

Spring
2009



Friends of the
Andrew Low House

The Low Exchange

10TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

MISSION STATEMENT: *To provide funding for the purpose of conservation and restoration of items in the Andrew Low House collection, for the acquisition of objects deemed appropriate for the House and to lend financial support for special needs of the house.*

Anniversary Celebration

The Friends of the Andrew Low House is officially 10 years old this year, and we are very proud of our accomplishments. You may recall that we were originally founded when we learned of the possibility of acquiring the portrait of Andrew Low and other important items of Low family memorabilia recently inherited by a descendant in South Africa. We arranged for our good Friend Hugh Golson to travel there, see the items and establish a base for negotiations. He did not return empty handed, bringing with him the first items Friends purchased, the amethyst parure and Vienna diaries of Mary Low's mother, Eliza Stiles, plus other family documents and photo albums. Serious negotiations for Andrew Low's portrait and Sarah Hunter Low's miniature were conducted by our own Alice Daily. The portrait of Andrew Low now hangs in all his glory above the front parlor mantle. The tender miniature of Sarah Hunter Low, with little daughter, Amy, resting against her knee, received needed cleaning and conservation and now rests on the secretary in the library. It had been painted months before Sarah's death. Mrs. Pawling Steward, our State President at the time, and Mrs. Howard Morrison, Jr., her predecessor in that office, conceived of having this supporting arm, and were joined by Mrs. F. Willson Daily, an earlier State President and now our Honorary Chairman.

Since 1999 so many things have either been repaired, conserved, purchased or acquired as gifts from the family or very dear friends that it would be impossible to list all of them.

Mary Stiles Low's pastel portrait and the handsome easel on which it rests in the family parlor, the elegant portrait of Jessie Low (Graham) in the dining room and numerous smaller drawings of family members placed throughout the house have all been purchased and given any necessary conservation. The breakfast table made by Joseph Barry and the dining room table were gifts from descendants of Mary Low's grandfather. Both pieces once stood in his Savannah home. We recently restored the floor cloth in the entrance hall and have just pledged \$5,000.00 toward historically accurate restoration of the garden.

We thank all of you for your support. None of our many accomplishments would ever have happened if you hadn't been such good Friends, and provided the wherewithal for us to do your work. Several of the Friends Board members are retiring or otherwise moving on this year. My faithful Co-chairman, Nancy Starr, is retiring, Jane Espy will become our State President, and I am moving to other jobs. Blessedly, Alice Daily will remain to counsel and assist in guiding this very important aspect of the Georgia Dames. We extend a warm welcome to our new Co-chairmen, Judy Bradley and Sally Davis who will guide us as we move forward into new acquisitions and expert conservation.

You are very dear Friends indeed, and we hope you will always remain so.

Caroline Nusloch, Co-chairman

1849 – Abercorn Street – 2009



On a balmy spring afternoon in 1849 or in 2009 the streets of Savannah offer citizens and visitors an excuse for a leisurely stroll with attendant opportunity to admire the fine buildings and gardens lining its main avenues.

In 1849, a stroll southward on Abercorn Street might have extended to recently laid-out Lafayette Square. There, strollers would have paused to admire the large residence rising on the prestigious southwest Trustee's Lot for wealthy cotton factor, Andrew Low II. The exterior of the dignified two story building was rapidly nearing completion and it was said the family would be occupying their new home before the end of the year.

The house, situated well back from the street, had golden tone stucco walls, scored to resemble large blocks of masonry and capped at the roof line by a parapet concealing its low pitched hip roof. Above the parapet, four massive chimneys were visible. A flight of wide stone steps led to the main entrance. In 1849 there would have been nods of approval from the spectators as they gazed up at the classical design of the brownstone entablature with flanking columns, the heavy mahogany grained double doors, with orderly row of bosses suggesting iron bolts, set within a frame with glazed panes above and beside the doors to provide light to the hall within. These side lights were in turn flanked by snow white fluted pilasters capped with delicately carved acanthus leaves. The impressive design of this residence would have called forth admiring comments upon the skill of its architect and builder, Mr. John Norris. The 2009 visitor would focus his camera to document the same scene. The recumbent red-stone lions put in place when the house was being completed still guard the entrance.

