

# Le Journal des Amis



### NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Over my 30-year career as a Parks and Recreation professional, I always found myself, like most of my colleagues, comparing our city's department with those in other cities..."what do they have that we don't?" But through networking with professionals across the country, it became very apparent that BREC was THE department others compared themselves to.



Eugene Young, Baton Rouge's BREC's long time superintendent, passed away July 20. Mr.

Young was instrumental in creating the parks department that we all know and love. He worked tirelessly to ensure quality parks and recreation for all citizens, no matter their age or their interest. He knew that parks could not just be all playgrounds and ballfields. His vision helped create our zoo, Cohn Arboretum, an equestrian center, an observatory, an art gallery, and, of course, our beloved Magnolia Mound, which certainly would have faced demolition without his dedication and determination. Through his efforts, our community is full of recreational, educational and cultural opportunities to experience and enjoy.

I was very fortunate to have been friends with and worked with Mr. Young during my career at BREC.

Donna Mitchell, President

#### History of the Friends





Magnolia Mound awaiting rescue

You may wonder how the Friends of Magnolia Mound started? It began in the 1960s with the passion, and dedication of a visionary group of ladies – Sue Turner, Winnie Byrd, Elise Rosenthal, Lois Bannon and Joan Samuel. They saw the importance of saving Magnolia Mound, not only for its unique architecture, but because they also wanted to create a landmark for education.

They turned to Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (BREC), and the newly founded Foundation for Historical Louisiana. With the help of Mayor "Woody" Dumas and a statewide campaign, the house was finally saved. The ownership of the property and the development of the site was assumed by BREC. The Foundation was responsible for the restoration. The partnership proved to be a successful one.

Continued on page 2

## The Slave Cabin at the Mound



The circa 1830 cabin recently received a new "old" porch. The earlier porch had become unstable and needed to be repaired for the safety of our visitors. Each room of the cabin is furnished with period appropriate items to illustrate the life of the enslaved. The cabin is an important part of telling a complete story of life at Magnolia Mound.

In the 1980s, the Friends' president, Winnie Byrd, began searching for a cabin for Magnolia Mound. The original idea was to build a reconstruction cabin, but Lillie "Pigeon" Thibaut knew of an early structure in nearby Pointe Coupee Parish that she recommended to Winnie for the Friends. Donated by the Major Family in 1992, the cabin is the last surviving structure of its type

Continued on page 3



The Pandemic forced Magnolia Mound's closure on Tuesday, March 17. Magnolia Mound re-opened to the public on Monday, May 18 as part of the Louisiana's phase one. The site offered only self-guided grounds tours in which patrons could explore the site with a detailed map, describing the buildings and grounds on the 16-acre historic site.

Magnolia Mound is now offering guided house tours to groups of 5 or less. All other public programs have been suspended for the summer. Rental events or any gatherings involving large groups of people are allowed if they follow the Governor's guidelines.



30th anniversary of saving Magnolia Mound, from l to r: Winne Byrd, Ruth Bilbe, Elise Rosenthal, Sue Turner

Under the Foundation, an auxiliary committee was created to begin the restoration with Sue Turner serving as its first chairman. The committee understood that it was extremely important to have major community support to raise funds. In a May 1992 article, Winnie Byrd said: "She credited Sue and Bert Turner for spearheading the community effort and fund drive."

Lois Bannon was chairman of the research committee. She researched and documented the history of Magnolia Mound. Joan Samuel was treasurer, and Elise Rosenthal worked to raise money to buy furniture. Winnie organized the first docents' program for the "Mound." For many years, tours were conducted mainly by these dedicated volunteers. At the beginning, the director of the house and a caretaker were the only paid BREC employees.

We cannot forget Pat Bacot, the LSU museum of Art director at the time, who assumed the very important advisory role for the furnishing of the house. He continues this role as Curator Emeritus for the Friends.

Finally the museum opened for tours in 1975 with one piece of furniture: the unique armoire in the parlor of the historic house.

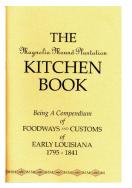


According to Pat Bacot: "The only Louisiana-made piece in this room is this mahogany and mahogany veneered armoire dating circa 1825, unquestionably made in New Orleans. It is a real prize in this collection because of its fiche hinges (exposed hinges) made of iron with pewter sleeves terminating in brass ball finials. This is the only example that we know of. The solid cast escutcheons would have been made in France or England. They usually had pressed

brass escutcheons in the early nineteenth-century. The reeded legs terminate in brass ball feet which could have been cast in a New Orleans foundry.

