



Friends of Fendall Hall

Dear Friends of Fendall Hall:

Two-Thousand and Eight has been an active year for the Friends and Fendall Hall. We are grateful for your continuing support. We are appreciative of the volunteer hours and talents given to Fendall Hall. With Christmas approaching, please take the opportunity to bring friends and family to Fendall Hall to see the house in full Christmas "dress."

When thinking about Christmas at Fendall Hall, the beautiful decorations and the spirit of the Season, the following story from the editorial page of The New York Sun, written by Francis P. Church, in 1897, comes to mind:

*Dear Editor, I am eight years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth: is there a Santa Claus? -----
signed: Virginia O'Hanlon, 115 West Ninety-fifth Street*

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no child-like faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real?

Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank god! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

Wishing you a joyous Christmas Season,
Carol Kleinhoff
President, *Friends of Fendall Hall*

Recreating the 1880's Look at Fendall Hall

By

Dent McCullohs, Chairman of the Furnishings Committee

How do you go about recreating the missing parts of the Victorian decorating carried out by the Dent Family when they moved into Fendall Hall in the 1880's?

In the Drawing Room, the anchor point to start with was the missing window treatments. The Original silk velvet valance with the chenille fringe still exists and there are many family pictures showing the draperies tied back with the same fringe as the valance. In the early years of my Interior Design career, I had taken a small scrap of the original 1880 drapery to F Schumacher & Company to get them to analyze it. They found that was a silk surface with cotton backing. When I started looking for a replacement fabric, I knew that the *Friends* could not afford to replace the draperies with silk, since we needed so many yards of fabric; therefore, I turned to modern fibers and found a polyester fabric with the color and "hand" of the original silk. I was also able to find a modern silk fringe that echoed the original chenille fringe.

Moving next to the Painted Dining Room, I remembered conversations with my Grandmother, Louise Dent Hurt and her sister, Caroline Dent McDowell, talking about Fendall Hall and its furnishings. I remembered their telling me that the drapery fabric in this room was a dark background floral English Chintz. I was able to find the perfect Victorian pattern of palms, ferns, and birds using the exact color scheme used in this room. It also used a method of printing that gave you the impression it was an aged fabric which helped it work with the walls and ceiling painted in the 1880's.

In moving across the hall to the Living room and Original Dining Room that the Young's used when they built the house in the 1850's, we needed to establish a color scheme that would blend with the two painted rooms and the painted entrance hall. For the Living Room, I took the area of the painted walls flanking the door going into the Living Room as the direction for my color scheme - the many terra cotta shades with some greens seemed to flow naturally into that room. Since the floors had never been finished in either of this room and straw matting was originally used as well as in the five rooms upstairs, I realized that we must use carpet in both the Living Room and the Original Dining room. I selected commercial grade carpeting that would withstand the traffic we expected in these rooms since they were rented out for various functions. Using the many books dealing with the Victorian home and the types of patterns used during the 1870's to the 1890's, I was able to find several historic patterns through Laura Wiggins at Designer Carpets at the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center. We selected two different patterns using the same shades of color – one more floral type as in the center of a Persian run for the Living Room, and a geometric pattern for the Original Dining Room.

I contacted Stephen Harrison, Curator of the Decorate Arts at the Atlanta High Museum of Art, and showed him pictures of Fendall Hall and its painted walls. He was most excited to learn of the house and I arranged to take him and two of his associates to Eufaula. He was most generous with his time and comments during his visit to the house. He immediately identified the Crystal Chandeliers in the Drawing Room and Dining Room as Baccarat. When he went across the hall into the Living Room, he commented that with all the opulence, pattern, and color across the hall in the painted rooms, he felt that the Dents would have used wall paper in the Living Room and the Original Dining Room. In the Living Room, he said that it would have most likely been a small scale geometric design. I was able to find such a wall paper echoing the colors in the Entrance Hall painted walls. Later, I found the design in the pattern book Grammar of Ornament by Owen Jones that was published in London, in 1856. The drapery treatment for this room needed to be a soft linen texture in a warm neutral color to set off the rich vibrant color of the paper. A flat braid reflects the colors in the wall paper and the draperies. This gave the room an almost causal feeling since it was used as a family Living Room. *Continued~*

~Perhaps the best stroke of luck (or good fortune) was the paper for the Original Dining room. It was a documented color way copy of a French paper installed in the Galler House in New Orleans in 1857 – the exact period as Fendall Hall and could have been used by the Young’s. The draperies and trim for this room needed to be slightly dressier, and I chose an Ottoman weave solid fabric that was popular during that time period. Again, a flat trim was chosen for the Draperies. In designing the valances for the draperies for the both rooms, I realized that they needed to be the same depth as the original 1880’s valances in the Drawing Room; therefore, they are shorter than what would normally be used today.

