

SORTOFA KINDOFA GUY YOU'D REALLY LIKE TO KNOW, PART I BY KRYS HALIBURTON



When we first signed on as volunteers at Bonnet House in 2011, my husband Dick and I immersed ourselves in the orientation program with the idea of learning something of the history of our new home town, Fort Lauderdale. We attended the weekly training sessions, diligently read the manuals, and watched the videos. And as we roamed the house and grounds absorbing the atmosphere, we found ourselves more and more intrigued by the cast of characters responsible for their creation.

Who were they, these people who had hewn a little paradise from a wild barrier island, created an elegant, sophisticated lifestyle here, improved and preserved its natural beauty, and then generously left so much for us and countless others to enjoy? The facts about the family, starting with Hugh Taylor Birch's buying up of tracts of land on the Florida coastline back in the 1890's, right up to Evelyn Bartlett's death in 1997 are well documented, and because Bonnet House is an accredited Museum, we volunteers are required to learn them.

As Linda Schaller, head of the volunteer program, is often heard saying with a wry grimace and lots of emphasis, "Well there are lots of good stories, but this is a M-u-s-e-u-m and so please, please, learn the facts, and then stick to them when you're showing folks around!"

But the facts don't tell you everything about people. The more you learn, the more clues you follow, the more curious you become about what they were really like.

Sorting through the quite complex Birch and Bartlett family trees, we slowly build up a picture: Obviously creative, artistic, wealthy, good-looking, they were living at a time when their wealth gave them the ability to travel the world at will, and when a small battalion of servants allowed them the time to pursue their interests without the distraction of boring everyday chores.

One day, in a training session about Frederic Clay Bartlett's career as a painter, Linda mentioned that he had spent time recovering from a cataract operation. That was in the 'Thirties when recovery took a little longer than now. So, unable to paint, he took off to his favorite European city, Munich where he spent his days writing a Journal, which he called Sortofa Kindofa Journal Of My Own.

Well now, there's a hint! If the title had been "Frederic Clay Bartlett: My Formative Years" I don't suppose I would have felt so impelled to read it.

Linda made a photocopy available (the real document is of course, Museum material, and requires the white-gloves approach), and I found a quiet corner to flip through it, hoping for insight into the artist's personality.

A couple of hours later I sped up the steep stairway to Linda's office and said, "please can I have the rest." Linda laughed, "so you wanted more, too? Well, we're out of luck. That's it. That's all he wrote."

Frederic Clay Bartlett is, of course, the architect, builder and the first artist-in-residence of Bonnet House. When he married Helen Birch, daughter of the Chicago lawyer who owned the parcels of undeveloped land along the Florida coastline, he was:

- the son of a wealthy Chicago hardware merchant
- a successful artist trained in Munich and Paris
- a 45-year old widower with a young son.

LETTER FROM THE CEO

BY KAREN BEARD

Bonnet House South Gate and North Beach Village Re-invention

Recently, Patrick Shavloske and I attended a design competition sponsored by *Tropic Magazine*. Four architecture firms gave presentations on what they would recommend for revitalizing the North Beach area. North Beach runs from the southern end of the Bonnet House property to the W Hotel.



South Entrance Rendering

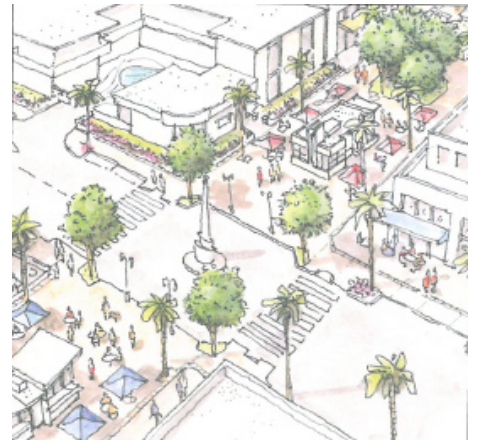
The firms were told to re-invent the area and in particular to focus on Breakers Avenue as an important north/south aspect of their designs, something *Tropic Magazine* called the “very spine of the neighborhood.” The designers were also told to create their solutions without regard to current zoning or other restrictions.

