

Hattiesburg Area Historical Society

HAHS MUSEUM

Post Office Box 1573
Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1573
Located in the
Hattiesburg Cultural Center
723 Main Street
Hattiesburg, MS

BEHIND THE SCENES IN HISTORIC HATTIESBURG SELF-DUNN HOUSE RESTORATION

Perseverance pays off. Every passerby of 901 North Main Street has no doubt of that. The colonial revival home with beaming white columns stands as testimony to the continued efforts of Walt Coker and his family. It offers us an example of what restoration and innovation can give to a community--a community which time and time again abandoned this piece of property, as it did an unfortunate number of others, to the fate of demolition by neglect.

The house itself has persevered. Originally built in the 1890's by the Self Family as a bungalow (small photo), this homestead was established on a small lot of land purchased from Mr. Hardy. It was located on the corner of 610 acres that soon would be divided by the railroad.

After a couple of fires and a couple of owners, R. W. Dunn purchased the home in the early 1920's. Mrs. Dunn set out to make it the colonial revival home of her dreams that stands there today (large photo). The transformation was completed in the early 1930's.

Some Hattiesburg residents know the home as The Brock Furniture House, opened in the 1980's by George Brock. At the height of his business, the home contained four apartments, and a cabinet shop.

After leaving his position as Executive Director of The Good Samaritan Center in 1993, Walt's perseverance was born with a challenge, "You can't fix this house and raise two kids." This was a legitimate, considerate statement made to a family that had to step down to the ground to traverse the expanse of the kitchen. The family's version of a house warming party consisted of putting the grill on the ground in the kitchen, with family and friends seated around on the floor with their feet on the ground--a rather absurd version of a summer picnic at the lake seated on a dock with your feet in the water!

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Small photo: 1920
901 Main St. after fire destroyed first house.

Large photo: 1932
Home of Mrs. R. W. Dunn. Photo from Martha Gunn.

from the president...

As we begin to think about the various upcoming Holidays, my thoughts turn to Thanksgiving. Thank you, thank you, to all our volunteers, members, and donors. Without our volunteers the museum would not be able to remain open.

Most of you know that HAHS operates without any paid staff. Thanks Laurie, Tat, Jeanne, and Earline, for always being there and keeping our doors open to the public. Thanks Ursula for providing interesting exhibits in the museum room and Barbara for helping us with the finances. Also, thanks to the City of Hattiesburg for providing us a place to house our museum.

Our only funding is from our members' dues and contributions. Without your help the HAHS would not be able to continue its service to the community.

Please mark your calendar and join us for fun and fellowship at our annual membership meeting on Saturday, January 8, 2005, at the Phillip's Camp from 2 - 5 p.m. For further information and directions call the museum during office hours.

Paula T. Harvey



DOWNTOWN HISTORIC BUILDING COLLECTABLES



Hattiesburg Depot
Issue Year 2004

*** SPECIAL OFFER ***

Start or complete your collection. Purchase the new 2004 issued ornament for **\$10.00** and previous ornaments are **half price (\$5.00 each.)**



CURRENT EXHIBIT

Our current Museum exhibit features the early history of the Piney Woods area and Hattiesburg. Drop by and view authentic Choctaw tools and arrowheads, a photo of Hattie Hardy, serving pieces from the Hotel Hattiesburg, a light bulb from the Hub Sign, and other historic items and photographs.

