



# Le Journal des Amis



## GREETINGS FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Now is a lovely time to visit Magnolia Mound with family and friends. The kitchen garden is thriving under the care of EBR master gardeners, looking every bit as lush and productive as it can be. The interior of the main house is “dressed” for summer, ready for our sultry humid climate.

The Friends of Magnolia Mound enjoyed a successful Petite Antique Forum, April 1. Thank you, Catherine White Johnson, for planning and executing this exciting event. Please see her column in this newsletter for all the specific details and pictures.

On April 24th, The Friends held their annual board meeting at the Turner Family Visitor’s Center here at the Mound. The following new board members were welcomed and introduced: Diane Finley, Ethan Melancon, Adelaide Russo, Cheryl Stromeyer, Liz Treppendahl, and Mary Williams.

In June close to 350 members of the Duplantier Family will hold their reunion at Magnolia Mound. We are excited to be able to host this event.

We invite you to renew or become a member of the Friends of Magnolia Mound! Membership is the primary source of income for our organization and serves to support our educational programming at the Mound. It also supports the procurement and care of our extensive collection of antique furnishing in the historic house and other structures on the grounds.

Karen Zobrist  
*President*

## Magnolia Mound Spring Crop Garden

*By Camm Morton with John Sykes, photos by Camm Morton*



This spring’s garden is beautiful despite the late freeze that had us scurrying around to cover everything we planted early. We had success, and the rain and sun have done the rest. We have already harvested potatoes, green beans, onions, tomatoes, and peppers. The photographs show how great the garden looks, thanks to the efforts of our Louisiana Master Gardener crew.



In addition to our regular garden, we were asked to plant a small patch of sugar cane along the west side near Nicholson Drive. The early ribbon variety, used in the 1830s, was originally grown at Magnolia Mound,

and then grown again in the 1990s-2013. It is a great addition to Magnolia Mound as a demonstration crop since sugar cane was the chief crop of the plantation from the 1820s to the last known sugar crop harvested here in 1902.



We are also pleased to announce that Clegg’s Nursery is sponsoring our garden and supplying the pine straw that helps in weed control and its overall look. Thank you to Clegg’s for their continued support of the garden at Magnolia Mound.







## Re-imagining the Le bureau de la plantation

By Babeth Schlegel

On February 23, the historic house plantation office was reorganized. It was decided to reverse the location of the big inlay armoire and the standing desk. As you can imagine, moving large pieces of furniture is not an easy task. We asked David Broussard to help us. David's cabinet maker skills were essential in the process. He also knows the Friends collection very well as he worked on so many pieces of our furniture throughout the years.

The armoire in this room is very interesting because we are able to identify who made it. Our dear Pat Bacot located very similar armoires in private collections in New Roads and St. Gabriel. Research suggested that our armoire was made by cabinetmaker A. Babin around 1790-1810. It is a massive walnut and cypress armoire with no belt on the drawers inside. The inlay work is not as sophisticated as seen in the dining room armoire which might indicate a less skilled cabinetmaker. Nevertheless, it is a beautiful armoire, and we invite you to come look at the new layout of this room.

## Strategic Planning Session

Magnolia Mound staff and the Executive Committee of the Friends of Magnolia Mound gathered for a Strategic Planning Session workshop on Saturday, February 25 at the Education Center.

Magnolia Mound, first accredited in 1985, is working on reaccreditation with the American Alliance of Museums. A final draft will be presented to the Board of Directors in the fall for approval.



(Left to right) Brooke Kidder, MM Volunteer Coordinator, Chet Coles, Friends Collection Committee Chair, Karen Zobrist, Friends President, Craig Rowley, MM Administrative Assistant, Babeth Schlegel, Friends Executive Director, Nolaine Bogan-Potts, MM Gift Shop Manager, Monique Mulder, Education Program Specialist, Donna Mitchell, Friends Past President, and Susan Eaton, Friends Vice-President.



Friends' collection of 18th to early 19th century French glass hand-blown preserve jars.

## Nicolas Appert's Contribution to Food Preservation

By Babeth Schlegel

**N**icolas Appert, born in France in 1749, was an apprentice cook at the Palais-Royal Hotel in Chalon. All his life he studied food. He worked in confectionery, distilling and brewing, in grocers' storehouses, kitchens and the wine cellars of Champagne. In 1780, he established a confectionery shop in Paris.

