



JEANERETTE LANDMARK SOCIETY newsletter

VOLUME NO. 1, ISSUE NO. 8

JUNE 2006

IN MEMORIAM



ROBERT E. FLOWERREE, JR.
January 4, 1921 to May 1, 2006

Mr. Flowerree, the grandson of Harry Hewes and the son of Amy Hewes, was the catalyst for the creation of the Jeanerette Landmark Society and its first restoration project, the Harry B. Hewes House. When he learned the house was for sale and there was interest locally in preserving it, he pledged to make a donation in the amount of \$72,000.00, the price of the house, if the local group could raise a like amount of money. The Jeanerette Landmark Society was formed and six months later Mr. Flowerree sent his promised grant from the Flowerree Foundation. With his support, the Society purchased the house, and is now in the process of restoring it and turning it into a community center and museum. Since that first grant in 2002, Mr. Flowerree has continued to support the work of the Society, donating a substantial sum each year to help fund the restoration.

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RESTORATION

**of Harry B. Hewes House
UNDER WAY!!**

Your contributions at work!

Thanks to the generosity of members, and a \$72,000.00 grant from the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources, Atchafalaya Basin Program, work on the Hewes House is well underway. Phase I repairs and improvements include the painting of the exterior, the upgrade and increase in capacity of the electrical system, the installation of a central air and heating system for the first floor, and carpentry repairs and improvements to the exterior of the house. The

grant is being funded through the City of Jeanerette. The grant funds will allow the Society to do additional work including construction of a handicapped bathroom on the first floor, and a handicapped ramp on the west side of the house. Improvements on the front lot are also underway. Reconstruction of the Main and Henkle streets sidewalk and curbing, creating an off-road tour bus stop in front of the property; sidewalks from Main Street to the front door, from Henkle

Street to the front porch; and several parking spaces along Henkle Street are under construction. The concrete work is being partially funded by DEQ through its Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund. The goal of the Phase I work is to get the home in condition to begin hosting events and public use, on the first floor only.

Much work remains to be done, however, Society officials believe that events can be held on the first floor once Phase I repairs are complete.

Financial Report as of April 15, 2006

From inception to date the Landmark Society has received a total of \$247,637.33 (including \$17,544.33 in grant funds) in cash, and another \$174,632.53 in in-kind donations of services, for a total of \$422,305.86. The Society presently has a total of \$111,928.29 in cash. This amount is contained in three accounts. CD accounts total \$51,028.14; the City Grant Fund account has a balance of \$18,544.33; and the checking account has a balance of \$42,355.82.

Since the CD accounts are restricted to cover Lifetime membership commitments and dedicated grants, and the City Grant Fund account is dedicated to the completion of Phase I Repairs and Improvements, the funds available for general administration of the Society and for other purposes is limited to the balance in the checking account, \$42,355.82.

Expenditures from inception total \$136,500.00, including \$72,000.00 for purchase of the Hewes House, \$1,563.00 for archi-

tect fees; restoration and repair expenses of \$43,005.00; liability and property insurance totaling \$6,992.00; \$1,241 for land acquisition cost and filing fees; \$1,500 for a computer and printer to produce newsletters; and \$730.00 for surveyor fees. The overall total of these expenditures is \$127,030.00. The remainder of the funds, \$9,470.00, were expended on general administrative expenses. In 43 months of operation 3.82% of cash collected has been expended on administration.

LANDMARK SPOTLIGHT

Historic McGowen Building

to be preserved and used as Culture and Arts Center

The Jeanerette Historic Preservation Foundation, a new organization formed in 2005, has taken over the Historic McGowen building, located on Main Street, in the center of Town, with the intent to preserve it and make it a community Culture and Arts Center. The McGowen and Cyr families and their heirs, fearing the McGowen Building, so long a part of their history, was being demolished by neglect, donated the building to the Jeanerette Historic Preservation Foundation (JHPF), a non-profit foundation whose intent is to help preserve and restore the many historic treasures of Jeanerette.

