Repair Work

I

U stone masons Tim Souders and Kenny Wagner, assisted by Dan Mullen, spent several weeks rebuilding the stone retaining wall that fell over last January during the heavy rains. The old stone was deteriorated to the point of not being useful, so new stone was purchased and the masons cut it to resemble the original. With a reinforcing concrete wall behind it and plenty of gravel fill for drainage, we should not have to worry about repairing this wall for at least 150 years and maybe longer!

The front porch decking on the house was also repaired this summer. The poplar wood used in the 1960 restoration project did not hold up well exposed to the elements, so IU carpenters replaced the rotted poplar with white cedar, which has a natural preservative in it and will not require painting. An added benefit for us, at least in this first year, is the delightful smell of the cedar wood that wafts into the house when we have the doors and windows open!

New Quilts

W

ylie House Quilters, Marjorie Clayton, Diamond Mathers, Virginia Miller, and Ellen Pittman, finished another reproduction quilt this past summer. Pictured at top right is the quilt with the Ohio Star pattern. It is called a scrap quilt because of the many colorful fabrics which have enlivened the room over the kitchen where it covers the trundle bed.

We realized that we had neglected to tell readers about the quilt made last year, so present it here (bottom right). The original quilt is held at the Mathers Museum on the IU Bloomington campus. The color scheme is red and white and ours follows that scheme. It is being used on the trundle bed in the boys’ bedroom.

We thank these dedicated women for their efforts on behalf of the museum which allow us to better preserve our antique quilts for future generations.
From the Director

The months have flown by since our last newsletter. Hiring and training a new Curator of Education and dealing with the Bradley bequest has kept me busy throughout the summer and early fall. We are thrilled to have Bridget Edwards on staff. She is already making a significant contribution to museum operations.

The shipment of furniture, glassware, books, textiles, and so on from the Bradley estate arrived June 3. Since then, I have received estimates on the cost of conservation and reupholstering of the furniture, and we have begun the long process of making these pieces ready for display and use. One volunteer is helping to catalog the books, and two more are helping to do the same with the textiles. I have scanned many of the family photographs. IU Libraries Preservation Department staff are helping with preserving photographs, flattening and mending of 19th century documents, and building enclosures for storing the documents. Our student employee has cataloged the furniture and has begun to work on the glassware and china. I have sorted the thousands of letters into order by year and two native German speakers are sifting through those letters written in German (to and from Professor Boisen, Lou Wylie’s husband and a professor at IU) to get an idea of what is contained therein. Lastly, one of the Wylie family portraits was taken to the IU Art Museum for conservation before being hung in the house.

I feel we’ve made excellent progress processing this gift, but we still have a long way to go. Conservation work is proving quite expensive: furniture repair and upholstery will total close to $20,000. Please think of us as you consider your tax deductible donations this year and help us preserve another portion of...

From the Garden...

No two gardening seasons are ever alike. Fluctuating temperatures and extremes of weather made 2005 the most challenging growing season I have experienced at Wylie House. Spinach bolted and peas wilted when the thermometer topped 90 degrees in May. The stunted Charantais melon vines turned brown and produced not a single fruit. No amount of water could revive the Cupani sweet peas. When it finally rained, many large plants were knocked to the ground.

Several heirloom varieties grown for the first time in the Wylie House plot thrived despite the unpredictable weather. Green-striped cushaw squash vines climbed and sprawled everywhere, in and out of the garden boundaries. Fruits were found hiding among the beans, peppers, and horseradish. After the seeds are harvested, the flesh of the cushaws will be used to make delicious squash pies.

The purple top verbena also did quite well this summer. Blooms appeared in early June and continued into September. The small seeds are nearly ready to harvest. It looks like there will be plenty on hand for the 2006 seed sale on March 4. Other new varieties that will be offered include Cherokee trail of tears bean, night-scented woodland nicotiana and tassel flower. —Sherry Brunoehler

Farewell and Thanks to Dean Thorin

Suzanne Thorin, while she served IU as Dean of University Libraries, was a strong supporter of and good friend to the Wylie House Museum. She recently left IU to take a position at Syracuse University, so we bid her farewell. The museum staff and volunteers will miss her encouragement and enthusiasm for our work. In recognition of her support of the Wylie House, a sweet bay magnolia tree will be planted in her honor this fall on the west side of the front lawn.

Curator of Education

Bridget Edwards joined the Wylie House Museum staff on July 5 as full-time Curator of Education. In this position she will develop, organize, and manage our public education programs, help develop special exhibits, supervise volunteer docents and student interns, catalog new acquisitions, and help with further research about the Wylie family, early Bloomington, and IU history. Bridget holds a PhD in Anthropology from IU and has experience as a teacher, researcher, and applied anthropologist working in place-based, community development projects here in Bloomington. The skills and assets she brings to this position will be of tremendous value to the museum. Please join me in welcoming Bridget to the Wylie House Museum and the IU Libraries.
Looking Back…

While looking over a group of 19th century newspapers that had been kept by the Wylie family, the following caught my eye:

From an 1855 Philadelphia paper, the following classified ads:

- **FOUR STRAY PIGS** came to the premises of John M. Odenheimer, one mile above Darby, on Sunday last. The owner will call, prove property, pay charges, and take them away.