Food shortages and supply needs were a big problem for campaigning troops, sailors, and explorers. Napoleon lost a lot of men due to the lack of food during his campaign's endeavor to seize Moscow. Winning battles was not an easy task and certainly not for hungry and malnourished soldiers. Another factor that contributed to more soldiers, sailors and civilian death was scurvy. The Britannica dictionary describes: "scurvy, also called vitamin C deficiency, one of the oldest-known nutritional disorders of humankind, caused by a dietary lack of vitamin C (ascorbic acid), a nutrient found in many fresh fruits and vegetables, particularly the citrus fruits."

In 1795, a 12,000 franc reward was offered by the French Government to discover a technique to conserve the freshness and nutritious qualities of meat and vegetables. Appert abandoned his confectionery in 1796 to move to Ivry-sur-Seine to start his research. By 1804, his process had been improved and his samples tested and reported to the Board of Health in Paris. J.C. Grahm mentioning the report stated: "The broth in the bottles was good, the broth included with boiled beef in a special vessel good also, but weak. The beef itself was very edible. The beans and green peas prepared both with and without meat have all the freshness and agreeable flavour of freshly picked vegetables."

Appert established his first bottling plant outside Paris with some land to grow vegetables and fruit to avoid the deterioration in quality between picking and bottling.

According to Grahm, a celebrated gastronome named Monsieur Grimond de la Reynière wrote in the *Courier de l'Europe* in 1809: "Appert has discovered the art of fixing the seasons. With him spring, summer and autumn exist in bottles like delicate plants

that are protected by the gardener under a dome of glass against the intemperance of the seasons.'

In 1810, Appert was awarded a prize of 12,000 francs with the condition that he write a detailed summary of his processes. He paid the expense of printing 200 copies of his report for the Minister. The report, published in a book format, was named: *L'art de conserver pendant plusieurs années toutes les substances animales et végétales*. (*The Art of Preserving All Kinds of Animal and Vegetable Substances for Several Years, Britannica*). 6000 copies were eventually published.

Grahm reported the four stages described in the book:

*1e : A renfermer dans les bouteilles ou bocaux les substances que l'on veut conserver.*

*2e : A boucher ces différents vases avec la plus grande attention car c'est principalement de l'opération du bouchage que dépend le succès ;*

*3e : A soumettre ces substances ainsi renfermées, à l'action de l'eau bouillante d'un bain-marie, pendant plus ou moins de temps, selon leur nature et de la manière que je l'indiquerai pour chaque espèce de comestible ;*

*4e : A retirer les bouteilles du bain-marie au temps prescrit.*

This English translation as Grahm mentions is from one made in 1811:

1st: To place in the bottles or glass jars the substances to be preserved.

2nd: To cork these different vessels with the greatest care because success chiefly depends on the closing.

3rd: To submit these substances thus enclosed to the action of boiling water in a water bath for a more or less time according to their nature and in the manner that I shall indicate for each kind of food.

4th: To remove the bottles from the water bath at the time prescribed.

Though researchers from other countries had alleged to have discovered the process to conserve food in hermetically-sealed containers, Grahm stated that: "What Appert did which was important was to make tests with different foods to find out how long they needed to be heated. He understood the need for airtight containers although he did not understand why this was so. He states in his writing: 'I owe to my experiments and above all to my great perseverance, being convinced, first, that the subject of heat has the essential quality not only of changing the constituent parts of animal and vegetable products but also that if not destroying, at least arresting for many years the natural tendency of these products to decomposition. Second, that having deprived them in a most rigorous manner possible of air, effects preservation of these same products with all their natural qualities.'

Sources:

The Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine Volume 74 May 1981

The French connection in the early history of canning by J C Grahm, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/014107688107400511>

The Britannica dictionary: Scurvy: <https://www.britannica.com/science/scurvy>, Nicolas Appert: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Nicolas-Appert>



# Thanks to all for a wonderful Petite Antiques Forum

By Catherine White

On April 1, the Friends of Magnolia Mound celebrated another successful Petite Antiques Forum. The day began with light refreshments graciously provided by Mary Boston in the foyer of the Louisiana State Archives building. Guests also had the opportunity to visit with Wayne Stromeyer, who had brought his newly published book about early camellias in Louisiana, and to enjoy the Archives' current exhibit.

