

Spring 2018

# The LEGACY

A Publication of Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc.

*Lifting*  
it up  
DOWN UNDER  
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

RICHES  
*in the*  
RUBBLE

HICKORY HILL'S TRASHY TREASURE

*Menakoni's*  
MASTERPIECE

GOODRUM AESTHETICS RESTORED

WATSON  BROWN  
FOUNDATION

FAKE NEWS

*Papers*  
T.R.R. COBB'S MYSTERIOUS CORRESPONDENCE





Thomas E. Watson and Georgia Durham Watson  
posing in the music room of Hickory Hill.

– 1907 –



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## OUR MISSION

The Watson-Brown Foundation, through creativity, diligence and financial support, labors to improve education in the American South by funding its schools and students, preserving its history, encouraging responsible scholarship and promoting the memory and values of our spiritual founders.

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# CAMPUS NOTES

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## Watson-Brown Scholars in Action



**Heather Brame**, Senior, Furman University: “This year, I began working with Communities In Schools, an after-school program at a nearby Title I school. This organization exists to help students with poor grades, low attendance, and behavioral issues. To say the least, taking on this job was an incredibly challenging feat. The program was incredibly understaffed when I came on, and every student presented daunting challenges in behavior and learning abilities. Many of the kids also carry a lot of emotional weight from unimaginably difficult home situations. Although working for CIS is one of the most difficult things I have ever done, it is by far one of the most rewarding.

“I can honestly say that I have looked forward to spending time with these kids every day I have worked. I have learned so much about people and how to listen to them well. It is astounding to me how so many behavioral problems are quelled by simply taking the time to look into the kids’ eyes, ask questions, and really listen to what is on their heart. So many times I have felt

HEATHER BRAME





TESSA BURGESS

completely out of my depth with students who are giving teachers an incredibly difficult time, yet decided to take a risk and ask them what was on their heart, and I have been blown away by how their demeanors change. I have found that there are no easy fixes for these kids' home lives, learning difficulties, and frustrations. But I have also learned the power of taking time to care about them, respect them, and listen to them.

"Although I don't plan to be an elementary school teacher, I am so incredibly grateful for the way this experience has blessed me. These little people that I was able to serve have humbled me and changed me so much. They have taught me the value of empathy and listening well and I wouldn't trade the time I spent with them for anything."

**Tessa Burgess**, Sophomore, Auburn University: "I had an amazing first year of college! I didn't think it was possible to make such close friends in such a short time. I met my two best friends during the Honors College Week of Service the week before classes started. We grew very close during that week and spent time together every day through the rest of the school year. We took classes together, studied together, and we even went grocery shopping together. Next year, we will be sharing a townhouse.

"I joined three organizations at Auburn. I am a member of the Honors Congress, Pre-Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA), and the Horseman's Club. I was elected the Treasurer of Horseman's Club for Spring 2017 and was reelected for this coming school year. Through my connections from Horseman's Club, I was given the opportunity to help shear and trim the hooves of some Angora Sheep with a professor, as well as volunteer at a North American Trail Ride Conference (NATRC) last fall.

"I was able to do so many different things this past year. I participated in the Week

of Service before classes started, where we learned about poverty in the Auburn area and volunteered at Salvation Army; Jean Dean RIF (Reading is Fundamental); the local food bank, and Alabama Rural Ministry (ARM), to name a few. I had a great time and learned so much! I was also able to go on a couple of trips during the year.

"I went with PVMA to the American PVMA (APVMA) 2017 Symposium at North Carolina State University back in March. The symposium is held every year. The 2018 symposium will be held at Auburn University, and I am on two committees to help plan it. At symposium, there were representatives from many vet schools around the country, as well as some international vet schools, including ones in the Caribbean and Australia. There were labs and speeches given by experts in various fields given throughout our time there. I had a lot of fun and can't wait for the next symposium!

"Instead of going home for spring break, I went on a trip to Tennessee and Kentucky through Auburn University's College of Agriculture. We spent the week traveling all over. We toured Keeneland Racetrack, Hagyard Equine Medical Institute, the Jaeckle Center, Hallway Feeds, Alltech, Wampler's Sausage, the Kentucky Equine Humane Center, and a few others. The trip was largely equine-based, but we did go a dairy farm and a beef cattle breeding facility as well. This trip was really important for me, because it allowed me to see and experience other jobs in the equine industry that I hadn't even known existed before this trip.

"This summer, I will be doing some shadowing with both equine and small animal veterinarians in my hometown of Aiken, South Carolina. I will also be doing some babysitting, pet-sitting, and house-sitting. I've also applied for a job in Auburn, and if I get it, I will go to Auburn early for training."

**Rishab Chawla**, Junior, Georgia Institute of Technology: "Juggling extracurriculars with classes was challenging for me during my freshman year, but in my sophomore year, I learned to manage my time better. I became more involved outside of class, and I had a more successful academic year than the last.

"This past year (my second year at GT), I began to expand my extracurricular involvements. I started a collegiate chapter of an organization called Be The Match, which strives to help leukemia and lymphoma patients find cures by matching them to bone marrow donors. Over the past several months, we have spread the word about our mission, coordinated a fundraising event, and added over fifty GT students to the national registry.

