HISTORIC AUGUSTA News

VOLUME 52, NO. 3
FALL 2026



THE MISSION OF HISTORIC AUGUSTA, INC. IS TO PRESERVE HISTORICALLY OR ARCHITECTURALLY SIGNIFICANT STRUCTURES AND SITES IN AUGUSTA & RICHMOND COUNTY, GEORGIA.



Raise a glass at Historic Augusta's Perfectly Aged Benefit Auction Thursday, September 17, from 6 PM–9 PM at Saint Paul's River Room.

This year's theme, Star-Spangled Ball, invites guests to celebrate the spirit of America's founding with an evening of patriotic elegance, lively entertainment, and unforgettable experiences. Enjoy an open bar by Joe Willis, epicurean cuisine by Edward Mendoza, desserts by Jai West, live music by Thomas Barnes, stunning floral designs by Charleston Street, photography by Jeff Huff, and invitation design by The Kru.

Throughout the evening, guests are encouraged to bid on luxurious experiences, exclusive packages, and exceptional auction items, with every ticket and winning bid supporting Historic Augusta's goals to preserve, protect, educate, and advocate for Augusta's historic sites and structures. Purchase your tickets today!

Visit onecau.se/perfectlyaged26 or scan the QR Code to purchase tickets and register for online bidding.

FALL EVENTS

SAVE THE DATES!



Joyce Law portrays Fanny Butts Newton Hope in the 2025 WWTS

October 24 - 25, 2026 | 1:30PM - 4:30PM

Walk With the Spirits

Committee Chair: Catherine Robertson
We are happy to return to Westover Memorial Cemetery to visit with the spirits of some of Augusta's notable citizens. Tickets available in September!



2025 Annual Meeting

November 10, 2026 | 5:30PM - 7:30PM

Historic Augusta's Annual Meeting

Join us as we celebrate another year of preserving Augusta's rich history with an evening of preservation awards, cocktails, and a look back at our accomplishments.



Dr. Lee Ann Caldwell opens Cashin Wilson Symposium

November 13 - 14, 2026

Annual Cashin Memorial Wilson Symposium

Explore thought-provoking perspectives on history during this year's symposium, featuring engaging speakers and discussions that bring the past to life in fresh and relevant ways.



Candlelight at the Wilson House

December 3 - 4, 2026 | 5PM - 7PM

Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson Annual Candlelight Open House

Step into the magic of the season as our historic homes glow with candlelight, enjoy festive décor, warm hospitality, and a timeless holiday atmosphere. Admission available in November!



Heritage Party hosted by Jan & Robert Burch in 2026

Coming 2027

Annual Heritage Party

This cherished tradition returns, celebrating our dedicated supporters with an evening of fine food, lively conversation, and the shared spirit of preserving our city's treasured past.



Coming 2027

From Mozart to Motown: An Evening with Russell Joel Brown

New event featuring Russell Joel Brown. Event information forthcoming.

Spring & Summer
Events Recap


Lamar-Wallace-Hill House


Cotton Ball Committee Chairs, Hill House owners, Events Chair and Historic Augusta director


Guests enjoy dinner in at Cotton Ball.

COTTON BALL

Historic Augusta's annual membership party, the Cotton Ball, was held on May 12, 2026, at Lamar-Wallace-Hill House, the historic home of Mrs. Elsie Hill & Mr. Levi Hill IV in the Summerville Historic District. The picture-perfect evening event was well attended, and a great time was had by all. A special thanks goes to our gracious hosts for their hospitality, to Ashley Hock Smith and Emily Stevenson, our event co-chairs, committee members and our staff for planning such a lovely evening.


Bradley's BBQ catering



Special thanks to Rae's Creek Revival for their music, Bradley's BBQ for the food, John Williams for organizing the mint juleps, and Joe Willis and his team for serving the libations. Volunteers, committee members and staff for the event included Lauren Alexander, Lee Catherine Booker, Melinda Elser, Ava Grace, Izzy Green, Patrick Henderson, Barbara McElwayne, Erick Montgomery, Laurie Montgomery, Wright Montgomery, Ashley Hock Smith, Ricky Salinas, Brendon Steffes, Emily Steffes, Emily Stevenson, Noelle Salinas, Max Vallotton, Jr., John Williams, Jason Witt, Brayden Wood, Katelyn Wood and Rebecca Wood.


