

Volume I

February 2021

HNF has a busy 2020 despite COVID-19

Due to ongoing COVID-19 concerns, the Historic Natchez Foundation canceled its traditional January cocktail reception and annual meeting for members and the general public. All conferences and public events planned for 2020 were also canceled. However, HNF staff members have been busier than ever.

The pandemic has resulted in an increase in research requests by phone and email and probably reflects both fear of travel and boredom in isolation and quarantine.

Staff members have been very busy providing realtors, buyers, and prospective buyers of historic properties with information about the histories of buildings as well as making house calls. The staff is also hard at work preparing applications for historic preservation tax credits for new owners of income-producing historic properties.

The boom in sales of historic properties began about two years ago but exploded after COVID-19 arrived

in 2020. People began looking for houses outside cities where they felt isolated by the virus. Relocation also became more possible as more and more businesses allowed employees to work remotely. The increased number of hurricanes in 2020 also sparked some relocations from coastal to inland cities. The Natchez housing boom will likely continue over the next few years as new businesses expect to bring about 275 new workers to downtown Natchez.

Articles in this issue of *Progressive Preservation* highlight the important donations of books, archival materials, and museum objects that HNF has received in 2020. These donations are among the largest and most important in HNF's history, and the staff is overwhelmed by the sheer volume of material and the need to reorganize to accommodate it.

HNF also worked during the year investigating grant possibilities and preparing applications for funding. HNF submitted a successful application

for its first historic preservation grant from the 1772 Foundation based in Rhode Island, which approved a \$100,000 grant toward establishing a revolving fund to preserve and restore historic properties. HNF also submitted a successful application for a Community Heritage Preservation Grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, which awarded \$210,400 for the exterior restoration of the House on Ellicott's Hill. Read articles inside for more detailed information about both grants.

Conferences and public events planned for 2020 were all canceled, but have been rescheduled for 2021. More detailed information on each event will be provided closer to the dates that appear in this issue on our Calendar of Events.

Thankfully, HNF staff members all remain healthy and no one has knowingly contracted the virus. HNF looks forward to the future and a return to normalcy when we can gather again and celebrate historic preservation.

JOIN TODAY TO PRESERVE THE PAST FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

Membership expiration dates are printed above your address on every mail-out from the foundation. Each membership and donation is very important to us.

Name _____

Address _____

Phones _____

E-mail _____

Suggested Membership

Student	20.00
Senior Citizen	35.00
Individual	50.00
Family	100.00

Special Donor Levels Pillars of Support

Tuscan Order	500.00
Doric Order	1,000.00
Ionic Order	2,500.00
Corinthian Order	5,000.00
Portico	10,000.00

The Historic Natchez Foundation is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

Return this form with your donation to:

Historic Natchez Foundation, P. O. Box 1761, Natchez, MS 39121 601-442-2500 and hnf@natchez.org

Major donations expand HNF museum collection

Each year HNF's museum collections expand and the Natchez Museum of History grows closer to becoming a reality. Ultimately, the entire first story of the building will be used as exhibit space with the central hall designated for changing exhibits. The offices, a greatly expanded research library, meeting rooms, and work rooms will be located on the second story. HNF's emphasis on collections has increased now that the Institute has a fire suppression system and climate-controlled storage rooms in the basement.

In 2020, HNF received its largest donation of museum objects to date from the family of the late William E. Stewart, known locally as Bill and a great hoarder of Natchez history. His wife Betty was and continues to serve as family historian extraordinaire. In the late 20th century, the couple began to



Bill Stewart joined the Army Air Corps in his freshman year in college and served as a B26 pilot in a bomb squad in the European theater from 1943-45.

donate the family collection to regional museum and archival institutions to ensure its preservation and to share it with scholars and the general public. Betty and her three children continue to organize and donate. The collections include business records, personal correspondence, photographs, pamphlets, clothing, furniture, household items, and items of memorabilia such as a beautifully etched fireman's horn and a sword of the Natchez Rifles. Photographs made by Bill himself are an important archive of 20th-century Natchez.