"I also became a Team Leader for GT1000, the intro freshman seminar course that teaches freshman about adapting to college life and study skills. It was a deeply rewarding experience, and I am now an advocate for the program in the GT1000 Ambassador program. I will be reaching out to incoming students at summer orientation to urge them to take GT1000.

"The highlight of my year was when Senator Bernie Sanders visited campus to deliver a speech about his new book: *Our Revolution: A Future to Believe In*. It was a memorable night, and I even managed to have a picture taken with him!

"This summer, I will be doing research in Dr. Amanda Stockton's Astrobiology lab at the GT School of Chemistry and Biochemistry, volunteering at Atlanta Medical Center, and taking two classes."



RISHAB CHAWLA



**Rachel Dean**, Senior, Wofford College:

"This past semester, I went abroad for four months to study. I am a Spanish major so my only requirement was a country where Spanish was spoken. I chose Granada, Spain, because I felt like I would have the most opportunities there to grow—and boy was I right. Now that I am home and reflecting back on my study abroad experience. I cannot imagine my college career without having a study abroad experience especially in respect to my Spanish major.

"My Spanish-speaking abilities have grown amounts I did not think were possible. I was pushed everyday outside the limits of comfort zone and because of that my independence has grown. I had to communicate all of my thoughts feelings and needs in a language that was not my native one. I had to deal with people whose customs and principles were different from my own. I loved my time abroad because every day was a new experience. On my walks to class I'd find a new restaurant, store, neat plaza, or different street performers who made the trip more enjoyable. I loved being constantly surrounded by history way older than you I find in my small South Carolina home. Every day I was greeted by the intimidating views of the Alhambra, and I was reminded that I was across the globe in a different country, living life.

"My favorite part about traveling is continually being reminded that the world we live in is huge. There are numerous ways of life including language, food, music, daily customs, etc. It's refreshing to learn more about different cultures and compare what I experience to my own culture. Sometimes parts of other cultures will never make sense to me, but I have learned to still accept aspects that are different from mine. While studying abroad I went to Morocco, Greece, Ireland, and Portugal. I held an internship that was completely in Spanish with an awesome not-for-profit organization which began in Andalusia, the region in which Granada is. I was a fundraising and marketing intern, and I did research to improve their fundraising plan and to reach out to more community partners. I am so happy I completed an internship abroad because it not only gave me actually work experience while in a foreign country, but it gave me a unique experience that no one else got. I am extremely grateful for my experiences made abroad, and I am appreciative of the lifelong gifts I have gained."



**Sydney Fitch**, Junior, Clemson University:

"This year was quite a challenge in the beginning for me because I transferred from the University of South Carolina to Clemson. Fall semester, I didn't really know anybody and I wasn't involved in anything I really enjoyed, but I sat down and applied to the Michelin Sustainability Initiative. I got accepted into the program/class, and I was so

excited. So this past spring semester I have been working with Michelin on their new Tweel non-pneumatic wheel design. Basically it's a tire without air. Right now, it's only being used on off-road vehicles, but they're hoping to expand the market. The production plant is very small and settled in Piedmont, South Carolina. I've been working with them and my group to make the Tweel Production more sustainable, and it has been a great experience for me. I've got to work with a team on lifecycle analysis and creating plans based on the tour of the plant. I don't always know what I'm doing, and I'm pretty sure they don't either, but I'm really enjoying what we've done so far and what we will accomplish together."

**Jenna Gaskins**, Junior, Columbus State University: "This year has been a crazy one. First off, I had the pleasure of working for my Honors College as a student assistant. In addition to that, I worked as a peer leader (group tutor) for support math. I was chosen to be on the orientation team again this year as a mentor leader. I was also a TA for a freshman seminar class. I would call this year very accomplished. I have kept my 4.0 with two jobs and 18 credit hours! Not only that, I also





JENNA GASKINS

volunteer in the elementary school for about 70 hours each semester. I love working with my children. They are my favorite part of the day.

"I have also learned a lot this semester about myself. I was able to participate in an amazing study-abroad experience with Global Visions International. This organization is based in many places, but I went to Costa Rica to participate. We worked with the local community, developing a community center for them as well as working to better the area. It was one of the best experiences of my life. I plan to go back and help out there on my own time. The best part was the sense of community there. They banded together to help each other even though they did not have much. It is amazing how resilient people can be.

"For the summer, I plan to take a break and have some fun. School was hard this semester—it is time for a break!"

**LaBryson Greene**, Junior, University of Georgia: "This year of college has been the most profound by far. I joke about this often, but it was during my sophomore year of college that I had my 'quarter-life crisis.' For as long as I can recall, it has been my dream to go to medical school and become a surgeon. Beginning at a very young age, I have shadowed surgeons, interned for pharmacists, interviewed practitioners, volunteered, and devoted the majority of my life to medicine. This past year of college was eye-opening because it was during this year that I decided to change course. Over the course of my past two semesters at the University of Georgia, I have developed a serious interest in American Sign Language and Deaf Culture. I have been overtaken by emotions that I can only describe as the discovery of passion. This subject inspired me to look for careers that would allow me to use ASL. After a period of soul-searching, I decided to adopt a new direction and pursue audiology. While it was incredibly

difficult to make the decision and change course, I recognize that throughout this time of growth and personal discovery that is college, I too have changed. It is only natural that my dreams change along with me."

