

# Preservation PROGRESS

FOR THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF CHARLESTON



Volume 52 • No. 2



# NEW BATTLEGROUND

*Preserving the Past for the Future*



## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Historic Setting vs. Development: New Battlegrounds in an Old War

As our cover for this issue of Preservation Progress vividly illustrates, the importance of setting to any historic site is of paramount importance. No matter how responsibly the architectural elements are preserved or protected, the property's entire historic context can be diminished or even destroyed by the loss of its intrinsic setting.

Both location and setting are characteristics that work to define why buildings were constructed in a particular style. And usually, these elements also reflect the purpose and function of the building, as well – an urban location vs. a rural location, for example. The setting has clearly influenced the history of the site in terms of its use through time. An example of this would be the means of arrival – its orientation to a street, a river, a lane, or one's neighbors.

The context of “setting” helps form the characteristics of why properties are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Fenwick Hall Plantation on John's Island is one of South Carolina's most important architectural resources remaining from the early 18th century.

When Fenwick built this Georgian plantation house it was sited to take full advantage of the setting to impress all who approached. What is now Maybank Highway from the Stono River was in fact the three mile long race track for the world famous Fenwick Stud stable (in the 18th c. race tracks ran in a straight line). The landscape surrounding the main house and support structures was as important as the style and materials used for the buildings.

It is unfortunate that previous owners sold off so much of the surrounding property and left it open for insensitive development to destroy the character of setting so important for a rare architectural resource. Equally unfortunate is a corporate developer who comes to the Lowcountry and does not respect the special qualities enough to be a good steward of the land nor a good neighbor.

August 2008

Cynthia Cole Jenkins  
Executive Director  
Preservation Society of Charleston



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# WAKE-UP CALL ON NEED TO PROTECT, PRESERVE JOHNS ISLAND

*Article by Cynthia C. Jenkins, Post & Courier, Sunday, June 29, 2008*

Robert Behre's recent article on the removal of vegetative buffers at Fenwick Hall Plantation on Johns Island is truly a "cautionary tale" for everyone concerned about the future of Johns Island.

The circa 1740 Georgian style Fenwick Hall plantation is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as one of South Carolina's most important 18th century properties. It once encompassed 4,500 acres along the Stono River and included a 3.5-mile race track for the famed Fenwick Stud. During the Revolutionary War, British commander Sir Henry Clinton occupied the house and grounds as his headquarters during the siege of Charleston in 1780. This occupation caused the plantation to be called Head Quarters throughout the 19th century.

During the Civil War, Confederate troops moved down Ferry Road, now River Road, near Fenwick Hall in June of 1862 to attack the USS Marblehead, a Union gunboat anchored on the Stono River near Legareville. Popular tradition maintains that the house was relatively undamaged because it was used as a field hospital by both armies at different times.

In the years following the Civil War, most of the original 4,500 acres were sold by subsequent owners. The current owners, who purchased the property in 2000, are committed to painstakingly restoring the plantation house and protecting its 55 remaining acres from the encroachment of development. Unfortunately, their time, energy and resources are being diverted from their restoration efforts to address legal issues with Portrait Homes, Inc. This multi-state corporation based in Chicago is currently developing the adjacent lands called The Commons at Fenwick Hall.

The legal issues originate from a 2002 memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed between the original developer (Winston Carlyle Co.), the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM), and the State Historic Preservation Office.

This memorandum of agreement is a written agreement between governmental agencies defining how the agencies will take into account and mitigate the effects of a proposed project on the affected historic property. As the successor to the original developer, Portrait Homes was required to comply with the agreement.

The most critical element of the MOA is the requirement stating that "visually opaque (year round) vegetative buffers shall be maintained." These opaque buffers provide the natural screening that ensures Fenwick Hall maintains its historic setting and character. A primary tenet of the MOA was violated by the removal of trees, shrubs and natural undergrowth. Vistas from Fenwick Hall now include a subdivision with cul-de-sacs and multiple residential buildings.

Replanting the opaque buffers will involve considerable expense as it requires replacing large trees and shrubs.

The property owners should not be expected to settle for small trees and told to wait 20 years until they mature.

The OCRM placed a stop-work order on the project in October 2007, which is to remain in effect until Portrait Homes complies with the MOA and resolves stormwater management issues. The stop-work order was reaffirmed in January 2008.

The issues at stake go far beyond the struggles of these owners to protect the rural setting of the property. The situation at Fenwick Hall should serve as a wake-up call to all property owners who are concerned about protecting and preserving the rural character of Johns Island.

If one of the island's oldest and most significant architectural and historic landmarks is not respected by developers, it sends a clear message to other developers about property protection and legal obligations.

This attitude not only puts Fenwick Hall at risk but family farms and lands that have been owned by families for generations. They also are in danger of forever being changed.

The citizens of Johns Island are facing unprecedented pressure from developers.

The Johns Island development plan and the future of the Interstate 526 extension are pending.

Developers must be held accountable. If they are allowed to ignore government regulations and agreements designed to safeguard the unique character of the Lowcountry landscape and cultural resources, then we have failed future generations and our heritage is at risk.