William E. Stewart (1924-2005) was the sixth generation of his family in Natchez, which dates to the late 18th century, when his great great great grandfather, Andrew Marschalk (1767-1837), arrived with the first printing press and became the "Father of the Press in Mississippi." Marschalk published newspapers in Natchez and neighboring Washington and, in 1828, launched the campaign to free the enslaved African prince, Abdul-Rahman Ibrahim Ibn Sori, also known as Ibrahima.

Marschalk's daughter Susanna married Pennsylvania-born cabinetmaker Robert Stewart, and the couple became Bill's great great grandparents. Robert Stewart was the city's most successful pre-Civil War cabinetmaker, furniture retailer, and undertaker and also served multiple terms as city alderman and city sexton, a position similar to today's coroner. For many years, he recorded the deaths in the city limits and noted the date, age of the deceased, cause of death, attending physician, and burial.

Robert Hill Stewart, Bill's great

grandfather assumed management of his father's business in 1854 and the role of city sexton. The obituaries of both Robert and son Robert Hill Stewart extolled the virtues and contributions of two men whose lives spanned the whole of the 19th century.

Bill's grandfather, William Percy Stewart, grew up in the retail business and married Katie Schwartz, daughter of John Conrad Schwartz, who immigrated alone from Germany at the age of 14 and became one of the city's most successful post-Civil War merchants. Schwartz deeded his hardware business to son, John Edward Schwartz, and son-in-law, William Percy Stewart, and it was renamed Schwartz and Stewart.

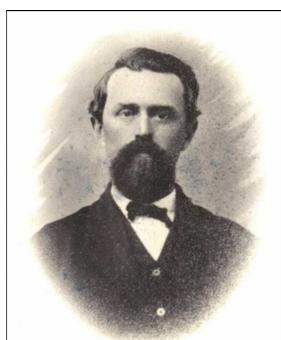


Recent Stewart family donations include William Percy Stewart's sword worn by members of the Natchez Rifles, a local militia.

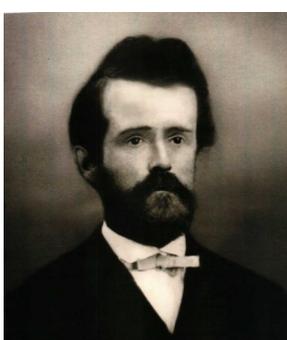
After the death of John Edward Schwartz, William Percy Stewart assumed full ownership of Schwartz and Stewart and brought his son, Bill's father, Robert Percy Stewart into the business. When the store closed during the Depression, it was the oldest retail store in the state. R. P. Stewart then went into the insurance business and established the R. P. Stewart Agency, which Bill managed until his retirement in the late 1980s. The firm evolved into today's Byrne Insurance Agency.



Andrew Marschalk
1767-1827



Robert Stewart
1795-1866



Robert Hill Stewart
1825-1899



William Percy Stewart
1858-1928



Robert Percy Stewart
1892-1968

McGehee family donates Natchez-made clock

The family of the late William Carl and Sarah Blewitt McGehee have donated one of the single most valuable items in the growing museum collections of the Historic Natchez Foundation: a tall case clock made in Natchez. Billy and Sarah McGehee were astute collectors who had one of the most academically restored private homes in the Natchez area and were longtime supporters of HNF. Their son Bill has served as president of HNF and his wife Rebecca has been the largest donor of volunteer hours. Bill's sister Mildred McGehee is a well known antiquarian who assisted her parents in the furnishing of their home, Dr. Dubs Townhouse.