R. Larry Schmidt, president of the Board of the Historic BK House and Gardens in New Orleans entertained attendees with an enlightening illustrated talk about the BK House titled, "If These Walls Could Talk: A Small Museum with Many Stories." Afterward, participants lunched at the Baton Rouge Country Club, then journeyed to New Roads to tour two historic private homes. Richard Gibbs and Randy Harelson opened their 200-year-old residence, the LeJeune House, while next door Cary Saurage opened his charming 1905 home for tours led by Friends' docents. Attendees enjoyed visiting the houses, and viewing the beautiful gardens.

Ninety-one people registered for the event. Thirteen sponsors contributed generously to the proceeds, which will aid the Friends of Magnolia Mound in supporting historic Magnolia Mound, a property of BREC.

The 2023 Petite Antiques Forum Chairman Catherine White, and her committee of Karen Zobrist, Babeth Schlegel, and Jane Thomas would like to thank the homeowners Randy Harelson, Richard Gibbs, and Cary Saurage for their gracious hospitality.

Many people volunteered their time and talents to make the event successful. We would like to thank Barbara Bacot for being speaker liaison, Mary Boston, Dare Didier, the staff of the State Archives for their assistance, and Barbara Anne Eaton and Amy LeJeune for the luncheon arrangements. Serving as docents from members of the Friends were Ira Babin, Chet Coles, Jane Coles, Donna Mitchell, Katherine Scherer, Mary Tharp, Donna Wright, and Mike Zobrist. Carey Coxe assisted at the tour houses. Karen Zobrist, Babeth Schlegel, John Sykes, and Craig Rowley assisted with myriad details to ensure the event went smoothly.



LeJeune House in New Roads



Forum Lecture. (Left to right) Catherine White Johnson, chairman; Larry Schmidt, speaker and president of board of BK House; and Karen Zobrist, president of The Friends



Photos by Debra Charles, Jane Thomas, and John Sykes





*Saurage House in New Roads*



*Mary Tharp gave a tour of LeJeune House dining room*



*Donna Wright gave a tour of Parlor of LeJeune House*



*Karen Zobrist & Randy Harelson*

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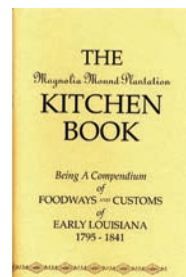
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Friends of Magnolia Mound

**MISSION STATEMENT**

*To assist in the preservation and interpretation of the historic house and site as a demonstration of early plantation life in south Louisiana for the education and enjoyment of present and future generations and to procure and manage the Collection*

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Friends, working with BREC, the Museum Director and staff, assist in implementing the master plan for the structures, landscaping, future additions and changes to Magnolia Mound.

BREC owns and operates Magnolia Mound. All of the furniture, decorative items and artifacts are owned and cared for by the Friends. This collection brings to life the interiors of the house and other buildings for the community, school groups, and tourists.

The Friends provide advisory and financial assistance for the kitchen garden, which is part of the educational tour at the Mound. Produce from the garden is used in the cooking demonstrations in the kitchen building.

**YOUR MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS THIS MISSION**

Friends of Magnolia Mound

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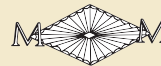
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Questions? Please send an email to [friendsofmagnoliamount@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofmagnoliamount@gmail.com) or call Babeth Schlegel at (225) 421-3162

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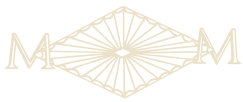
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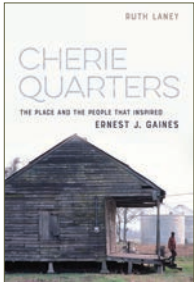


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**On the first Sunday of every month, admission is free!**



**On Sunday, May 7** Author Ruth Laney discussed her new book *Cherie Quarters: The Place and the People That Inspired Ernest J. Gaines*. Her book rediscovers the plantation quarters in Pointe Coupee that inspired its most famous resident, Louisiana writer and Pulitzer Prize nominee Ernest J. Gaines. Laney's new book is available in the gift shop.



*Friends' board member Larry Ruth listens to the Reverend Levert Kemp tell his memories of his aunt Lubertha who was the last known resident of the Cherie Quarters cabin now at Magnolia Mound. Pastor Levert Kemp is a cousin of Louisiana author Ernest Gaines and the pastor of Greater Antioch Baptist Church in South Baton Rouge.*



*Verna Kemp, cousin of Ernest Gaines, with author Ruth Laney at the Cherie Quarters cabin at Magnolia Mound.*

*Photos by John Sykes and Karen Ruth*