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# Albert Simons:

## ARCHITECT AND PRESERVATION PIONEER

Albert Simons (1890 – 1980) had a sixty year career as an architect in Charleston – a career that included an extensive amount of preservation work, for which he is best known. He played an important part in creating nationally prominent preservation functions such as the first historic district and the first Board of Architectural Review.



Born and raised in Charleston, he attended the University of Pennsylvania for architecture school. At Penn he studied under Paul Cret, one of the great architects and educators of his day. Cret brought the educational system of the Ecole des Beaux Arts to Penn from France, his native country. This system was a very rigorous one with an emphasis on classical training and artistic expression in the form of watercolored drawings. This background shaped Albert Simons' work and honed his considerable talents.

After his graduation, Albert Simons was given funding for a European tour. This was the dream and aspiration of young architects, immersed as they were in the study of classical design and architectural history. Architects were practically required to keep a sketchbook, using it as a tool to further their understanding of the structure, but also to hone their drawing skills. As was typical of architects who did the grand tour, Albert Simons did sketches and watercolors of architecture that he admired. A portion of these artistic works reside in the Special Collections department of the College of Charleston. They capture not only the architecture but also a sense of light and space, and exquisite details.

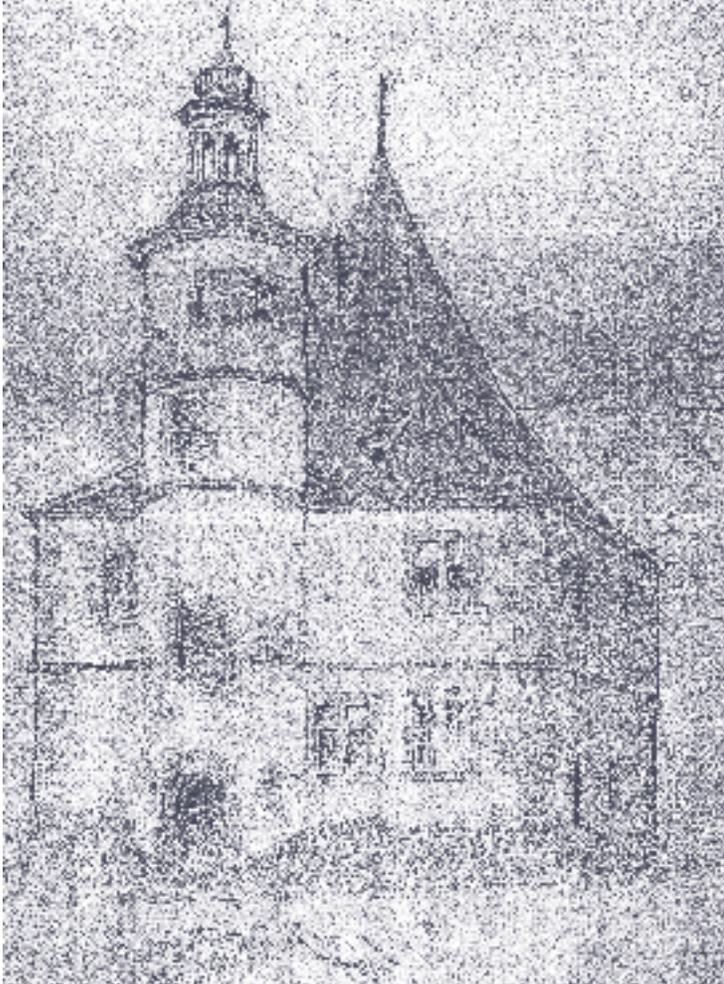
Albert Simons went on to work at the atelier of a French Beaux Arts architect, then Simons returned to South Carolina where he taught in the Beaux Arts form of education at

Clemson University. He soon returned to Charleston and worked on illustrations and studies of Charleston houses for the book *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston* by the excellent artist Alice Ravenel Huger Smith and her father. Simons also did a stint in the military and became a partner in the firm of Todd, Simons and Todd for a short time before starting his own architecture firm in Charleston in partnership with Samuel Lapham in 1920 and he went on to have an impressive and eventful sixty year career in the fields of Architecture, Historic Preservation, Planning, teaching and doing occasional artwork.



In 1930 he was part of a blue-ribbon commission that helped Mayor Thomas Stoney pioneer the first historic district in America and the first Board of Architectural Review (B.A.R.). These served as national models for preservation planning. Over 800 historic districts now protect the architectural patrimony of many cities and towns. Simons continued to serve on the B.A.R. for forty-three years while managing a thriving architectural practice that included the design of Memminger Auditorium, the Dock Street Theater, the College of Charleston gymnasium and additions to Randolph Hall, along with countless houses, additions and alterations in the Lowcountry. Somehow he also found time to teach the first art appreciation courses in town at the College of Charleston, which he did from 1924 to 1948.

**Editor's Note:** On May 8th the Preservation Society of Charleston's membership welcomed guest speaker Ralph Muldrow, Simons Chair in Historic Preservation and Associate Professor of Art History at the College of Charleston as the guest speaker for the May membership meeting held at The Charleston Museum. His presentation, "The Sketchbooks of Albert Simons," was an introduction, for some, to the mind of one of Charleston's most influential preservationists. And for others who knew him, it gave refreshing insight into this preservation pioneer's early inspiration. This is Mr. Muldrow's summary of this illuminating presentation.