Internally the armoire is extremely interesting. Inside there is a two-inch band of mahogany on the front of each cypress shelf. The armoire has the typical Louisiana arrangement of three drawers placed across the middle. The silver plated pulls were made in England, a rare occurrence in American furniture."

After Sue stepped down, Winnie served as chairman of the Magnolia Mound Board of Trustees for eight years. Winnie persuaded the Junior League of Baton Rouge to help fund the restoration



of the kitchen, and to start a cooking program. An archaeological dig was conducted to locate the site of the original kitchen and the construction of the reproduction kitchen began. For many years, the cooking program was made possible thanks to dedicated volunteers from the Junior League. The League also sponsored the project, *The Magnolia Mound Plantation Kitchen Book*, published in 1986. Barbara Bacot was the first committee chairman, followed by Martha White. The cookbook

was reprinted in 1991 and 2008. It continues to be sold at the Turner Family Visitor Center gift shop.

In 2000, the Friends separated from the Foundation and became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The Friends then hired Patricia Comeaux as director of the Friends and later, Babeth Schlegel as the collection manager.

Karen Zobrist, chairman of the Collection Committee and vice president of the Board recalls: "The year 2000 was a very memorable year for me. It was the year I retired from teaching mathematics at LSU and began my volunteer life. Marilyn Davis asked if I would like to be a board member of the Friends of Magnolia Mound. Becoming a member of an active group dedicated to saving and preserving the historic structures of Magnolia Mound became my calling."

Over the years the Friends organized, in conjunction with BREC, many community events such as Creole Christmas, the Black History Month programs, and the Petite Antiques Forum. In 2020, the Friends celebrated the Forum's twentieth anniversary and recognized Pat Bacot, who was the first speaker at the Forum.

From the beginning, the goal was to become a museum accredited by the American Alliance of Museums (then the American Association of Museums). The goal was high, but achievable. Today Magnolia Mound is an accredited museum thanks to the help of the Friends of Magnolia Mound.

The Friends owns and exhibits the collections appropriate to its mission. The Friends manages, documents, and cares for a collection of antiques that has grown over the years. Many period buildings are now entirely furnished: the main house, kitchen, overseer's house, and slaves' cabin. The Friends provides public access to its collections while ensuring its preservation and helping BREC in the interpretation of the history of the museum.

The furnishing of the Museum and the Friends group would not be where it is today without the dedication of all the many board members, committee members, and the invaluable generosity of its members and donors. The Friends rely exclusively on this inestimable dedication to achieve its mission:

To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in the south Louisiana, for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations, and to procure and manage the collection.







#### **Building the Collection**





Sheraton chairs, circa 1810, donated by Barbara and Pat Bacot

The Collection Committee is vital for additions to and maintenance of Magnolia Mound's collection of historical artifacts.

If you wish to donate an object or furniture to the Friends of Magnolia Mound, contact Babeth Schlegel (Collection Manager) by phone (225) 421-3162 or by email friendsofmagnoliamound@gmail.com. A temporary receipt will be created with the description of each item. The collection committee will meet to carefully review each items. Once accepted into the Friends of Magnolia Mound Collection, Babeth will send the final paperwork to you.

The Friends greatly appreciate all donations and thank the donors for their generosity and thoughtfulness.

Karen Zobrist, Chairman.

#### RECENT DONATIONS TO THE FRIENDS' COLLECTION

**Shirley Newsome:** Her donation included treenware, old cast iron cooking ware, tools, china, and glassware.

**Richard Byrd:** In memory of his mother, Winnie Byrd – her entire collection of Louisiana books. Also pictures, oils, plates and wooden items made from trees which fell on the Mound property and were turned into decorative items by Stuart Couvillion.

**Susan Eaton:** In memory of her mother, Mary Frey Eaton – Louisiana books from her mother's collection.

**Thomas and Marsha Wade:** A collection of historic, flat-head, hand-forged nails.

**William "Butch" Hart:** A reproduction of an 1880 Magnolia Map by surveyor, Charles M. Green. This map was copied from the original map in a private collection.

**Barbara Weber:** a 100-year old child's chair with hide seat. Also Ms. Weber donated three vintage brooms.

**Barbara and Pat Bacot:** A pair of decorated Sheraton fancy chairs, circa 1810, now in the Main House.

**Chet Coles:** A graniteware pot for the wooden commode chair, a matelasse coverlet, and a doll bed coverlet made from a wool blanket fragment for the Overseer's House.

The donated books will be placed in the research library, owned jointly by the Friends and BREC, and are available for on-site researchers, staff and docents, and members of the Friends.

Slave Cabin continued from page 1

from Riverlake Plantation near New Roads, Louisiana. Riverlake is best known as the childhood home of award-winning Louisiana writer, Ernest Gaines. The Friends provided financial assistance to restore the cabin and led the effort to furnish it appropriately. The cabin opened to the public in 1996 and was the impetus for the annual Black History Month program.





