
AMERICANA WEEK
George F. Baker Houses
New York, NY

Blizzards and gusting winds did not deter avid Americana enthusiasts from joining us at the Baker House for receptions filled with drinks, hors d’oeuvres, and friends (new and old) during Americana Week 2014.

We began the week by welcoming Winterthur, MESDA and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for an Americana Week "kick–off" reception on January 21, 2014. We hosted tours for the Directors of the Dumbarton House located in Washington, D.C. and benefactors from the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem,
60th Winter Antiques Show Ralph Harvard and Elle Shushan Phil Zea and Susan Stein Marcia Feinstein and Tish Roberts Johanna McBrien and Nonie Gadson Lauren Brunk, Dean Failey, Andrew Brunk

The snow came down in droves on the day of the reception jointly hosted by Winterthur, MESDA and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation – but to our joyful surprise, we still welcomed over 60 guests to the Baker House who came by foot, stop-and-go taxi trips, and even hitchhiked rides! It was an extremely enjoyable and memorable night, and a great way to welcome supporters from near and far for an events-filled week in New York City.
We then welcomed Directors of Dumbarton House and benefactors from the Peabody Essex Museum for tours of the Baker House. "Fresh Take, Making Connections at the Peabody Essex Museum" was on view as the loan exhibition at this year's Winter Antiques Show. This exhibit, which was referred to by the organizers as a "microcosm of the PEM experience," coincided with the Peabody Essex Museum's 215th Anniversary in 2014. Read more about this exhibition [here](#).
On Saturday, January 25th the Decorative Arts Trust celebrated Penny Hunt's retirement with a cocktail reception at the Baker House for friends and supporters. Even though there was more snow (and lots of ice!), over 125 guests joined us for the event. Penny Hunt's husband, John, and the Decorative Art Trust's new Executive Director, Matthew Thurlow, gave a toast to Penny's dedication and inspired vision during her thirty years of service. Food, drink and merry conversation floated around the house, on this culmination of a successful Americana Week.

Read Penny's "Farewell Letter" in the recent DAT Newsletter.
Spring is in the air.... We now set our sights towards spring, which can't come soon enough! We have 52 tours/events on our calendar to date including the first-of-the-month Saturday public tours at Millford Plantation. There are many repeat groups we are delighted to see again. We are also looking forward to visits by the Wellesley College Friends of Art, The French Heritage Society, Clemson University, the Art Institute of Chicago, The Bartow Pell Mansion Museum, The National Trust for Scotland USA Foundation, Historic Charleston Foundation, the Greenwich Garden Club, The Monmouth Museum of Art and the Greenville County Museum of Art, to name a handful.

Richard H. Jenrette and CAHPT are honored with the Eric M. Wunsch Award for Excellence in the American Arts

On Wednesday, January 22, 2014, the Wunsch Americana Foundation honored Dick Jenrette as a co-recipient of the second-annual Eric Martin Wunsch Award for Excellence in the American Arts alongside Linda and George Kaufman, major collectors of Americana. The award ceremony was held at the Rockefeller Center Galleries at Christie's, New York, where over 200 guests gathered to celebrate the honorees' dedication to American Arts and their continuation of the legacy of renowned collector, Eric Martin Wunsch.

The Eric Martin Wunsch Award was created by the Wunsch Americana Foundation in the
Leslie Keno speaks with guests.

Guests mingled over cocktails while weaving through displays of Americana that were to be auctioned off at Christie's later in the week. To begin the remarks, Morrie Heckscher, the Lawrence A. Fleischman Chairman of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, spoke about Martin Wunsch's commitment to American Decorative Arts as a collector, philanthropist and scholar. Mr. Heckscher spoke about four highlighted objects from Martin Wunsch’s collection that will be on loan at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Luke Beckerdite, Executive Director and Curator at the Chipstone Foundation, went on to introduce award recipient Linda Kaufman. Mrs. Kaufman's highly personal and eloquent speech will not be forgotten by those in attendance, as she clearly demonstrated the passion that she and her late husband, George Kaufman, shared for the American Arts. Introductory remarks about Dick Jenrette were given by Peter Kenny, Curator in the Department of American Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and can be found here. Margize Howell accepted the award on behalf of Dick and CAHPT.

The night was filled with laughter and good cheer among friends and colleagues, and served as a wonderful way to begin a weeklong celebration of American Decorative Arts.

For more information about this award in Antiques and The Arts Weekly, please click here.

Profile: Jack Smith
CAHPT Director, Director of Operations

This newsletter’s Profile will focus on Mr. John W. Smith, better known as Jack, who oversees all of Classical American Homes Preservation Trust's properties as Director of Operations, and also sits on CAHPT’s Board of Directors. Jack has been with CAHPT since its inception in 1993, also having worked the previous 18 years for Richard Jenrette as a property manager. Jack has been directly involved in the restoration of all CAHPT and Richard Jenrette's portfolio of properties for nearly 40 years.

