

ASSESSING THE FEASIBILITY OF USING ARNOCROFT  
AS AN HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM

by

ALLISON MOON

(Under the Direction of John C. Waters)

ABSTRACT

Arnocroft, located at 925 Milledge Avenue in Athens, Georgia, was constructed in 1903 as a wooden frame house, and remodeled in 1933 to reflect the Colonial Revival influence popular in architectural trends of the day. It is significant to the historic fabric of the Athens community as an artifact of social history, architectural evolution, and landscape design. The house, decorative arts collection, and surrounding property were donated to the Junior League of Athens, Inc. in 1994 by Mrs. Eugenia Arnold Blount Friend, who founded this organization in 1935. During their stewardship, the Junior League has not articulated a specific use for the property. This thesis considers the historic significance of the site, examines the feasibility of operating it as an historic house museum, and outlines a plan to facilitate this proposition.

INDEX WORDS: Athens, Georgia, Milledge Avenue, Arnocroft, Junior League of Athens, Historic preservation, Historic house museum, Heritage tourism

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is respectfully dedicated to the memory of Eugenia Arnold Blount Friend.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO ARNOCROFT

In 1994, the Junior League of Athens, Inc. inherited the house at 925 Milledge Avenue upon the death of its owner, Mrs. Eugenia Arnold Blount Friend. Mrs. Friend was a native of Athens and is credited as being the founding president of the Junior League of Athens in 1935, known then as the Athens Junior Assembly. Her long association with the Junior League influenced her to deed the property, with a modest endowment, to this group for their use. According to the terms of her will, it was to be known as Arnocroft, and it was to be used to “...further the interest and welfare of the people of the community of Athens.”<sup>1</sup> Though this was a very general mandate, as of the date of this publication, a specific use for this property had not been determined. Indeed, it has sat dormant for almost the entirety of the last decade. If Arnocroft was properly developed as an historic house museum, it would have the potential to represent thematic elements that could be developed into successful interpretive programs that serve to educate, enlighten and entertain community residents, school groups, and visitors from other communities.

Generally speaking, the synopsis of the story most often encountered with this property is that it was a house originally built as a wood-frame house at the turn of the century, and then it was remodeled in the Colonial Revival style in 1933. Mrs. Eugenia Arnold Friend had inherited the house from her parents. Though she had her primary residence in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for many years, she retained Arnocroft as a vacation house and visited it periodically through the years. When she gave the house to the Junior League, she gave the entire collection of

furnishings and decorative arts with it. Though none of this information is incorrect, it hardly does justice to the scope of thematic elements represented by Arnocroft. An appropriate outline of the history of this house would consider a broader scope of issues.

Beginning with a deed search for the property, it can be ascertained that Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr., father of Eugenia Arnold Friend and builder of Arnocroft, acquired the property in 1903 and subsequently built the house.<sup>2</sup> Beyond this, the physical structure itself reveals many remarkably intact clues to the original wood-frame structure of the house including an intersecting gable roof and recycled clapboards in the attic; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps drawn in 1926 and 1947 show a change in the general footprint of the property as well.

It was ascertained from the obituary of Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr. that he distinguished himself in Athens by serving as mayor and representative in the Georgia General Assembly.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, he was involved with a number of significant businesses in Athens, including the Arnold Grocery Company, the Arnold Candy Company, the Athens Foundry, the Athens Mattress and Spring Bed Company and the Citizens Pharmacy.<sup>4</sup> Oliver Arnold was married to Aurie Baynes Arnold, and they had three daughters: Jennie, Elizabeth and Eugenia. These three girls enjoyed the privileges of a comfortable home and formal education, and they grew to be very interesting women.

When Oliver Arnold, Jr. purchased the land to relocate his family and build his new house, he originally acquired over ten acres.<sup>5</sup> The lot was conspicuously located on the corner of Milledge Avenue, Rutherford Street, and Lumpkin Street. Over time, portions were subdivided, and when the property was given to the Junior League of Athens in 1994, it contained a little

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<sup>1</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 287, 01 June 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book WW, Page 216, 06 July 1903.

<sup>3</sup> Obituary for Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr. *Athens Banner Herald*, 27 May 1945.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

over two acres.<sup>6</sup> Those two acres surrounding the house had been developed into formal landscaped areas, and it is known that great contributions were made to this landscape from the advice and direction of Hubert Bond Owens.<sup>7</sup> Owens, professionally trained as a landscape architect, spent many years developing the landscape architecture program at the University of Georgia. Under his administration, the School of Environmental Design came into being, and he was appointed dean. He collaborated on numerous landscape design projects in Athens and other communities, and his influence was strongly felt in this field. His work in the field of landscape architecture will continue to grow in significance. The landscape at Arnocroft retains a great deal of integrity, and it is one of the most significant characteristics of the history of this property.

