



News

The oldest statewide historic preservation organization in Tennessee

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF TENNESSEE ANTIQUITIES

FALL/WINTER 2015

MEMPHIS CHAPTER

by A.J. Northrup

Museo

When asked to submit something for our newsletter, I always write the same old “what’s happening in the museum” piece. While we have plenty going on inside the chapter and museum and all those details would make a lovely piece from our chapter, this isn’t going to be one of those submissions. Rather, I have decided to write about a personal learning experience.

Recently, my parents invited me to join them on a cruise through the Caribbean to Mexico. While I really never cared for Mexico, I had never been to the ports the ship was to stop and I had never been on a cruise, so I agreed (with some hesitation). The cruise was a wonderful experience; now I’m hooked and planning my next adventure! But the truly enriching experiences were the excursions into the ports. The first port we stopped in was Cozumel, Mexico. My knee-jerk reaction was “Ugh! Cheap tequila and knick knacks made in China.” Of course, we wandered through the kitschy souvenir shops upon arrival...and, yes I now have a few kitschy souvenirs. After an hour or so of walking, we took a long carriage ride and a tour of a few neighborhoods. We stopped at the Cathedral of Corpus Christi, the largest church on the island. This was a stunning place, quiet and very peaceful. The windows and doors were open and the tropical breeze made me feel very calm...and happy. Near the end of the tour, our guide encouraged us to visit the museum. I thought to myself, “Really?! Museum?!” I really should have been more open-minded, because nothing could prepare me for what I was about to walk into.

Museo de la Isla de Cozumel faces Cozumel Channel in San Miguel. A wide staircase took us from the street into this immaculately bright yellow and white “open air” building. On the second floor there was a café. What I found most profound was ALL the doors and windows were open. We were greeted by a young

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President’s Message

by Frank McMeen, APTA President

It looks like we have survived a very rough February. Spring will soon be here with flowers blooming and birds singing. Bitter cold ice storms are certainly not part of our typical winter in the South, but it is something for which we must be prepared. When we look at the beautiful and historical properties that we manage and preserve, if it were not for APTA, its leadership, vision and many, many volunteers, these pieces of Tennessee history would not be here. They would not have survived the many rough Februaries of the last century.

How do we survive the next century?

(1) Volunteers! The future of each site is developing a strong group of dedicated volunteers who believe in sharing our past with the next generation and others in our future. The next generation must connect with the value of each of these properties. That connection will create life into the next generation for these beautiful properties.

(2) Financial stability! The fundraising climate has changed. Fundraising is not the same as it was in 1950 when APTA was founded. Just as marketing the properties has changed, so has how we generate dollars.

To assist in this effort to provide stability for APTA and the chapters, the West Tennessee Healthcare Foundation will offer a challenge grant to establish or grow APTA endowments. The Foundation will provide a \$15,000 challenge gift to APTA as a state organization and a \$15,000 challenge grant to the chapters as a group. For every \$3 given to the APTA’s endowment, the Foundation will provide an additional dollar, up to \$15,000, providing an immediate 30% return on your investment. The chapter’s challenge grant will have a total of \$15,000 where gifts to chapter endowments will be matched with \$1 for every \$3 donated. All endowment funds are permanent and provide an income stream for the organization and allow for growth so that the income stream grows as well.

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Executive Director's Message

by Elliott McNiel, CAE, Executive Director

One of our purposes in the APTA is to ensure that our properties are preserved for those who come after us. To do that we must engage young people. In this edition of the APTA newsletter, I'm giving my column to one of our younger members, Jesse Williams. I first met Jesse when he was a volunteer at Glenmore. He is now an interpreter at Belle Meade Plantation and doing a fabulous job. I've asked Jesse to tell us how and why he became involved in historic preservation in the hopes that others will follow in his footsteps.

I am an Interpreter at Belle Meade Plantation, and one of the many things I love about working here is the point in the tour when I say everything left this house in 1906 and the APTA has been recovering those items since 1953. People are amazed that the collections can still trickle back to the site. I usually take the opportunity to try to make them see how important old things can be to telling a story. That old chair in the attic that Grandma loved could have a much longer story than just Grandma's ownership. We live in a disposable society when something is no longer useful to us we just toss it in the dumpster, from the used Starbucks cup, Grandfather's World War II uniform, or an old building. That's why preservation is so important to me.

A preservationist needs to be a friend who stops people to say, "Wow, hold on, have you thought that through?" Old buildings and antiques are like fine works of art to me. Who knows if this "thing" I am looking at is the only "thing" left in the whole world? I have often been called a hoarder by my friends because I'm not afraid to crawl into a dumpster or take something no one else wants anymore. Waste infuriates me, waste of any kind.

