



Stone Mountain Historic Society Newsletter January 2015

Greetings

We extend a huge thanks to the Smokerise Morning Glories Garden Club for their incredibly festive Christmas decorations at the Wells Brown House. From the apple-laden wreath on the door to the mantels adorned with greenery and berries, they made the house grand for the holidays. We are equally indebted to Jenny Hall Busch who did a stand up job marshaling food and drinks and created the beautiful table landscape for our Christmas party (see above). It was a wonderful event with classical guitar music, a blizzard, but most importantly a convivial group of friends, neighbors, and members. Finally, we extend a very sincere thank you to the membership for your continued support through your dues and generous end-of-the-year donations. Your financial support fuels our mission to preserve the village's history.

I suspect this will be a banner year for history minded people in Stone Mountain. Our depot is undergoing a tremendous transformation. The south end has been carefully preserved with the mortaring of the joints between the granite stones (quite a few birds who nested in the walls lost their homes!), adjacent planters have been removed to avoid moisture problems, and a new roof is on the way. It is the heart of our village and its exterior preservation is an exciting first step in its new life as a community building.

We are delighted to have three new board members this year: Sally Kellogg, Susan Devine, and Chakira Johnson. Each brings talent and expertise to our operations and we



2015 Officers and Board

Mary Beth Reed, President
Kathryn Wright, Membership
Theresa Hamby, Secretary
JoAnn Florence, Treasurer
Rusty Hamby, House Manager
Susan Devine, Keeper of the Gardens

At Large Board Members:

Chakira Johnson
Sally Kellogg
Jim McCurdy
Pat Miller
Naomi Thompson

Wells-Brown House Committee:

Rusty Hamby, Chairman
Ann Hamby, House
Jim Bill McCurdy, House
Kathryn Wright, House
Theresa Hamby, Collections
Pat Miller, Library

look forward to working with them. We will miss Averil Bonsall, past president and board member, but wish she and her husband, Bob, well in their new location. The contributions of both will be sorely missed.

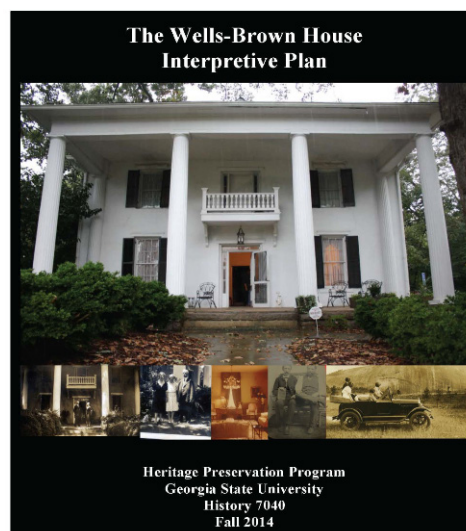
Our new website will be online by the end of January. Future newsletters will have a new posting containing a detailed history of a historic house in the village and we will continue our "Growing Up in Stone Mountain Series" through the year. Other 2015 goals include developing a cemetery tour to debut this spring in partnership with the Cemetery Trust. We are looking for family members and community volunteers to provide family stories and to act as interpreters to tell stories at specific gravesites. If you are interested in rekindling your dramatic skills, are a family history buff, or just want to participate, please contact us at stonemtnhistoricsociety@gmail.com.

We are just digesting the Interpretive Plan produced for us by the graduate class in Heritage Preservation at Georgia State University. Some of their suggestions included locating artifacts to interpret the office of Dr. James Riley Wells within the Wells Brown House. They also encouraged using an upstairs /downstairs approach to researching the house, focusing on all who lived and worked there. Finally, they encouraged us to look at what made our history unique – the civic commitments our ancestors made to make Stone Mountain a good place to live. The students did a great job and gave us lots of food for thought. This plan will be available on our website and if you want a hard copy please give me a call and I will send it to you (770-498-4155 ext. 128).

Eventwise, Naomi Thompson is our first speaker this Thursday at 7:00 pm at the Wells Brown House. She will be sharing some old and new film footage found in the Park's archives. The Rock Gym is ours for Valentine's Day and an Easter Bunny is making an appearance at the Wells Brown House in March. Look forward to seeing you at all these great events.