Rae's Creek Revival plays at the Cotton Ball


Cotton Ball guests




2026 Cotton Ball Committee Members

PRESERVATION MONTH EVENTS

The past few months have been filled with exciting opportunities to celebrate and preserve Augusta's history. From our Preservation Month Happy Hour at Emil's to the behind-the-scenes Peep & Eat at the Historic Cotton Exchange led by Michael Wolff, community members joined us in exploring the places and stories that make Augusta unique. We also welcomed hundreds of guests to our Annual Cotton Ball, a wonderful evening of fellowship, live music, and fundraising in support of our mission. Thank you to everyone who attended, volunteered, sponsored, and supported these events.

Your involvement helps Historic Augusta continue to preserve, protect, educate, and advocate for Augusta's historic sites, structures, and stories.

Special thanks to: The Historic Cotton Exchange owners Mrs. Nancy and Dr. Troy Akers, Rebecca Sandberg, Michael Wolff, Emil's Staff with appreciation extended to staff and volunteers for their assistance and allowing us into their building, setting up for events and their continued support.



Preservation Month Happy Hour Attendees



Peep & Eat guests at the Historic Cotton Exchange



Michael Wolff details the history of the Historic Cotton Exchange



Preservation Month Peep & Eat at the Historic Cotton Exchange

Widows Home Cottages



Preservation Month Happy Hour Attendees
Lee Robertson & Mary Houston



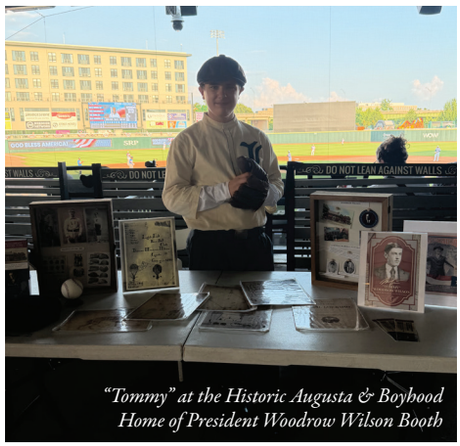
Preservation Month Kick-Off Happy Hour hosted at Emil's



Preservation Month Happy Hour Attendees
Tom Robertson & Tennent Houston

AUGUSTA GREENJACKETS AMERICA250 EVENT


"Tommy" Wilson, Auggie and George Walton


"Tommy" at the Historic Augusta & Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson Booth


"Tommy" and George Walton preparing for pitch


Augusta GreenJackets Mascot in front of the Wilson House


Rylen Peek as "Tommy" Wilson throwing first pitch in 2026

Historic Augusta and Historic Meadow Garden teamed up with the Augusta GreenJackets for a memorable Independence Day celebration that brought Augusta's history to life at SRP Park at the 4th of July baseball game.

Representing the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson, Rylen Peek portrayed young "Tommy" Wilson in an 1880s-inspired attire. The pregame ceremony connected Augusta's Revolutionary and presidential history as George Walton, portrayed by local attorney Carlton Powers, ceremonially signed a commemorative baseball before presenting it to "Tommy" Wilson, who threw the ceremonial first pitch in honor of President Woodrow Wilson.

Throughout the evening, fans visited the Historic Augusta and Meadow Garden exhibits, met the living history interpreters, explored Augusta's remarkable past, and captured photos to commemorate the occasion. This unique partnership celebrated America's 250th anniversary by connecting the stories of two influential Augustans through our nation's favorite pastime, creating an engaging and memorable experience for baseball fans of all ages.

Special thanks to: The Augusta GreenJackets, Emily PiPalma, Catie Graf, Historic Meadow Garden, Carlton Powers, the Augusta Players Junior Players, Rylen Peek, Mindy Peek, our dedicated staff and volunteers, and everyone who helped bring this special Independence Day celebration to life. Together, we created a memorable experience that connected America's pastime with Augusta's remarkable history and the spirit of the America250 commemoration.