Copy of original Albert Simons sketch Courtesy of College of Charleston, Simons Center for the Arts.



Albert Simons was an important part of the era now known as the Charleston Renaissance, a phenomenon during the 1920's to the 1940's and beyond. During this era, Simons had plenty of commissions, especially for Northerners who were either moving to Charleston or seeking a second home. He worked especially on Plantation Houses, skillfully remodeling them for the owners preferred use, which often

*ALBERT SIMONS, CONTINUED PAGE 14*



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## MAY 27TH FINDS SOCIETY VOLUNTEERS FETED AT “APPRECIATION PARTY”

As the 2008 Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens begins its wind-up for another big season, we pause to recap the 2007 Volunteer Appreciation Party of last May 22nd. This special event for all volunteers of the Society, including Tour Volunteers, was our way of thanking those who helped make 2007 such a big success.

We must have pleased the weather gods as this year's party met with spectacular blue skies and a perfect spring breeze blowing across the Charleston Harbor. More than 300 volunteers were on hand to officially receive our deep gratitude for their loyal support and enjoy the catered reception at the Maritime Center. We hope the good food and wine sparked renewed interest in volunteering for the tours so that the 2008 tours will be a record-breaker for preservation education and advocacy in the Holy City.

The event could not have been possible without the generosity of Southern Occasions, Hyams Garden Center and Snyder Event Rentals. For information on volunteering for this year's tours, call Ginger Scully or Charlie Benton at (843) 722-4630 or e-mail [gscully@preservationsociety.org](mailto:gscully@preservationsociety.org) or [cbenton@preservationsociety.org](mailto:cbenton@preservationsociety.org)

Right: Cynthia Jenkins, Lynn Hanlin, George Smythe and Lois Lane  
Below: Jean Marie Britt, Pat Britt, John Burkel, Archie Burkel & J. Shannon Hurley



# Madeira: WINE OF CHOICE IN 18TH CENTURY CHARLESTON



Madeira was Charleston's overwhelming wine of choice in the 18th century and beyond. This relatively sweet product of the vintner's art was highly prized throughout colonial America and it eventually came to symbolize far more than a pleasant accompaniment to a robust dining event. It was not taxed by the British; thus its consumption was something of a silent protest to the

Crown. This and other fascinating facts about Madeira will be explored on Friday, November 7th when the Preservation Society will host "An Evening of Madeira in Charleston's 18th Century Tradition." Joining us will be nationally syndicated columnist, international wine judge and author John R. Hailman.

He will lend us his insight into our founding fathers and the passion for Madeira in the 18th and 19th centuries. It will be an evening of wine tasting with unique vintages of various Madeiras – a name derived from the Portuguese word for "wooded." The location for this event is the beautiful and historic South Battery house, once home to Ernest and

Nell McCall Pringle where the Preservation Society was founded in 1920.

Mr. Hailman, author of the recently published book, *Thomas Jefferson on Wine* (University Press of Mississippi, 2006), fascinates wine connoisseurs and historians alike with his illumination of the founding father's passion for wines. "It was hard work to be a wine lover in those days" he writes, "To order wine, Jefferson had to specify in each letter (of order), the ship, the captain, the ports of entry, how the wines should be packaged and how he would get payment across the ocean and determine and pay the customs duties." Once it got here, not only was the wine of great value but so were the bottles that contained it. The story of Madeira is an insightful peek into the morays and values of colonial America.

Join us for this "vintage" special evening of history and hospitality on November 7th. Invitations with reservation information will be announced in a special mailing in September. Also mark your calendars for Saturday, November 8th at the Preservation Society Bookstore when Mr. Hailman will be signing copies of *Thomas Jefferson on Wine*.

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## MEDALLION CIRCLE LAUNCHES HALSEY MAP PROJECT WITH THE HISTORY OF THE COCKTAIL PARTY

The Medallion Circle, comprised mostly of the Preservation Society's younger membership, who are Charleston's preservationists into the 21st century, celebrated the history of the cocktail party. Funds raised at the event launched Phase I of the Society's Halsey Map Interactive education project based on Alfred O. Halsey's 1949 map of the

Charleston peninsula. Charlestonians

have valued this map as a historic resource that graphically exhibits the city's historic development. This multi-layered research project will illustrate neighborhoods, wars, fires, the buildings, street patterns, and general development patterns on the peninsula.



Mary Scott McLaurin, Frances Parker, Cindy Hayes and Ian Walker

The theme of this Medallion Circle event celebrated Charleston's unique role in the history of the cocktail party, which originated in the Holy City in the 1920's. The location was the elegant 18th century home of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Oakes at 17 Meeting Street.

For those who may be unaware of Charleston's legendary contribution to this urban rite (the cocktail party), the story goes something like this – according to author/historian Harlan Green.

In his autobiography, *Untold Friendships* (Houghton Mifflin, 1955), New York's bon vivant Schuyler Parsons speaks of attending cocktail parties in Charleston. "Nowhere else," he decreed, "was there anything like this sort of entertainment." Why had Charleston developed this unique form of entertainment? He offered his theory.