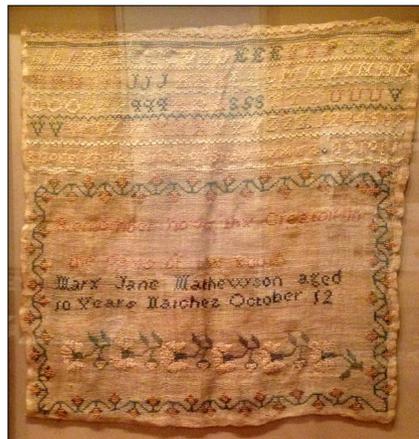
The clock case was probably made by cabinetmaker Robert Stewart of the William E. Stewart family profiled on the opposite page. The clock works and face were supplied by David Mathewson, a Natchez jeweler and watch maker, who added his name, "D. Mathewson" and "Natchez" to the clock face. He likely imported the clock works and face from England.

Stewart arrived in Natchez about 1817 and opened his own cabinet shop in 1818. David Mathewson opened his business in 1818 and died in 1823. However, the clock most likely dates between 1818 and 1821, when Mathewson's store merchandise was sold at a sheriff's sale to satisfy debt. His financial difficulties are also documented in a letter written by John James Audubon, who related that he had sketched a good portrait of a

Mr. Mathewson but he had "absented" without paying.

Two remarkably similar clocks in Natchez also have the face inscriptions "Natchez" and "D. Mathewson" and are located at Stanton Hall and the House on Ellicott's Hill. Each face differs in decorative detail, but the construction details indicate a single cabinetmaker. Robert Stewart's business records from 1818 to 1822 do not survive, but, in 1824, he made four clock cases for jeweler and silversmith Thomas Coit. The "D. Mathewson" clock cases may be unsigned, because they were ordered by Mathewson for sale in his store. Masonic symbols decorate the face of the Ellicott's Hill clock and further strengthen the Stewart attribution. The clock was once owned by the Grand Lodge of Mississippi, and both Stewart and Mathewson were members.

David Mathewson left behind a widow and three young children. The McGehees also donated a ca. 1831 sampler made by the youngest child, Mary Jane Mathewson, "aged 10 years." The sampler was found in the attic of The Elms in the 1980s and is apparently a relic from a girls school that once occupied the house.



HNF works every day to record Natchez history and unravel its many mysteries. A similar clock signed by Stewart or a document may yet emerge as definitive proof that Stewart made the clocks. Although Robert Stewart had 14 children, Meg Bennett Hazlip, wife of HNF president Mac Hazlip, and descendant-in-law Betty Stewart are the only direct kin living today in Natchez. The Stewart family can rest assured, however, that HNF will preserve their Natchez family legacy.



HNF receives large library and archival donation

A major library donation in 2020 has HNF scrambling for more library space at the Natchez Institute. Dr. Ronald L. F. Davis, professor emeritus at California State University, Northridge (C-SUN), donated his entire library and a large and significant collection of Natchez-related resources, which include student papers, theses, and dissertations on Natchez history; a large collection of microfilmed Natchez newspapers; and copies of Natchez-related material from library and archival institutions around the country.

Ron Davis's interest in Natchez was piqued when he was a graduate student and wrote his dissertation on sharecropping, which led to the publication of his book, *Good and Faithful Labor: From Slavery to Sharecropping in Natchez, Mississippi, 1840-1890*. His interest in Natchez was revived in the early 1990s when he was hired by the Natchez National Historical Park to undertake a special African American history study which was published as *The Black Experience in Natchez, 1720-1880*.

Ron's research on Natchez African American history led him to HNF's offices and ultimately a partnership to preserve the public records of Adams County. HNF staff and Ron Davis



Ron Davis is pictured above with his late wife Patricia who donated many hours to the Courthouse Records Project. She meticulously organized, wrapped in acid-free paper, and labeled hundreds of bound volumes.

shared a concern about the poor storage conditions of these important legal records in the Adams County Courthouse, where they were stacked, spilled, and scattered in poorly lit basement rooms where pipes leaked and rats nested and chewed. They were inaccessible to scholars due to their disorder and storage conditions, but thieves could roam and plunder.

