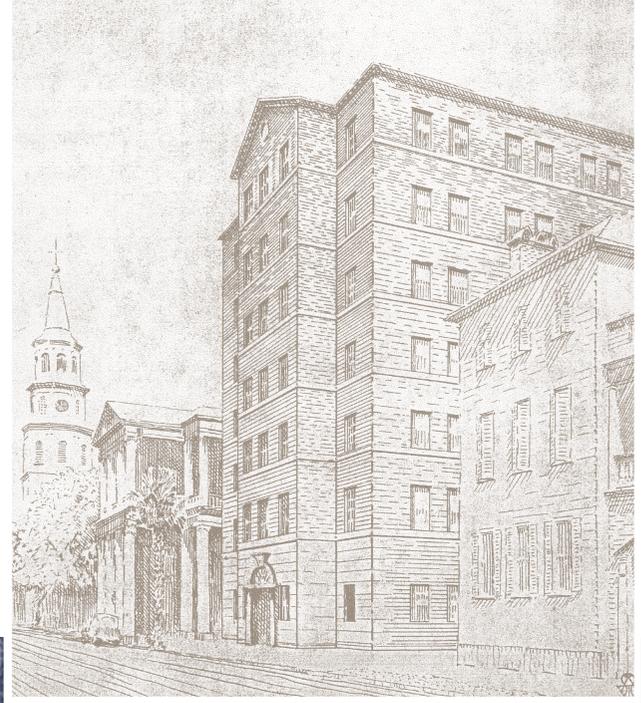
Come visit our West Islands office on Seabrook Island - 1101 Lancelot Way - 775.1515 - dhmrealestate.com

Looking Back, Looking Forward

68 MEETING STREET: WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

After the Great Depression, the advent of World War II brought a surge of economic activity that lifted Charleston's economy out of the stagnant doldrums. This was the largest wave of prosperity the city had seen since before the Civil War and everyone was eager to move forward and realize new goals for the Holy City. Naturally, with this prosperity came added pressures for development of every kind.

Many of the city's larger old houses were converted into apartments during the war – as housing for defense workers was in very short supply. Several new projects were proposed, as well, to meet this growing need. One dramatic case in point was a 1948 plan to raze the John Cordes Prioleau House at 68 Meeting Street (constructed ca. 1810 and altered ca. 1900) to make way for a seven-story apartment hotel just next door to South Carolina Society Hall. Clearly, the project was outsized, overscaled in mass, and woefully out of place. When it was opposed by the Preservation Society, developers countered that it was outside the Old and Historic District (as it existed at the time). And this was true. The incident underscored the ability of the preservationists eye to see beyond current and/or passing trends and the need to continually review the city's preservation protection program to reflect the values of Charleston's citizens. This time – the Society prevailed, but we are still fighting battles over height, scale and mass today. And we are still awed by "what might have been."



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Staff Notes:

MEET LANNIE E. KITTRELL,
PRESERVATION RESEARCH AND ARCHIVAL MANAGER



Originally from Atlanta, Georgia, Lannie E. Kittrell studied art and art history at the College of Charleston graduating in 1995 with a B.A. in Fine Arts. She returned to Atlanta and worked at the High Museum of Art as the Assistant Registrar of the permanent collection. Lannie decided to switch gears from fine art to historic preservation and attended Georgia State University graduating with her Masters in Historic Preservation (2003). During this time, Lannie worked at the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) with the Planning & Local Assistance Unit coordinating Section 106 Environmental Review projects and correspondence. She was the Jenny Thurston Fellowship recipient for 2002 – 2003 and in turn was awarded the opportunity to work at the Atlanta Urban Design Commission. After graduation, she returned to the Georgia SHPO working in the Survey & National Register Unit. More recently, Lannie lived in Austin, Texas where she worked as an architectural historian in the cultural resources management field performing archival and historical research, survey work, and writing reports for the identification and documentation of historic surveys, historic contexts, and National Register nominations at Prewitt and Associates and then for Hicks & Company.

Lannie is the Preservation Research and Archival Manager at the Preservation Society. She, in addition to acting as our Archival Manager, will assist the Historic Markers Program, Easements Program, and Carolopolis Awards Program. She looks forward to writing and working in preservation advocacy and outreach in the Charleston community.

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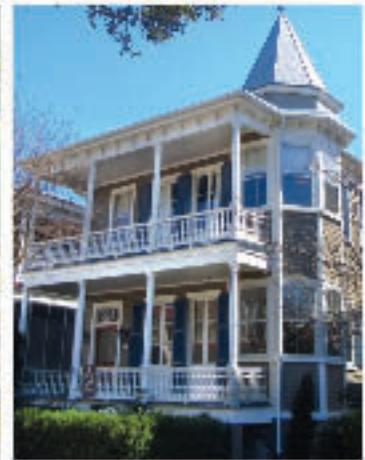
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