



Le Journal des Amis



GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

2025 has been an eventful year for Magnolia Mound. Ashley Freeman hit the ground running as our new Museum Director, overseeing both new initiatives and ongoing programs. Significant and much-needed improvements to the Historic House—specifically to the HVAC system and roof—are now underway. Throughout this maintenance period, the staff has done an exceptional job ensuring that tours and programs continue with limited interruption. We are excited by the progress of the Exhibits Committee on a new interactive exhibit honoring the enslaved, highlighting personal stories and the profound contributions of the individuals who lived and labored at Magnolia Mound.

Our special events have also been a great success. The annual Pumpkin Patch drew crowds of delighted children and families, filling the grounds with energy and excitement. As always, Creole Christmas—held this year on Sunday, December 14—offers a festive experience with holiday décor in the Historic House, period demonstrations, and booths featuring local vendors. We are eagerly anticipating the Petite Antique Forum on January 29, 2026, which will feature a lecture by Neal Hurst, Associate Curator of Costume and Textiles at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, as well as tours of three historic properties. Additionally, we look forward to launching a new event in March: an Estate Sale to be held in the barn at Magnolia Mound.

On a sad note, we recently said goodbye to another long term, loyal supporter of Magnolia Mound when Cary Saurage passed away on November 4th. Cary was a true patron of the arts and generous supporter of our community. His deep appreciation for nature and landscape design inspired his steadfast support of Magnolia Mound. We will miss his kind, generous spirit.

The Friends of Magnolia Mound would like to wish you all a wonderful Holiday Season and we hope to see you all soon.

Susan Eaton
President

26th Annual Petite Antiques Forum - January 29, 2026 “THE ART OF DRESSING: CLOTHING MEN AND WOMEN 1770 – 1820”



By Barbara Bacot

Please join us on January 29 for Neal Hurst's lecture on the latest fashions from the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Women's fashions usually steal the show, but Neal Hurst, Curator of Textiles and Historic Dress at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, is also an expert on gentlemen's fashion. Mr. Hurst received his MA from the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture from the University of Delaware. In addition to his academic qualifications, he apprenticed at the Williamsburg tailor's shop and rose to be the master tailor. He knows clothing from the inside out, from the Governor's Palace to the kitchen. In his lecture he will take us behind the scene to his museum's storage area, and also answer questions you always wanted to know, such as: How did men buckle their shoes? And why did women of all degrees need so many pins?

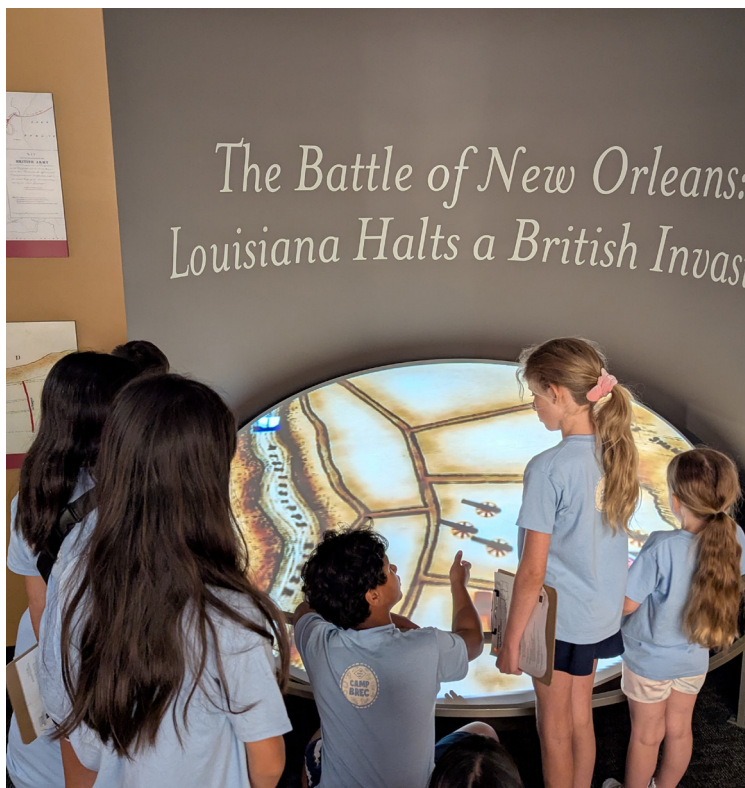
Lunch at the Baton Rouge Country Club follows the lecture. Then the group is off to tour three historic properties that are seldom open to the public.

