EUL & GARDENS A Droperty of the Florida Trust

The Newsletter October - December 2016

The House of Refuge at Bonnet House

Caretaker's Cottage Gets Restored

Annual Report

From the CEO

Bonnet House Caretaker's Cottage Gets Restored

The original two story Caretaker's Cottage was built in the early 1920's. It housed the Caretaker and his family who lived on the Bonnet House property year round. Over the years additions and alterations were made. They included the one story building attached to the two story cottage as well as alterations to the original two story cottage.

Jefferson Lockett was the first Caretaker. He represented Mr. Birch in town. He referred to Mr. Birch as "Big Boss." Mr. Birch considered him a "faithful and dear friend."

Dewey Hawkins who grew up on the property eventually became the caretaker, chauffer and overseer of Mr. Birch's properties.

Frank West was a carpenter who worked on the Birch property. In 1929 he was named Superintendent of Bonnet House and also performed work on the property that is now Birch State Park.

James Brunner started working for the Bartletts in 1956. He worked there until the 1980s. He once shot two men who were trying to break in with a shotgun.

Larry Manny lived at Bonnet House after it was donated to the FTHP and opened for visitors. He was the last caretaker to live on the property.

Bonnet House was fortunate to secure a Special Category grant from the State of Florida which has allowed us to complete a number of restorations. One of the buildings being restored back to its original 1920's appearance is the Caretaker's Cottage. Like any other building that is almost 100 years old, various repair needs were discovered. The posts that hold up the upstairs porch needed to be replaced. The foundation footer on the first floor had to be replaced. The porch floor was rotted and will be replaced. All custom milled spindles had to be replaced on the railings and some siding that has been installed over the years was removed. The project should be completed by October.



Karen Beard

Karen Beard, CEO

Newsletter design by Monica Estevez Cover photo: *Chickee Bridge* by Larry Singer

Development News by Patrick Shavloske

Qualified Charitable Distributions Made Permanent



In a winwin vote for organizations like Bonnet House and many IRA holders, Congress and the

President agreed to make permanent the provision for Qualified Charitable Distributions with the passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016. For several years, donors over 70½ who wished to make contributions from their IRAs rather than incurring income through required minimum distributions faced uncertainty as to whether or not the provision would be renewed. There is no longer any doubt; the provision is now permanent.

Here's how the provision works. Once an IRA owner reaches 701/2, he or she must begin taking withdrawals from the IRA. These withdrawals are known as required minimum distributions, and the withdrawn money is subject to tax as ordinary income. However, let's say an IRA owner doesn't really need the withdrawn funds. The qualified charitable distribution allows the IRA owner to direct all or a portion of the required minimum distribution to a charity to avoid recognizing the withdrawal as income subject to taxation. For many people over 701/2, it may make sense for them to use this provision of the tax code to fulfil their charitable goals. There is only one catch; the gift from the IRA must go directly to the charity. If the IRA custodian makes the gift payable to the donor or even deposits the gift into a donor's checking account, the gift won't qualify as a charitable distribution, and there is no way to reverse the error.

Several Bonnet House supporters have taken advantage of the qualified charitable distribution in previous years. If you are 70½ and are looking for a way to support Bonnet House, speak with your financial advisor to determine if this strategy makes sense for you. You may also contact Director of Development, Patrick Shavloske for more information at 954-703-2603 or at patrickshavloske@bonnethouse.org. Florida Division of Cultural Affairs and Division of Historical Resources Support Bonnet House

The Florida Division of Cultural Affairs has awarded Bonnet House a programming support grant of \$92,726 for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. This grant will support the education programs



at Bonnet House as well as tours and Bonnet House Fine Artist exhibits. In addition, the Florida Division of Historical Resources has awarded Bonnet House a Special Category grant of \$309,458. Combined with a cash match of \$155,000 from the Evelyn F. Bartlett Support Trust, this funding has allowed many long-deferred maintenance and repair projects to take place including extensive wood restoration, painting, and correcting severe structural deficiencies at the Caretaker's Cottage. Please take a moment to contact your state representative and senator to express your thanks for their support of grant programs in both the Division of Cultural Affairs and Division of Historical Resources.

Join The Haller Foundation in Supporting Concerts Under the Stars



Bonnet House offers its sincere thanks to The Haller Foundation for becoming the presenting sponsor of our annual Concerts Under the Stars, Young Artist Music Series programs. The foundation's trustees hope that their gift will inspire others to sponsor the concerts and the preservation of Bonnet House. Contact Monica Estevez or Patrick Shavloske for more information on how to be a sponsor and receive VIP seating at these much-loved performances.