The McGowen Building was built by Dr. Charles Alfred McGowen in 1887. Dr. McGowen, a dentist from Spring Ridge, Mississippi, arrived in Jeanerette in 1878. He was very active in the commercial and cultural life of the community, being involved in the formation of one of the first banks in Jeanerette and a newspaper in 1887, called the "Teche Pilot" or "Le Pilote du Teche".



Vee's 5 & 10 circa 1980

The JHPF has taken possession of the donated portion and has started the first of several projects towards its restoration. This first project is to produce a phased project plan for the adaptive re-use of the McGowen Building and a set of initial architectural drawings. This project is funded by private donations, a Design Arts grant from the Louisiana Division of Arts and a Certified Local Government Historic Planning grant. The CLG grant is a federally funded grant and is managed through the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation. The JHPF has received this grant through and in cooperation with the City of Jeanerette.

The adaptive re-use of the building will include the Jeanerette Culture and Arts Center, commercial retail space and a business center. The Jeanerette Culture and Arts Center will contain a gallery for the display of local arts and crafts and traveling exhibits; a reference room/library where books, documents, genealogies and other material on the history of Jeanerette and its citizens can be made available to the public; classrooms for art and cooking classes; lecture rooms for other classes and presentations; and a gift shop.



McGowen Building in 1912

Dr. McGowen purchased the property from Whitworth & Company in 1886. Following construction of the building, he opened his dentistry office on the second floor. He also leased office space to other dentists and doctors. For most of the building's history the main central area of the first floor has been used for the retail of general merchandise. The two smaller areas have housed insurance offices, drug stores, attorney offices, general retail stores and grocery stores.

Dr. McGowen's wife, Florence Bussey McGowen took ownership of the building in 1889. She managed the property until her death in 1949. On July 17th, 1939 Mrs. McGowen sold the general retail business and leased the building to Julius Weill of the Weill's Wholesale Dry Goods Company, Inc. Managed by Maurice Silverman for many years, the Weill's Department Store served Jeanerette for 35 years at this location. After Weill's relocated, Vee's 5 & 10 Stores took over the location and remained until the mid-1980's. After Vee's 5 and 10 Stores, the building was used for a variety of specialty stores. Except for the easterly area, which has continually been occupied, the rest of the building has been vacant since 1995.



McGowen Building in 2006

A WORK IN PROGRESS --

On this page and pages 4 and 5, articles showing specific improvements, and before and after pictures of the Hewes House illustrate the progress of the renovation and restoration effort.



August 2003



March 2006

"The most noticeable changes ... include the painting, foundation piers, and the removal of the shutters..."

The most noticeable changes to the front facade include the painting, foundation piers, and the removal of the shutters, which are inconsistent with the original East Lake Victorian style of the house. Phase I includes carpentry work to repair rotten siding on the west side, front steps leading to the front door and construction of a hand railing around the entire front porch.

Repairs to the East side of the house include porch roof fascia, foundation, painting, and, if you look closely at the lower left, below the dining room window, you can see the new central air and heating unit installed to serve the first floor of the house. Duct work was installed under the house and routed through the floor.



East side 2004



East side 2006

CENTRAL AIR AND HEATING



New central air and heating unit can be seen on the East side of the house.

Completed in 2005

A new, energy efficient, central air system was installed to serve the first floor of the Hewes House by L & L Refrigeration of Jeanerette. Neal Landry and his employees placed the 5 ton Carrier unit on the East side of the house, and ran the duct work under the house. Ten wooden floor registers were installed to distribute the air, and a cast iron return air grill was installed in the dining room. This new system will provide conditioned air for the first floor of the house and not only allow public use of this area, but also assist in keeping the moisture in the house under control. Air conditioning for the second and third floor of the house will be addressed in Phase II of the project.

NEAL'S ELECTRICAL

Performs electrical work on Hewes House

Neal Shelton of Neal's Electric, and sons Raymond and Robert performed the electrical work for Phase I. Among other things, the work involved removing the overhead electrical wires from the service pole on Henkle Street and placing them underground. You can see the trench dug by Raymond in the picture. They will also remove the phone wires and place the cable wires underground. In the future there will be no unsightly wires strung from the street to the house which would impair the historic front or side facade of the home. The Phase I electrical work also involved removing numerous old electrical panels and conduits installed on the outside of the house over the years and replacing them with a new electrical service panel located under the stairway landing off the back porch.