Preservation Briefs



Workmen installing new copper roof at First Christian Church

First Christian Church

The historic First Christian Church at 629 Greene Street in the Augusta Downtown Historic District is undergoing rehabilitation since losing its roof in Hurricane Helene. Scaffolding surrounds the building, and the original metal roof has been replaced. Additional work will be done on the main steeple which is listing to the north, as well as to wood floors, carpeting, and plaster walls that got wet from the rain infiltration . The $6 million + work is being covered by insurance, and is expected to be completed in early 2027. First Christian was built in 1873-75 by the generosity of Mrs. Emily Tubman when Justice Joseph Rucker Lamar's father, the Rev. James S. Lamar, was pastor. The architect was David B. Woodruff of Macon, with William H. Goodrich of Augusta as the contractor. Mrs. Tubman also funded construction of the original manse for Rev. Lamar in 1860, which is now the offices of Historic Augusta, Inc. When the new church was completed in 1876, a new manse was built adjacent to it.



Lot at 416 Second Street has been clearcd for placement of historic cottages

Widows Home Cottages

Progress is being made to move three historic cottages associated with the Widows Home located at 127 Telfair Street, now Christ Community Health Care's clinic in Olde Town. Historic Augusta holds a preservation easement on the property, and has agreed to move the cottages to an adjacent lot at 416 Second Street. The lot has been deeded to Historic Augusta, which will take on the costs of the move, partly funded by the Creel-Harison Foundation and the 1772 Foundation. It is hoped that the move will be accomplished by the end of 2026. The cottages will be sold for rehabilitation as one or two residential units.



Interior view of Fordyce-Kennedy House, awaiting rehabilitation

Fordyce-Kennedy House

The Fordyce-Kennedy House that was moved from 2516 McDowell Street to 2489 East Avenue has now been reacquired by Historic Augusta for rehabilitation and resale as a single family residential structure. Built in the 1870s by a soldier stationed at the Augusta Arsenal, with additions by the Kennedy Family around the turn of the twentieth century, the house was saved by Historic Augusta in 2023 when it was in the path of a planned expansion for Saint Mary-On-The-Hill Catholic Church.



946 Milledge Road

946 Milledge Road

The late nineteenth century house at 946 Milledge Road has recently been purchased by Cam and Robert Osborne, and is being rehabilitated as their personal residence. The house was built by the widow and daughters of Charles Shaler Smith, an architect and civil engineer who designed the Confederate Powder Works in Augusta. He later focused on designing bridges, and died in 1886 after falling from one in Saint Louis, Missouri. The Smith Family returned to Augusta and built the Milledge Road home after Shaler's death. Cheatham, Fletcher, Scott is the architectural firm working on the project, and Robertson Restoration is the contractor.



House Bill 376 vetoed

House Bill 376 Vetoed

Unfortunately, House Bill 376, so widely advocated throughout the State of Georgia, did pass the House and the Senate, but was vetoed by the governor at the last minute. The bill would have made additional credits available for certified rehabilitation through a program that has been successfully used in Augusta and throughout Georgia. It should be noted that Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits for rehab have not been affected by the veto, nor have the Georgia credits for owner-occupied residential rehabilitation. The program that freezes property taxes for certified rehab in Georgia also remains in place. In fact, Senate Bill 141 also passed the House and Senate, and would allow the tax freeze to be extended from 10 to 20 years, if adopted by the local government. Richmond County has been requested, but has not yet adopted the program.

ENDANGERED PROPERTIES UPDATES



The Butt-Kelly-Sullivan House at 2131 Gardner Street has been saved after being listed in the 2025 Endangered Properties List

Historic Augusta's 2027 Endangered Properties List will be announced in February. We are open to suggestions for potential historic places to include on the list. The annual announcement is a way to bring public attention to a preservation need, which sometimes leads to a solution that saves the building. Suggestions can be sent to preservation@historicaugusta.org, or by calling the office at (706) 724-0436.