The House of Refuge at Bonnet House

by Ruth Landini and Denyse Cunningham



Hugh Taylor Birch Standing by the House of Refuge, c. 1902

In 1876, the US Government extended the welcome arm of the U.S. Life-Saving Service down the long deserted southeast coast of Florida. Five stations called Houses of Refuge or Life Saving Stations were built approximately 25 miles apart. Construction of House Number Four in Fort Lauderdale was completed on April 24, 1876 and was situated near what is today Bonnet House Museum & Gardens. Its location was on the main dune of the barrier island that is approximately four miles north of the New River Inlet. Archeological finds from that time have been discovered in the area and an old wellhead still exists at this location.

The houses were the homes of the keepers, as the men-in-charge of the houses were called and their families. They were required to go along the beach in both directions in search of castaways immediately after a storm. Keepers were not expected nor were they equipped to effect actual lifesaving, but merely were required to provide food, water and a dry bed for visitors and shipwrecked sailors who were lucky enough to have gained shore.

Prior to 1876 when the entire coast of Florida was windswept and infested with mosquitoes, fresh water was difficult to obtain. Most of the small settlements were on the mainland, and shipwrecked men had a fearful time in what was years later considered a "Tropical Paradise." There was a desperate need for rescue facilities. The problem was brought to a head during the hurricane of 1873 when a vessel was wrecked between Biscayne Bay and the New River. The ship was a total loss and the crew existed on spoiled fish. The story of the hardship was told in the New York newspapers and reached the attention of government officials. The superintendent of the Life Saving Service immediately ordered the construction of the "houses of refuge" which included five houses built from St. Augustine to Miami.

Albert Blaisdell of Boston was appointed the architect. The houses were all alike: frame construction, one-story with loft. Three main rooms downstairs surrounded by an eight-foot-wide verandah on three sides and a narrow kitchen on the north side, windows with screens and shutters but no glass, and a brick chimney in the kitchen for a cook stove. The keeper and his family lived downstairs; the loft, with a small window on each end was equipped with approximately 20 cots for castaways and visitors. Many sailors used to sleeping on the ship's deck did not want to spend the night in the cramped second floor and would sleep out on the porch overlooking the water. There was an outhouse, a boathouse for the lifeboat and a large wooden elevated tank which held



House of Refuge as Coast Guard Base during WW I

water. Each station cost about \$3,000.

Washington Jenkins was a 25-year-old South Carolinian who left his farm on the New River to take the keeper's post. According to the 1870 census, he had only one neighbor, Charles William Pierce, who later wrote a book *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*. Edwin Bradley became the next keeper. After taking over the post he lost his 10-year-old daughter Flora, to a mysterious illness. Workmen engaged with repairing the station made a coffin and she was buried under a wide spreading sea grape tree. Today the location of Flora's grave is unknown. Captain Dennis

The House of Refuge (Cont'd) by Ruth Landini and Denyse Cunningham

O'Neill was the keeper of the house in 1891 when the station was skidded a mile-and-a-half down the beach to where it was originally supposed to be. The New River Station was originally built in the wrong location because the lumber for its construction landed in the wrong spot. It had been tossed overboard and the ship's captain had misjudged the current and it lodged on the beach a mile north of the chosen site. The structure was then constructed where the timbers came ashore.

The land where they built the first Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge was owned by Jacksonville attorney Patrick A. Cunningham. Bonnet House property today is located on parts of two original "government lots." The 22-acre front lot (on which the actual house is today located) had been granted to Walter H. Martin of Tallahassee in 1884 by President Chester Allen Arthur. Patrick Cunningham bought it from Martin in 1891 for \$150 dollars, and when Cunningham came south in 1891 to inspect his property he was surprised to see a structure on it. He demanded the house be removed.

Because of the remoteness of the area it was difficult to get a bid to move the house. It was accomplished by moving the structure down the beach on rollers spread across heavy timber tracks. Both the house and most of the chimney remained intact. The new site was located at the present site of the Bahia Mar Resort.

When contractor Samuel Drake built Bonnet House, some of the bricks of the old foundation of the House of Refuge were still in place. Archeologists found a pre-1900 orange brick during a 1988 survey of the estate.

The house was taken over by the Coast Guard and used as a base during WW I. After the war it was used by the community as a center of recreational activities and a site for numerous picnics and fish fries. It was damaged beyond repair by the 1926 hurricane.