As for those who say, "History is boring, it's just all names and dates!", history does not only pertain to history pre-1900. I say there is a side of preservation for every interest. Do you love movies and the costumes you experience? Well, there are preservation efforts to save both old films and the costumes. Two great iconic examples are Scarlet's dress from "Gone with the Wind," or the Cowardly Lion costume (made from real lion hide) from "The Wizard of Oz" were rotting away! Conservators were able to restore them to look as they did in 1932. Do you enjoy "CSI" or James Bond stories? What about the International Spy Museum in Washington, DC, preserving the tools of the trade and the men and women who were involved.

It's not always easy for young people to find an inlet into the history field, but there are endless opportunities for them. I love World War II history, but it's more than just the battles. There was so much here at the home front that needs to be remembered and preserved. I found a way to put my passion to work by volunteering with the Oak Ridge Heritage Preservation Association back home in East Tennessee. I was able to help with the preservation efforts of the Guest House/Alexander Inn (the only hotel built for the Manhattan Project). The work was hard and exhausting! Cleaning out a condemned building in the summer with no air conditioning or electricity that had been closed up for over a decade is tough work. However, how rewarding it is to see it today, on the road to becoming a new assisted living facility. Not into physical labor? I also had the privilege of serving on the planning board of the Secret City Festival planning events for displays on Oak Ridge history.

My point is, there are many different paths to take, but if you stick with it and follow your passion you can't go wrong. So I ask you, what is your passion? I assure you this passion has a history, so preserve it!

—Jesse Williams

From the President, cont.

How else can the Foundation help our chapters and the APTA as a state-wide organization? In December we have the Christmas Challenge. Again, we match contributions made in memory or in honor of loved ones with a \$1 for every \$3 contributed to endowments held at the Foundation. We set aside \$100,000 in this pool and again, these endowment contributions are permanent and are used as the beginning of providing chapters and the APTA with long-term financial stability. This challenge begins in July, so begin to make your plans to grow or start your endowment.

News from the APTA Chapters

Memphis Chapter, cont.

man neatly wearing a museum T-shirt and name tag. (This impressed me, right from the start.) Admission was only \$4 for the self-guided tour. All the signage and installations had English subtitles. Large, well-lit rooms held collections and vignettes. The entire first floor was dedicated to natural history and human history. A Mayan hut vignette was staged in a courtyard. It absolutely pained me to see artifacts so exposed to the elements and to “bad tourists.” There was also a modern photography exhibit in a gallery tucked in the back next to the offices. This blew my mind! It was like walking into a gallery in New York! Adjacent to a very large meeting room and restrooms was another courtyard where a group of local artists were preparing for Carnival. They were making the giant papier-maché masks worn in parades. They all had such great pride in showing us how they were made and making sure to point out the art exhibit on the second floor.

A very wide central staircase took us to the breezy second floor. Along the pristine white walls hung local contemporary paintings. The café doors were open and I expected to smell food cooking, but all I got was the fresh sea breeze from the channel. The rooms upstairs focused on the history of the island and an impressive nautical and pirate exhibit. These were larger rooms than the rooms downstairs with a ton of information. It appeared that the museum was going through a slight remodel just outside one of the rooms. Everywhere we turned there were Museo employees smiling and on hand to answer any questions. I just couldn't stop thinking about the quality of the exhibits...and the absolute pride and passion that everyone seemed to have. A wonderful experience, particularly because I didn't expect it. The Museo was a complete and utter surprise. I thanked them for their hospitality and continued the kitschy souvenir shopping.

After I returned to the ship, I took a look back at my day. Then, of course, I dissected every aspect of our house museum back home in Memphis. From accessibility to exhibits, contents and composition of exhibits, the maintenance of the Museo, our volunteers and staff, etc., etc. The one overwhelming thought was the passion and the pride reflected from every corner of the Museo. In the midst of kitschy souvenir shops and loud cantinas, there was a peaceful place of history, art, heritage, and science...all wrapped up in a bright yellow and white gift box!

Now home, I am digging deeper into how we preserve...how we educate...and how we present our beloved house museum and how to share with the Association. I must admit that it all starts with passion and pride. Maybe we often overlook things because we take our collections and/or properties for granted. Maybe we see the same old things day in and day out. Maybe it's time to take a hard look at ourselves and reinvest some in some pride and passion. I learned plenty at the Museo, and the most enriching lesson was that I am in need of an “attitude adjustment”...and this lesson was as much a surprise as the Museo.