Engine Company Number 7

2163 Central Avenue, Summerville Historic District



Incendio is the name of the new restaurant located in Engine Company Number 7 on Central Avenue

Rehabilitation of the historic Engine Company Number 7, at 2163 Central Avenue in the Summerville Historic District is now complete. Standing empty for about 20 years, the 1914 fire station is now Incendio, specializing in wood-fired Neapolitan style pizza. Jim G. James, and his wife, Lizanne Sekul are the owners, having purchased the property from the city in 2025. The certified rehabilitation utilized historic preservation tax incentives to help finance the project. The project consultants include Dan Troutman with Alternative Construction & Environmental Solutions, Palmetto Spatial Designs, R.D. Brown Contractors, and Historic Augusta. Staff for the restaurant will include some adults with disabilities.

Harper Tenement Building

965-967 Broad Street, Augusta Downtown Historic District



965-967 Broad Street

The Harper Tenement Building at 965-967 Broad Street in the Augusta Downtown Historic District will soon be undergoing rehabilitation after roof damage by Hurricane Helene. Built in 1836, Rob Wynn with Wynn Capital is the owner who is undertaking the project, which will be a certified rehabilitation. This will be the second time the building will be renovated using Federal rehabilitation tax incentives, the first being in 1985-1986 as part of the Bankers First project that included the entire 900 block from the YMCA building to the corner of 10th Street. Work is expected to commence in the fall, although the exterior will not be altered.

Knox Building

114 Nassau Place in Thomson


The Knox Building in Thomson

Work has been completed on the Knox Building at 114 Nassau Place in Thomson, converting it from office space to eight market-rate apartments. Andy Knox is the owner, who successfully rehabbed the building next door, the former Thomson City Hall and Fire Station, as Thomson's first loft-style apartments. The Knox Building has two distinctive fronts, with a 1917 façade facing Journal Street, and a 1954 façade facing Nassau Place when the entire block was redeveloped as the Knox Shopping Center. 2KM is the architectural firm that designed the new plan, and Two State Construction is the contractor. Historic Augusta provided consulting services for the rehabilitation tax incentives.

Meadow Garden

1320 Independence Drive


Noah Tindall and Kholson Bull, current and immediate past Presidents of the GSCAR, cut the ribbon on the new interpretive panels at Meadow Garden

Meadow Garden, the home of George Walton in Augusta, located at 1320 Independence Drive just off 13th Street, is undergoing rehabilitation for its mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems. In addition, on May 29, 2026 new interpretive panels were unveiled in the front yard, providing more context to the story of Walton, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence. Meadow Garden is owned by the Georgia Society, Daughters of the American Revolution, and the panels were a project of the Georgia State Society, Children of the American Revolution. Now visitors will be able to get orientation before taking a tour of the house.

Wilson House
Updates



Chimney repair at the Wilson House

Construction was completed in early July on repointing, and actually rebuilding the four chimneys on the Wilson House, which were damaged by Hurricane Helene. Landmark Preservation was the contractor on the job, which is partially funded by FEMA. Additional work has been done to the roof, but still to come will be some repairs to newly discovered built-in gutter damage. Many thanks to Lee Powell who donated his services to do a drone fly-over so that we are better able to access issues that need to be addressed.



Among the 13 pieces of original Wilson furniture are the dining table and sideboard

We are happy to report that original furniture owned by First Presbyterian Church of Augusta has recently been donated to Historic Augusta for permanent display in the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson. Used by the Wilson Family when they were in residence, the thirteen pieces include a sofa and two matching chairs, three Gondola chairs, the dining room table, a sideboard, two marble top parlor tables, a dresser, a secretary, and a sewing table. All have been part of the exhibits in the Wilson house since 2000, but were on-loan. Historic Augusta made a reciprocal loan to the church of an antique dining table, and a new secretarial suite. The mutual loan has now been converted to full ownership of the respective pieces for both entities.



Recently acquired Sitz Tub for the Wilson House interpretation

Recently acquired for the Wilson House is a Sitz Tub, also known as a hip tub. These were widely used in the mid-nineteenth century for bathing. The purchase was made using funds from a grant from the National Society, Colonial Dames of America in the State of Georgia, Augusta Town Committee.