HNF's acquisition of the Natchez Institute in 1992 and Ron Davis's offer of graduate student volunteers created HNF's ongoing Courthouse Records Project. Ron Davis and his graduate students were a familiar sight in downtown Natchez during the spring and summers from 1992 until Ron's retirement in 2010. Students who participated in his Natchez Project were required to write a paper on a subject related to Natchez history and many of those research papers later evolved into theses, dissertations, articles in scholarly journals, and important books.

The Courthouse Records Project continues today and has expanded far beyond the 18th and 19th-century documents and volumes that were stored in the courthouse basement in 1992. HNF continues to work with the chancery and circuit clerks to transfer important historic records from the courthouse to the Natchez Institute, where they are protected by fire suppression and climate control systems and their use is supervised.

Dan Shiells, who participated in C-SUN's Natchez Project as a graduate student, and his wife Jan have established a fund to support the ongoing work of processing and cataloguing the courthouse records.

HNF partners to digitize African American records

HNF is participating in a cooperative project initiated by Mississippi State University (MSU) and identified as "The Lantern Project," which has a goal of creating the state's first institutionally supported digital database intended to give greater access to legal records that identify victims of enslavement. The National Historic Publications and Records Committee, a branch of the National Archives, has awarded MSU a grant of \$340,424 to cover the cost of digitizing records.

MSU contacted HNF, well known for its Courthouse Records Project, about participating in "The Lantern Project." HNF proposed scanning the pre-1863 Adams County probate papers, a rich resource of documents that identify enslaved African Americans. Probate case files often include inventories of African Americans who

were the property of an estate. Many inventories include first and last names, as well as ages, roles, and value. Case files can also contain wills, invoices and receipts that reference enslaved African Americans, particularly in purchases and services for clothing, medical treatment, and burial arrangements.

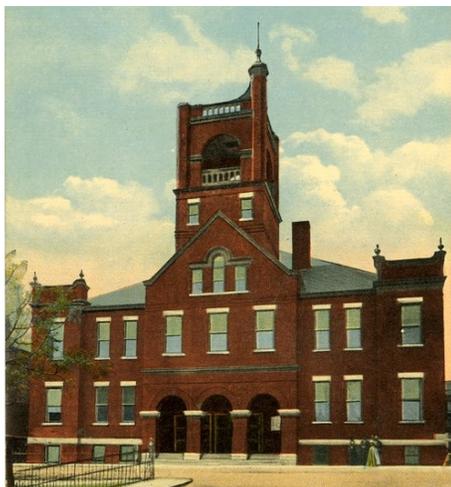
HNF will receive funding to cover the cost of professionals to review each probate case file and isolate within the file the documents to be scanned. MSU will bring its scanning equipment to Natchez and scan the documents at HNF headquarters in the Natchez Institute.

Other participating institutions are the University of Mississippi Libraries, Delta State University, Columbus-Lowndes County Public Library (which manages the county legal records), and the Montgomery County Archives in Alabama.

No.	Name	Price	Age
1	Molly Washington	110.00	44
2	George Martin	60.00	49
3	Charity Martin	60.00	42
4	Rudy Martin	62.00	32
5	Blarance Martin	53.00	14
6	Robert Martin	46.00	13
7	Marion Martin	30.00	11
8	Jenny Martin	35.00	9
9	Marion Martin	20.00	7
10	Adams Martin	15.00	5
11	Molly Martin	150.00	36m
12	George Martin	110.00	16
13	Mary Elizabeth	110.00	7
14	Margaret Franklin	45.00	45
15	Mary Ann Franklin	6.00	24
16	Molly Franklin	65.00	22
17	Peggy Franklin	50.00	17
18	John Franklin	350.00	10
19	Ann Franklin	310.00	12
20	Molly Franklin	350.00	9
21	Mary Franklin	200.00	7
22	George Lavis	50.00	...

The probate papers of Katherine Minor, who lived at Concord and died in 1844, contain inventories and appraisals of enslaved African Americans in her estate. All have last names and ages.