When Arnocroft was given to the Junior League of Athens, it was given with an extensive collection of decorative arts. Many of those pieces are unique and fine examples of design and craftsmanship and reflect the decorative arts taste of their time; they were recognized at a special exhibit at the Georgia Museum of Art in 1998-99.<sup>8</sup> The many pieces of this collection were gathered over the lifetimes of several members of the Arnold family, particularly mother and daughter, Aurie and Eugenia Arnold. Having both been widowed in the 1940s, they traveled together throughout Europe and America on many trips and brought back furnishings and objects d'art from their excursions.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, beyond the physical structure and social history, Arnocroft could be a terrific showcase for the efforts of the Junior League of Athens and its seventy-year history of charitable

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<sup>5</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book WW, Page 216, 06 July 1903.

<sup>6</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 288, 01 June 1995.

<sup>7</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

<sup>8</sup> Brittany Freeman, "Legacy of Style," *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>9</sup> M.A. Barnes, "Arnocroft: Junior League Provides Loving Care to a Piece of Athens History," *Online Athens*, 03 June 1998.

works for Athens and the surrounding community. As the governing entity of Arnocroft and the managing entity of the Taylor-Grady House (c. 1850), the Junior League serves as the steward for two very different, but important, historic properties in Athens. The driving force behind the Junior League has always been the efforts of the many talented women of their membership, a theme which lends itself to further expressing the significant role women's groups have played in the development of the field of historic preservation.

The confluence of a variety of assets makes Arnocroft uniquely suited for use as a house museum. It would be unique among the other museums in the community. Presently, Athens has four other house museums which are opened to the public: the Church-Waddel-Brumby House (1820), the Taylor-Grady House (c. 1845), the Ware-Lyndon House (1850), and the Founder's Memorial Garden House (1857). Of these four properties, none of them have an extensive collection of original furnishings such as that at Arnocroft; the majority of their furnishings are period pieces that were assimilated through the years. Similarly, none of them are situated in their authentic landscape. The Church-Waddel-Brumby House and the Taylor-Grady House feature parterre gardens, which are not accurate to the site or the time period. The Founder's Memorial Garden House is located in the middle of a landscape that is a twentieth century creation of the Ladies Garden Club of Georgia and the UGA School of Environmental Design. The Ware-Lyndon House features a small kitchen garden, however no other attempt to create an authentic landscape setting for this property has been made. Finally, all of these other sites are representative of the ante-bellum era of Athens' history. Arnocroft introduces a time period, and consequently the social history, of a completely different era of this community.

This thesis will explore the history of the Arnold family and their influence on Athens and surrounding communities, the architectural evolution of the house itself from a wood-frame

Victorian dwelling to a stately brick-veneer Colonial Revival home, and the legacy of the landscape surrounding the house. This information will be used to establish an argument and a plan for operating Arnocroft as a house museum. This plan will include both theoretical principles and practical information to guide the management and stewardship of this property, and it will define the tremendous role that Arnocroft can play in the larger framework of historic house museums in Athens, Georgia and the surrounding communities.

## CHAPTER 2

### WHY AN HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUM: PHILOSOPHY AND INTERPRETATION

The development of historic house museums in America has paralleled the development of significant events in the field of historic preservation. In many ways, house museums are the most accessible point of contact the general public has with historic preservation. They could even be considered the front line in the effort to broaden awareness of historic preservation initiatives in communities around the country, and thus, strengthen community understanding and support of historic preservation.

Numerous authors have cited the examples of Hasbrouck House in New York and Mount Vernon in Virginia as prototypical roots for the development of house museums in America. Both of these properties were endangered in the mid-nineteenth century, and they both were saved by small groups of interested citizens who made emotional appeals regarding the significant associations with George Washington. The success of these two institutions, as well as the formation of other private preservation interest groups such as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities and the Daughters of the American Revolution, created an environment where a belief emerged that recognized, “patriotism and an appreciation of American virtues could be developed through the experience of historic structures.”<sup>1</sup> In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, other private groups, as well as local, state, and federal government agencies have become more aware with the passing of years that America’s built heritage is a resource that should not be taken for granted.



There are many different types of buildings that comprise the historically significant structures of America's built heritage: libraries, churches, theatres, etc. However, the popular practice of converting domestic dwellings to museums, which are open to the public, has somehow earned its own unique nomenclature: the historic house museum. This begs the question, what is so special about houses in particular? Perhaps the peculiar nature of houses is best articulated by anthropologist James Deetz in the book, In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life.

