

A word from Dottie George

A new era for McLeod



On February 28, 2011, the Friends of McLeod saw the achievement of the goal we have been working toward for many years. On that day, the sale of McLeod Plantation to the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission was finalized.

With public ownership of McLeod, we can now say that the plantation belongs to all of us. Working together, we have succeeded in protecting this remarkable historic site. It was a monumental task that demanded the efforts of many people. The board of directors of the Friends of McLeod would like to thank each of you, individually, for your part in meeting this challenge and never, ever giving up.

PRC and the Friends of McLeod share the same core values: the preservation of the McLeod Plantation, its history, and its cultural heritage. The Friends of McLeod are confident that PRC is the right steward for McLeod Plantation, and that public ownership of McLeod will ensure the highest and best use for it.

With the accomplishment of our goal of public ownership for McLeod, we are continuing our mission of ensuring the preservation of the plantation and its cultural heritage while moving into a new role of advocacy for McLeod. Our former chairman, Dr. Jerry Owens, is now a member of PRC's McLeod Steering Committee, which is working on a master plan for the property. The purpose of the document will be to guide the PRC in its stewardship efforts for McLeod Plantation, now and in the future. Dr. Owens is very encouraged by the emphasis that is being placed on preservation. We are also continuing our mission of educating the public about McLeod's history, and you can look forward to more events such as our very successful March lecture about McLeod on the eve of the Civil War. Our oral history program is also continuing, and may prove to be one of the most important things that we do for McLeod. And we will continue to have our annual benefit oyster roasts as fundraisers for the plantation.

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An interview with Glenn Keyes: McLeod's stabilization program

Architect Glenn Keyes has been working with the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission as a consultant on the master plan for McLeod Plantation. Keyes is a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Board of Advisors, and is past president of the Preservation Society of Charleston. He has worked on many historic structures in South Carolina, from the Old St. Andrew's Church to the Joseph Manigault House, owned by the Charleston Museum. He is currently working on the stabilization plans for the house and outbuildings on the McLeod Plantation, and was kind enough to speak with Friends of McLeod board member John Meffert regarding the next steps on the preservation of the McLeod property.



JM: What is your firm's role in the planning for McLeod Plantation?

GK: We are working with the Jaeger Company, as part of their consultant team, to prepare Historic American Building Survey drawings for all 13 buildings on the property. While working on the drawings, we are also

preparing an assessment of the buildings as part of a historic structures report. Finally, we are working on the specification process for bids to accomplish immediate stabilization work by October 2011.

JM: What are the conditions you are going to be addressing?

GK: Several of the buildings – particularly the gin house, the garage building, and the barn – need stabilization. We are currently determining how to proceed to intervene safely to preserve the integrity of the buildings until the master plan is agreed upon. Our current efforts will be directed toward keeping water out of the buildings so that

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we can buy time for the final plans to be agreed upon. This means that by November we hope to have all necessary roof work done, and the exteriors of 10 buildings on the site painted.

JM: Do you anticipate that this will be preservation or a restoration project?

GK: The committee working on the master plan will decide the philosophy we will operate under once the planning effort is completed. It is my opinion that what is at issue with McLeod is the rich heritage the buildings represent of different periods of the McLeod era from 1850 to 1991.

JM: What has been the most intriguing aspect of this project to date?

GK: The range of the outbuildings and what they contain is fascinating, particularly the dairy building and the spring house. It is remarkable that the house and the cabins were lived in until the 1980s and 1990s, and there is a wealth of original detail to be sifted through as we are considering how to interpret the property and its long history. I do not have any preconceptions about the property and I have been intrigued by the process we are engaged in. It is the buildings and the people that will tell us where we should go in interpreting the property for the future.

JM: How could the Friends of McLeod help in the planning process?

GK: The Friends have already played the critical role of ensuring the property is in the hands of the PRC as a responsible steward for the future. In my opinion, the Friends can continue to collect the recollections and the artifacts that are critical to the interpretation of the property. There will always be the need for volunteers and people who care to participate in the process of discovery. I hope that together we can shape a significant interpretation plan for the understanding of this legacy.

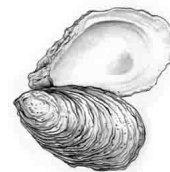
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As the Friends of McLeod move into a new role, I am also changing roles. I took over as chairman in 2009, and I am now honored to pass the mantle of chairmanship to one of our founding members, Carol Jacobsen. She is committed to supporting PRC in this endeavor and ensuring that the plantation's history is kept alive.

I want to thank each of you for your continued support in helping to ensure that McLeod Plantation, a historic and cultural treasure, is saved for the enjoyment and benefit of all.

With sincere appreciation,

Dottie W. George, Immediate Past Chairman
Friends of McLeod Board of Directors



SAVE THE DATE! NOVEMBER 27, 2011

The Friends of McLeod
annual benefit oyster roast
and silent auction will be held on
Sunday, November 27

at

Bowen's Island Restaurant.

Please join us for oysters, barbecue, and a beautiful view of the sunset from the dock on the Folly River. If you have an item you would like to donate for the silent auction, please contact us via our website. Donations are greatly appreciated!

McLeod on the eve of the war

The Friends of McLeod welcomed a record crowd of over 200 people to our March 3 program, "On the Eve of the War: McLeod Plantation and James Island, 1860-1861." Historian Doug Bostick provided an informative and entertaining overview of McLeod's history during the pre-war period, and PRC Executive Director Tom O'Rourke joined us for the event. We would like to thank the Department of Natural Resources for their generous support in allowing us to use the DNR auditorium at Fort Johnson. We hope to have Doug speak at an upcoming program on McLeod during the Civil War.