2021 ushers in new downtown restoration projects



HNF has advertised for bids on a project to preserve and improve the appearance of the Natchez Institute. The project will include a new roof; repairs to gutters and downspouts; and repair, re-glazing and painting of all 157 windows. HNF also plans to restore the brickwork and metal ornament damaged in the 1998 windstorm and repaint all trim.

HNF received a \$243,375 grant from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History's Community Heritage Preservation Grant Program funded by the Mississippi legislature. HNF will fund the balance of the cost with a minimum match of \$81,125.

HNF acquired the deteriorated building in 1992 and has previously focused on making the interior partially habitable; creating an accessible side entrance and elevator access to all three floors; rewiring the entire building; installing a fire suppression system; and developing an archival and museum climate-controlled storage facility for HNF collections and the public records of Natchez and Adams County.

HNF hopes one day to restore the missing tower so it can once again join with the church towers and the temple dome to enliven the skyline of Natchez.



Storefront as is



Storefront as was

Mac Hazlip, president of HNF, has acquired 403 Main St. and has begun its restoration. Built in 1866 for John Quegles and rented as a shoe store first to Simon Mayer and later to Adrian Trimble, the building has been largely vacant for about 40 years. This is the fourth historic building that Mac and his wife Meg have acquired and rehabilitated. He obviously takes his volunteer jobs with HNF and the Natchez Historic Preservation Commission seriously.

HNF continues collaborative endeavors in 2021

Decorative Arts of the Gulf South

Since 2012, HNF has participated in a collaborative effort to inventory the decorative arts of the Gulf South. This effort was initiated in 2011 by the late Paul Haygood of Baton Rouge and has now coalesced as the Decorative Arts of the Gulf South, a program area of the Historic New Orleans Collection (HNOC). HNF serves on the advisory committee. Since 2012, approximately thirty

collections of decorative arts with a Natchez provenance have been catalogued and will eventually be available for study by scholars through the Louisiana Digital Library. The 2002 fire at Arlington emphasized the importance of cataloguing original collections, and the focus was initially placed on the furnishings of houses which retain most of their original furnishings.

The HNOC is planning an exhibit for 2021 entitled *Pieces of History: Ten Years of Decorative Arts Field Work* to showcase the inventory project. D'Evereux, Lansdowne, Melrose, Richmond, and Stanton Hall are lending items for the exhibit. The HNOC intends to photographically recreate the oak-grained wallpaper at Roseland for the dining room to be created for the exhibit. More details about the upcoming exhibit in New Orleans and a companion exhibit in Natchez will soon be forthcoming.



Oak-grained wallpaper at Roseland

Pre-Civil War Outbuilding Survey

HNF, Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), and Natchez National Historical Park have been working throughout 2020 to create an inventory of pre-Civil War outbuildings in Natchez and Adams County to include drawings and photographs to the standards of the Historic American Building Survey at the Library of Congress. These buildings are most valuable in interpreting the lives of enslaved African Americans. In 2021, Tulane University will join the project.

MDAH's James Bridgforth snaps photographs of an early privy at Hawthorne while Rusty Jenkins, whose family acquired the house in 1928, provides family history.



1772 Foundation awards \$100,000 grant to HNF

In December, HNF submitted a grant application to The 1772 Foundation and was excited to learn in January that it was the recipient of a \$100,000 matching grant to establish a revolving fund for the preservation of historic buildings. HNF's match will create an initial revolving fund of \$200,000.

The late Steward Barney Kean founded The 1772 Foundation, which is named in honor of its first restoration project, Liberty Hall in Union, New Jersey, which was built in 1772 and is the ancestral home of the Livingston and Kean families. The mission of The 1772 Foundation is "to continue Kean's legacy throughout the country by helping preserve architectural and cultural history and agricultural landscapes for generation to come."

Although HNF has revolved 49 properties since its founding in 1974, most were reactionary projects to crisis situations like threatened demolition and fire. HNF has always stepped forward to save important historic

buildings, even in its earliest years when it eked out its existence on a day-by-day-basis. After HNF acquired the fire-damaged Linton House in 1986 and Memorial Hall (now a federal courthouse) in 1987, its net worth was minus \$100,000, the amount of a bank line of credit to restore the exterior of the Linton House with 10 HNF members as primary guarantors and 40 as secondary guarantors.