Today there is a House of Refuge museum located in Stuart, Florida which can be visited year-round. The House of Refuge at Gilbert's Bar is the only remaining House of Refuge. Built as one of ten along the east coast of Florida, it is the oldest structure in



House of Refuge at Gilbert's Bar

Martin County and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic structure has weathered many storms and provided needed shelter for shipwreck survivors including those of the *Georges Valentine*, an Italian brigantine whose wreckage remains just 100 yards off the rocky shoreline, providing an ideal dive site.

The House of Refuge continues to withstand the test of time while offering a fascinating look at a bygone lifestyle along the sea.

The museum today has been restored to showcase historical lifesaving equipment and the Keeper's living quarters as they were in 1904.



Bonnet House, Inc. Annual Report July 2015 - June 2016

The Board of Directors of Bonnet House extends its sincere thanks to the following individuals and organizations that have supported Bonnet House between July 1, 2015 and June 30, 2016 through pledges, cash gifts, and gifts of goods or services. The museum would not be able to operate without these loyal benefactors. Thank you!

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We strive to keep our records as accurate as possible. Please contact the development office at (954) 703-2603 with any questions about how your gift is listed. You may also send an email to: patrickshavloske@bonnethouse.org.

Mission

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens stewards the legacy of the Bartlett and Birch families by preserving their historic estate and providing programming that nurtures creative expression, delights the senses, educates, and honors the natural environment.



A Note From the Alliance President William Gundlach III



Happy 30th Year as the Bonnet House Alliance!

Welcome Bonnet House Alliance members to another great year as the Community Ambassadors to the Bonnet House. This is indeed a very exciting time in our history.

We will have our first General Membership meeting on Oct 17th from 5:00pm to 6:00 just before our Oktoberfest kick off. The Oktoberfest which is celebrating Frederic Bartlett's Bavarian experiences will start at 6:00 and go until 8:00.

The "Oktoberfest" is the return of a fun and festive fall event for the Bonnet House and this year it will serve as a membership "Draft" for new members so invite



friends and neighbors to enjoy the evening and learn about the Bonnet House. We will be serving bier, wine, brats and other German delights. There will be live music, dancing and fun.

Then on November 18th we will change costumes into our Great Gatsby Roaring 20's attire and soi-



ree into the speakeasy for cocktails, food, Vegas style entertainment and fun. This is our Third Annual Speakeasy Soiree on the Bonnet House

Veranda and if you thought it was great last year, it will be even better this year. So plan ahead and get your tickets now. The Holiday Party will again be held at Lauderdale Yacht Club on Tuesday December 6th from 11:30 until 2:00. The Club is beautifully decorated for the holidays which lends to a wonderful feeling at this special time of the year.

Last year we took a motor coach tour to Fairchild Tropical Botanical Gardens and this year to entice our traveling pleasure, we will be motor coaching south to Miami, all the while sipping mimosas, on our way to the James Deering Viscaya Estate Museum and Gardens for a grand tour and lunch while enjoying the beautiful architectural surroundings and gardens. This wonderful trip is from 9:00am to 3:00pm on January 30th 2017.

Entirely Entertaining XXII will be Monday February 27th 2017 from 11:30am to 2:00pm on the Bonnet House Veranda. This sell-out event features the most beautiful, whimsical and elegant table settings you have ever witnessed. Local artists and table designers work all year to create their amazing tables to the delight of all who attend. The table settings, the food,



the wine and the wonderful social event is well worth the pleasure being at EEXXII.

We value each and every one of our volunteers. We need and desire your continued help, enthusiasm and support of our Bonnet House. Without you we could not exist. So, thank you for being members of the Bonnet House Alliance, because of you our ongoing success is assured.

I look forward to seeing and working with all of you this year.

Very Sincerely, WGIII Newsletter of the Bonnet House Alliance

Education News by author & historian Bill Sydnor

Mitchell's Magical Day at Historic Bonnet House



Mitchell's Magical Day at Historic Bonnet House is a tale of historical fiction for intermediate readers (3rd - 5th grade). The book highlights significant events that occurred on the Bonnet House property from the early 1800's through the turn of the 20th century.

As a long-time Fort Lauderdale resident and school teacher. I

have always had great interest in Bonnet House and its unique surroundings. Through this book, I wanted to bring the story of Bonnet House to life for young readers and pique their interest to learn more.