Neal Shelton and son Raymond install underground electrical wiring at Hewes House in January 2006.



Rear picture of Hewes House shows new electrical panels and underground work in progress.

You can see some of the remnants of this old wiring in the picture of the rear of the house. The project also involved running new grounded service to all rooms in the house, upgrading the level of service, and installing exit signs and emergency lighting in the home. In Phase II, the old wiring will be totally replaced by new wiring.

Neal and his sons generously donated their labor for this work to the Landmark Society. Therefore the only cost the Society will be for materials and expenses. Neal said that Jeanerette has been very good to his family over the years and he and his sons wanted to give something back to the community. Their generosity is overwhelming. The value of their contribution to this project puts the Shelton family among the top 25 project supporters. Our thanks go out to Neal, his wife Katherine, and sons Robert and Raymond.



SW Corner 2004



SW Corner 2006

Improvements to the west side of the house, including new paint and foundation piers, removal of the overhead wiring, and reconstruction of the rear porch stairwell landing. The huge electrical conduits and panels on the rear porch visible in the picture at left, have been removed.



Rear 2004



Rear 2006

In addition to fresh paint, the rear of the house has been improved not only by the stair landing reconstruction, but also by the removal of numerous old electrical panels and breaker boxes which can be seen on the rear wall and on the back porch in the picture on the left. New electrical panels, which increase and upgrade the home's electrical service were placed under the stair landing. These panels will not be visible from the side once a lattice work screen is placed around the sides of the landing.

FOUNDATION WORK

One of the first and most important tasks in the restoration and renovation of the Hewes House was to level and upgrade the foundation of the structure. The owner, Mark Provost, and employees of the company which performed this work are seen in the photo at left. Following the leveling of the house, the company replaced the old piers with

new cast concrete brick style piers around the perimeter of the house. The old piers were used to add support to the foundation under the remainder of the house. Mark and his employees also replaced some of the fascia boards around the bottom of the front porch and rebuilt the landing on the back porch exterior stairway. This work was done in late 2004 and early 2005.



Mark Provost (standing) and employees work on foundation.

President's Message

I am pleased that our project is moving along at a healthy pace. Although I would like to see the project completed in one or two years, I realize that this project will take many years to complete. Things simply don't move as fast in the government and non-profit world, as they do in the business world. That's okay, as long as we reach our ultimate goal. I hope that you feel the same way, and will also have the patience that I am learning to cultivate. I have been told by many people who do this kind of work that we have accomplished a lot in a short period of time, so I guess we aren't doing so bad.

The really good news is repairs to the house are in progress, as you can see from the pages of this newsletter. We can point to concrete evidence that your contributions are being used for the purpose intended. Another important milestone, our Phase I grant from the State is helping us to do the work. Before the end of this year, we will have spent between \$100,000.00 and \$144,000.00 on repairs and improvements to the property. We hope to have the first floor of the house open for public use by that time.

We still have a long way to go. There is much to be done, and we still need your help and support. In addition to funds for operation and maintenance, we will need to generate substantial funding to complete the Phase II improvements.

Please renew your membership this year!

Thank you again for your wonderful help and support!

Raymond E. Allain

ROBERT E. FOLWERREE, JR.

(Continued from page 1)

The record of Mr. Flowerree's accomplishments is too long to list here. But to name a few: he served as a Naval Officer in WWII and was awarded seven Battle Stars; he was the retired Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Georgia-Pacific Corporation; a director of Chase Manhattan Bank, Georgia Gulf Corporation, Jeanerette Lumber and Shingle Company, and Chairman of the Board of Kilgore Corporation. He also served on the Board of

Administrators of Tulane University, was a Life Trustee of Lewis & Clark College. He was elected to the Paper Industry International Hall of Fame in 2001.

We know clearly that he was a man who appreciated history and the value of preserving our historic landmarks. We are fortunate indeed that he chose to support our efforts.

We at the Landmark Society will miss Mr. Flowerree, and we extend our heartfelt sympathies, and great appreciation to his wife, Elaine and family.



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