Interiors of the slave cabin at Magnolia Mound

#### Petite Antiques Forum

The Friends of Magnolia Mound plan to hold the Petite Antiques Forum in 2021, however we are working on changes to our format which will comply



with the limitations that the Covid-19 virus has placed on our society. We plan to present to you an event that will be interesting, entertaining, and give you a pleasant day out without undue exposure and risk.

Please keep the 2021 Petite Antiques Forum on your calendar for sometime in the late winter. More information will follow soon.

Susan Wilder, Chairman

#### Inside the Magnolia Mound Collection

#### Battersea Enamel Knobs





These Batterseastyle (also known as Bilston) knobs from the Friends' collection were used as decorative hooks for hanging paintings and mirrors.

Small decorated enamel objects, such as boxes for trinkets and jewelry, snuff boxes, candlesticks, bonbonnieres, and picture knobs became popular in the society of Georgian England. The enamel decorations depicted flowers, landscape scenes, patriotic emblems, military heroes, and portraits.

The Friends own two beautiful English enamel knobs (circa 1790), referred as "Battersea" or "Bilston." These two portrait knobs also known as cloak pins are in use in the front girls' bedroom.

Knobs were made in two different shapes, oval or round, usually no more than three and a quarter inches in diameter. The copper base was slightly curved and covered with a coat of vitreous enamel which was fired. The knobs were then decorated using a transfer print – a method of impression from an engraved metal plate. The design was engraved by hand on a copper plate with a graver by a combination of punching dots or cutting fine lines. The design is then transferred to a white enamel piece using paper transfer or another method known as *bat transfer*. A bat of glue was used to take the impression of a copper plate to be transferred on to an enamel surface. The piece was then painted in colors and fired again.

The disk was mounted on a convex iron back with its center perforated and reinforced with a collar that firmly held a brass shank turned one and three-eight inches long, that was intended to support the looking glass. The face of the knob was then framed with a delicate border of thin patterned brass.

Knobs served to suspend picture frames or looking glasses with a cord. For heavy frames they could also be placed in pairs directly under the frame on each side.

The technique of transfer printing was first developed for the ceramic industry, and then was used on other enameled objects. The use of this technique on ceramic and enamel gave manufacturers the capacity to create a production line at lower cost.

Many men can be credited for having discovered, invented, or introduced transfer printing into England in the mid-18th century, but John Brooks is the most likely inventor. He was the manager for Stephen Theodore Janssen, once Lord Mayor of London.

In 1753, Janssen established a factory at York House on the South bank of the River Thames, in Battersea, to produce enameled objects on copper. The York House stood out for having introduced transfer printing on enamel. Many decorated enamel items were made at his shop from 1753 to 1756.

Janssen's shop went bankrupt in 1756. He was able to sell his supplies, tools and copper plates to other manufacturers. Enamel objects continued to be made long after the Janssen factory closed.

Today these highly collectible enamel objects are still referred to as "Battersea Enamels," because of the original location. Most

were likely made in other workshops in London, in Matthew Boulton's works in Birmingham, in Liverpool, and in Staffordshire (Wednesbury, or Bilston). Therefore, "Battersea box" became more a generic term for all such items.

Donor:

Mr. and Mrs. Verdie Reece Perkins

Sources:

Painted Enamels An Illustrated Survey 1500-1920 by Erika Speel

The Penguin Dictionary of Decorative Arts, John Fleming & Hugh Honour

<sup>1</sup>Antiques, Volume 2, Aug 1922, by F. E. Atwood

One of the enamel knobs is used to hang a mirror in the girls' bedroom.



#### **Summer History Camp**



**2020** marks the 40th anniversary of Magnolia Mound's award-winning Summer History Camp. We were thrilled to welcome returning camp director, Brandon Bouy, and camp counselor, Jordan Hollier, and our new counselor, Amy Lambert.

The first week beginning on June 1 was virtual with campers exploring Magnolia Mound from home and enjoying history camp projects. A smaller, in person, camp limited to 20 campers began on Monday, June 8; and continued for five week-long sessions. Attendance averaged around 12 campers per session. (Our usual attendance level is 25 per weekly session.)

This year, camp included numerous safety protocols as recommended by the State of Louisiana and the CDC. Each morning, the campers were screened prior to entering which included temperature readings and a Covid-19 questionnaire. Campers remained at the Mound all week long and did not enjoy the usual off-site field trips. While inside, the campers wore face masks, and frequently washed their hands.