Continued on page five

Summer History Camp at the Mound

By Craig Rowley

Summer camp at Magnolia Mound was back in session for its 45th year! This year, the theme for camp was explorers and expeditions throughout the ages. In addition to our customary activities like weaving and open-hearth cooking, campers flexed their creativity and imagination while making themed crafts such as Viking helmets, Northern Lights art, mapmaking, and more. Campers enjoyed exciting weekly field trips to both the West Baton Rouge Museum and the Capitol Park Museum.



We had good enrollment in our first month with 73 campers across four sessions, and our second month was almost a sellout with 98 campers!

With many interesting candidates this year, the stars aligned to give us an excellent seasonal staff of these three bright young women:



KAHLILA BANDELE, a 20-year-old history and Africana Studies major at Rhodes College. She returned for her third year at Magnolia Mound's summer camp, now serving as Camp Director. Kahlila is passionate about history education for all people of all ages, and has enjoyed teaching the kids. Moving forward, she plans on attending law school and continuing to pursue her love of history.



DA'JUA SYKES, (no relation to our former director) a 20-year-old junior at Southern University majoring in Child and Family Studies. Da'Jua lives in Hawaii and has a passion for working with children and creating supportive, growth-centered spaces. In her free time, she enjoys baking, being creative, and exploring various approaches to wellness. She also aspires to attend law school and one day open her own child development center. In her own words, "This summer was a meaningful step toward my future, and I'm excited to see what's ahead!"



AUTUMN AUSTIN is a 22-year-old native of Los Angeles, California, who graduated from Southern University and A&M College in the spring of 2025 with a Bachelor of Science in Therapeutic Recreation & Leisure Studies. She is passionate about health and wellness and she is now pursuing a master's degree in kinesiology with long-term goals of becoming a sports medicine physician.

Meet Our Latest Acquisition

By Babeth Schlegel

The Friends of Magnolia Mound are pleased to announce the recent donation by Mr. Michael D. Williams of a fine piecrust Queen Anne-Chippendale tea table, crafted in Philadelphia between 1760 and 1780. Made of walnut, this elegant tripod table features a classic birdcage mechanism, allowing the top to both rotate and tilt—an important hallmark of mid-18th-century design. The top itself is formed from three joined walnut boards with a crisply carved piecrust edge that is integral to the boards, not applied, demonstrating the high level of craftsmanship associated with Philadelphia workshops. The table is raised on three cabriole legs terminating in distinctive snake feet on pads, each leg finely dovetailed into a baluster-turned pillar that supports the birdcage assembly. Tea tables of this type were prized objects in fashionable households, reflecting both social ritual and refined taste. A comparable example is illustrated in *American Antiques* from the Israel Sack Collection (Vol. 4, p. 1195). This generous gift enriches the Friends' decorative arts collection.



Object Name: Piecrust Tea Table
Style/Period: Queen Anne-Chippendale
Date: ca. 1760-1780
Place of Origin: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA



Site Clean-up

By Ashley Freeman

In August, we did a total site assessment and categorized projects. In early September, the Magnolia Mound crew helped Babeth clean the interiors and exterior yards of both the Overseer's House and the Enslaved Workers Cabin. We removed all the fallen fence boards, loose nails, and all visible debris.

We are collaborating on a cleaning schedule to ensure all outbuildings receive the attention they need, getting the site back on track.

Jennifer Viator has taken on the huge task of pressure washing the sidewalks and bricks, trimming the overgrowth throughout the site, and submitting long-overdue work orders. In November, she finished cleaning the front of the Hart House and the gazebo.

I'm also happy to report that the nails for the garden pieux fence have been purchased and delivered! We will be working with BREC on this project at the beginning of the new year.