"All white Charlestonians of the 'downtown' set had black help. Charlestonians ate their main meal at 3:00 in

the afternoon. (One of the best novels to come from Charleston is Josephine Pinckney's *Three o' Clock Dinner*.) It was an odd custom, those from "off" (the word given to those not from Charleston) thought. When the poet Amy Lowell visited Charleston in the early 1920's, she was hurt that no one asked her to supper in their homes—that was, again, due to the fact that Charlestonians ate their main meal in the afternoon and dismissed their help early."

"To entertain these Northerners, and all the other artists and intellectuals coming to town (and to show off their liquor supply, despite Prohibition), Charlestonians evolved the cocktail party. Before they left, black maids cooked hams and turkeys, which the Charleston hostess could then just put on the sideboard, along with other small things served cold. People would be poured drinks upon entering, and they would be welcome to move about the rooms, eating and gossiping. With no servants around, and no need for a big evening meal, Charlestonians started this practice, Parsons believed. So it's not just Planter's Punch, supposedly named after the Planter's Hotel on Church Street that gives the city a claim to fame in the drinks department. At least one resident of the time was adamant in his memoirs that the cocktail party is another gift to Western Civilization from the civilized old city."

Drew Burris, Allyson Haynes, John Doering and Catherine Alley



Debbie Bordeau and Anne Belden

# In Memoriam

## G. FRAZER WILSON, M.D.

NOVEMBER 22, 1918 – JUNE 29, 2008

Dr. Wilson was born on Wadmalaw Island in 1918. He graduated from the College of Charleston in 1940. His class of 1943 of the Medical College of South Carolina was called into service in World War II six months prior to graduation. He served with the 5th Army Air Corps in the Pacific theater. Throughout his medical career, Dr. Wilson received many honors and participated in many professional endeavors. As a preservationist, he will be remembered for his love of antiques and his dedication to Charleston's history and material culture. He was a Life Trustee of Historic Charleston Foundation and a long-time supporter of the Preservation Society of Charleston. Dr. and Mrs. Wilson opened their home for house tours for many years. Our condolences are extended to his son and family and his host of friends.

## ROBERT B. LEONARD

AUGUST 17, 1946 – APRIL 29, 2008

Robert B. Leonard was a long-time member of the Society and a volunteer for the Fall House and Garden Tours.

Ginger L. Scully, Director of Programs and Operations affirmed Mr. Leonard's commitment to the Society's work, "We appreciated Bob's enthusiasm for the tours and his dedication to the Society will be greatly missed." Our condolences are especially extended to his wife, Linda, who has also volunteered for the Society in a number of capacities over the past several years.

## CHARLES EDWARD LEE

JUNE 17, 1917 – MAY 30, 2008

Mr. Lee became director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History in 1961 and in 1969 was also appointed to serve as South Carolina's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). He recognized early the need to document historic sites and buildings on the local level and with Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Chistie Z. Fant, established a regional approach to preservation planning. Each of South Carolina's ten regional councils of government had staff members carrying out local survey and planning projects, listing properties of the National Register of Historic places and assisting local historic and preservation organizations. The new National Historic Preservation Act (adopted in 1966) offered historic buildings and sites a means of protection that was previously unavailable.

Cynthia Jenkins, who was one of the regional historic preservation planners, credited Charles Lee with setting a standard for young preservationists to follow that influenced dozens of professionals working around the country today.

Mrs. Jenkins said "Mr. Lee and Mrs. Fant directed South Carolina's preservation program into one of the strongest and most respected in the country. Those of us fortunate enough to work with them in the 1970's will always cherish the experience and value the lessons we were taught. We learned the details of the national historic preservation program and the legal means to protect the state's resources."



S.C. 10-CHAR, LT-6



The ruins of these powder magazines are located just south of Magnolia Cemetery on the land fill site being considered as the location of the Promenade development. According to the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation of the site from 1934 and accompanying text from 1936, the powder magazines were designed circa 1824 by architect Robert Mills for the storage of public and private powder.

The site originally contained nine magazines, an officers' house and a barracks combined with a gateway. The magazines were constructed of stucco over brick with a slate roof and doors trimmed in brownstone. The largest magazine was supported by a center brick column carrying a mushroom brick vault ceiling. It was used for the storage of public powder and had a capacity of four thousand kegs. The smaller magazines had a capacity of one thousand kegs and were assigned to different importers of powder.

Two magazines were demolished during the late nineteenth century to make way for the Seaboard Air Line Railway right of way. The officers' quarters and barracks were in ruins and the remaining seven powder magazines were falling into disrepair in the 1930s when the site was documented for HABS. Today only ruins of the powder magazines, brick buildings, and brick wall remain.