**Natasia Harris**, Sophomore, Kennesaw State University: "This school year was filled with different experiences. Being that it was my first time living on my own and adjusting to the life of a college student, at times I got overwhelmed. I can honestly say that this school year broke me down to rebuild me. It taught me a lot about who I am, and it revealed a bigger purpose in my life.

"My first year at KSU was a year that I would not trade for anything in the world. I met so many amazing people who impacted me in many ways. My professors were so amazing, as they truly cared about their students. Part of me thought that I was going to college just to earn a degree and to receive a change of scenery. Little did I know, my



NATASIA HARRIS

freshman year gave me a lot more than that.

"Freshman year gave me a best friend, one who has helped me during some of my lowest points in life. Most of which included self-induced stress, as I pressured myself to be better than the semester before. My freshman year also gave me a new outlook on life. It showed me that sometimes God's plans do not correspond with mine, but his plan is always better. This school year also taught me that college is more than working hard to obtain a degree, as each day I learned something new whether it was inside a classroom or just somewhere around Kennesaw. Lastly, college taught me the importance of family. It taught me to value the relationships I have with my family members while also helping me grieve after the loss of my dad. Freshman year was definitely about learning.

"During my freshman year at Kennesaw State University, I learned so much. I can honestly say that I am a different person today than I was on August 15, 2016, because



LABRYSON GREENE



of KSU. Freshman year at Kennesaw State University rebuilt me and put me on the path to accomplish my main goal: to make my Daddy proud.”

**Kinsella Hayes**, Sophomore, Georgia Southern University: “As I was headed off to college, I heard many opinions from friends and family. What I heard the most was freshman year is either the easiest or the hardest of them all. For my first year it was right in the middle of that. Going away for college is no easy task, anything or everything can be challenging. You can struggle with being away for the first time, the classes are a lot harder, or you can’t seem to find the right group of friends. For me, the hardest part was being away from home. I didn’t really struggle with it at first because my roommates and I became instant friends, but after a month I went home for the first time and going back to Statesboro was a bit harder than I remembered. Fortunately, my classes and sorority kept me very busy so I didn’t have much time to think about home. My sorority really helped get involved in campus events like going to see guest speakers or performers on campus. My sorority also kept me motivated to keep my grades up and allowed study time for anyone that needed it. I couldn’t imagine my freshman year without being a Zeta.

“The one thing I was most proud of this year was keeping a 4.0 GPA. I was in a sorority,



KINSELLA HAYES

had a job, and took a full-time load of classes while maintaining all A’s. My classes were challenging, especially the sciences, and the amount of work was much more demanding than it was in high school, but somehow I managed to make time to study and do my work. For me school always comes first, that’s what my mom has always said and she is right. Freshman year taught me a lot. It taught me how to manage my time, get involved in campus events, that professors aren’t as scary as they may seem, and to make friends in your classes. Overall, I enjoyed my freshman year and can’t wait to go back in the fall.”



ELIJAH MOTON III

**Elijah Moton III**, Senior, Francis Marion University: “One of my greatest accomplishments this semester was being able to have two drag queens come perform at my university. This was a big step for Francis Marion University, because it’s a pretty closed-minded school when it comes to administration, but they helped make it more diverse by hearing me out with a speech about the diversity it will bring our campus. The organization that sponsored the event was Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA), which is an organization that allows a safe space for individuals of the LGBT+ community, and I was the president. I love Francis Marion University student life and the administration; however, it was a struggle to pull this event off, but it was definitely worth it and one for the books. We had a total of 200 people come out to our event, and this is a huge amount



DOUGLASSMITH



because our organization only has seven faithful members within it. We all worked hard to make it happen, and we hit a few bumps here and there but it got accomplished at the end of the day. Again, I just want to thank you all for helping me attend college year after year and be able to experience all the mind-opening and life-changing experience that happens when you attend college.”

**Douglas Smith**, Junior, Presbyterian College: “This year, I got the opportunity to study abroad during spring break with the PC Choir. We toured through Prague, Vienna, and Budapest, making short visits to Brno and Eisenstadt during our travels. We had the opportunity to sing in several cathedrals including St. Stephen’s Cathedral, one of the largest cathedrals in Austria. In Prague, we had the chance to explore the city, as well as the Prague Castle, learning about the rich history and the collective heritage the people of Prague share. We also visited Terezin, a very small village outside of Prague that was converted into a Nazi concentration camp during WWII. As we toured the complex, we heard stories about the hardships and sufferings people had to endure under the extremely poor conditions in which they were forced to live. In Vienna, we spent some time in one of the largest cemeteries in the country, the place where many famous musicians are buried like Beethoven, Brahms, and others. While there, we were able to sing in the cemetery’s church. This impromptu performance was probably one of the most emotional and spiritually connected times we have ever experienced as a choir. We had an amazing time, and I cannot wait to travel more in the future!”