Live Oaks

Live Oaks, circa 1838, is in Iberville Parish. Its façade has six columns supporting its broad double galleries. Perhaps the most outstanding architectural feature on the interior is the winding staircase connecting the wide central hallway of the first floor with the second floor. It is the home of Mr. and Mrs. William Obier.

Adjacent to Live Oaks is the Episcopal Church of the Nativity. This Gothic Revival frame structure was built by John Philson in 1859 and consecrated a year later by Leonidas Polk, first Episcopal Bishop of Louisiana.

Also on tour will be Valverde in Pointe Coupee Parish. This brick Greek Revival mansion was built in 1842, and owned by Henry Johnson from 1855 until 1864. Mr. Johnson had served as the state's fifth governor. Its façade features spacious double galleries with six columns, and the interior is a four room center hall plan. Valverde has been fully restored by its current owners Dr. Hosea Doucet, III and Dr. Mark Cassidy of New Orleans.

The Petite Antiques Forum will offer a full day of entertainment and information on January 29, 2026. Admission to the forum will be available early in January. Be sure to send in your order form to reserve your seats, as the event is limited to 100 people. Admission price will be \$150 per person, which includes the lecture, all refreshments, and tours of three beautiful historic properties.



Episcopal Church of the Nativity



Valverde

Sponsorships support the forum, with proceeds enabling the Friends to maintain Magnolia Mound's collection of artifacts.

Sponsorships are available in the following amounts:

- \$300** includes admission for one to the forum
- \$600** includes admissions for two to the forum
- \$1000** includes admissions for three to the forum
- \$2000** includes admissions for six to the forum

To sponsor the forum please contact Babeth Schlegel, the Director of the Friends of Magnolia Mound, at (225) 421-3162 or friendsofmagnoliamound@gmail.com.

Thanks to the Sponsors of the 2026 Petite Antiques Forum

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Magnolia Mound's Third Annual Pumpkin Picking Event – Our Best One Yet!

By Camm Morton & Babeth Schlegel



On the first Sunday in October—also Magnolia Mound's Free First Sunday—the Master Gardeners of East Baton Rouge, together with Magnolia Mound's staff and dedicated volunteers, hosted our Third Annual Pumpkin Picking Event. A brief passing rain shower didn't slow anyone down; the day was filled with excitement, and this year's celebration was by far the most successful yet.

The kitchen and crop gardens were at their seasonal best, thanks to the unwavering care of the Master Gardeners, whose work ensures that the gardens remain both beautiful and educational. We extend our deepest appreciation to them for their skill, enthusiasm, and generous support of the event.

Families explored the grounds, enjoying activities that brought together history, nature, and fall fun. Children selected pumpkins straight from the patch, posed for festive photos, and took part in hands-on experiences inspired by the early 19th century—including making corn husk dolls, trying colonial toys like ball-and-cup or Jacob's ladder, and completing a fall scavenger hunt around the site.

The beekeeping station, led by local honey bee expert Kevin Langley, was a standout attraction. With an observation hive and interactive displays, visitors of all ages had the chance to learn about Magnolia Mound's bees, sample fresh honey, and purchase jars produced on-site. Many guests even walked a short distance to view the active hives responsible for this year's harvest.





Another crowd favorite was the sugar cane station, where children and adults alike chewed on pieces of Magnolia Mound Cane—the official variety name designated by LSU. Potted cane plants and bundles of stalks were available for purchase, offering a take-home taste of a traditional Louisiana crop.

Of course, the highlight of the day was the pumpkin patch itself. Visitors wandered among hundreds of pumpkins in every shape and size, choosing the perfect one to bring home. Despite the mid-afternoon shower, the patch completely sold out—more than 350 pumpkins found new homes!

Throughout the afternoon, visitors also enjoyed highlight tours of the historic house and watched a cooking demonstration that introduced culinary traditions of the early 19th century, adding depth and authenticity to the fall festivities.