ARLINGTON CHAPTER

by Phyllis Kennedy

Visitors to the Rachel H.K. Burrow Museum this year enjoyed our permanent exhibits on the history of the building, the Town of Arlington and a 1940s kitchen. Changing exhibits at the museum included Arlington's Bicentennial Celebration in 1976; Arlington's educational history; the history of Arlington's first library; Elvis memorabilia; old hand-held fans and electric fans; canning; and a Halloween display. Visitors also were reminded of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963, through a display of front-page news of the Commercial Appeal and the Memphis Press Scimitar and a special edition of Life magazine. Our special 1960s Christmas exhibit featured a large decorated tree in front of each porch window, as well as greenery and lights decorating the Museum's porch. Around the interior of the Museum, smaller trees displayed bubble lights and charming family ornaments, the vault showcased gingerbread-man decorations, teddy bears, and old dolls, and even the kitchen was decorated for the holiday season.

The Chapter's Agricultural Exhibit of cotton, soybeans, milo, and corn was a success. Visitors were able to see these local crops from sprouting plants to harvested crops. Crops from the exhibit were used to decorate the porch of our Museum in October and to make Christmas wreaths for our Harrell Farm Log Cabin.

In August, our Chapter participated in the in-service day for teachers at Arlington's schools. Teachers were given information about our Chapter and what our Chapter can offer them as aids for their lessons in the classroom and at our sites. We also gave our local Cub Scouts a tour of our buildings as part of their activity on the history of Arlington.

The Blacksmith Shop was open in October and December with demonstrations of blacksmithing by Bill Perry. Arlington Boy Scouts assisted the blacksmith as apprentices earning community service hours. In November, the Historic Post Office was open for Veterans Day with a special exhibit honoring veterans of our community. Boards signed by veterans in or visiting our community were on display, and another board was available for visiting veterans to sign that day.

In addition to having our sites open and giving special tours of our sites, the Arlington Chapter will be sponsoring a number of events in 2015. These include our annual Memorial Day Service in May at the Arlington Cemetery, Membership Breakfast in June, Independence Day Celebration on July 4 at Hughes-College Hill Park, Chili Supper at the Blacksmith Shop in September, and Christmas Tree-lighting Ceremony in November.

News from the APTA Chapters

BUCHANAN LOG HOUSE CHAPTER

by Judy Vecchione

The Buchanan Log House Chapter has concentrated on renovation this year. The bathroom has been renovated and is now ADA compliant. We have replaced our old damaged steps with new concrete ones, and a new handicap ramp will be added soon. The dining room has been repainted and the Smoke House has a new floor. Ten new tulip poplar and October maple trees have been added to the property. These are available for adoption in honor or in memory of loved ones.



Our Folk Festival continued to be the highlight of our year. The first day was open only to students and parents. The second day was open to everyone. The 19th Alabama Civilian Corps presented their fall encampment and demonstrators displayed an excellent variety of skills and talents, showing blacksmithing, weaving, woodcarving, quilting, soapmaking and more.

GLENMORE CHAPTER

by Joanne Vest

The board is excited about working with Dr. Carroll Van West, Director at the Center for Historic Preservation at MTSU and Tennessee State Historian, on a plan to help Glenmore become even more productive in the coming years. Graduate students and staff from MTSU's Center for Historic Preservation have been working at Glenmore, researching the house and family and developing new ways to present our artifacts.

On Christmas Eve 2014, a dogwood tree was planted at Glenmore Victorian Mansion in Jefferson City to honor past State President Helen Gray and her husband Kenneth Gray, who has also been a valuable Glenmore volunteer for many years. The dogwood was planted in the spot that once was occupied by a sugar maple tree, which due to its dying condition had to be cut down in February. The wood from this massive tree was given to Appalachian Outreach to be used as firewood for needy families.



Christmas 2014 Glenmore member's party

After many hours spent decorating, the Chapter held a Christmas Open House the first two weekends of December, serving cookies and hot wassail. Candlelight tours were held in the evening.

The Garden Market for 2015 is already in the planning stages. This will be held on the grounds of Glenmore on Saturday, May 2, which coincides with the opening day of the annual tour season. Lunch is served in our Tea Time Tent with our famous Strawberry Shortcake for dessert. We will be adding an antique tractor show this year.

News from the APTA Chapters

HAMBLEN COUNTY CHAPTER

by Sally Baker

The Crockett Tavern Museum will open for its 57th season on Tuesday, April 28. The museum will be open from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday until October 24.

On May 30 the museum will join with museums in the Knoxville area for the celebration of Tennessee Statehood Day, offering free admission. For Flag Day, June 13, the museum, in partnership with the Crossroads Downtown Partnership, will host a Young Patriots Parade. Celebration activities for David Crockett's 229th birthday on August 16 will include reenactors, refreshments, music, storytelling and free tours of the museum. On September 26 the Crockett Tavern Museum will again provide free admission in honor of the Smithsonian magazine's National Museum Day. Admission tickets for two can be found on the Smithsonian magazine's website.