**Todd Turner**, Senior, Furman University: “Though Furman offers so many unique experiences within the classroom, there is one particular weekend off-campus that I will never forget. Mary-Mitchell Campbell ’96, music director for Kristin Chenoweth’s ‘My Love Letter to Broadway,’ reached out to Furman students to provide chorus members for their final Saturday night performance.

“We flew up to New York City on Friday and made our way through the Big Apple to the Empire Hotel. After a late night slice of pizza, it was time for bed. The next morning was show day! We rehearsed with Mary-Mitchell, and I was even able to sing in a master class with her along with my good friend, Alexa Cripe ’18. In addition to her helpful feedback regarding our performance, she answered questions and discussed her road to where she is today.

“After a quick dinner, we walked to the



TODD TURNER



JENNA VANPELT

Lunt-Fontanne theatre for warm-up and a tour of the stage ... and to meet Kristin! She came downstairs engulfed by both a fuzzy pink robe and a dazzling smile. After wishing us luck and thanking us countless times, she took the stage. Her voice filled the auditorium. I couldn’t believe that we were there.

“The moment I stepped onto the stage, I knew this was where I was supposed to be. The lights, the audience, the orchestra, the performers ... it was amazing. I could hardly believe it was happening.

“As soon as it began, it was over. We flew back to Greenville the next day, and I went to class Monday morning a different person. This is truly what college is about: finding your niche. The Watson-Brown Foundation made it possible for me, and for that I am forever grateful.”

**Jenna VanPelt**, Junior, Clemson University: “Sophomore year has been an amazing sequel to my freshman year at Clemson University! Being a part of Tiger Band, I was able to travel

with the marching band to all of the football games once again. We flew to Arizona for a second time, traveled down to Miami, and, of course, won the National Championship! It was undeniably the highlight of my college career to be a part of Clemson and college football history. During the spring, I was initiated into the National Honorary Band Fraternity Kappa Kappa Psi. I was able to make some incredible friends that I could not have finished the year without. I stepped out of my comfort zone and took a swing dancing class, which I’m happy to continue this coming year, and I applied to study abroad in Tokyo, Japan, for this summer. I’m so excited to continue my two years of Japanese at Seisen University for a month and experience all the culture Japan has to offer, and I’ll be back in time for this coming fall semester. It was a difficult year for me, but thanks to the support of my friends and family, I was able to get back on my feet and finish with all A’s. I’m looking forward to the second half of college!”



# ADRIENNE GREEN



## Alumni Spotlight

BY SHANNON FRIEDMANN HATCH



**B**efore Georgia became a colony, an oak tree sprout pushed its way through the earth in what would one day become the town of Thomasville. It grew as the Declaration of Independence was penned, state lines were drawn, Union and Rebel soldiers charged, the country strove for civil rights, and man walked the moon. Today, its base is 26 feet wide and its branches stretch farther than a football field.

“Adrienne Green, too, grew up in

Thomasville. With the strong roots of her family and support from organizations like the Watson-Brown Foundation, she spread farther than anyone could ever have imagined—from her childhood in Georgia all the way to Australia as the CEO of a nonprofit. Here’s how the seeds of confidence, hard work, openness to global worldviews, and faith have impacted her journey so far.

### *Can you share a little about your background?*

“I grew up Thomasville, a small town in southwest Georgia. I was raised in a single parent household by my mother and have two younger sisters. My mother and grandparents instilled into us that we could do or be anything that we wanted if we worked hard and always gave 100 percent. We grew up studying the history and contribution of African-Americans and women in America, so we believed that we too could make significant contributions to our community and society. My mother and grandparents worked hard to ensure that we had better opportunities than they did, and for that, I am grateful. They laid a great foundation for us to build upon, and we have been able to achieve so much more.”

### *Is it true that you earned three bachelor degrees?*

“I decided to take both AP and university

courses my junior and senior years of high school. By the time I graduated, I had 30 credit hours of university courses that I transferred to Florida State University, so I started as a sophomore. I had a keen interest in psychology and started taking courses while in high school. I continued those at FSU and added a Political Science double major, which I completed in three years. Although I loved studying both psychology and political science, I discovered during an internship in London that I did not want to practice either. Fortunately, because I finished my courses in three years, I was able to do a fourth year and studied Finance.”

### *If someone had asked you upon graduation what your life would look like, what would you have told them?*

“Not this! I believe that we can only be what we’re exposed to. I had the opportunity to study abroad shortly after September 11 when America was at war; the world was divided, and it was not popular being an American abroad. People expected me to have informed opinions as if I represented the whole of our nation, and that exposed me to a world beyond the U.S. border. In hindsight, I can say that’s where my thirst for culture and formation of a global worldview began.”

### *Describe Watoto and how you initially*





***became involved.***

“Watoto is a family made up of people from all over the world who are working together to ensure that the forgotten have a place to belong. As we work alongside the most vulnerable in Uganda, mostly women and children, our aim is to rescue individuals and raise each one as a leader so that, in turn, they will rebuild the nation.