1873 image of African American nurses attending children on Greene Street

We are pleased to report that Historic Augusta is the recipient of a $1,000 intern grant from the Handumy Jean Tahan Internship Fund, through the Southeastern Museums Conference. The chosen intern, Peyton Millwood, will research the role of African Americans at the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson, both specifically, and in general terms as related to free and enslaved domestic workers in Augusta and other urban Southern cities. The information will be used to enhance the interpretation of the Wilson House, and may lead to a specialized themed tour on request.



Visitors enjoy a tour of the Wilson House

Remember, tours of the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson are offered Wednesday through Saturday at 10, 11, 1, 2, 3, and 4. Admission is $10 for adults, $8 for seniors and military, and $5 for children (K-12). Closed on national holidays. It is the perfect place to bring your guest for a taste of Augusta's history in an award-winning 1860s National Historic Landmark house museum.

Staff Updates



Melinda Elser, Preservation Manager

Melinda Elser

Preservation Manager

Melinda grew up just across the river in North Augusta, where she developed an early appreciation for the region's rich history and character. She later moved to Virginia to pursue a master's degree in archaeology, deepening her passion for understanding and preserving the past. Recently, Melinda returned home to begin working in historic preservation, focusing on protecting the historic buildings in the community that first inspired her interest in the field.



Payton Millwood, Intern

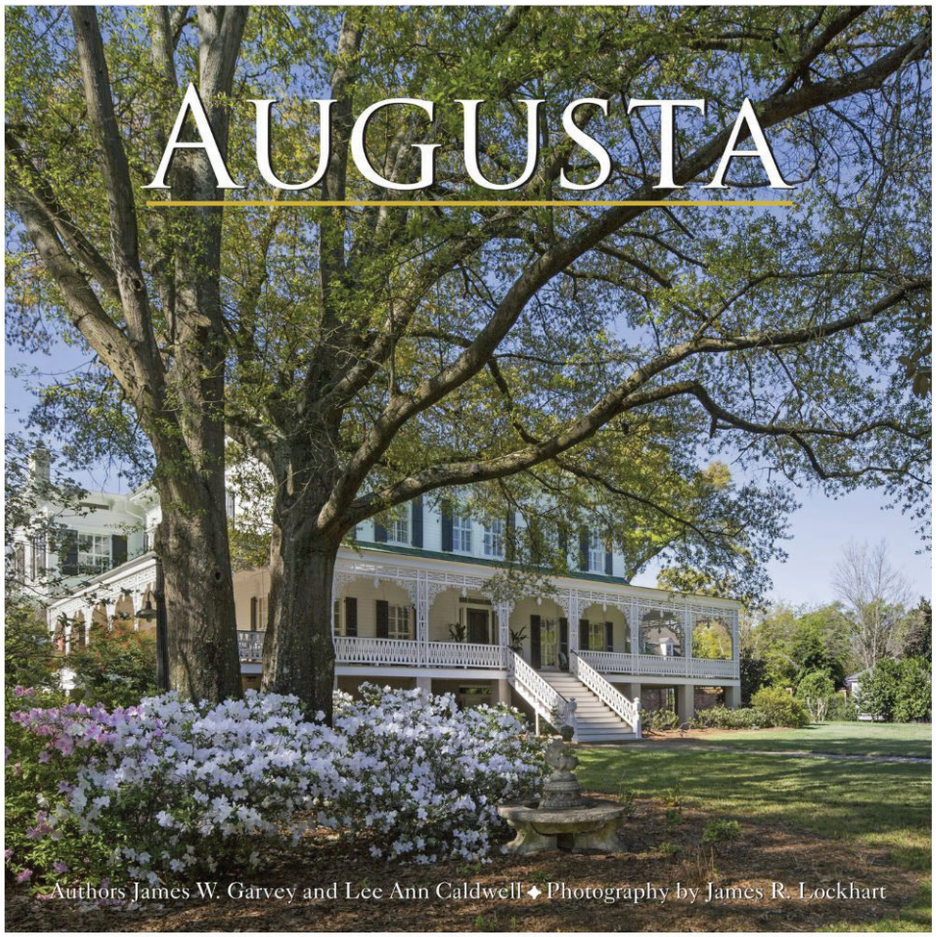
Payton Millwood

Intern

Payton has lived in Augusta for the past 13 years and is a recent graduate of Mercer University, where he studied History and Political Science. He is especially passionate about local and Southern history and enjoys sharing the rich stories and traditions that define the region. He will be working on refining and expanding the roles of African Americans at the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson.