The early viewer might have commented on the dry moat surrounding the English style basement, an uncommon feature in Savannah, where most houses had their main floor above a fully exposed basement. Massive louvered shutters of cypress, sporting a fresh coat of the fashionable chrome green color, in 1849 might have been stacked, waiting to be hung at the windows whose glass panes were defined by mahogany glazed muntions. Cast iron balconies flanked the entrance and the double balconies on either side of the house had been painted a darker, Essex green. This same deeper shade of green was admired on sections of the iron fence being erected upon long blocks of brownstone coping to enclose the front garden. Nods of admiration and expressions of approval might have been exchanged by those observing the house under construction. Andrew Low was indeed having a fine residence built for himself and his young family. It was a credit to the city and to her prosperity that derived much of its wealth from the flourishing cotton trade with England.

Natural disasters have wrought some changes in the appearance of the house. A great hurricane hit Savannah in September 1854. A letter written a few days after the storm by Eliza Mackey, grandmother of Andrew Low's second wife, Mary Cowper Stiles, mentions in addition to much other destruction in the area, "The tin on Mr. Low's house was rolled back and it is leaking badly. He can get no one to repaired it for love nor money." At this time, the second, and present roof was likely installed over the original. It has an Italianate overhang with carved brackets. John Norris had begun to use this style roof on several houses he designed in the 1850's and Andrew Low may have had him designed this one. The eaves of this second roof have been painted a grayish matte and the carved brackets are defined in polished mahogany semigloss, colors appropriate for the period of the house. In the attic the original roof remains beneath the second one and traces of the parapet can be seen.

In August 1886, shortly after William Low had inherited his father's estate and while the house was being redecorated in preparation for his marriage to Juliette Gordon, a massive earthquake shook the east coast from Maine to Mobile, Alabama. In Savannah it was recorded as a 6 degree earthquake, with severe aftershocks following for several days. The stucco on the Low House sustained a number of cracks. These were patched with concrete and the first coat of paint was applied to the exterior walls at this time to conceal the patches. This color closely matched the color of the original stucco. Over the years,

the stucco was repeatedly painted. Today, those layers have been carefully removed revealing the original stucco. The cracks have been cleaned of their old concrete patches and new stucco applied, toned as closely as possible to the color of original stucco.

This perfectly balanced building has an unsolved mystery ... what happened to the balcony on its north side? Caroline Stiles Lovell, Mary Low's niece, in "The Light of Other Days", describes the house in the early 1870's as having, "in the front, little iron balconies and on each

side were double iron balconies".

The stroller of 1849 would find startling changes along much of Abercorn Street in 2009. However, upon reaching Lafayette Square and halting in front of the Andrew Low House he might think time had stood still.

Friends of the Andrew Low House are proud to have underwritten the cost of the historic paint analysis by Preservation Consultant, Sara B. Chase, of Lexington, Massachusetts, done in August 2007, as part of the Conservation Project for our Andrew Low Museum House.

The Harbor of Liverpool C. 1820



The Harbor of Liverpool, c. 1830 - Ships of A. Low & Co. arrived here laden with cotton for the mills of the midlands.

Trade was the life blood of Andrew Low and Company, trade between the ancient and flourishing port city of Liverpool on one side of the Atlantic and the bustling young harbor beneath Yamacraw Bluff, in the city named, Savannah, on the other side of the ocean.

The city to which Andrew Low I had come in 1800 to open the western office of the company that eventually bore his name alone, was a new city, having been founded as recently as 1733, but already all manner of trade had been established between England and her thirteenth American colony, interrupted by the Revolutionary War, but resumed once hostilities ended.

This colored lithograph depicting the Liverpool harbor would have been a familiar sight to sea captains from Savannah who brought their ships loaded with raw materials from the coastal or midland plantations of Georgia and returned with cargoes of goods ordered by the planters or their agents or merchandise to be sold in the warehouses

of companies such as Andrew Low and Company. It was to Liverpool that the original Steamship Savannah headed on her maiden voyage across the ocean and one of the entrepreneurs who had invested in her was Andrew Low I.

This colored lithograph was a gift from Hugh Stiles Golson. The Friends have had it expertly conserved and framed. It hangs in Andrew Low's library.

Rare Tucker Porcelain Child's Tea and Coffee Service



Part of a rare 22 piece Tucker Porcelain child's tea and coffee service.