This joyful event would not be possible without the hard work of our volunteers, the dedication of the Master Gardeners, the commitment of Magnolia Mound staff, and the enthusiastic support of every family who joined us. The smiles on our visitors' faces made all the planning and preparation worthwhile.



Mark your calendars now:

The Fourth Annual Pumpkin Picking Event returns on the first Sunday in October 2026—once again on Free First Sunday.

We can't wait to welcome you back to the patch!

Remembering Leonard Cary Saurage II

The Friends of Magnolia Mound mourns the recent passing of our longtime friend, former board member, and devoted supporter, Leonard Cary Saurage II, whose generosity and commitment strengthened our organization for many years. Cary's connection to Magnolia Mound ran deep, and his encouragement helped sustain the important educational and preservation work at the site.

Cary believed deeply in the value of history and the importance of sharing it honestly and thoughtfully with our community. His support for the Friends reflected that belief. His presence was always felt and appreciated. He understood that Magnolia Mound's story—complex, challenging, and essential to Louisiana's past—deserves to be preserved and interpreted with care.

Those who worked alongside him will remember his kindness, his steady encouragement, and his sincere interest in the well-being of the Friends organization. Cary was the kind of supporter who made the work feel meaningful, reminding us that our efforts matter and have lasting impact.

Cary will be greatly missed, but his legacy of generosity and stewardship remains a meaningful part of the Friends of Magnolia Mound's story. We are grateful for the time he shared with us and for his unwavering support. In 2019, Cary generously opened his home for the Friends' Salon Duplantier, offering a warm and memorable gathering to thank our dedicated supporters—an act that reflected his gracious spirit.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones.



2019 Salon Duplantier at Cary Saurage's home in Baton Rouge, (L to R) Susan Wilder, Winnie Byrd, Donna Mitchell, Patricia Comeaux, and Cary Saurage

Page One: Images from Colonial Williamsburg Foundation

Coat

ca. 1770. Origin: America, New England. Medium: Wool plain weave fullered and napped "broadcloth"; twill worsted "shalloon" lining; tabby linen lining center back. Pocket flap lined with twill worsted; sleeves lined with tabby linen; right lower pocket is linen; left pocket is leather; inside pocket on left breast is linen, with broadcloth welt. Dimensions OL: 39"; Shoulder width: 12 3/4". Museum Purchase. Object number 1953-59

Portrait of a Woman, Probably Ann Golden Herring.

January 1823. Attributed to James Herring (1794-1867). Origin: America, New York. Oil on panel. Dimensions overall: 32 x 24 1/2 in. (81.3 x 62.2 cm). Gift of Deborah Davenport and Stewart Stender in Memory of Gordon and Marjorie Davenport. Object number 2022.100.3.A&B

Gown

1726-1728 (textile); 1775-1785 (gown). Artist/Maker Anna Maria Garthwaite. Origin: England (textile); worn in America, Rhode Island. Medium: Silk "lampas" brocaded with silk; linen bodice and sleeve lining. Dimensions: Length 54" Waist 22" Textile width 21"; vertical repeat 18" Museum Purchase. Object number 1951-150.1

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Friends of Magnolia Mound

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in south Louisiana for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations and to procure and manage the Collection

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Friends, working with BREC, the Museum Director and staff, assist in implementing the master plan for the structures, landscaping, future additions and changes to Magnolia Mound.

BREC owns and operates Magnolia Mound. All of the furniture, decorative items and artifacts are owned and cared for by the Friends. This collection brings to life the interiors of the house and other buildings for the community, school groups, and tourists.

The Friends provide advisory and financial assistance for the kitchen garden, which is part of the educational tour at the Mound. Produce from the garden is used in the cooking demonstrations in the kitchen building.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THIS MISSION

Friends of Magnolia Mound

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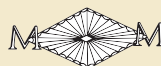
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The Friends & BREC - partners in preservation for over 50 years.

Questions? Please send an email to friendsofmagnoliamount@gmail.com or call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162

Friends of Magnolia Mound is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

1-Year Membership (For a renewal, the year's membership will begin when the current membership expires.)

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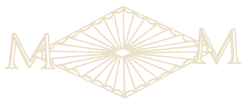
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