



LANDMARK LETTER

Historic Mobile Preservation Society



Volume 41, Issue 1
November 2009

Inside this issue:

Haunted Oakleigh	2
Oakleigh Belles	2
Become A Partner	2
Brave Scouts	3
Plan A Visit	3
"What's It Worth"	3

Bravery & Beauty

Bravery & Beauty was a rousing success! The mint julep party and silent auction boasted record attendance and raised funds and community support for the work of the Historic Mobile Preservation Society. Guests filled the antebellum mansion and spilled out onto the lawn. The jovial air lingered well into the evening. The festive event commemorates the 1877 visit to Oakleigh by (then) Ohio Congressman and retired (Union) Major General James A. Garfield who would soon become our 20th President. As the guest of T.K. Irwin, Gar-

field sipped his first mint julep on Oakleigh's veranda. Later, he would reminisce, "The bravery and beauty of Mobile



"The bravery and beauty of Mobile were there."
James A. Garfield (1877)

were there." And so, once again, the brave and beautiful have returned to Oakleigh to mingle with neighbors while sipping

juleps and savoring delicious food.

According to HMPS Board member Sam Gadd, who coordinated the event, dozens of area businesses donated goods and services for the auction. Local artists also showed their support for historic preservation by donating their works. "This is what you call a 'working board'" commented Martha LoCicero as she quietly guided fellow board members and HMPS volunteers through the bustle that night. And work they did, with passion and purpose. Just wait until next year!



Coming Attractions:

"What's It Worth"

(airing on Fox 10)

November 11th & 12th

Christmas at Oakleigh

December 5th & 6th

Historic Homes Tour

March 19th & 20th, 2010

Historic Preservation: Our Passion!

Dear Friends,

Historic Mobile Preservation Society (HMPS) is alive, well and flourishing. Your new board took office in late May. We immediately embarked on a mission to rekindle those important ties to each historic neighborhood and organization. Currently we are in dialogue with Old Dauphin Way. We are also reaching out to

the Mobile Historic Development Commission and the City of Mobile to support community preservation. HMPS is represented on the newly reconstituted Barton Preservation Committee. Keeping Barton Academy in the forefront of preservation and restoration is essential. You can count on HMPS to be a proactive voice.

We are having an incredible, productive year. For example, the Oakleigh complex has been spruced up, inside and out. New flooring has been installed throughout much of the first floor, thanks to the city. Trim was painted and windows replaced and glazed. City groundskeepers have taken the gardens in hand. A

(Continued on page 3)



*“Oakleigh is
the front
porch of
Mobile.”*

Al Stokes

Haunted Oakleigh

Hailing from all over the city, more than 500 Mobilians recently experienced a night of suspense, mystery and intrigue during Haunted Oakleigh. Even the driving downpour last Thursday evening (October 22) did not deter the crowds. Guests prowled and snooped all over the shadowy Oakleigh Complex. Their journey unfolded like a suspense-filled novel telling har-

rowing tales. The vignettes called upon local legends and actual historical events associated with the property to stir the imaginations of both young and old.

The Drama Department from the University of South Alabama provided the artistic direction, amazing props and special effects, as well as actors. Oakleigh's own Belles served as actresses and in

other supporting roles throughout the three night event. Even neighborhood children got in on the act.

Proceeds from Haunted Oakleigh will support projects at Oakleigh including support for our Belles and their activities. HMPS appreciates such a “frightful” response by our friends, neighbors, and partners. Many thanks to all!

Become a Partner Today!

When you become an HMPS partner you join a broad-based community effort that's committed to making sure that Mobile's distinctive charm flavors the 21st Century. Membership is within everyone's reach. Even the youngest students may join for just \$10/year. Individuals can enroll, beginning at a modest \$35/year. Families of any size can enjoy the benefits of mem-

bership for just \$50/year. Various levels of membership are also available, including Corporate Memberships. As our partner in historic preservation you will receive news and announcements regarding a variety of activities: educational, social and civic. Enjoy complimentary admission to Oakleigh Historic Complex year-round. You are also eligible for exclusive discounts in

Oakleigh Gift Shop and at HMPS special events. As an added benefit, you are eligible for discounted registration to the annual National Trust for Historic Preservation conference. Don't delay, call 251.432.6161 to become our partner in historic preservation.

Click here to download online membership form.

Oakleigh Belles: Exceptional Girls Bring History to Life



Belles get acquainted during their introduction to the Oakleigh Complex.

The Oakleigh Belles program, which began in 2008, is designed to initiate high-school girls as guides of the Oakleigh Historic Complex and the Museum of Mobile, as well as allowing them to serve as ambassadors for the Historic Mobile Preservation Society. They are selected annually in a competitive interview setting.