A child's tea and coffee set made by the Tucker Porcelain Company, of Philadelphia, about 1835, was recently given to the Andrew Low House by two long-time Friends, Mr. Ronald Kane and Mr. Solomon Grossman. Both gentlemen were friends of the late Edward Vason Jones, our highly valued first restoration consultant and his successor in that capacity, the late Berry B. Tracy. Their splendid Classical period gifts to the collection at the Andrew Low House have all been given memory of Edward Jones and Berry Tracy and are of a quality those two astute authorities would have whole-heartedly approved.

The translucent white porcelain child's tea and coffee set, decorated with gilt bands and a spider pattern decoration of Greek anthemia includes all necessary pieces for children of appropriate age to have been introduced to the correct manner of serving these beverages to guests. Amy and Hattie Low, the two daughters of Andrew Low and his first wife, Sarah Hunter Low, when of appropriate age, would have been introduced to the correct manner of serving tea

or coffee to guests using just such a set as this one. Their governess, Miss Emma Visick, might have instructed them, or perhaps it would have been their beautiful and accomplished step-mother, Mary Stiles Low who would have set the example. In either case, the elegant twenty-two pieces now in our collection would have delighted their original owner as we can imagine they might have also delighted the two older Low girls.

Friends, Indeed

Saturday, March 14th was one of those vivid, memorable days to be a Dame and a docent because the tours were populated with visitors who were captivated with our Andrew Low House. One of those guests was a most sophisticated young woman from New York who, as we were walking out at the end of the tour, turned to me and said, "I know I have just seen the best house museum in Savannah, so what do you suggest I do now?" I answered her question, but I was thinking, "Thank you, Friends."

On its tenth anniversary, evidence of this important supportive force in our Society permeates the Andrew Low House, from the rare portrait of Andrew Low II, which dominates the front parlor, and the numerous other Low family portraits and miniatures, to the latest stunning gift, the exquisite and rare Tucker porcelain tea and coffee set.

This Christmas our c. 1800 dining room table looked especially elegant as it was covered with a white damask cloth and the Stiles ruby glass epergne and candlesticks, all festooned with fruit and greenery. My fellow Dames, it created what is known as the "Wow Factor"! Of course,

it was through the Friends that we received these pieces of the 1848 Bohemian glass, desert service commissioned in Austria by William Henry Stiles, Mary Low's father.

The books the Friends have secured and conserved for us as well, Katie Low's Bible, Mary's Prayer Book and Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, have provided our rooms with a personal touch so important in a house museum.

From my perspective as a Dame and a docent, I am reminded several times a week of the accomplishments of the Friends. It is with great pride that I count myself a member, and therefore, can be a part of their exemplary work.

So, on behalf of the Furnishings Committee, let me offer heartfelt congratulations to the Friends of the Andrew Low House on their tenth Anniversary.

Rowley Jane Mayo (Mrs. William Henry Mayo)
Chairman, Furnishings Committee



Friends of the Andrew Low House
10th Anniversary Issue
Spring 2009

During the past ten years, you, our members, have made possible the purchase of many treasures for the Andrew Low House. Most of these pieces have direct ties to the extended family – Mackay, Stiles, Low – and have come from as close as Savannah descendants and as distant as a South African great-great-grandson. Some of you have presented gifts of rare and exceptional furniture and signifi-

cant items of family memorabilia to the collection. Your generous support has enabled us to provide expert conservation as needed both for items newly acquired and for needy pieces already in the Andrew Low House collection. The list that follows is a partial catalogue of what Friends have accomplished in the past ten years. As you read it, you will be proud to be a Friend of the Andrew Low House.



Sarah Hunter Low
1817 - 1849



Andrew Low II
1812 - 1886



Mary Stiles Low
1832 - 1863

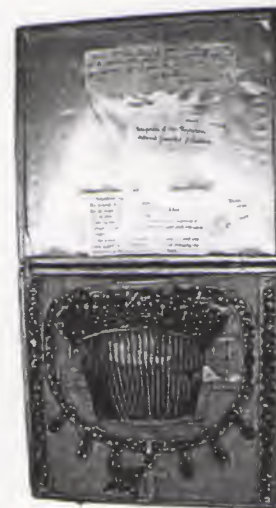
1999 Organized

2000 Underwrote

Cost of plane ticket to South Africa for Hugh Golson to see what Low family memorabilia was in possession of great-great-grandson Christopher Davidson, and to establish basis for negotiations for possible purchases.