HNF was in much better financial shape when it accepted the donation of the Prentiss Club after a 2018 fire nearly destroyed the building and its insurer rendered it a total loss, but the stakes were also higher. HNF invested \$375,000 on only the restoration of the exterior of the building.

In its application to The 1772 Foundation, HNF expressed its

intention to use the grant and match to establish a revolving fund dedicated solely to the "acquisition, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, and development of historic properties whose preservation cannot be assured through traditional incentives, primarily due to deteriorated condition and/or location...with an initial focus on buildings in the historic downtown commercial district and properties

located in historic African American neighborhoods or associated with the lives of African Americans." HNF ultimately hopes to acquire two buildings a year by donation or purchase for restoration and

rehabilitation and to grow the fund through profits from sales, grants, partnerships, and donations.

The 1772 Foundation is one of the few foundations that funds what are known as "bricks and mortar" projects on a nation-wide basis, and HNF is exceptionally proud and appreciative of being selected by the Foundation for a 2021 grant.

City Hall and House on Ellicott's Hill receive grants

On January 22, 2021, the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH) announced the recipients of its Community Preservation Grant awards, which included two historic properties in Natchez.

The City of Natchez received a \$157,056 grant for a new roof for Natchez City Hall. The Classical Revival building dates to 1925 and was designed by architect Harry N. Austin of Jackson.



The city "Sanitary Dept" truck is parked in front of the new 1925 Municipal Building.



The Preservation Society of Ellicott Hill, the non-profit affiliate of the Natchez Garden Club and owner of its historic properties, received a \$210,400 grant for the exterior restoration of the House on Ellicott's Hill. The Historic Natchez Foundation prepared the grant application, which received extra points as a National Historic Landmark (NHL).

Built between 1798 and 1801, the house is one of 13 NHLs in Natchez and Adams County. Ten are buildings and three are archaeological sites associated with the Natchez Indians and their ancestors in the Mississippian culture.

The Natchez Garden Club acquired



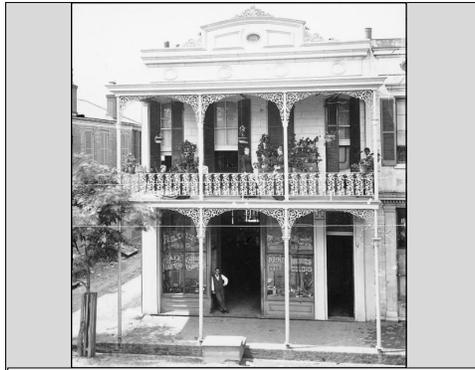
and restored the House on Ellicott's Hill in the mid-1930s when it was in very deteriorated condition. Historic photographs indicate that the prominent two-story gallery of the house was largely rebuilt during the 1930s restoration.

The major focus of the upcoming grant-funded project will be the restoration of the two-story gallery, which is currently off-limits for visitors due to age-related structural deterioration. The project will also include general exterior repairs to siding, stucco, doors, windows, blinds, and hardware as needed, and the entire exterior will be repainted.

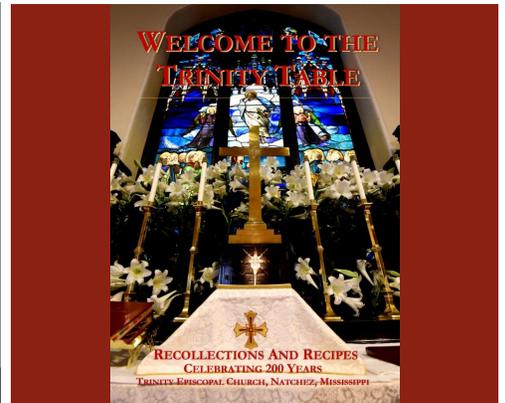
HNF presents 2020 historic preservation awards



Ben Hillyer, *The Natchez Democrat*



Dr. Thomas H. and Joan W. Gandy Collection, LSU



NATCHEZ CITY CEMETERY

HNF awarded the George and Ethel Kelly Restoration Award to the Natchez City Cemetery Association. On June 23, 2020, an act of vandalism toppled the much loved Turning Angel statue from its base and shattered a wing.