“I first learned of Watoto while I was living in London ten years ago. I attended a concert where the children spoke of the impact of the civil war in Uganda, Joseph Kony, and the Lord’s Resistance Army. Many of those children had been abducted by rebel troops and were forced to become child soldiers or the wives of soldiers. I was in disbelief that this could be happening to children and appalled that the world was grossly unaware and, therefore, doing nothing in response. I made a commitment to start donating to the work of Watoto.”

***What is your current role? Describe a typical day.***

“In 2010, I moved from London, where I was an investment banker, to Sydney and have been working with Watoto since October 2012. I am currently the CEO of Watoto Australia & New Zealand. I know it is cliché, but no day is the same. Some days I meet with major donors or partners, potential partners, pitch for new

business, speak at conferences or events, or work on fundraising appeals and campaigns. Other days are filled with team meetings, strategic planning, forecasting, or operational analysis. Last year, I travelled four-and-a-half months of the year between Uganda and various locations around Australia to meet with partners, potential partners, and to attend conferences.”

***Have you visited the villages in Uganda?***

“I have travelled to Uganda for Watoto eight times since 2014 and typically attend global team meetings there twice a year. I love Uganda and her people! Ugandans take things a day at a time. That could largely be due to the shorter life expectancy and that it’s hard to plan for the future when you are not sure of what tomorrow holds; however, it reminds me to take things a day at a time and to enjoy the moments instead of rushing past them. The people are absolutely beautiful. They are welcoming and kind, especially the Acholi tribe in northern Uganda. If you visit their homes, they go out of their way to prepare meals and host you, even if they have relatively little.”

***What would you most like readers to know about Watoto and your work?***

“I have seen firsthand the impact of the contributions that individuals and businesses from around the world. I have seen

malnourished babies, abandoned at birth, being brought back into health because our medical team and nannies have access to resources that some government hospitals in the area do not. I have seen abandoned children being reconciled into Watoto families. And even my own sponsor child, Grace, graduate from university and take a role as a medical clinician in a local clinic.”

***What inspires you, professionally or otherwise?***

“My faith is what most inspires me, personally and professionally. I draw my strength from my purpose, and when days are hard, it’s a great focal point for remembering why I started in the first place. I am also inspired by my mother and grandmother. They are two of the strongest women that I know and both made significant sacrifices to ensure that the generations after them started from a platform of strength and were able to achieve dreams that were out of reach in their lifetimes.”

***How did Watson-Brown play a part in who you are today?***

“It was confirmation that hard work pays off and a seal of approval that my life and story were significant and meaningful. It showed me that others believed in me and my dreams for the future. For that, I am ever grateful.”





# A MYSTERY SOLVED?



## T.R.R. Cobb House

BY SAMUEL N. THOMAS, JR.

**H**istory is full of mysteries. Some of the mysteries are easily solved, while others can go on for years, even decades, before coming into the light. In these days of “fake news” and “viral deception,” we always need to be on guard for claims made by individuals without evidence to back it up, or as historians strive to do, to produce corroborating evidence. This is especially true with an item found in newspapers.

One such mystery seemingly came to fruition the other day as I was going through some of the correspondence of Howell Cobb. Over the past ten-plus years I have been collecting and transcribing the correspondence of T.R.R. Cobb in our ever-continuing efforts to learn more about our namesake. With over 450 pages of transcribed correspondence in hand, we feel as though we have a pretty good understanding of the man. Most of his original writings are housed at the Hargrett Rare Book & Manuscript Library of the Russell Library at the University of Georgia, but there are some letters from T.R.R. that we come across now and then still in private hands or housed in other public repositories.

With the resources of T.R.R.’s personal correspondence beginning to narrow, I recently turned to other sources for information on the man in question. So, what would be more fitting than to turn to the correspondence of other Cobb family members in our effort to more fully understand “Tom Cobb.”

The most obvious of these resources is with the correspondence of those closest to him, namely his brother, Howell. And again, we are grateful that the Hargrett has a tremendous collection of the correspondence of Howell Cobb, including both letters to and from Howell and other family members; some 300,000 to 400,000 pieces of correspondence to give you an idea.

So it was that recently as I was involved in transcribing a few letters from the Howell Cobb Collection, that I came across one that helped to settle a mystery that has been going on for some 155 years. Not long

after the death of T.R.R. Cobb at the battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, on December 13, 1862, a letter began to circulate in several newspapers written by Cobb’s commanding General offering condolences to the Cobb family on the death of T.R.R. The *Southern Watchman* printed the letter in their February 18, 1863 issue.