# STATE POWDER MAGAZINE



# FURTHER NOTES ON BEING “GREEN”

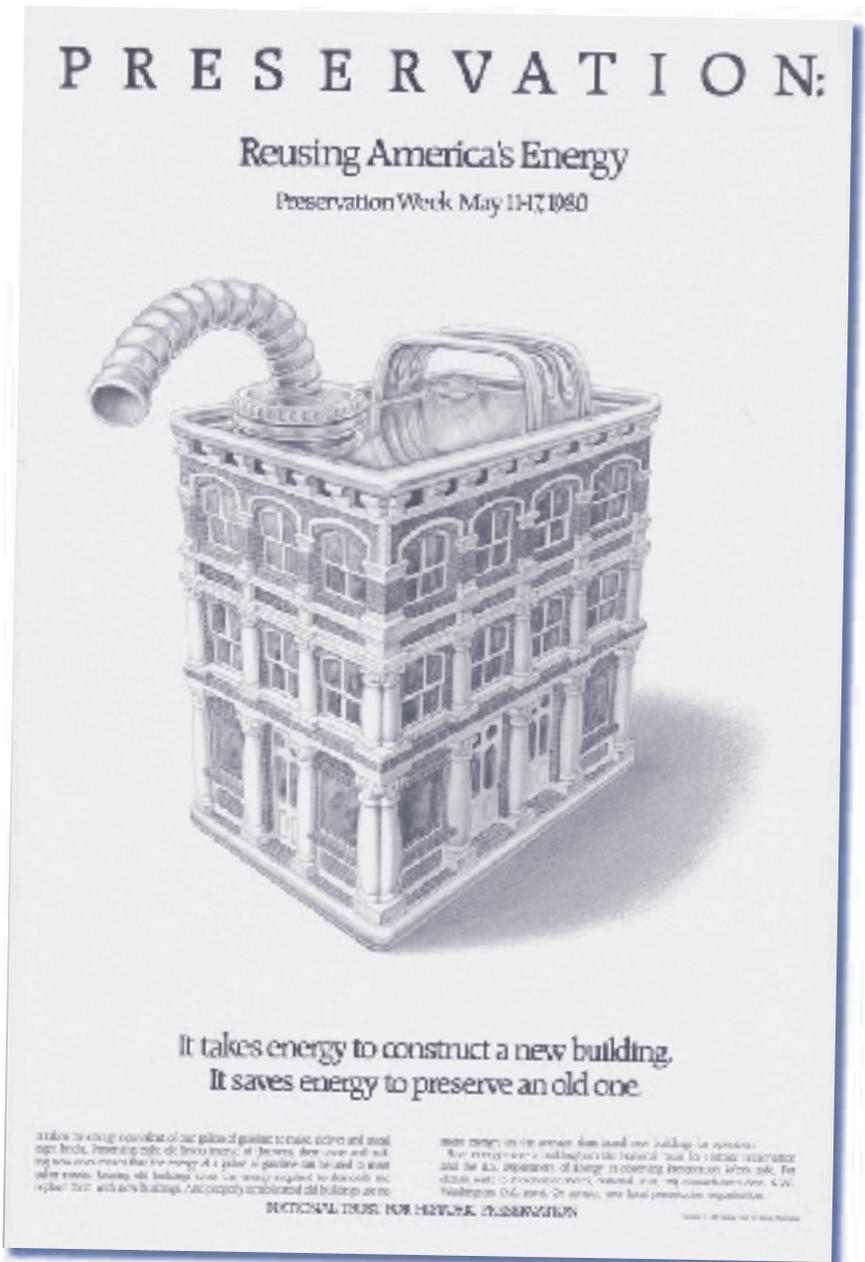
In the last issue of Preservation Progress, our feature story focused on the concept of sustainability in preservation and our beleaguered environment. Our getting on the “green” bandwagon wasn’t just to be trendy, timely and politically correct.

So popular is the idea of framing everything in a green context these days that just using the word (green) is starting to lose meaning. Let’s be sure we’re not diluting the use of green to a mere tint of its former verdant glory.

Going green in our preservation ethic means more than protecting our architectural heritage. It means integrating a more thoughtful approach to the decisions and choices we make on a daily basis. When it comes to the macro of major construction site for Charleston to the micro of a weekend project done behind the garage; the choices we make are important. Are we using low volatile organic compound paints? Are we buying renewable building materials or products designed and manufactured under approved green regulations? Are we looking at the natural resources we consume in light of their renewability? Do we stop and ask about their safety or status as being endangered or protected in designated areas? Shifting patterns of behavior is not easy, but it is not impossible. It is a matter of commitment.

James Meadors, Chairman of The City of Charleston’s Green Committee states, “The focus on green initiatives is heightened as science has shown that change is imperative. Going green is also trendy, and some are riding the bandwagon. It is no longer an option for anyone to ignore the consequences of our behaviors on the only planet we have. The Green Committee is studying best practices in our community, the country and around the world. Whether we are involved in innovative, creative processes or small changes in our lifestyles, we can all make a difference in how we treat our environment. The common theme to insure success in all areas must begin with education. We must all work together to modify our culture and our society, and we can do it. It takes leadership, being in front of people with our message, until this new way of life becomes second nature to us all.”

Yes, “green” can mean the saving of old buildings and the resources and skills that created them. Being green preservationists includes modeling the behaviors of conservation and eco-friendly consumerism to our friends, neighbors, and especially our children. It is the responsibility of every one of us to make the green movement work and not be relegated to the scrap heap of faded fads and failed follies.