HARDEMAN COUNTY CHAPTER

by Ken Savage

Every year during the Christmas season, the Hardeman County Chapter of APTA invites the public to The Pillars for a free Open House. The purpose of our gathering each year is to thank the community for their support and to better educate the public of the importance of preserving our state's historical sites for our children and their grandchildren's children. Once these sites are gone from the landscape, their history soon follows.



The Pillars, built circa 1828, was bought by John Houston Bills in 1837. He was a settler, merchant, planter, diarist, and financial advisor to James K. Polk, our 11th president. According to his diary, the Bills family hosted notable guests such as Andrew Jackson, Congressman Adam Huntsman, Sam Houston, Rt. Rev. Leonidas Polk, and various Civil War generals both South and North. Prior to Bills purchasing the property the home was visited by Davy Crockett and other political figures of the era.

This summer is our chapter's 50th anniversary. We plan to celebrate all summer long with different events, tours, and a party.

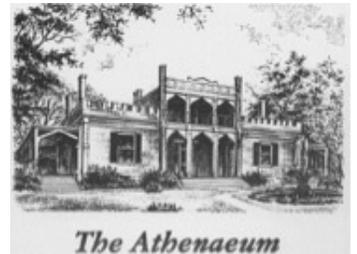
MAURY COUNTY CHAPTER

by Linda Gupton

On March 28 you'll have the chance to find out exactly what that antique painting you bought at a garage sale is really worth at the Athenaeum's Antique Appraisal Fair. Bring books, early photos, silver, clocks, watches, Civil War pieces, Lionel trains and Victrolas. You never know what treasures you might have, so take this opportunity to find out.

Become a Southern Belle for the weekend! The Maury County Chapter-APTA will host the 1861 Athenaeum Ladies Weekend, May 1-2 at the Athenaeum Rectory in Columbia. Activities include needlework, etiquette, table settings, dance, art and many more period customs. We all possess a little "Inner Scarlett," so these weekends have been very popular. Sign up early!

Shelia Mitchell-Hart will teach dulcimer and harp lessons at the Athenaeum July 9-12. Participants in the class will give a concert on Sunday afternoon. Please check the Athenaeum website for more information on activities at the Athenaeum.



RUTHERFORD COUNTY CHAPTER

As some of you may be aware, we've had some difficulties in the transition of leadership in the chapter. Our greatest concern is that the new leadership has not been given the membership list. If you know of someone who has joined the chapter recently, please let us know by emailing their information to our headquarters at APTA, 1951@bellsouth.net. We want to make sure everyone is recognized as a member of the Rutherford County Chapter-APTA.

Despite hitting some bumps in the road, the chapter is making exciting plans for the future. The new board under the leadership of Bonnie Nemeth as President is eager to involve more members in chapter activities as well as expanding the mission of the chapter.

APTA Annual Meeting May 12, 2015

Please join us for the APTA Annual Meeting on May 12, 2015. This year's speaker will be Marsha Mullin, Vice President of Museum Services and Chief Curator at The Hermitage. Ms. Mullin will be giving us an inside look at curating the new \$1.1 million, state-of-the-art exhibit *Andrew Jackson: Born For a Storm*. Please contact the APTA office for more information, apta1951@bellsouth.net.

Special events at our properties can be found on our website: www.theapta.org.



KNOXVILLE CHAPTER

by Judy LaRose

Historic Ramsey House

The sale is final on our commercial piece of property and the money is in the bank. We are pleased with the result and are looking forward to being able to breathe a bit easier. The board is in the planning phase as to how best to use the money, as we need to be able to use the money carefully and wisely. It is agreed that the majority of the funds will be invested so that the interest earned will help to pay our operational expenses. The committees also believe that a portion should also be used to improve our Visitor's Center to help create an additional income stream. We expect that the process will take several months as we plan on investigating our options.

Christmas Dinner with the Ramseys in December was a great success. All five nights sold out and we received a lot of positive feedback. The house looked beautiful decorated in its natural holiday finery and candlelight. We held our Annual Candlelight tour on December 14 with the largest crowd that we have ever entertained for this event.

For two years we have been working on a program that will feature a Paranormal Investigation at Ramsey House. For many years there have been rumors, so we decided to see if they had any teeth. The result is a 30-minute, award-winning DVD, presented to the public on February 28.

On March 24 we will be presenting our "Cherokee Country Club Fashion Show and Boutique." This is consistently one of our most successful fundraisers.

April will bring another season of Vintage Base Ball. We will be partnering again with the Tennessee Association of Vintage Base Ball and the Three Rivers Rambler Train Tours for another season of family fun! We have more games scheduled and are planning more events within the event.

Mission Statement
The Association for the Preservation of Tennessee Antiquities (APTA) promotes and encourages active participation in the preservation of Tennessee's rich historic, cultural, architectural and archaeological heritage through restoration, education, advocacy and statewide cooperation.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF TENNESSEE ANTIQUITIES

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