- **LOST**—On Tuesday evening, a Red BULL, white spotted; when last seen he was on the River road near the Columbia bridge, Belmont. The finder will be liberally rewarded by leaving word at J. R. Green’s Drove Yard, or at Stall No. 25 MARKET, above Third St.

- **A GRAY MARE**, about sixteen hands high, came to the premises of the subscriber, north of the Girard College. The owner is requested to prove property, pay charges, and take her away, or she will be disposed of according to law.

- **STRAYED OR STOLEN**, on the evening of the 23d of October, TWO COWS, one red and spotted white, with a white face; the other a roan color; both with short horns; from the premises of Laurel Hill Cemetery. Any information that can be given, please address THOS. DRIMAN, Superintendent of Laurel Hill, as a suitable reward will be given.

- **BUFFALO ROBES**—By Bale or single Skins: large stock opened at low prices, at 38 MARKET Street, below Second.

- **TEACHER WANTED.**—A Female Teacher, for the “Williams Unclassified School,” 22d. section: Salary $300 per annum. Apply to the Directors at the School house, on the Limekiln Turnpike one mile above Pittville, on Saturday, Oct. 27th, at 2 o’clock.

- **WAX TAPERS! WAX TAPERS! WAX TAPERS!**—For sale at WILER & MOSS, 81 S. Fifth St., just below Walnut.

The following personals ad, date unknown, was clipped out of a newspaper and left in a Wylie family book:

- **MATRIMONY**—A YOUNG MAN, 21 years of age, with limited fortune, possessing good qualifications, is desirous of forming the acquaintance of a YOUNG LADY, with an ultimate view of Matrimony. Communications confidential. Address “Bachelor,” Blood’s Despatch.

The following story appeared in the February 21, 1833, issue of the *State’s Advocate* from Milton, PA:

A STRETCHER—An elderly gentleman of unimpeached veracity, though by the way somewhat addicted to story telling, relates the following: During the early days of this town, before carts came in vogue, he was accustomed to haul his wood by the aid of an old black mare, kept in his service. Now the old mare’s harness consisted of a breast plate, and traces, made of the untanned hide of an ox. At the close of a rainy day, he went to his wood lot, situated some 40 or 50 rods from his swelling, for the purpose of procuring a load of wood. After having cut a log which he judged might be a smart load for his beast, he fastened to one end, set her head towards home, and gave her the rein. The old mare continued her course till she arrived at his door, when, to his surprise, he discovered, that owing to the great extensibility of the traces they had stretched the whole distance, without breaking, or moving the load an inch. Throwing down his axe, he went to his beast, and removing the harness from her, threw the breast plate over a post that stood near the door, and went to bed. Upon rising the next morning, he found that the heat of the morning sun had so operated on the contractibility of the traces as to bring his wood up to the door, ready for hewing and splitting! —Lowell Compend.
Volunteer Opportunities

- Do you like history, antiques and a pleasant, tranquil setting? Learn to be a docent at the Wylie House.
- Have limited time? Help with special events at the museum.
- Do you prefer to spend your time in the garden? Lend a hand in our heirloom garden.

If you live in the Bloomington area and would like to become more actively involved with the museum, please call and chat with us about the opportunities.

DOCENTS AND VOLUNTEERS:

Mary Emison, Jane Harnett, Rachel Hix, Rachel Kosmitis, Naomi Lawlis, Carol Lorenzen, Ann McEndarfer, Hayley Schilling, Cindy Smith, Julie Smith, Carla Williams, Carol Wise

GARDEN VOLUNTEERS:

Gino Brancolini, Amanda Davis, Ross Hill, Luca Peragallo, Lee Ridge, Floyd Richards, Eve Schultes-Ridge, Carol Wise

QUILTERS:

Marj Clayton, Diamond Mather, Virginia Miller, Ellen Pittman

Wylie House by Candlelight will be held this year on Saturday, December 10, from 5:00 - 8:00 p.m. As in years past, only the downstairs of the house will be open. Live music will entertain guests in the parlor and light refreshments will be served in the dining room and kitchen. We hope many of you will bring your friends and family to this special event, the last before we close for the winter.

Then mark your calendars for the first weekend in March. Our annual seed sale will be held on Saturday, March 4, from 10:00-4:00 in the Museum Annex (317 E. Second). And we will once again host a month-long exhibit of antique quilts in March.

Plans are being made for several other special exhibits in 2006. We were unable to organize such exhibits in 2005 due to time constraints, but we hope to have at least three special exhibits in 2006.