Bonnet House is keenly interested in what will happen to this section of the beach.



South Entrance Gatehouse Rendering

We support the efforts to return it back into a destination. Bonnet House will soon be raising funds to allow us to re-open the historic south entrance to the Bonnet House property located at the north end of Breakers Avenue. Our new entrance will be a pedestrian entrance which will allow visitors and residents to access the property the way the Birch/Bartlett families did. The historic opening leads to the Desert Garden and then to the front doors of the Main House, as will our new entrance. Included in the new south gate project is an interpretive exhibit that will focus on some of the earlier residents on the property, the Tequestas. This exhibit will allow visitors to learn more about the people who lived on this beautiful spot hundreds of years ago.



One proposed streetscape

It was very affirming for us to be at this design presentation. All of the designers spoke of the beauty of the Bonnet House property and incorporated elements found on the property into their designs. Each designer had a unique solution inspired by Bonnet House. We were very pleased that Bonnet House is viewed in such a positive manner and agree that it should be an inspiration for our neighborhood. The South Gate will be very good for Bonnet House. It will allow us to be a part of this important aspect of the reinvention North Beach.

EVELYN BARTLETT BONNET HOUSE ORCHID

The Evelyn Bartlett Orchid is set to bloom with eight clusters of flowers the second week in April. Be sure to visit the Orchid Display House and catch a glimpse of this beautiful orchid named after Evelyn Bartlett.

The orchid is a cross made from seeds from BLC Momilani Rainbow crossed with pollen from Cattleya Intermedia to create this hybrid registered with the American Orchid Society after its first bloom in 2011.

Orchid care volunteer extraordinaire Tony Millet created and registered this orchid.



DEVELOPMENT NEWS

BY PATRICK SHAVLOSKE, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Impressions Recognizes Artists and Raises Funds for Bonnet House



1st Place Winner.

Tammy Seymour, *Calamus*

The opening night cocktail party for Impressions: A Juried Art Exhibit was held at Bonnet House on February 10th with over 270 guests attending. Presenting sponsors for the event were Ryder Systems, Inc. and Hyatt Regency Pier Sixty-Six, 360 Degree Catering who provided the food and décor for the lavish

event. Matt Carone returned for the second time as guest juror for the exhibit and also selected the winning artists: Tammy Seymour won first place for her watercolor *Calamus*; Sandy Dolan won second place for her photograph, *Shutter Light*, and Liora G. Davis won third place for her watercolor, *Chihuly at Fairchild*. Honorable mention winners were George Dolan, Phoenix Marks, Larry Joe Miller, Tammy Seymour, and Kit Snider. The People's Choice winner (selected by guests on opening night) was Greg Burns for his pen and ink and watercolor work, *Tropical Balustrades*. Special thanks go to the event co-chairs, Kirk Imhof and Lois Schmatz who successfully raised \$48,500 in cash sponsorship for the opening night event, to the guests who purchased nineteen paintings on opening night, and to everyone who made this year's event such a success.



People's Choice Winner.

Greg Burns, *Tropical Ballustrades*

Funding in Place to Rebuild Boat House Bridge and Rehabilitate Boathouse

Once home to the Bartletts' boat aptly named *The Bonnet*, the historic Bonnet House Boat House sits astride the private canal linking the estate to the Intracoastal Waterway. Today, tour visitors enter the museum by crossing

a bridge that links the Welcome Center, the Boat House, and the most historic, eastern half of the property. By the time Mrs. Bartlett donated Bonnet House in 1983, the Boat House had long fallen out of use and significant work was needed to save the building and to replace a wood bridge that made it accessible. But, the reconstructed bridge and some other upgrades made nearly 30 years ago now are themselves falling victim to time and the destructive natural elements of a seaside environment. Thanks largely to two anonymous donors, Bonnet House has raised the funds necessary to rebuild the Boat House Bridge and perform

minor restoration and painting work on the Boat House itself. Work will soon be getting underway, so look for the new and improved bridge to open in late spring or early summer. Bonnet House offers a sincere thank you to everyone who is making this project possible.