### JOHN BOARDMAN, SUMMER INTERN

John Boardman, originally from Charlotte, NC, attended Duke University graduating with a BA with Distinction in History in 2006. John is now attending Wake Forest University School of Law and recently completed his first year of law school. During his undergraduate career John spent a semester in Charleston completing classes in the Historic Preservation and Community Planning Program at the College of Charleston and he wrote his undergraduate thesis on the British Occupation of Charleston in 1780. This summer John is working at the Preservation Society compiling research and writing a thorough report on the Preservation Society's position on and advocacy efforts during the controversy surrounding the proposed "Charleston Center" from 1978 to 1981. The development of what is now known as the Charleston Place Hotel provides a good case study blending legal and political challenges with both local and national preservation issues.



### LIZ PERKINS, FALL TOUR OF HOMES AND GARDENS INTERN

Liz Perkins, a member of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, recently graduated from the College of Charleston with a BA in Historic Preservation and Community Planning and a BA in Art History. The School of the Arts awarded Liz an Academic Merit Scholarship in 2007 – 2008. Liz spent a semester interning at Drayton Hall in the Preservation Division organizing research and documenting architectural details of the plantation house. She also worked as a docent and administrative assistant at Hildene, Robert Todd Lincoln's home in Manchester, Vermont. While at the Preservation Society, Liz is researching architectural and historical data and writing house histories for properties to be highlighted during the Annual Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens. She is also managing the volunteer and guest databases and coordinating mailings to volunteers and homeowners.



### NATHAN ATTARD, PRESERVATION AND ARCHIVAL INTERN

Nathan Attard, a junior at the College of Charleston majoring in Historic Preservation and Community Planning, is interning at the Preservation Society this summer where he is assisting with numerous archival projects and performing research for the Halsey Map project. At the College of Charleston, Nathan is a member of the Honors College, the Vice President and an active member of the Historic Preservation Club, a Campus Tour Guide, and a Resident Assistant in the Department of Residence Life and Housing. In 2007 Nathan received a Summer Undergraduate Research with Faculty Grant, and studied the historical and current land use patterns in the Hampton Park area with his professor. Nathan also spent a semester studying Art History and Italian in Rome.

## DANIEL M. HUNDLEY FUND

Since 1993, The Daniel M. Hundley Fund has provided summer internships at the Preservation Society of Charleston for college and graduate level students. The Hundley Fund was established at the Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina by Daniel Hundley's parents Mrs. Evelyn Richards and Mr. R. Walter Hundley in memory of their son, Daniel.

To date the internship has funded fifteen students, providing them with real life experiences working for a local preservation nonprofit. The internship is designated to assist with the annual Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens. Interns work in all areas for preparation of the tour season. One of the most important contributions is the compilation of

house histories that improve upon the existing architectural and historical data shared with tour guests. The Society's extensive database of house histories is a result of this annual internship.

This Fund is another example of the continuation of one of Charleston's many civic-minded families as they leave a lasting legacy to our organization and to preservation in Charleston. According to Edie Blakeslee, Program Director for the Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina, "This fund is a testament to the work that the Preservation Society does, and it's our honor to be involved in the legacy behind this Fund as well as providing financial support, in perpetuity. I am always amazed at the generosity of

people in our community, not just for today, but forever."

The Preservation Society looks forward to future Funds being established through the Community Foundation of South Carolina to continue our work in support of preservation in Charleston. For more information contact Edie Blakeslee, at the Coastal Community Foundation at (843) 723-5736, or the Preservation Society's Executive Director, Cynthia Cole Jenkins at (843)722-4630. To learn more about this year's recipient of the Hundley Fund, Liz Perkins, see her intern profile in this issue of Preservation Progress.

# LOOKING FORWARD / LOOKING BACK: THE PICTURE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Of all the covers for Preservation Progress we've published in recent years, perhaps none has evoked more questions and comments than that of last issue's "Green, Green."

This undated, vintage photo of Charleston's famous "Rainbow Row" is from our archives but little else is known beyond that. The original image was printed in sepia tones but one building at 87 East Bay Street we tinted green for our cover. We wanted this building to symbolize the growing recognition that old buildings are a significant and precious resource and with their large windows, high ceilings, and open piazzas are inherently "green."

Your response to the photograph was both immediate and compelling. Many of our readers, it seems, had never seen the iconic streetscape they know so well in such a disturbing state of urban decay. We have all grown so accustomed to Charleston's remarkable state of preservation that we almost take it for granted – as if restorations like Rainbow Row

were a given. Indeed, few among us today are old enough to recall a Charleston where images like this were commonplace in the Holy City. How far we have come!

The row house shaded in green on our cover was, itself, the focus of some attention. It is known as the James Gordon House constructed circa 1792 and rehabilitated circa 1930. According to Jonathan H. Poston, in *The Buildings of Charleston*, Gordon was a Scottish merchant and planter who built his house and store on the site of a tenement destroyed earlier in the fire of 1778. Today, the four-story, stucco-clad brick house features its original fenestration, low hipped roof and distinctive quoins.