One Place Study - Meeting the McClures

In November, the One Place Study group invited Wells descendant, Ashley McClure, to the Wells Brown house to learn more about the Wells



Wells Brown Interpretive Plan

Compiled by the Heritage Preservation Program, Georgia State University, Issues and Interpretations of Public History Class: Marcy Breffle, Nathan Brown, Joshua Curtis, Lisa Flaherty, Laurel Lamb, Courtney Nix, Raul Pino, Julie Renner, Alexandra Troxell, Charles Turner, and Megan Warley under the direction of Dr. Kathryn Wilson, Fall 2014.



SAVE THE DATE

**OLD FASHIONED
EASTER EGG HUNT**

WELLS BROWN GROUNDS

MARCH 28th

Family. Ashley had posted a blog about her family research illustrated with photographs of her great-grandfather, Dr. James Wells and her grandmother, Martha Jane Wells. This caught our attention and an invitation was sent and accepted. For over an hour, Ashley McClure and her family toured the house and graciously provided information about the family as well as family photographs, some of which are shared here.



Scotty Scott, Pauline Myers, Rusty Hamby, Theresa Hamby, Pat Miller, and Chakira Johnson learned about Martha Jane and her husband, Robert Herring, and their offspring as well as long-time servant, Modine Etchison, a Shermantown resident. Scans of photographs of the family in the Society's collection were given to the family and some great images were lent to us to further inspire our research. It was a good exchange and we hope to do more as we learn about the Wells Family. Join us on February 12th at 7:00 pm at the Wells Brown House if you would like to join the study group.



Dr. James Wells and his sister Mary on porch with Family Dog.



Spicy Corn and Ham Soup

Published in the AJC, this recipe won a trip to the Bahamas for Edith Shiver from the Georgia Farm Bureau Souper Dairy Recipe Contest in the early 1990s. It is great hot or cold, and can be lightened by substituting 4 cups of skim milk for the milk and half and half.

Makes 8 servings

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

- 1 small onion
- 2 cups cream-style corn, fresh, frozen or canned
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 6 ounces lean cured ham chopped finely
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 rib celery, chopped
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- 2 cups of milk
- 2 cups half-and-half
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 3 tablespoons pimentos, chopped
- 3 ounces cheddar cheese shredded
- 1 cup whipping cream, whipped
- Nutmeg for garnish, optional
- Fresh mint sprigs for garnish

Put onion and corn in blender and puree.

In a 2-quart saucepan melt butter on medium heat. Add chopped ham and cook 5 minutes, stirring.

Add pureed corn mixture, salt, hot pepper sauce, celery, white pepper and 1/2 cup of milk. Cook 10 minutes on medium heat, stirring to mix well.

Depot Renovation Reveals Historic Georgia Railroad Logbooks

While completing the new roof for the Depot in December, contractors found historic Georgia Railroad logbooks nestled under the eaves. Thirty-four logbooks were retrieved and each will receive an initial cleaning to remove about a hundred years of dirt on the covers and interiors. Remarkably, while the covers have suffered damage, the interior pages appear to be very well preserved.

Seven of the oversize books have been cleaned and they date from 1911 through 1915. Some are freight registers showing who was doing business in the town. For example, in a record of Georgia Railroad's Cash Receipts for January 19, 1915 the following Stone Mountain businesses are noted: W.E. Tuggle, J.W. Britt & Co., D. McCurdy Co, L. A. Weaver, C.A. and H.H. Holly, Davis & Davis, J.S. Rankin, Pappas & Campbell, Cash Grocery Store, W. D. Maddox, and B.B. Rhodes.



Others logbooks/registers provide statistics on passenger travel such as the Georgia Railroad Daily Record and Passenger Travel for 1913, which shows how many tickets were purchased for each destination. Not surprisingly, a cursory look suggests that Atlanta and Decatur were the most popular destinations. These logbooks contain significant information about village commerce prior to World War I and will be on display in the depot when it is rehabilitated for community use. They are truly an unexpected treasure.