GIFTS TO THE SOCIETY

May 1, 2004 - September 30, 2004

- ❁ 1939 Big 8 Track Record of H. G. Talbot, photo and article - Arnie Sowden
- ❁ Two videos: Southwest Indian Art: Baskets and Navajo Rug Weavers - Pam Boor
- ❁ Two cartons of 45 rpm records of Craig Wiseman's *Hattiesburg Centennial Song* - Evelyn Wiseman
- ❁ Camp Dantzler cap - Gerald H. Walker
- ❁ Assorted newspaper clippings and HHS Class of 49, 50 memorabilia - Joyce Craig
- ❁ 1946 photos and postcard - Delores White
- ❁ Two scrapbooks about Smoky Harrington Park from Neely and Mickey Harrington - Theresa Sackler
- ❁ Framed pictures of the Class of 1949 - Cloyd Loewer, Jr.
- ❁ Subscription to *Reminisce* magazine - Martha Gunn
- ❁ Art prints of the Old Library, Bethea Drugs, Trinity Church, Bay St. Pres. Church, Frostop and McLeod House by artist Patty Talbot - Patty Talbot
- ❁ Two watercolor backdrops for the exhibit on the history of Hattiesburg - Patty Talbot
- ❁ Framed 1949 Mississippi Southern College desk blotter - Dr. Van Allen Phillips
- ❁ Doll in Rev. War dress, Bank bags from First National Bank and Citizens Bank - Lorena Roseberry Smith
- ❁ Photo of HHS graduates killed in WWII - Mrs. James Seifert
- ❁ The first Hawkins Jr. High School Annual, 1964-65 - Phyllis Bailey
- ❁ Eight HHS *Hi Flashes* school newspapers from 1959 and 1960 - Becky Cooper
- ❁ Various HHS memorabilia circa 1981-1983 - Tom Rhea Phillips III
- ❁ Choctaw ball sticks (reproduction) - Laurie Crowson
- ❁ Hewlett-Packard Computer, monitor and keyboard - Mr & Mrs Byron East
- ❁ Antique walnut platform rocking cradle circa 1900 with child's quilt and dolls - Laurie Crowson
- ❁ Memorabilia from the Self-Dunn House at 901 Main St.- Walt Coker
- ❁ Printouts and disk of an old Hattiesburg Postcard Set - Walt Coker
- ❁ Four medical bags belonging to Dr. T.E. Ross, Sr. and Dr. T.E. Ross, Jr. - T.E. Ross Family
- ❁ Our continued thanks to Capt. Andrew English for putting his railroad and timber memorabilia on loan for us to enjoy.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN HISTORIC HATTIESBURG- The Self-Dunn House Restoration

Continued from Page 1

Yet the family endured and a home soon surrounded them. Windows, doors, and their frames would simply fall off the house as renovations began. Even an exterior wall began to give under the weight of the upper floors. As quick with a 4 x 4 beam as with hammer and nail, Walt shored up the structure, the floors, interior walls, and soon the neighborhood. With existing materials, and materials found in places one might not think contained items that make a home, this family continued recreating a piece of what once was in innovative ways. Corner shelving, pieced together cabinets, and salvaged flooring are but a few of the imaginative ideas that revived the structure. Walt, with two sons in tow and the aid of friends, has restored the home almost to the exact version of Mrs. Dunn's dream offering back to the community a cornerstone of the North Main Street Historical District.

Over a seven year period trashed bottles from under the house captured a history in glass, the concrete parking lot in the front yard gave way to flower beds, and Italian cypress completed the home's signature landscaping. Then as if awards were not due, the second story caught fire sending heat and soot throughout the first floor, damaging the many items that were missed by Walt's frantic hands as he tried to save what he could. However, rehanging his original paintings in frames battered from landing in the yard, driveway and front porch, Walt took every cent of his insurance and continued. What emerged was a shining example of a man's, a family's, and a neighborhood's spirit of perseverance reminiscent of the spirit that created Hattiesburg.

From information and photos provided by Walt Coker.

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Post Office Box 1573
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MUSEUM HOURS

Mon., Tues., Thurs.
2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Wed. 10 - 12 a.m.
By Appointment
Call 601-582-5460

Located in the
Hattiesburg Cultural Center
723 Main Street
Downtown Hattiesburg, MS
E-mail:
HAHSmuseum@megagate.com

OFFICERS

President.....Paula Harvey
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Historian/Parliamentarian.....
Brian Blair

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HAHS Appreciates These Recent Monetary Contributions

May 1, 2004 - October 20, 2004

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UV PROTECTION NOW INSTALLED

Dr. William B. Thompson, Vice President of the Hattiesburg High School Class of 1951, recently notified HAHS of the class's decision to have no more formal reunions. As a result the HAHS became the recipient of the remaining class funds. This large cash donation enabled us to purchase the much needed UV film to cover the light panels in our exhibit room office, and archives. With the help of volunteers Ursula Jones, Jeanne Herring, Earline Roseberry, Jeanne Tutor, Laurie Crowson, Pam Boor, Molly Graf and Melissa Jones, the material has been installed. We are grateful for the generosity of the HHS Class of 1951 in helping protect our collection.

Thank you for supporting HAHS. The status of your membership is found after your name on the address label for the last year dues have been paid or "L" for Life Member.

2005 HAHS DUES

Date Received _____

Check # _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Individual \$10 _____ Couple/Organization \$15 _____

Student \$2 _____ Each Life Membership \$100 _____

(Please make checks payable to **HAHS**)

Send to: P. O. Box 1573, Hattiesburg, MS 39403-1573

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The History of Forrest County, MS _____ copies @ \$50 each \$ _____

Tax exempt donation of \$3.50 for S/H if mailed \$ _____

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