The girls, dressed in authentic late 1800's period dresses, make special appearances for activities related to tourism and civic presentations. Belles

also serve as hostesses for special events including Haunted Oakleigh, Christmas at Oakleigh, and the Mobile Historic Homes Tour. Additionally, they have some fun activities including picnics and parties at the Oakleigh Mansion.

“We have girls from all over the Mobile area. Our Belles are very active in their schools and are required to maintain a cumulative B average,” reports Historic Mobile Preservation Society board member and Belle coordinator, Sally Ad-

ams Trufant. “Because the Oakleigh Belles interact with the public, our girls must be outgoing, poised, and have excellent communication skills. It helps, too, if they have a passion for history!”

Interviews take place each January. Girls interested in becoming an Oakleigh Belle are encouraged to contact Sally Adams Trufant. Her email address is:

sally@bbpetstop.com

What's It Worth

Two years ago a chalk, ink, and pencil sketch of a young woman sold at auction for the remarkable sum of \$19,000. Until recently the portrait was credited to a 19th century German artist. Unfortunately, the previous owner did not know its real worth! A forensic expert using 21st century science discovered a



palm and a finger print that are an exact match for prints attributed to Leonardo da Vinci on another work housed in the Vatican museum. Art experts tell the current owner that the portrait is valued at greater than \$150 million. Maybe you have an antique or piece of art that makes you wonder, "What's it worth?" Now

you have an opportunity to ask the experts, "Is great grandmother's lamp really a Tiffany or just an aged knock-off brand?" WALA-Fox 10 is sponsoring an exciting event called, "What's It Worth", so bring your treasures (or trinkets) to Oakleigh on November 11th and 12th from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. For more event details, call 251.432.6161. Professional appraisers will be on hand to give you an answer. Your donation of \$2 per item appraised, is a charitable gift that benefits the work of Penelope House and the Historic Mobile Preservation Society. Viewers can also tune in to Fox 10 for live broadcasts from Oakleigh. Who knows what you might discover?



Some of our brave scouts strike a pose with President Garfield after the party.

Brave Scouts

As Bravery & Beauty wound down, a group of uniformed young men appeared at the door. After a word of welcome and a few introductions they were escorted to the formal dining room to enjoy some refreshments. Their identity was not so much a mystery as was the purpose behind their presence. Party goers appeared a tad puzzled as they offered the boys a warm smile or a kind nod.

At the stroke of nine o'clock members of Boy Scout Troop 227 shifted into action. They volunteered their service to make sure that Oakleigh was ready to receive touring guests the following morning. Tables were stacked and stowed. Linens were gathered and shaken out. As each task was completed a scout would ask where he might be put to use. Before long the tables had been cleared for the caterer and a couple of boys stationed themselves at the sink and took charge of washing platters and serving pieces. "These boys are remarkable!" was oft repeated. Yes they are! Several are now exploring possible Eagle Scout service projects in partnership with HMPS. *Be Prepared* for more scouting service.

OAKLEIGH HOUSE

Hours of Operation

Monday-Wednesday: by appointment

Thursday: 10:00AM-4:00PM

Friday: 10:00AM-4:00PM

Saturday: 10:00AM-4:00PM

Sunday: 1:00PM-4:00PM

Tours on the hour.

Last tour begins one hour prior to closing.

General Admission:

\$7 for adults

\$3 for children and students

\$5/person for groups of 10+

Discounts for Seniors, AAA, Veterans & Active Military

Call 251.432.6161 for information

(Continued from Page 1)

horticulturist is guiding our efforts at improving the grounds. Area youth are fast becoming partners with HMPS. (See related articles.)

The Minnie Mitchell Archives responds to inquiries from all over the United States. Recently Mrs. Lewis Brasell, (Lois) entrusted the archives with some of her late husbands writing, pictures, and

documents concerning Barton and other historic buildings. What a wealth of information!

Bravery and Beauty was a resounding success and there's much more to come!

Al Stokes, the mayor's Chief of Staff, recently remarked that the Oakleigh Complex is the "front porch of Mobile". With so much activity to en-

joy, why not come and join us on the front porch and sit a spell!

Sincerely,

Martha S. LoCicero, M.D.
President, HMPS



**300 Oakleigh Place
Mobile, AL 36604**

*Preserving tangible links to our past
for the enjoyment of present and future generations.*

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Mobile, Alabama
Permit # 528

We're on the Web!

<http://www.historicmobile.org>

Pre-orders due by November 10th

Mail in your order today!

Be sure to include details, contact information, and
your check made payable to:

Historic Mobile Preservation Society

Attn: Christmas Wreath Sales

300 Oakleigh Place

Mobile, AL 36604

For more information or for discounts on large or-
ders contact Sam Gadd at 251-648-1857.



Christmas Wreaths And Garlands

Fresh from the mountains of North Carolina...

22" wreaths/ \$20

75' white pine garlands/\$25

Printed Compliments of BankTrust