While working as a contractor in upstate New York, Jack was first introduced to Mr. Jenrette in the fall of 1975 by a local decorator. Mr. Jenrette hired Jack to complete a large painting job at Edgewater on the Hudson River, which had been purchased from Gore Vidal in 1969. Two years later, upon the completion of his work at Edgewater, Jack was hired full-time by Mr. Jenrette to manage his properties.
Over the next fifteen years, Jack participated in restoring and decorating Mr. Jenrette's residences as they were acquired. Next was 37 Charlton Street in New York (property later sold), where a complete two-year restoration was completed. In 1985 Mr. Jenrette acquired both Ayr Mount in Hillsborough, North Carolina, and Cane Garden in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Each of these projects entailed extensive work. Between 1987–89, Jack oversaw a cosmetic restoration of the George F. Baker Houses. The project began when Mr. Jenrette purchased 67 East 93rd Street in New York (sold a year later), and continued upon his purchase of 69 East 93rd Street, which is now CAHPT's headquarters. Jack also restored 67 East 93rd Street a second time in 1996 when Mr. Jenrette re-purchased the property. Additionally, when Mr. Jenrette acquired Millford Plantation in Pinewood, South Carolina in 1992, Jack oversaw a massive restoration of the Mansion and the seven individual outbuildings on the plantation grounds. In each of these instances, Jack says that he has loved to see the houses transform back to their original, classical beauty.

Edgewater, on the Hudson River, in upstate New York.

As Director of Operations, Jack's role now is to maintain the houses and grounds in "tip-top" shape and ensure that they are physically prepared to withstand the test of time. This is no easy task, as these old houses consistently present an array of challenges, from structural maintenance like leaky roofs and peeling paint, to accessibility and security issues. CAHPT strives to keep the properties in pristine condition, and Jack credits the individual site managers and their teams for their tireless contributions. He applauds the teams led by Ernie Townsend at Roper House, Bill Crowther at Ayr Mount, David Crowther at Cane Garden and Louis Hall at Millford, plus his own crew at Edgewater and the Baker Houses, for their hard work, deep knowledge of the properties, and dedication to the cause of preservation.

Jack is also an original member of the Classical American Homes Preservation Trust Board of Directors. The Board of Directors oversees all of CAHPT’s activities and ensures that these six houses and grounds are being delivered to the next generation of preservationists in the best condition possible. He also envisions building a passionate, interested constituency of supporters as being crucial to the organization’s ongoing vitality.

It is difficult to sum up Jack's impact on Classical American Homes Preservation Trust, as his innumerable contributions have ranged from strategic planning, antique and art acquisitions, restoration, and decoration, to electrical work and plumbing, and landscape design. Regardless of the task, Jack's sunny disposition and trademark laugh are always present. He lives in Barrytown, New York (just steps from Edgewater) with his wife of 38 years, Diane, who works at nearby Bard College. Their son, Christopher, serves as CAHPT's
Pair of Duncan Phyfe Card Tables Return to Edgewater

Edgewater, located on the Hudson River in Barrytown, NY, was built in 1825, presumably by John R. Livingston, of the wealthy Hudson River Valley Livingstons, for his daughter, Margaret. In 1852, Robert and Susan Donaldson of North Carolina later purchased the estate. Patrons of architecture and art, the Donaldsons added a library by Alexander Jackson Davis and filled the home with fine American furnishings, family portraiture, and objets d'art.

Edgewater was empty when it was purchased by Richard Jenrette from Gore Vidal in 1969. Edgewater remains Mr. Jenrette's private residence, and his desire to restore the estate and eventually turn it over to his foundation, Classical American Homes Preservation Trust, has led him on a collecting journey around the world. In a series of serendipitous events over the past 45 years many of the original Livingston and Donaldson objects have found their way back to Edgewater. Mr. Jenrette's book, *More Adventures With Old Houses: The Edgewater Experience*, details the exciting odyssey of finding, acquiring and returning these objects to Edgewater.

The most recent piece of history to return to Edgewater is a pair of Duncan Phyfe rosewood card tables (see image above). The tables, decorated with gilded brass mounts and inlay, were recently discovered to be part of an 1822 commission by Phyfe for Robert Donaldson, who resided in Fayetteville, North Carolina at the time. The pair of tables was falsely attributed to a "Mrs. Bronson of South Carolina" until their Donaldson provenance came to light in mid-2013. Extensive research by Martha Willoughby of Christie's revealed a connection between the style and design of the Phyfe tables and an 1822 invoice from Phyfe to Robert Donaldson.

After inheriting a substantial amount of money from his father and uncle, Robert Donaldson commissioned many pieces from Phyfe during the 1820s, which were later inherited by his daughter, Isabel Donaldson Bronson. The invoice, dated August 21, 1822, reveals the tables could possibly be a part of a larger commission, including a rosewood sofa, fourteen...
chairs, a center table, a pier table, and the card tables, which were priced at $100 for the pair (see image at right).

Similarities in gilding and ornamentation connected the pair of card tables to the other pieces documented as made by Phyfe for Donaldson. However, there was another suite made by Phyfe for Donaldson in 1827 that included a Grecian couch and sofa which have brass mounts of rosette flanked by leafy stems that are similar to ones on these card tables. They could possibly be a part of that commission.