While on a 4th grade class field trip to Bonnet House, the protagonist, Mitchell, uses his Pop Pop's 'magical' binoculars to transport himself into the past.

Suddenly, Mitch finds himself on the beach with marooned sailors from the wreck of the schooner, *Alna*, as they seek fresh water to survive. Guess where they find it? But, Mitch and the sailors are in danger... the Seminole Indian War is underway!

Eventually, Mitchell refocuses on the Bonnet House tour and learns all about the property from tour guide, Linda. He decides to look through the magical binoculars again and soon is talking with Hugh Taylor Birch and daughter, Helen. Not long after, he's having a conversation with Ed Hamilton, the Barefoot Mailman!

Mitch redirects his attention to his class tour - he finds the property so interesting! But, he's drawn to take another look through the binoculars. He finds himself with Frederic and Evelyn Bartlett, discussing their keen interest and devotion to the house and property. Tequestas, Seminoles, shipwrecking, the House of Refuge, the Birchs, the Bartletts and others, all brought to life in vivid focus. *Mitchell's Magical Day at Historic Bonnet House* includes a collection of historic photographs, sure to capture the attention of readers of all ages!

I hope you'll enjoy reading this story as much as I enjoyed writing it! Maybe you'll see Mitchell and me as we visit schools across the county.



Cruisin' Down the River By Marlene Schotanus



Bonnet House has all the ingredients for a fun afternoon--Carrie B Sightseeing Boat, historical facts, complimentary wine, and live music provided by the Gold Coast Banjo Band.

Join us November the 12th, 5-7 pm. Tickets available on line at www.bonnethouse.org/calendar

The "Dry" Fountain by Denyse Cunningham



One of the features of the Bonnet House estate designed by Frederic Bartlett is a decorative area with a non-functioning (hence "dry") stone fountain located on the crest of the Secondary Dune. According to Evelyn Fortune Bartlett, Frederic purchased the center portion when a mansion in Palm Beach was being torn down.

The fountain in Palm Beach

It is made of Italian marble and has become our most popular place for wedding ceremonies.

In 1942 Frederic designed the flanking pieces and assembled them to create the fountain as we know



Frederic's design for the Fountain

it today. The large spheres on top of the coral stone columns are also made of marble. Years of exposure to salt air has caused them to crack and the steel rod that held them in place rusted and expanded causing the marble base to crack and break into pieces. One of the spheres detached and rolled onto the ground, nearly ending up in the Slough had it not been stopped by a palm tree!

Properly conserving and restoring both spheres is going to be an extremely costly endeavor. We have a quote from a reputable conservator for \$10,871. We welcome anyone wanting to assist with funding this important project.



The runaway sphere!

Weddings are Sensational at Bonnet House



Bonnet House Museum & Gardens is quite possibly the perfect South Florida location for memorable wedding ceremonies and receptions. With its alluring tropical backdrop and enchanting oceanfront views, Bonnet House provided the awe-inspiring setting for the beautiful nuptials of Laura Beth Koffman and Willy

Clay Wieland Photography

DiStefano, expertly planned by Joni Scalzo of Your Special Day Certified Wedding Coordinators.

The happy Mrs. DiStefano stated, "The reason we picked the Bonnet House is because we wanted to be married outdoors in a garden – not on the beach, which so many outdoor venues are in Florida. We also were looking for a venue where we could have the ceremony and reception at the same place, but not in the same area. Finally, we wanted a place that would be intimate for both our guests and us. Bonnet House superbly met all the criteria. And the tropical gardens also were perfect to showcase my all time favorite flowers, orchids. Still to this day people are saying our wedding was the best they have ever been to."

Whether you are planning a close and intimate gathering or a grand and lavish affair, Bonnet House Museum & Gardens sets the scene for romance and timeless memories, with dramatic spaces, such as the Hibiscus Garden, fountain courtyard, water front veranda and tree-lined allee all providing memorable possibilities for a truly unforgettable wedding. Originally built in 1920, and embodying a unique combination of old-world charm and understated elegance, Bonnet House – listed on the National Register of Historic Places and declared a historic landmark by the City of Fort Lauderdale - exudes classic and eclectic taste, with artwork and decorative flourishes seen at every turn and an evident love for nature reflected in the beautifully manicured grounds surrounding its 35-acre estate.

For additional details, rental information or a tour, please contact Nicholle Maudlin, Events Manager, at 954-703-2608 or at nichollemaudlin@bonnethouse. org.