We are pleased to report there were no reports of sickness from our campers, and we will continue to monitor the health of those attending the later sessions.







l to r: Brandon Bouy, camp director and a recent graduate of Lewis University in Illinois; and Jordan Hollier, counselor; and Amy Lambert, counselor, both students at LSU.

Pandemic Response continued from page 1

Full-time staff worked in shifts, either at home or at the Mound. (Magnolia Mound was monitored by on-site staff, seven days a week during the closure.) Part-time staff used the closure time to participate in on-line staff training, assisted in revising the Emergency Preparedness Plan, and even did maintenance work around the site. The entire Magnolia Mound staff helped keep the site and the buildings cleaned during the prolonged closure.

#### MEMORIAL RECOGNITION

Magnolia Mound joins with the Friends in remembering two important supporters.

Ann Lamar Switzer "Dee Dee" Reilly died on July 18, 2020. For many years, the Reilly Family Foundation contributed to the work of the Friends and supported Magnolia Mound. We appreciated her generosity and support.

Former BREC superintendent Eugene Young died at age 92 on July 20, 2020. Gene Young was instrumental in BREC joining in the original litigation to save Magnolia Mound from demolition. Gene Young was an important partner in forging the public-private partnership that has made Magnolia Mound so successful. Our sympathies to his wife, Betty, and his family.

## Welcome to Our New Board Members

The Board of the Friends of Magnolia Mound would like to welcome its newest members to the team:

Martha Kincaid Wells – Previously an executive with AT&T, she is a residential agent for Del Rio Real Estate. She has actively been involved in many organizations: Junior Achievement, Women's Hospital, Baton Rouge Chamber of Commerce, and American Red Cross, just to name a few.

Margaret Lawhon Schott – Television , actress, author and artist. Margaret and her husband Martin are frequent travelers to France and are business partners in "Folie A Trois," importing French antiques and collectibles to Louisiana.

**Susan Martin Eaton** – A long-time perinatal social worker for Women's Hospital. Organizations she has served with include Volunteers in Public Schools, YWCA, Community Funds for the Arts and Boys and Girls Club.

Also returning to the Board to further assist us in our mission:

**Chet Coles MD** – A long-time volunteer, Chet has served in numerous capacities for the Friends and has donated countless hours of time and energy to help preserve the history and culture of Magnolia Mound.

**Jane Thomas** – A past board president of the Friends, Jane has volunteered her time and services for many years. Her tireless effort, dedication and enthusiasm are all reflected in the successful programs and projects the Mound provides throughout the year. She has also served as president of Louisiana Earth Day and Friends of the Baton Rouge Zoo.

#### FRIENDS OF MAGNOLIA MOUND UNDERWRITERS, MEMBERSHIP AND DONATIONS

Current Memberships and Donations as of this printing

#### MAJOR UNDERWRITERS

Franklin Press – Printing Thomasgraphics - Graphic Design

#### ARMAND ALLARD **DUPLANTIER CIRCLE**

#### **CONSTANCE JOYCE** DUPLANTIER CIRCLE

\$2,500 - \$4,999

Josephine Nixon

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If you wish to make a donation in memoriam please call Babeth Schlegel

\*Indicates Honorary Member

at (225) 421-3162.

Please email Babeth Schlegel at friendsofmagnoliamound@gmail.com if your name has been omitted, if there is an error, or if you do not wish to be listed in future newsletters or on the Friends' website.

#### \$5,000 - \$9,999

John Turner and Jerry Fischer

Barbara and H. Parrott Bacot, Jr.\*

\$500 - \$999

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Nancy Dougherty Micheal Duplantier

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Advance notice of events

\$10,000

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#### Friends of Magnolia Mound

#### MISSION STATEMENT

*To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic* house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in south Louisiana for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations and to procure and manage the Collection

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

The Friends, working with BREC, the Museum Director and staff, assist in implementing the master plan for the structures, landscaping, future additions and changes to Magnolia Mound.

BREC owns and operates Magnolia Mound. All of the furniture, decorative items and artifacts are owned and cared for by the Friends. This collection brings to life the interiors of the house and other buildings for the community, school groups, and tourists.

The Friends provide advisory and financial assistance for the kitchen garden, which is part of the educational tour at the Mound. Produce from the garden is used in the cooking demonstrations in the kitchen building.

#### YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THIS MISSION

#### Friends of Magnolia Mound

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H. Parrott Bacot, Jr., Curator Emeritus

Babeth Schlegel, Administrative Assistant/Collections Manager, Friends of Magnolia Mound





The Friends & BREC partners in preservation for over 50 years.

Questions? Please send an email to friendsofmagnoliamound@gmail.com or call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162 Friends of Magnolia Mound is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

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