Purchased

Amethyst parure originally belonging to Archduchess Marie Louise, purchased for Mary Low's mother, Eliza Mackay Stiles, by her husband, at the palace sale in Vienna, April 1849.



Amethyst parure, purchased in Vienna by William Henry Stiles, for his wife, Eliza. It had belonged to Archduchess Marie Louise, second wife of Napoleon Bonaparte



The daughters of Andrew and Mary Low, Jessie, Mary and Katie, c. 1876



Large Anglo-Irish, diamond pattern, cut glass, dessert bowl, with lid and tray, early 19th century. It originally belonged to Mary Low's grandparents, Robert and Eliza Mackay.



Wedgwood jasper ware mug, celadon ground, from Etowah Cliffs, girlhood home of Mary Stiles Low

Vienna Diary of Eliza Stiles (1846 – 1849).

Mary Low (Guthrie's) album of family photographs.

Miscellaneous books and papers belonging to children of Andrew and Mary Stiles Low, including Katie Low's Bible, a gift from her father, Christmas 1869 and Mary Stiles Low's Prayer Book, 1854.

2001 Purchased

Portrait of Andrew Low II by George Washington Conarroe, 1836

Portrait conserved by Malutin Pavlovich, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, Ga.

Miniature of Sarah Hunter Low and daughter Amy, by Cornelius Durand, 1849

Miniature conserved by Carol Aiken, Baltimore, Md.

2002 Purchased

Pastel portrait of Mary Stiles Low, done in Paris, 1854
Mahogany easel made by Gregory Guenther, Savannah, Ga., for correct display of this pastel portrait. Easel design based on period example in Boston Museum of Art.

Water color of Mary Cowper Stiles as a teenager, possibly painted by her mother, Eliza Mackay Stiles, while the family lived in Vienna, 1848

Miniature of Robert Mackay, Mary Low's maternal grandfather.

Miniature of future General Alexander Low as a cadet. (He was a 1st cousin, lifelong friend and executor of will of Andrew Low II.)

Miniature of three daughters of Andrew and Mary Stiles Low (Katie, Mary and Jessie)

Conservation, cleaning and repair to frames of the last four of these, Master Solutions, Savannah, Ga.

Cleaning of large marble cross on Low lot, #521, in Laurel Grove Cemetery.

2003 Purchased

Portrait of Jessie Low (Graham), attributed to Charles Alexander.

Suitable period style frame for portrait created by Master Solutions, Savannah, Ga.

Bequest

Numerous items of Stiles family provenance from estate of Eleanor Stiles Golson, including: Compote, pair candlesticks and two plates from W.H. Stiles ruby glass dessert service, Parian greyhound group, porcelain card box and playing cards and William Henry Stiles two-volume History of the Austrian Revolution, 1848, plus numerous other items of family memorabilia.

Purchased

Large, Anglo-Irish glass dessert bowl, with lid and platter, (possibly originally owned by Mary Low's Mackay grandparents),

3 pieces of Wedgwood celadon jasper ware used at Etowah Cliffs and other family items from Elise Stiles Heald.

2004 Purchased

Epergne, part of 144 piece ruby glass dessert service made-to-order for Mary Stiles Low's father in Vienna, 1848, Portland pattern chamber pot with lid and large wash bowl, from set used at Etowah Cliffs, girlhood home of Mary Stiles Low. Other Stiles family items from Margaret Stiles Knight.

2005 Paid for

Leather writing surface replaced on breakfront made by Joseph Barry for Robert Mackay, 1810. Gregory Guenther, Savannah, Ga. (Breakfront was gift from William and Barbara Mills, as was the dining table.)



Plate from the custom designed, 144 piece, ruby glass, dessert set ordered by Mary Low's father, William Henry Stiles.



Repaired: large, three branch, Sheffield candelabrum.



Silver wine funnel, originally owned by Mary Low's grandparents, Robert and Eliza Mackay

Cleaning, polishing and minor repairs to large mahogany dining table that belonged to Robert Mackay. Gregory Guenther, Savannah, Ga.