In 1920, the house was purchased by Preservation Society founder Susan Pringle Frost. We conclude that this photograph illuminates a protracted time of economic decline. The wharves of commerce located across the street

that had been so important to Charleston's economy since colonial days were apparently idle. Indeed, it appears the bustling hub of commerce had deserted this area of the city completely. The once-flourishing first floor businesses that faced the docks are void of shoppers and merchandise. Some doors are even boarded up. Does this indicate the Civil War period or the grim years thereafter?

Not so fast. If you look closely, you'll note there is a utility pole and the faint evidence of a few utility lines strung through the air.

Gene Waddell's fascinating book *Charleston in 1883* tells us that the use of electricity for lighting was not

introduced here until 1882 by the United States Electric Illuminating Company of Charleston. However, the lines don't appear to be connected to any of the buildings along Rainbow Row. Perhaps this area was so depressed at the time that electric lighting had not been installed in these tenements as yet.

What if these utility lines are,

in fact, telegraph lines running down East Bay Street to the factors' offices that were once humming with cotton and rice deals shortly before the war? Had some of these telegraph lines survived Charleston's long bombardment? Had a few of these lines of communication been restored? The photo gives no clue.

However, there is another important tip to explore. Notice the considerable structural damage done to some of the buildings. Is this latent evidence of the long bombardment Charleston suffered during the Civil War?

We know from the extensive analysis of earthquake damage done in "The Great Shake" of 1886 that vertical cracks in masonry, especially at window openings, are strong evidence of earthquake shocks, not artillery fire. Is this damage fresh, indicating the photograph may date

LOOKING FORWARD, CONTINUED PAGE 17



# MAY 16-18 STUDY TOUR: IT WAS “A JOURNEY TO AIKEN” ...AND SO MUCH MORE.



Charles Coe, Emerson Read, Jim McNabb & Gene Spence at the Aiken luncheon



Susan Dickson, Jim Ramsey, Diane McCall, Charles Huff, and Mark McCall



Charles Coe, Diane McCall, Mark McCall, Janice Coe, and Charles Huff



Jim & Mary McNabb at the Green Boundary Club

The Preservation Society of Charleston’s Study Tour embarked on “A Journey to Aiken” in May and it provided a cornucopia of pleasures and discoveries beyond anyone’s expectations. Aiken is a treasure trove sometimes overlooked by those accustomed to hearing the Lowcountry’s praises sung loud and long. But, the history, culture, architecture and hospitality of this legendary “winter colony” has fascinated visitors since its founding in 1828.

Aiken, originally a stop along America’s first railroad line built between Charleston and Hamburg, South Carolina, soon began to attract wealthy northerners to enjoy its warm climate and abundance of natural resources. By the turn of the 19th century, Aiken was a popular place to spend the winter for Americans and Europeans alike.

The incredible trip was made possible by Kristopher King, his mother Gail King, the homeowners that participated and the City of Aiken.

“One of the reasons the tour was such a success was that it was a group from the Preservation Society of Charleston,” said Mr. King. “Aiken’s doors were opened because people knew the group would appreciate the hospitality and support the preservation effort taking place throughout Aiken.”

Highlights of the Society’s springtime visit to the upcountry included accommodations at the Willcox Inn (c. 1898), a 19th century (indoor) court tennis exhibition at the Aiken Club and Court, and a visit to the Banksia Museum House and Tranquility Cottage (c. 1840). The group enjoyed a leisurely lunch at the expansive Joye Cottage (which began as a two-room home in 1830). Driving tours of Aiken included stops at the Palmetto Golf Club (c. 1892) and the Devereaux Milburn House (c. 1929).

## NTHP SOUTHERN ADVISORS AND PARTNERS MEETING: OUR CARRIBEAN CONNECTIONS



Governor John P. deJongh, Jr., Cynthia Jenkins and Glenn Keyes

Preservation Society Executive Director, Cynthia Cole Jenkins and National Trust for Historic Preservation Advisor and former Preservation Society of Charleston president, Glenn Keyes represented Charleston at the National Trust of Historic Preservation's Southern Advisors and Partners Meeting. This year's meeting was held in St. Croix which is an area served by the NTHP Southern Regional office here in Charleston. The St. Croix Landmarks Society assisted in planning the day trips to Lawaetz Museum, Cane Garden; the plantation of Charleston's on Dick Jenrette, Whim Plantation and Government House.

The meetings included local and state level partners of the National Trust gathering to discuss emerging issues in the region, heritage tourism, commercial revitalization and neighborhood conservation. David J. Brown, Executive Vice President of The National Trust states that "meetings like this are invaluable because they provide a jolt of energy. Attendees hear their colleagues discuss problems they've faced and solutions they've developed. They learn about innovative efforts in everything from developing a preservation ordinance to mounting a fundraising campaign. They expand their network of resources and contacts—and the end result is that they go home refreshed and better prepared to do their job more effectively. That's good for our preservation partners, of course, but it's also good for the preservation movement as a whole." Our readers can look forward to learning more about Charleston's many connections to the Caribbean in our next issue of Preservation Progress.