*CAMP NEAR FREDERICKSBURG  
18th December 1862*

*General Howell Cobb:  
General:*

*I beg leave to express my deep sympathy in your great sorrow. Your noble and gallant brother has met a soldier’s death, and God grant that this army and our country may never be called upon again to mourn so great a sacrifice.*

*Of his merits, his lofty intellect, his accomplishments, his professional frame, and above all his Christian character, I need not speak to you who knew him so intimately and well. But as a patriot and soldier, his death has left a deep gap in the army which his military aptitude and skill render it hard to fill. In the Battle of Fredericksburg he won an immortal name for himself and his brigade. Hour after hour he held his position in front our batteries, while Division after Division of the enemy was hurled against him. He announced the determination of himself and his men never to leave their post until the enemy was beaten, and with unshaken courage and fortitude he kept his promise.*

*May God give consolation to his afflicted family, and may the name and the fame of the Christian statesman and soldier be cherished as a bright example and holy remembrance.*

*With great esteem,  
Your obedient servant,  
R. E. Lee*



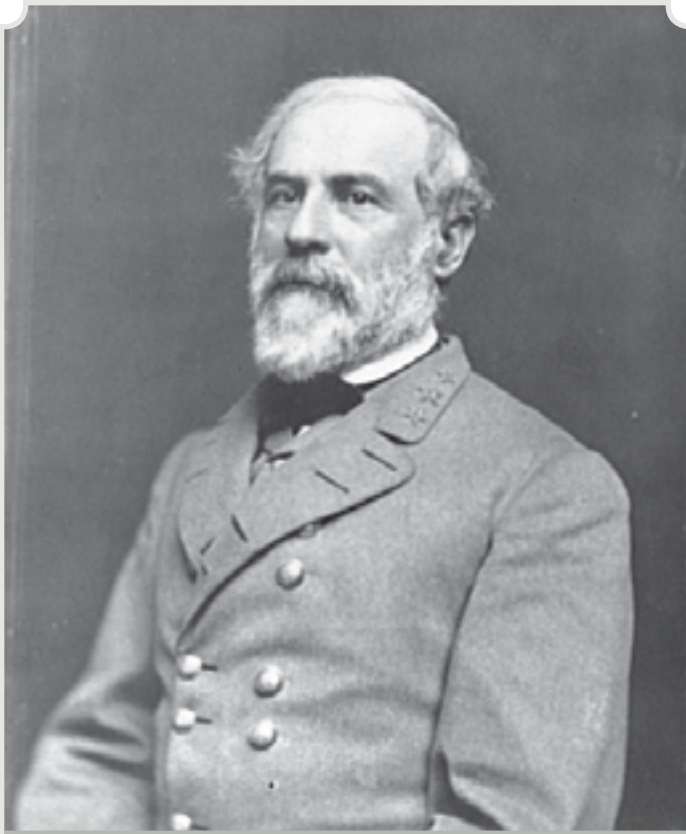
Athens Jan 24th 1863

Dear General,

*I have just returned from Fredericksburg, while there I had reason to visit the Head quarters of General Lee. During the interview he inquired of me whether you had received a letter from him in relation to the death of General Thomas R.R. Cobb. I replied that you had not so far as I knew before I left. He said he feared you might not get it and therefore he enclosed it to Gen Beauregard for you. He also remarked that he had written one to Gov Pickens of South Carolina concerning Gen Maxey Gregg which he had seen published. Major Venable who was present followed me when I took my leave and remarked Gov Pickens had turned over the letter to the sister of Gen Gregg. Although delicacy forbid Gen Lee's saying so, yet the impression made upon me both by him and Major Venable left the impression that he intended the letter for publication. I need not say to you that such a aruction [sic] given to this letter which contains so noble a tribute to the memory of your brother would not only be agreeable to his friends, but to the brigade generally which he commanded and to his Legion especially, who mourn his loss as that of a Father. If you concur in the opinion that there would be no impropriety in the course indicated it can be given to the public by you quietly or by his friends by your permission.*

Very truly yours,  
E. P. Lumpkin

*P. S. His family beg of you the privilege of allowing them to retain the original. I enclose a letter brought by me from Col Glenn.*



Robert E. Lee

The one mystery surrounding this letter that has stumped historians for decades is, where is the original letter? It is not to be found in the T.R.R. Cobb Collection, nor the Howell Cobb Collection, nor the five or six additional family-related collections found at the Hargrett. It doesn't show up in other repositories. The thought among historians is that with so significant a letter, penned by such an important person, not only in history, but to the time, wouldn't this letter have been preserved and treasured by the family. The general consensus is, of course it would have—if it ever existed in the first place. So, did this letter ever really exist, was it actually penned by Robert E. Lee, or was it something created in a dark newspaper editor's office to hype his paper's circulation? Believe it or not, this was a much more common practice in the nineteenth century than it is today.

In recent years, the "Lee Letter" has fallen under more and more suspicion that it is a fabrication due to the absence of the original. When I put the question to Dr. Emory Thomas, the preeminent Robert E. Lee historian a few months ago, he remarked that the language did sound similar to Lee's writings, but added that it also sounded like the flowery style of the time. So, that wouldn't necessarily rule out an editor sitting at his desk in early 1863, imagining what words Lee would put to paper in this situation and penning this type of correspondence.

So, it seemed that we were left to continue speculating as to the real identity of the writer and the letter's authenticity—until last week. Going through a short stack of letters from Howell Cobb, I came across one from E.P. Lumpkin. Edward Payson Lumpkin was a brother of Marion Cobb. He was also a member of his brother-in-law's staff with Cobb's Brigade, and he was present that day on December 13, 1862. I decided that even though his letter was dated more than a month after T.R.R.'s death, it still might have something of interest detailing some aspect of T.R.R.'s death. I wasn't prepared for what I found instead.