Boat House, Photo by Sandy Dolan

Major Donors Get Preview of South Gate

Since its earliest days, Bonnet House Museum & Gardens has benefitted from the friendship of EDSA, a world renowned planning and architectural landscape firm headquartered here in Fort Lauderdale. Founded by Edward D. Stone—a friend of Mrs. Bartlett—EDSA continues to assist Bonnet House on an array of planning matters. EDSA's latest project for Bonnet House has been design work on reopening Bonnet House's historic South Gate. Major donors saw initial plans for the gate at a dinner on the veranda on February 23rd where EDSA's Chairman, Joe Lalli, made a presentation about the history associated with the area and the possibilities this project has for enhancing the public visibility of Bonnet House. CA Catering, one of Bonnet House's preferred caterers, generously provided catering services for the evening.



Kent Planck, Rose Holland, Joe Holland

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THE LILY PAD

NEWSLETTER OF THE BONNET HOUSE ALLIANCE

A NOTE FROM THE ALLIANCE PRESIDENT BY KEN FARLEY



Writing this in advance of the Alliance's signature Entirely Entertaining Luncheon makes me pause for a moment, reflecting not only on what the Alliance has accomplished, but also on the friendships that have been forged and what is still on the horizon before we close another chapter in the rich history of Bonnet House and the Alliance.

Each of us will walk away with our individual memories... it is your work and your commitment that have helped ensure the legacy of Bonnet House will continue. Thanks to the Alliance it's a job well done!



Alliance Luau Luncheon on Bonnet House Beach

Our next event is the annual "Volunteer Appreciation Party" April 2nd at Le Club. Our committee is hard at work putting the finishing details together, but extra hands are always appreciated. I encourage you to contact Rosalie Rusovick if you're able to assist in any way. Her number is in the directory.

For our final luncheon on May 7th, we return to Fort Lauderdale's landmark The Tower Club with good food, camaraderie, and breath-taking views of the city. At that time we will also have the installation of new officers. Mark your calendars...and thanks again for your valuable contribution of time and effort.



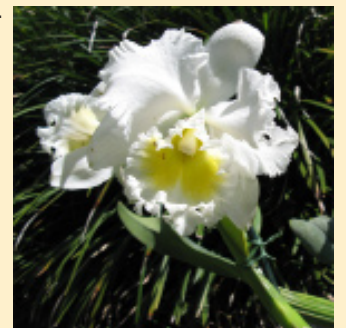
Guests enjoy Entirely Entertaining XVII

MORE THANKS FOR ENTIRELY ENTERTAINING

Timing is everything. Our program went to the printer before we could include everyone. Below are several generous businesses and individuals who helped make Entirely Entertaining XVII a great success: Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Casa D'Angelo Ristorante, Chef Remi, Nancy D'Amore, Pat D'Antonio, Decorating Den, Gold Medal Wine, Patsy Hawkes, H.I.P. Nurseries, Leslie Wells Rambin, Harley Schmude, Margarethe Sorenson and 33rd Street Wine Store.

WATCH ME GROW! CAROL DRUM MEMORIAL

A charming and beautiful woman who loved the Bonnet House and its fascinating collections passed away in the spring of 2011. Her husband of over 50 years, Ted Drum, asked that the Bonnet House Alliance be the recipient of the memorial gifts sent by her family and friends. The Alliance determined with her husband that the Bonnet House Orchid Collection would benefit from these gifts, "In Memory of Carol Drum," and would be used to support and enhance the extensive Bonnet House orchid collection.