Add 1 and 1/2 cups of milk, half-and-half and parsley flakes. Cover; heat on medium-low to simmering, stirring often. Remove from heat.

Stir in pimentos and grated cheddar cheese. Mix well. Keep soup hot until ready to serve if hot soup is desired.

If cold soup is desired, cool and chill in refrigerator. Serve chilled soup in a small cup as an appetizer.

When serving soup, hot or cold, place a mound of whipped cream on top of each serving in a soup bowl or cup. Garnish with a dash of nutmeg and a sprig of mint.

Per serving without garnishes: 327 calories, 15 grams of protein, 6 grams fat, 19 grams of carbohydrates, 1 gram of fiber.

In Honor of Dixie Marks Wilson (1940-2014)



Dixie Marks Wilson's obituary gently notes that at age 74, she went to be with the Lord on December 30, 2014. The Society was very fortunate to count Dixie as one of our own. She was an active member and volunteer in 2005 when we inherited the Wells-Brown House. She was there at the beginning and very much involved in cleaning up and cleaning out the house in its first days, and was a faithful, dependable volunteer who could always be counted on to roll up her sleeves and pitch in wherever needed. Her participation really made a difference.

Growing up in the Marks house next door to the Wells-Brown house, Dixie had some very interesting stories to tell about Miss Mary Wells, the last Wells descendant to occupy the house. Dixie as a young child, every night after supper, would don her pajamas and walk next door to spend the night with "Miss Mary" who was alone in the house after her brother Dr. James Wells died. Dixie said it was a job because she got paid (probably a nickel or two).

Dixie Wilson loved the Wells-Brown House. We enjoyed her remembrances of days gone by and visitors were lucky to get Dixie as a tour guide when visiting the Wells Brown House because of the interesting stories she could tell about the house and "Miss Mary." She was an energetic, loving friend to all in Stone Mountain. Our hearts go out to her two daughters and her sweet twin grandchildren - Will and Bella.

-JoAnn Florence and Kathryn Wright

Upcoming Events

Naomi Thompson Takes Us to the Movies, January 22, 7:00pm Wells Brown House

We are very proud to have Naomi Thompson, the Stone Mountain Memorial Association's Education Supervisor, give our first talk of 2015. Naomi will be presenting a montage of recently digitized film footage found in the Park archives. The hometown crowd will recognize some of the events captured on film! Refreshments will be served.

Valentine's Dance at the Rock Gym, Saturday, February 14, 2015, 7:00 pm

Be there! **Frank Luton, our DJ**, will be spinning just the right tunes for a Valentine's Night event, the **Varsity** will provide the eats (food inside), and the **Rock Gym** never fails as a marvelous venue for food, dancing, and friendship. Children are welcome! Gifts will be raffled and a special treat will be an exhibit of the 62 Granite Sentinel banners created for our 175th Celebration as well as new photographs collected by the Society. Tickets at door: \$20 for adults, \$12 for children. Food includes 2 entrees and a side, dessert, and soft drinks. Please join us for a night of great fun and help support the Society!



Easter Egg Hunt at Wells Brown House, Save the Date, Saturday, March 28th

You are invited to a Spring Celebration sponsored by the Stone Mountain Historic Society. The meanings of the many different customs observed during Easter have



**Snow Falling at Christmas
Party**



City Cemetery Trivia

What woman's gravestone is
embedded in a tree trunk?

been buried with time but all are a celebration of spring and all that this wonderful season brings. An Easter Egg Hunt is one of the most joyful we still practice.

Gather with us on Saturday, March 28th for an Old Fashioned Egg Hunt on the Wells Brown grounds. Bring your children, your grandchildren, or children special to you. We will have an Easter Bonnet Parade with prizes for the best bonnet, one prize for adults and one prize for children. Two egg hunting areas will be created with an area for crawlers and toddlers and an area for our older participants. The Easter Bunny will be there to lead the fun and will pose for photos. Snacks will be served. Save the date and more information will be included in our next newsletter.

- Rusty Hamby