The Natchez City Cemetery Association, which manages the cemetery, took all the right steps in restoring the monument. They solicited and reviewed proposals, which received a final review by Nancy McRaney Rosebrock, who grew up in Natchez and is now Chief Conservator at Biltmore in Asheville, N.C.

Emily Ford of Oak and Laurel Cemetery Preservation in New Orleans and her assistant Corey Douglas completed the restoration in September.



NATCHEZ POLICE DEPARTMENT

HNF recognized the Natchez Police Department with a Special Merit Award for its quick arrest of the vandal who damaged the Turning Angel—a youthful prank gone awry. Police made an arrest within a few days of the incident and calmed an anxious community fearful of further vandalism.

THE DIXON BUILDING

HNF chose to illustrate Dorie and Brad LeMay's Special Merit Award with a ca. 1880 view of their Dixon Building at 514 Main St. Their extensive exterior and interior rehabilitation preserved an exterior not discernibly different from 1880. Few downtown buildings have been so beautifully preserved. The LeMays have created a spacious retail space on the first story and the largest and most luxurious living space in an upper-story apartment in downtown Natchez.



CONDE CONTEMPORARY

Artist Andres Conde and wife Stacy received a Special Merit Award for their sophisticated conversion of 334 Main St. into an art gallery and studio. Moving to Natchez from Miami, Stacy wrote, "We can live where we want... invest in a community we love and assist in its recovery by utilizing the power of art as a socioeconomic driver." Andres and Stacy have brought new life to downtown and created an enchanting retail space.

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Trinity Church received a Special Merit Award for its innovative publication of a book that heralds the upcoming celebration of the church's bicentennial in 2022. The book combines food and history and is richly spiced with historic images dating back to the church's founding in 1822, personal recollections, and a photographic tour of the church's outstanding stained-glass windows. Books may be purchased at Trinity or on-line from the website.



701 FRANKLIN STREET

Norm and Karen Yvon received a Special Merit Award for the fix-up of a ca. 1930 building on Franklin St. During rehabilitation, an errant car rendered it a garage. It proved only a minor setback, and the Yvons completed the project with a newly restored storefront and marble base.

Historic Natchez Foundation
P. O. Box 1761
Natchez, Mississippi 39121

2021 Calendar of Events

Slave Dwelling Project
Joseph McGill, Jr.
Founder and Executive Director

April 15-18, 2021
Schedule Forthcoming

Sponsored by
Mississippi Humanities Council
Natchez National Historical Park
Historic Natchez Foundation

Mississippi Heritage Trust

Annual Conference
June 10-11, 2021
Natchez, Mississippi

Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians

Annual Conference
September 30-October 2, 2021
Natchez, Mississippi

Historic Natchez Foundation Awards

George and Ethel Kelly Restoration Award

Natchez City Cemetery Association
Restoration of Turning Angel Statue

Special Merit Awards

Stacy and Andres Conde
Conde Contemporary
334 Main Street

Dr. Brad and Dorie LeMay
Dixon Building, 512 Main Street

Natchez Police Department
Turning Angel Statue

Trinity Episcopal Church
Welcome to the Trinity Table
Recollections and Recipes

Karen and Norm Yvon
701 Franklin Street

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President Elect Pat Biglane
Past President Stratton Bull
Secretary Becky Jex
Treasurer Chuck Caldwell

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Lansen Barrow
Hyde Carby
Melinda Kent
Ethel Truly

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Scott Christian Becky Jex
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Tony DeAngelis Cheryl Rinehart
Neifa Hardy Andy Sartin

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L.D. Lang
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