Board members of the Friends of McLeod gathered under the McLeod oak in March to celebrate the plantation's purchase by the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission. Our thanks go to the PRC for graciously allowing the board to meet at McLeod.



Photo by Alan Hawes, courtesy of the Post and Courier.

THOMAS JOHNSON, 1942-2011

In March the Friends of McLeod mourned the passing of Thomas Johnson, vice chairman of the organization and a community leader of long standing. He served as chairman of the James Island Land Use Commission and as chairman of the Committee to Preserve Black Cemeteries on James Island. (In the 2009 photo above, he is shown at a cemetery on Secessionville Road.) He served on the City of Charleston Recreation Committee, the Charleston Greenbelt Committee, and the S.C. Cemetery Board. He was vice president of the James Island Little League and president of Westchester Civic Association. He also helped establish the Apple Charter School. The Friends of McLeod will deeply miss Thomas, but are comforted to know that his voice lives on in his narration of "McLeod Plantation: A Walk with History." Following is a poem read at his funeral service by Adrienne Chisolm-Cox.

*Who will do the work when I am no longer there?
I have done my duty well, I have done my fair share!*

*Who will take up the torch that I have carried day to day?
I wonder what they will do, I wonder what they'll say?*

*The foundation has been laid, I've labored from dawn to dark.
I have toiled in many communities, many of them now have parks.*

*I do not need any fame, any accolades, or applause.
I only want to know who will stand up for the cause!*

*Who will be the one when people need another voice
because they're feeling timid and think there is no choice?*

*The harvest is always plentiful and the laborers are always few,
so who will do the work? Will it be me? Will it be YOU?*

McLeod Timeline

June, 2004: Historic Charleston Foundation announces plans to sell McLeod Plantation to the American College of the Building Arts. ACBA proposes to construct multiple new buildings on the historic site.

June, 2004: Concerned citizens meet to discuss ways to save McLeod from development.

August, 2004: The Friends of McLeod incorporate as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the McLeod Plantation and its history.

September, 2004: Charleston City Council gives final approval of a school-overlay zoning change for McLeod. The city's Board of Zoning Appeals also approves the zoning change. The Friends of McLeod file an appeal of the BOZA decision.

October, 2004: The Friends of McLeod hold a press conference to announce plans for legal action.

December, 2004: Historic Charleston Foundation sells McLeod Plantation to ACBA for \$850,000.

Fall, 2008: Confronting financial problems, ACBA sells McLeod Plantation back to HCF.

September, 2009: The College of Charleston Foundation proposes to purchase McLeod for \$4 million. The foundation's plan to use the McLeod field for recreational purposes draws fire.

February, 2010: The College of Charleston Foundation withdraws its proposal to purchase McLeod.

April, 2010: HCF rejects James Island Town Council's offer to purchase McLeod for \$2.7 million. The council subsequently votes to try to acquire the plantation through eminent domain.

July, 2010: James Island Town Council votes to end its efforts to acquire McLeod through eminent domain.

October, 2010: Historic Charleston Foundation agrees to negotiate with the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission for the purchase of McLeod Plantation, a long-time goal of the Friends of McLeod.

February 28, 2011: Historic Charleston Foundation sells McLeod Plantation to Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission for \$3.3 million.

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Students' journals reveal their impressions of McLeod

A group of students from the University of North Carolina visited historic sites in the Charleston area recently as part of a course on African-American history. Executive Director Tom O'Rourke of the Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission was their guide during their visit to the McLeod Plantation. Following are excerpts from some of the students' journal entries on McLeod.

□ The last stop of the day, my favorite on the entire trip, made me realize new opportunities for the future and how I can change others' perceptions on slavery. McLeod Plantation was untouched, undisturbed, and unbelievable. Like Mr. O'Rourke said, I could feel the people of the plantation working around me; I could see them in the field... Something about the home and slave quarters just seemed so authentic and beautiful. I was struck by a new thought as I saw how close the bank was to the final slave house in the row: I realized how our fast-paced, materialistic world makes it so easy to overlook our rich background and forget the things we've learned through history.

□ McLeod Plantation has maybe been my favorite place thus far. ... You really could feel a presence on that plantation. It was quite a powerful feeling—something so untouched by society. It was like history in its own little bubble.

□ McLeod Plantation was by far my most memorable experience. There was no one to hide anything or sugar-coat the past. We were standing in a snapshot of time surrounded by all types of development. I found myself just wanting to get inside the slave cabins and even the barns. I honestly don't think I looked at the house for more than a few seconds. I was more enthralled in the cabins, the trees, the fields, even.

... It is a great piece of American history that will hopefully be secure forever.

□ The last plantation that we visited was the most hard-hitting. The grounds were untouched, except for the parts which had been sold for a shopping center and such. The slave cabins were located right along the road, and I'm sure many people drive by them every day without thinking about the significance of them. It was my favorite plantation, because we were able to wander around the grounds and look at what we wanted and imagine that we were there many years ago. Everything was untouched, but still beautiful and haunting. ... The man [Tom O'Rourke] who showed our class the grounds was the most inspiring of all the tour guides. He was passionate about saving this plantation and keeping it historically accurate.

□ McLeod Plantation surpassed my expectations and was probably my favorite place we visited. It was a mysterious place with such a raw beauty because of its abandonment.

□ Our last stop was McLeod Plantation. This for me was the most powerful place we visited on the trip. ... I really did "feel the history." I really don't know what to say about it. It gave me an eerie feeling imagining the life around there originally, like I was there in 1850 observing it. It really hit me hard. I didn't understand completely the extent of everything, the significance of our education in this class, until I walked up to the house and saw the long row of untouched cabins extending to the road. At that moment I understood why I took this class. ... Seeing that plantation will remain one of the most significant moments of my life. Even right now I am getting chills thinking about it.