ON SALE NOW!

"The must-have coffee-table book for all those interested in Augusta's history and architecture."
-The Augusta Chronicle



$50
+ 8.5% GA Sales Tax

AVAILABLE ONLINE & AT THESE LOCATIONS

Andrews Gallery
Antique Gallery
Augusta & Co.
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Capsule
Charleston Street
Curtain Call Fabrics
Design Images
Historic Augusta
Lovies Mercantile
Low Country Clothier
Mish Mash Interiors
Morris Museum of Art
Persnickety Interiors
Queensborough Bank
Augusta & Evans Branches
Sacred Heart
Simon's Formal Wear
Southern Lighting Gallery
Surrey Center Pharmacy
The Book Tavern
Weinberger's Furniture
Windsor Jewelers

AVAILABILITY IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. WE RECOMMEND CALLING BEFORE VISITING A LOCATION.

HISTORIC AUGUSTA
INCORPORATED

For more information on the book, please visit www.historicaugusta.org.

Membership

March 2026 - June 2026

New and renewed memberships that have been paid between the above dates are included in the following list. This is not a complete list of members. If you paid dues in another period, it would have appeared at that time. If, however, you do not see your name shown in the correct category, and you believe it should have been included, please call the office to inquire so that we can make any corrections needed for our records.

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+ UPGRADED
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JUNE 29, 2026

PATRICIA "TRICIA" FERNALD SASNETT
JULY 6, 2026

NANCY JANE GLASER
AUGUST 10, 2026



Nancy Heath Bowers

NANCY HEATH BOWERS

1943-2026

It is with great sadness and respect that we announce the passing of Nancy Bowers, Historic Augusta's first female president. She was elected to the office in 1990, serving until 1992, becoming an Honorary Trustee thereafter. Nancy was a proud native Augustan, and was a tour guide for out-of-town tourists and local groups that wanted to learn more about Georgia's second oldest city. She spent countless hours working to advance the mission of Historic Augusta, both before, during and after her presidency. She once chaired the Ezekiel Harris House committee when Historic Augusta was its steward. Always supportive of any efforts to preserve our past, she was an important voice in the decision to step in, to save, and eventually restore, the Boyhood Home of President Woodrow Wilson. She also served as representative of Richmond County on the CSRA Advisory Committee for Historic Preservation organized by the Regional Development Center.

Married to Dr. Ronald W. Bowers, a local dentist, they had four children, Bill, Beth, Bart, and Bennett. Dr. Bowers died in 2022. For many years they lived in a fine historic home at 2609 Walton Way, and were generous by sharing it with nonprofits and friends. She was also very active in the Summerville Neighborhood Association, Heritage Garden Club, All Seasons Garden Club, and the Georgia Dental Association Auxiliary. In more recent years, with her sister, Donna King, Nancy purchased Summerville Rags, a ladies' furnishings store at the southeast corner of Monte Sano and Central Avenues. She was a devout member of Saint Mary-On-The-Hill Catholic Church. Her funeral was held there on June 30, 2026, with burial beside her husband, Ronnie, at Westover Memorial Park.

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Historic Augusta News is published by
Historic Augusta, Inc.,
PO Box 37, Augusta, Georgia 30903-0037.
Offices are located at 415 Seventh Street.
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Designed by:
THE kru

Front Cover: *The Signers Monument (1848-1850), located in the center of the 500 block of Greene Street in Augusta, was built over a crypt holding the graves of George Walton and Lyman Hall, two of the three Signers of the Declaration of Independence from Georgia. The cornerstone was laid with great ceremony on July 4, 1848. Designed by New York architect Robert French, the obelisk is approximately 50 feet tall, erected on a base that is 12 feet 8 inches square, and 7 feet below the surface. Although honoring all three of Georgia's Signers, Button Gwinnett could not be found at the time, and is probably buried in Savannah. Photo credit: Akhenaton06, Wikipedia.*