ALBERT SIMONS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

revolved around hunting and leisure activities. He also designed new houses that were carefully designed to fit in with the context of Lowcountry architecture.

In the 1920's he designed a number of houses on or near Murray Boulevard, and others in the countryside, including several in the Yeaman's Hall neighborhood alongside nationally known architects such as James Gambrel Rodgers.

After the Great Depression hit hard he was able to procure commissions from federally funded projects, including the Robert Mills Housing Project, which was the first federally funded housing project in the country.

It was during the Depression that he designed the College of Charleston gymnasium, the Memminger Auditorium, and did extensive changes in the old Planter's Hotel to fit a theater based on English eighteenth-century models into the former courtyard to facilitate its transformation into the Dock Street Theater.



Courtesy of College of Charleston, Simons Center for the Arts.

He played a key role in the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (and later under its current name, the Preservation Society of Charleston), working with Susan Pringle Frost, Dorothy Legge, and many others to keep outsiders from stripping historic houses of their original wood paneling. With Dorothy Legge, he helped restore and revitalize what is now prized as 'Rainbow Row.' He also restored the Heyward-Washington house to its original form, removing a commercial storefront and raising the first floor to its appropriate height.

Albert Simons also co-authored excellent books with wonderful drawings: his book *The Early Architecture of Charleston and Plantations of the Carolina Low Country*.

He was also a key member of the team that produced "This is Charleston," a building-by-building study of the historic peninsula.

Albert Simons' legacy continues in the form of the School of the Arts at the College of Charleston. He created the first courses in Art History at the College in 1924 as a reply to H. L. Menkin's infamous barb that "the South was the desert of the Beaux-Art."

He taught until 1948, and the single course evolved into the School of the Arts today in a building appropriately named the Albert Simons Center for the Arts.

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# STAFF NOTES:



## CHARLES E. BENTON, JR. FALL TOUR AND EVENT COORDINATOR

Charlie, originally from Columbia, South Carolina attended the University of South Carolina studying media arts and psychology, and graduating in 2004 with a Bachelor of Arts in Experimental Psychology. During his time in Columbia, Charlie hosted a radio show on the University's radio station, performed an independent study on the effects that exposure to violence has on young children, worked in the radiology department at Richland Memorial Hospital and managed the kitchen at Jake's Bar and Grill. After years of visiting friends in Charleston, Charlie decided to relocate with his dog to Folly Beach. Charlie has enjoyed volunteering as a docent for the Preservation Society's Fall Tours of Homes and Gardens and is excited to now be an integral part of the planning of the annual event. When he is not working, Charlie enjoys spending time with his wife and three dogs, surfing, photography, and searching out the latest local music.



## LEANNE VEACH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Leanne Veach, originally from Surfside Beach, South Carolina, graduated from Winthrop University in 2007 with a Bachelor of Science with Distinction in Integrated Marketing Communication. While at Winthrop, Leanne was an active member of the Student Activities Board and Student Government. Leanne completed an internship at BMW Manufacturing Company in Spartanburg during college where she assisted with media and community-related special events promoting the company within the region. She worked as a Student Assistant to the Director of Student Activities at Winthrop, at a bagel shop, and most recently waited tables at Wild Wing Café in Charleston. Leanne, who as a child lived in Saudi Arabi, has traveled to Germany, Mexico, and the Bahamas, hopes to one day visit Egypt and Greece. As the Preservation Society's Administrative Assistant, Leanne will utilize her communication and marketing backgrounds to plan, oversee, and assist with routine business and special projects. She is most excited about the Preservation Society's mission to the public and learning about the city's historic architecture. When not at work she loves to go the beach, read Harry Potter and spend time with her friends.

LOOKING FORWARD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12



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from after 1886?

Charleston's history with earthquakes goes back much earlier than 1886. These 18th century structures had survived several earlier tectonic adjustments by the time this image was made. In hard times, repairs could have been deferred and much earlier, crude repairs could have failed, revealing old scars.

Also, let us look to the few human images captured by the camera. A woman in an ankle-length dress of light color could indicate summertime garb anytime from the turn of the 20th century to the eve of the Charleston Renaissance in the 1920s.

Finally, let us examine the source material, the original photograph. Actually the photograph that appeared on our cover was cropped. The entire image reveals motor vehicles from the World War I era or early 1920s. Clearly this image dates from later than the post Civil War Reconstruction years.

We know Susan Pringle Frost was concerned that the houses now known as Rainbow Row were at risk. That is why she purchased the home at 87 East Bay Street, among many others throughout her career. She was determined to save it. We also know that she ordered photographs to be taken of her projects some of which have been lost to time. Does this suggest we are looking at Rainbow Row at Charleston's economic nadir -- just before the Navy came as America mustered into World War I?

Somewhere in that general spectrum of time, the old row houses of East Bay Street would have been bereft of electricity and affluence, laden with architectural heritage and potential charm, but they were unrealized promises of the icons of preservation they would become.

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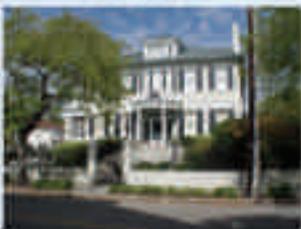
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