E.P. Lumpkin

So, it seems that Robert E. Lee did indeed write a letter of condolence to Howell and that he also possibly intended it to be published. With the letter potentially passing through so many different hands it may have become lost along the way or one of the family members may have determined to keep it and bring it out for show so often until it was no longer intact. Whatever the fate of its final destination, we thankfully still have a copy of it. And we can thank a newspaper editor for that.





West wall of Goodrum's Menaboni breakfast room





# WHY THE CAGED BIRD SINGS



## Goodrum House

BY BARBARA HYDE

When I came on board this project in February 2016, the looming light at the end of the Goodrum House—restoration tunnel was the well-known Menaboni Breakfast room. In 1930, Philip Trammell Shutze designed an intimate casual dining space for May Goodrum and her mother, Mollie. A 10-foot-by-10-foot octagonal room tucked between the kitchen and a lady's powder room at the front of the house, it incorporated shelved niches in four corners and an ogee shaped ceiling. The room was described in the October 1932 issue of *House & Garden* as “suggesting an airy bird cage with its rattan motifs and soft Chinese coloring”. The article further describes the golden niches with brightly colored figures of Chinese caricatures. What lay before me was a far cry from the description in that 1932 magazine article.

The initial meeting between Shutze and Athos Menaboni, the artist who created this tiny gem of a room is lost to us. What we do know is that Menaboni emigrated from Italy in 1921 and resided in New York City before making his way to Tampa, Florida, to work as an art director for the Davis Island development during the 1920s Florida land boom. With the land bust in 1925, Menaboni headed north and eventually settled in Atlanta, Georgia. Recent research indicates he might have been acquainted with Allyn Cox, another important artist who created the dining room murals at Goodrum House in an Asian motif. Cox and Shutze were close friends from their

youthful days at the American Academy in Rome. It's possible Cox supplied Menaboni with a letter of introduction to Shutze. By whatever means the initial meeting took place, Shutze had the perfect room to compliment Menaboni's talents.

What Menaboni envisioned at Goodrum House was a charming aviary filled with colorful flitting birds: two love birds cuddling on the bamboo lattice, a parrot chasing down dragonfly, and an exotic hummingbird with peacock-like tail feathers to name a few. Intertwined between the lattice, insects, and birds were vines of grapes, blue and pink morning glories, and ivy. Menaboni returned to his Italian

roots in the niches, but with a twist and nod to Allyn Cox's Asian-inspired dining room conceit. The gilded, gold-leaf niches and oval-shaped paintings above harkened back to the gold-ground panel paintings and altarpieces he studied in his youth, but the similarities stopped there. He put his good humor to use on this glowing surface by painting whimsical scenes of Asian caricatures in slap-stick comic situations: a mischievous monkey grabbing a man's braided ponytail; another flinging coconuts at an unsuspecting passerby; a baby being scolded by his mother for playing with a tiny cannon. While the comic strip-like niches incite giggles, the oval panels above





Close-up of May's breakfast room gilded niche

reveal Athos's depth of talent in beautifully composed and modeled still-lives: a bowl of plums with an unusual pipe, a vase of delicate cherry blossoms arranged with an eye for Asian aesthetics, a box wrapped in impressively convincing drapery. May's breakfast room enticed the visitor to spend time looking closely at their environment.

But eighty-seven years had taken their toll. Layers of paint, years of repeated cleaning and wiping of the niches, and severe water damage had left the room in a mournful state. Restoration attempts in 1984 and the early 1990s had made major changes to the artist's original intent. When pipes burst a second time in the south wall of the room releasing steam directly onto the plaster ceiling, white latex paint applied to the mural background was thought to be the best solution. By 2009, portions of the painted ceiling were separating from the substrate, the gold ground of the niches were dulled by years of nicotine and harsh cleaning, and fluctuations in temperature

and humidity had caused paint to flake off the tiny gilded vignettes. This project was saved for last simply because there were many difficult curatorial and restoration decisions to be made.

By fall 2017 the time had arrived to tackle those decisions. Chip Miller and Steve Tillander of Restoration Craftsmen started by photographing every inch of the ceiling. Steve had experience with restoring other Menaboni murals. He has an eye for Menaboni's original brushstrokes. The first question was if removal of the white latex paint was possible. Chip came up with a solution to remove the paint and subsequent layer of varnish found underneath. While Steve started working on paint removal, Chip worked on adhering the areas of the mural that had separated from the plaster substrate. He devised a paper hinge method to keep the hanging chads in place while applying adhesive behind it, activating it with a warm heating iron, and consolidating the area to the



May's breakfast room's gilded niche shelves



plaster. Areas of the mural were missing and required inpainting. Armed with a stack of photos spanning between the 1930 and 1984 and a digital projector, Steve carefully recreated the lost sections. Paint analysis revealed the original color of the walls was a lighter blue than its current state. The walls and trim were stripped of eighteen layers of paint and returned to their original blue. By Christmas 2017, the room was finished but the niches were still dull and the vignettes muddy.