To reflect on how we began the search to recreate the 1880’s look that the Dent’s brought to Fendall Hall, I must go to our board member, past President of the *Friends*, cousin, and special friend, Charlie Crook. He offered the board a sum of money to be used in “freshening up” the first floor of Fendall Hall. We felt that AHC would probably let us do the Drawing Room since we had the exact fabrics from the 1880’s. At this time Charlie encouraged me to plan the painted Dining Room as well as the Living Room and Original Dining Room. His comment to me was, “Dent, if you and I don’t do them at this time, I don’t think it will ever get done.” When I had all the samples, prices, and installation cost ready, Charlie Crook, Calvin Wingo, and I presented the project to Mark Driscoll, AHC Director, and Clyde Eller, Curator of the Collection of House Museums for AHC. To our great joy they approved our plan for all four rooms.

Even after the installation of these draperies, valances, and upholstery of various pieces furniture, Charlie kept pushing the AHC to let us get rid of the totally worn out “shabby” carpet in the Painted Dining Room. Since this room was used for dinner by each generation into the 1970’s, there were areas where all you could see was the canvas backing. Elizabeth Brown was acting head of AHC at that time and encouraged use to see if a facsimile of the original design could be secured. I was able to get this done through Laura Wiggins at Designer Carpets.

All of the wonderful restoration that you see on the first floor of Fendall Hall was made possible with the generous offer of money from Charlie Crook and the extra generous discount that Cindy Watts, manager of Brunschwig and Fil showroom at the Atlanta Decorative Arts Center, was able to secure for Fendall Hall.

I hope that this overly simplified version of the renovation will give you insight into how we recreated the 1880’s look and how we strived for continuity through the first floor rooms. I also wanted to restore the warmth and feeling of home that was enjoyed for almost 120 years by the generations of the Young’s. So on your next visit to Fendall Hall, stop and take a minute to look around you and see how the Furnishings Committee was able to breathe some new life and spirit into that grand old Lady – *Fendall Hall*.

“Great Houses of the South”

Deborah Casey

Fendall Hall has been chosen as one of the featured homes in an upcoming book titled Great Houses of the South, by Steven Brooke and Laurie Ossman. Steven Brooke is an internationally recognized leader in the photography of architecture, landscape, and interiors. Steven has dozens of books including Historic Houses of Virginia, The Majesty of Mississippi, and Views of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. Laurie Ossman has a Ph.D and a Masters degree in American Architectural History from the University of Virginia and an undergraduate degree from Brown University. They both spent many hours at Fendall Hall in July gathering details and photos for their book.

Three houses from each of the Southern states were selected to appear in “Great Houses of the South”, and Fendall Hall is one of the three from Alabama. The other two are Gaineswood, another AHC property in Demopolis, and Oakleigh, in Mobile. The Alabama Historic Commission is very pleased to have two properties featured.

The book should be completed and available in November 2009 in time for Christmas. Laurie and Steven have been invited to return to Fendall Hall for a book signing after the book is released. We’ll all look forward to the book & event!

Upcoming Event Calendar

Friends of Fendall Hall

Garden Festival

Saturday, May 16, 2009

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Tour of 12 private gardens in addition to Fendall Hall.

Gardens on Tour:

Randolph Street: Laura and Arnie Cutchen, Dot and Buck Singer, Pam Freeman

St. Francis Point: Donna Stetler and Charlie Swift; Gwen and Vernon Hopper; Jackie Devlin and Arnie Meagher; Carol and Bill Kleinhoff

West Side of Eufaula: Gabe Frankovitch, Mary and Bobby Dixon, Eleanor and Ronald Brown, Lou and John Martin, Toni and Billy Houston

The event includes entertainment, demonstrations, and gardening vendors. Admission: \$25 the day of the festival; \$20 pre-sales until May 8th; \$5 per individual garden at the gate; children 12 & under free. Rain or shine. No refunds. Proceeds benefit Friends of Fendall Hall Landscape Restoration Projects.

For tickets or more information, please contact *Fendall Hall* at 334-687-8469.

Eufaula Pilgrimage

Friday, Saturday, Sunday

April 3rd, 4th, and 5th

Fendall Hall will be open during the day time tours only. On exhibit at Fendall Hall will be many letters written by Captain Dent to his wife, Anna Young Dent, during the Civil War. These letters were recently presented to the Alabama Archives and History by the Dent family. Fendall Hall will host the Civil War encampment for the boy scouts again. Last year's event was very successful. This year, they will include a civil war era field hospital tent. As many of you know, Fendall Hall was used as a Confederate hospital during the Civil War.

*Friends of Fendall
Hall*

**917 W. Barbour St.
Eufaula, AL 36027**