In addition, a new hybrid orchid has been developed in her honor and registered with the American Orchid Society. Carol loved orchids and this tiny orchid plant is a very special tribute to her life and memory. It had its first bloom this spring and should bloom a second time in early summer.

One of our tables at Entirely Entertaining XVII, "Orchids and Antique Mirrors," was lovingly designed by Carol's daughter, Lorrie Drum Roschman, and her friend, Tracy Ziegler Dunn, to further honor this delightful and gracious lady.

cont'd from page 1

As a wedding present, Helen's father gave them a tract of land adjoining his own on the Fort Lauderdale coast. When Frederic had asked "how much land," he had been told "enough to swing a cat."

Those are some of the facts from the notes we volunteers were given.

From the paintings and photographs of him at Bonnet House I knew he was dashing handsome. He had an understanding of architecture and a great eye for decorative detail. He also had an undisputed talent for mural painting and stained glass work, for it's a recorded fact that he earned \$65,000 from commissions in Chicago in the first year of his professional career. And I knew he had to be both exuberant and whimsical because, if he was the architect and builder of Bonnet House, there's ample evidence of those appealing traits all around us in the colorful walkways, gardens and crazy combinations of curios.

What I also discovered from his journal was that he was both frugal and generous; modest and unassuming, that he was a loyal and discreet friend who valued friendship perhaps above all other virtues; that he was both a diligent student, and a love-struck beau; that he was exceedingly mellow and good-natured; that he loved interior decorating, partying, music and dancing; that he was an indefatigable traveler; that he carried not a trace of pomposity or vindictiveness in his makeupand that he was a dog listener.

All that deduced from just 66 small printed pages?

Yes. And what's really intriguing is that, although his journal covers only the years from 1893 to 1900 and was written during a cold German winter thirty-odd years later, all the way through it are references to things we can see and recognize every day at Bonnet House. Let's take a look:

Here's Frederic, aged 19. He has had an eye-opening experience at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, and has managed to persuade his father, the Chicago businessman, to let him go to Germany to study art.

Poor little rich boy having a "gap" year at Dad's expense? You would be forgiven for thinking that on his first night there he might call a cab and book into a decent hotel. But this is what he wrote: "Arriving late at night I found a cheap lodging near the station.

The corn husks of my mattress seemed like clouds of feathers after the wooden bench of my railway carriage...."

He takes lodgings with his private art teacher whom he reveres and calls *The Master*, and starts his art studies in earnest.

Once, coming back from a week's sketching in the country, he describes losing all his sketches, having his entire attention centered on his "knapsack of antique steins purchased for a song in the little stowed-away village where I had been working."

Guess where you can see those antique steins today? At Bonnet House, a collection of nineteen of them, shelved on the West wall of the Dining Room.

Later, his Friend (whom he does not name either in the journal, but whom we know to be his lifelong friend Robert Allerton) arrived in Munich, also with the blessing of his wealthy family, to study art. The two set up a joint studio and go for long walks "in our beautiful Munich with its endless parks adorned with statues and fountains," surely an early mind-picture that led to the way he decorated the courtyard at Bonnet House.

Together the two would wander around Munich haunting the many street markets full of second-hand goods:

"Perhaps furniture predominated, and many a rare antique table and chair were purchased by us, and carried, strapped to our backs, in triumph back to Munich, stopping on the long walk home before wirtshouses [pubs] where refreshments were brought out and served to us at our own table sitting on our own chairs."

So began the lifelong magpie-like hunt for interesting stuff, from antiques and ecclesiastical curios to the eclectic mix to be seen on the shelves and cupboards in the Studio and other rooms at Bonnet House.



In our next edition we learn that Frederic and his friend Robert Allerton both gain admission to the prestigious Royal Academy of Arts in Munich, Germany; Frederic meets and marries Dora, moves to Paris, and falls under the spell of the Impressionist painters.

Monica Estevez, Marketing Manager,
is the editor of this issue of **The Newsletter**



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The Newsletter
 APRIL - JUNE 2012

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