Larry Shutts of Savant and Shutts Art Conservation cleaned a few test spots on the oil-painted caricatures. He felt the painted areas could benefit from a light cleaning but the gilding might be problematic—but Menaboni had utilized the gold leaf in his highlighting and modeling the figures. As Larry cleaned away the years of grime, details and textures of the figures' clothing—the pink skin tones of the babies and Menaboni's painterly brushstrokes—came to the surface. He contemplated what he could do with the gilding. It was holding up to a light cleaning around the figures and the shine was returning. He decided to test a small area; a fox-like creature running through a forest, and then a larger tiger stalking a man wielding a hatchet and using his coolie hat as a shield. The gold still cast its glow. By slightly changing his technique, Larry could clean the gilding and protect it with a light coating of varnish. The gilding in some niches is thinner than others and shows more wear. Re-gilding without damaging the delicate paintings isn't possible at this time. The inpainting of the slight flaking paint on some figures made all the difference. I've looked at these muted paintings with areas of loss for so long, it was slightly shocking to see them in their nearly original state. The viewer's eye is no longer distracted by breaks in the color field within the scenes and Menaboni's virtuosity with a paintbrush shines through.

Questions still remain—the space is small and doesn't lend itself easily to tours. What do we do about the original arrangement of furniture? Maybe a chest and mirror against the south wall and forgo the drop leaf table? The carpentry of the walnut floor is exquisite, but May had a needlepoint carpet to compliment the apricot taffeta curtains. And speaking of those apricot silk taffeta curtains, would she lean toward a pinkish-orange-toned apricot? Or an orange-yellowish tone? A plain lustrous taffeta? Or one with a delicious water silk pattern woven throughout? The endless questions continue as Menaboni's birds burst into song once again.



Archer cleaned, but prior to inpainting



# FLUSH WITH ARCHAEOLOGY



## Sticks & Stones

BY MICHELLE ZUPAN

For an archaeologist, be they professional or avocational, working upon a giant trash midden can be both a fascinating and an infuriating proposition. Hickory Hill, by virtue of its location and geomorphology, has been inhabited by humans for thousands, if not tens of thousands, of years. That length of occupation produces a lot of trash.

The amount of material culture that lives just below the surface causes much interest, and some consternation, among both visitors and staff. Visitors, especially children, walking from one location to another will always pick up the odd piece of glass, ceramic, or metal and run excitedly to the nearest staff member to inquire what it is and if we ought to “save it,” as one would an injured lizard. Similar scenes play out frequently between myself, the resident archaeologist, and the grounds crew. Plowing, driveway maintenance, field leveling, and other earth-moving activities invariably turn up bits and bobs of Hickory Hill’s intriguing past. These bits generally find their way into a bucket—or a Christmas-cookie tin—and finally into my office. One such missive was delivered just last week.

Amongst the dozens upon dozens of unidentifiable pieces of aqua glass, whiteware, milk glass, corroded iron machinery parts, and rocks was a large whiteware sherd bearing the maker’s mark “ELJER” in impressive blue lettering.

A bit of research later determined that our intrepid grounds crew had found—a toilet! While that may not seem very sexy, it actually does have bearing on the post-turn-of-the-century history of Hickory Hill. Tom Watson, in an effort to embrace the modern world, installed not only electric lighting but indoor plumbing—a rarity for the early twentieth century. While not the Holy Grail, this humble piece of plumbing might be one of the early Hickory Hill potties!

Flush toilets were first described in a 1586 pamphlet *A New Discourse on a Stale Subject*, called the Metamorphosis of Ajax (a “jakes” being slang for toilet). They did not come into fashionable use until 1851. Eljer, Inc. was founded in Oakland, California, in 1904 by two cousins, Raymond Elmer Crane and Oscar Jerome Backus, who combined letters from their middle names to form the company name. Eljer invented a new type of flush valve that closed under its own weight and, so, was not dependent upon strong water pressure to do the job. The “flapper” valve in contemporary toilets is the extension of that early design.

The company continued to grow and purchased defunct dinnerware potteries in the East throughout the mid-twentieth century before merging into American Standard with Crane Plumbing in 2008. Most of the Eljer products are made overseas today.





The Eljer Flushing Valve and Closet



Bits and bobs of Hickory Hill's intriguing past

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A large whiteware sherd bearing the maker's mark "ELJER"



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Walter J. Brown was a journalist and a broadcast pioneer who built and chaired what would become Spartan Communications, Inc., one of the larger privately held TV companies in the country.

Early in his career, Brown had an office in the White House when he served on the staff of Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. Brown's enduring love for politics was eclipsed only by his respect for Jimmy Byrnes. Inspired in part by Byrnes's philanthropy—which in 1948 established the James F. Byrnes Foundation—Brown created his own private Foundation in 1970. Named for Thomas E. Watson and J.J. Brown, the men to whom Brown attributed his success, the Watson-Brown Foundation today continues to ensure that hundreds of deserving students are provided the opportunity to excel at the college of their choice.