The 1822 commission, completed by Phyfe's workshop in New York City, was en route to Fayetteville, NC via the Cape Fear River when the ship carrying it capsized, sending the entire suite of furniture to the riverbed. Donaldson family history recounts the furniture as having been recovered unscathed, a testimony to the master quality of craftsmanship that came out of Phyfe's workshop.

Robert Donaldson moved to New York City in 1827, bringing this Phyfe suite of furniture to his new residence at 15 State Street. In 1852, Donaldson acquired Edgewater, again outfitting his house with his Duncan Phyfe collection. Edgewater remained in the Donaldson family for nearly 50 years until it was sold in 1902. Robert's daughter, Isabel Donaldson Bronson, inherited the card tables and other family furnishings and moved with them to her new home in Summit, New Jersey. Finances compelled her to sell a sofa and two card tables, which was documented in her 1928 "Reminiscences". The card tables were sold to John Morrison Curtis, an interior decorator in Summit, NJ. The tables later appeared in 1983 at William Doyle Galleries, accompanied by a letter from Curtis, detailing their production by Phyfe, their treacherous trip along the Cape Fear River, and their later inheritance by Isabel Donaldson Bronson. The majority of the remaining Donaldson furniture Isabel inherited was later passed down to her daughter, Mary Cromwell Allison, the last living Donaldson descendant. Mary Allison, desiring that the family items be returned to their home at Edgewater, bequeathed them to Mr. Jenrette.

Classical American Homes obtained the tables from the Christie's sale of the Jack Warner (Westervelt) Collection last year. Upon learning of the tables' Donaldson heritage, Bill Thompson, founding Director of Classical American Homes Preservation Trust and partner of Richard Jenrette, made a generous donation to facilitate their return to Edgewater. We are thrilled to have yet another piece of Edgewater's history back "home" -- a reminder to visitors of the Donaldson era and a testament to Bill Thompson's generosity and pivotal role in CAHPT's founding. Read more about Edgewater in More Adventures With Old Houses: The Edgewater Experience and explore the history of Duncan Phyfe in The Metropolitan Museum’s Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York - both available for purchase at our Shop online.

See image of Edgewater and other pieces from the collection.
Antique Appraisal Fair at Ayr Mount
April 17th, 4 – 7 pm

What's in your closet or attic? Ever wonder if that antique is worth more than you expect or a family heirloom is a missing part of an American legacy?

Join us on April 17th for Ayr Mount's first-ever Antique Appraisal Fair with guest of honor Julia Carpenter, of UNC-TV's Collecting Carolina. This event, inspired by Antiques Roadshow, will give guests the opportunity to have two antiques appraised by local experts from Leland Little Auctions, Whitehall at the Villa Antiques, and The Persian Carpet. Accepting for appraisal: silver, pottery, porcelain, paintings, jewelry, engravings, textiles, furniture, wine, collectibles, toys, glassware, and more. Mini lectures will be featured throughout the event. Wine and refreshments will also be served.

Tickets are required for admission to this event and may be purchased online or by calling 919–732–6886.

Tickets are $50 per person, which includes two antique appraisals, mini lectures, refreshments, and access to view Ayr Mount during the event. Limited availability -- Buy your tickets early! Also, tune in to UNC-TV on March 27th to see Ayr Mount featured on Julia Carpenter's Collecting Carolina!

Check What's Going On at Ayr Mount.

The Americana Series
Coverlets: Treasure from the Loom
April 2nd – 30th at Ayr Mount

Ayr Mount and CAHPT are proud to present, Coverlets – Treasures from the Loom, the inaugural installment in our exciting Americana Series. Featuring over 50 American coverlets, this event will discuss the art, construction, and history of the coverlet and its important in American material culture. The exhibition will integrate and highlight the permanent collection at Ayr Mount.

The exhibition is open during regularly-scheduled tours and admission is included in the standard tour fee. Ayr Mount's guided tour schedule is as follows: Wednesday – 11am; Thurs., Fri., Sat. – 11 am & 2 pm; Sunday – 2 pm. Tours are $12 per person, admission to the special exhibition is included.

For more information on Ayr Mount's Hours and Directions, click here.
Martha Stewart visits
Estate Cane Garden, St. Croix

Estate Cane Garden welcomed Martha Stewart for a tour of the house and grounds during her recent vacation to St. Croix. She spent part of the afternoon learning more about the history of the house's architecture, furnishings and associated ruins, as well as its extensive collection of Island mahogany furniture and classical decor. Ms. Stewart must have had a great time (but who wouldn't while sipping rum by the Caribbean!), because she featured her visit to Cane Garden in a recent post on her blog "Martha: Up Close and Personal". Read the blog post and see 65 pictures from her visit here.

A big thanks to the staff at Cane Garden for providing such a warm welcome to Martha Stewart and her colleagues!

Learn more about Estate Cane Garden, its history and collection.

Support our mission to preserve, protect and open to the public examples of classical American residential architecture, surrounding landscapes and scenic trails, as well as fine and decorative arts of the first half of the 19th century.

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