2006 Paid for

Repair of broken arm on three branch silver candelabrum from Woodbridge family, presented to the house many years ago. Estes-Simmons Silver Plating, Atlanta, Ga.

Conservation of ruby glass epergne (several breaks) and Parian dog group, (paws, tails and ears) with replacement dome to cover this group, by Restoration Services, Arlington, Mass.

Conservation of several Low family books, Allen Grace, Book Binding, Jacksonville, Fla.

First gift of \$20,000.00 to Andrew Low House Conservation Fund.

Received gift of silver wine funnel and silver mounted, carved coconut shell that had belonged to Robert Mackay from William and Barbara Mills.

2007

Second gift to Andrew Low House Conservation Fund of \$20,000.00.

2008

Paid for exterior paint analysis of Andrew Low House by Sara Chase, Preservation Consultant, Lexington, Mass.

Received gift of colored lithograph of the Harbor of Liverpool, about 1820, from Hugh Stiles Golson. Conservation done by Lenora Weaver, Atlanta, Ga. and framing by Master Solutions, Savannah, Ga.

Received rare, 22 piece, Tucker porcelain, child's tea and coffee set, circa 1830, gift of Ronald Kane and Solomon Grossman, in Memory of Edward Vason Jones and Berry B. Tracy.

2009

Voted gift of \$5,000.00 toward restoration of Andrew Low House garden to original period (1840's).

BREAKING NEWS!

Friend Ronald Kane has just sent three wonderful pieces to join the impressive collection of classic period furnishings in the Andrew Low House. These are a mahogany Pembroke table, a three drawer work table, both possibly by Duncan Phyfe and a bull's eye mirror capped with an eagle perched upon a pile of rocks that is flanked by coiling serpents.

Word is spreading about the extraordinary collection of furnishings in our museum house. The cream of cabinetmakers from the period 1800 - 1860 are represented by items such as the breakfront made by Joseph Barry (retaining his label), the wardrobe attributed to Charles Honore Lannuier, eight lyre-backchairs documented in Phyfe's work book for 1815, a piano-forte by John Geib, in a case by Phyfe, and pieces by Michael Allison, Joseph Meeks and Alexander Roux. In addition, there is a French porcelain dinner service made for a family in Baltimore and handsome Argand light fixtures.

Jennifer Guthrie Ryan's and Hugh Stiles Golson's collaboration on the history of the Low family and in particular, their Savannah-based operation, "SIGN OF THE BUCK, Trade, Triumph and Tragedy in the House of Low", is in the hands of the publisher. It promises to bring to light many facts concerning the extended Low family, in particular, Andrew Low I, Andrew Low II and the latter's children.

Did you know...

The first golf club in America was founded in Savannah, Georgia in 1794 and Mary Stiles Low's grandfather, Robert Mackay, was an early member. On May 1, 1806 he was billed by Andrew Low & Co. for "4 golf clubs for self and 1 for Biggs - 5 -----.625 ---\$3.125" and for "6 Do. Balls ---.25 ---\$1.50". The receipted bill is one of hundreds of documents in the Mackay-Stiles File at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Pa: Mackay Esq. Savannah 1806.
To Andrew Low H.C. Dr.

May 1st

<i>5 2/8 Shullon</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>2.50</i>	
<i>15 apron putting of Chak</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>3.75</i>	
<i>3 1/2 1/2 Chucks</i>	<i>37 1/2</i>	<i>1.12 1/2</i>	
<i>6 1/2 " Dowles</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>1.62 1/2</i>	
<i>3 " 1/4 Linen</i>	<i>62 1/2</i>	<i>1.87 1/2</i>	
<i>2 " Blue Glass Cantriv</i>	<i>52 1/2</i>	<i>1.25</i>	
<i>2 3/4 " Hutton</i>	<i>18 1/2</i>	<i>0.50</i>	
<i>2 string silk</i>	<i>6 1/2</i>	<i>0.12 1/2</i>	
<i>4 Golf clubs for self</i>			
<i>1 do " for Biggs</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>62 1/2</i>	<i>3.12 1/2</i>
<i>6 Do. Balls</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>1.50</i>	
		<i>17.37 1/2</i>	

*Recd pay in full
Andrew Low Esq*

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Address Service Requested