ACTIVITES CALENDAR 2016 - 2017

EVENTS

CRUISING DOWN THE RIVER

Experience a cruise down the New River and learn about the history of Fort Lauderdale

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 5:00PM \$45 Member/ \$55 Non-members

For information visit bonnethouse.org or call (954) 703-2614

SPEAKEASY SOIREE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 6:00PM - 10:00PM Roaring 20s Gala on the Veranda For information visit bonnethouse.org/alliance

ORCHID, GARDEN & GOURMET FOOD FESTIVAL

Featuring the 10th Annual Orchid & Exotic Plant Sale Orchids, Exotics, Tropicals, Herbs, Fruit Trees, Garden Art, Gourmet Food, Libations and Much More

SATURDAY & SUNDAY DECEMBER 3 & 4 9:00AM - 4:00PM

\$12 Member \$15 Non-members

For information visit bonnethouse.org or call (954) 703-2614

ENTIRELY ENTERTAINING LUNCHEON

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27 11:00AM - 2:00PM An elegant luncheon with individualized table designs

For information visit bonnethouse.org/alliance

CONCERTS UNDER THE STARS

Presented by The Haller Foundation

Featuring the 21st Annual Young Artist Music Series

Enjoy musical performances under the stars on the beautiful

Bonnet House Veranda. Wine, sweets and coffee included in the price

THURSDAY EVENINGS 7:00PM - 9:00PM

JANUARY 19 FEBRUARY 16 MARCH 16 APRIL 6



Individual Tickets: \$35-\$45 For more information & tickets visit bonnethouse.org or call (954) 703-2614

MAKING NEW IMPRESSIONS A JURIED ART EXHIBIT

THURSDAY, MARCH 9 at 6:00PM

Annual Juried Art Exhibit & Fundraiser with a Lavish Opening Reception

Featuring artwork from Florida artists in a variety of media. Exhibition runs through May 1

For details visit bonnethouse.org or call (954) 703-2605



ACTIVITES CALENDAR 2016 - 2017 (Cont'd)

CLASSES

BIRDING CLASSES

SUNDAYS, 2:00PM - 5:00PM

OCTOBER 23 Ascend to Better Birding I **NOVEMBER 6** Ascend to Better Birding II **DECEMBER 11 Bird Behavior JANUARY 8 Birding By Habitat FEBRUARY 12** Birding By Ear MARCH 19



Birding By Season \$20 Members APRIL 8 - 9:00AM - 12:30PM \$25 Non-members Green Cay/Wakadahachedee Cost is per class Special Field Trip

WORKSHOPS

WATERCOLOR WORKSHOPS

Creative Realism 6 WEEK SESSIONS



WEDNESDAYS, 9:30AM - 12:30PM OR 1:00PM - 4:00PM • JANUARY 11 - FEBRUARY 15 MARCH 1 - APRIL 5

\$120 Members/\$150 Non-members

Orchid Painting 2 DAY SESSION

FRIDAY & SATURDAY JANUARY 20 & 21 9:00AM - 3:00PM

\$180 Members/\$200 Non-members

WORKSHOPS (Cont'd)

ACRYLIC WORKSHOPS 6 WEEK SESSIONS

THURSDAYS, 9:30AM - 12:30PM OR 1:00PM - 4:00PM JANUARY 12 - FEBRUARY 16

• MARCH 2 - APRIL 6

\$120 Members/\$150 Non-members

BASKET WEAVING WORKSHOPS I DAY SESSIONS

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4 10:00AM - 2:00PM Small Florida Basket \$90 Members/\$105 Non-members

LECTURE SERIES

MONDAYS, 10:00AM

JANUARY 9 Before Bonnet House: An Archaeological Overview of the first 4,000 Years

FEBRUARY 13 Big Boss: The Story of Hugh Taylor Birch

MARCH 13 **Bonnet House CPR:** Recent Conservation, Preservation & Restoration Projects



Free for members/\$5 Non-members

EXHIBITION

BONNET HOUSE FINE ARTIST EXHIBITION JANUARY 12 - FEBRUARY 28

Opening Reception JANUARY 12, 6:00PM



To Register for Classes or Purchase Event Tickets visit BonnetHouse.org



900 NORTH BIRCH ROAD FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33304

www.bonnethouse.org

Non Profit Organization U.S. Postage PAID Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310 Permit No. 4398

BONNET HOUSE Orchid, Garden & Gourmet Food Festival

Saturday and Sunday December 3 and 4 9:00am - 4:00pm



Orchid Photos by Brian Immke • Event Photos by Elizabeth Monge



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