Whether a crude brush-and-bough affair built by the nomadic Siriono Indians of Bolivia for a single night's use, or an elegant mansion on the beach at Newport, Rhode Island, the house forms the focus of that basic social unit of the human species, the family. People are conceived, are born, and die in houses; in pre-industrial cultures, the house is at the same time the domestic center and the location of most production of essential artifacts. The form of a house can be a strong reflection of the needs and minds of those who built it; in addition, it shapes and directs their behavior. Small wonder that so much of archaeology concerns itself with the excavation and interpretation of domestic structures of almost endless variety.<sup>2</sup>

Historic houses are places to which everyone can relate, because everyone comes from some sort of a home. Home life, be it good or bad, is so basic to the values that shape every individual, there arises a natural curiosity to gain access to the homes of others and ostensibly, to compare these experiences to our own. Additionally, the artifacts, be they humble or grand, that surround individuals in their daily lives play a significant role in creating a sense of identity and directing the activities of individuals. "No matter what its age, size, or style, or what life inside and outside was like, a *residence* is a universally understood place."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick H. Butler, III, "Past, Present and Future: the Place of the House Museum in the Museum Community," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 25.

<sup>2</sup> James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life*, (New York: Doubleday, 1977), 92.

<sup>3</sup> Jessica Foy Donnelly, *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 3.

The historic house museum provides a context for these experiences and objects. “Museums began as repositories for homeless artifacts of all sorts which, for an endless variety of reasons, could no longer survive in their original habitat.”<sup>4</sup> Traditional museums may have the advantage of large open spaces with sophisticated lighting and climate control systems in which they can create show rooms and display cases for artifacts. But the house museum is the real environment; it is the actual stage on which the drama of experience and artifacts is played out. House museums are ideal repositories for the various artifacts of daily life that have become indispensable to our domestic habits.

To highlight these contrasting environments, consider the display of a late-eighteenth century wooden sewing tables. Sewing tables were small work stations, popularized during the federal era in American history, which provided women a place to carry on such domestic activities as sewing and mending. As they grew in popularity, they became more technically and artistically sophisticated, and since their decline in the early-twentieth century, have become valued as collectible antiques.

A traditional museum could display a variety of different sewing tables, different accessories such as needles, scissors, and textiles that would be used in association with these tables, and signage differentiating the style, maker and significance of each table. Such a display would serve to inform and educate viewers on the form and function of these artifacts of women’s daily lives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in America. However, consider a sewing table, its accessories, and signage placed in an historic house, which was constructed in 1820. A typical setting for this particular artifact would show it close to a window or fireplace to provide light, and it would be in relation to other pieces of furniture that may have been in the

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<sup>4</sup> James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 219.

nineteenth century parlor, such as a secretary for writing letters and storing books, a small piano or other musical instrument, and a variety of chairs or sofas arranged in a way that is conducive to conversation. A variety of other artifacts could be displayed, such as candles or oil lamps, that suggest the different kind of lifestyle that particular sewing table would have served. Though both of these environments educate viewers about the function of sewing tables, the house museum provides a true and evocative setting for understanding the context in which the artifact was utilized.

The culmination of these various ideas is the fact that historic house museums provide settings for a dynamic interpretation of history, and they require a dynamic style of leadership to allow the institution to realize its full potential.

The development of the house museum as an institution crosses many traditional cultural, intellectual and institutional boundaries. It encompasses issues in the traditional history and decorative arts museum; the historic preservation movement; the development of formal museum training programs; the role of government in museums and society; concepts of popular education for children and for general audiences; gender roles among museum volunteers and professionals; the role of volunteerism and, in particular, ‘patriotic’ organizations in society; and the place of collectors and antique dealers in establishing and maintaining these institutions.<sup>5</sup>

The multiple levels of issues enumerated above are all part of the dynamic that would recommend Arnocroft for use as a house museum. The physical environment of this property lends itself to the interpretation of significant issues associated with architectural history, landscape history, and community development. Arguably the main character in the story of Arnocroft is a woman, Mrs. Eugenia Friend, which allows for an insightful interpretation of women’s history. The lives lived in this house reflect sub-themes of the larger historical trends taking place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. And the house was donated with its entire collection of

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick H. Butler, III, “Past, Present and Future: the Place of the House Museum in the Museum Community,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 18.

furnishings, textiles, and objects d'art, which comprise a fine assortment of antiques and decorative arts.

It is a mistake to think of the house museum experience as a static story of the family members that occupied the site. Interpretation should go beyond the names, dates and facts of a script. A site should strive for a holistic interpretation of the various aspects of the property which generate its significance. Every historic site is comprised of multiple themes with myriad sub-themes. According to Rex Ellis, vice president for the historic area at Colonial Williamsburg,

One of the most effective traditional venues for teaching history is the historic house museum. The twentieth century witnessed a surge in the creation of the museums in America, but for most of that time, their interpretive emphasis was on white, often upper-class, mostly male residents. As competition for audiences and funding increased, and as the field of history in general opened up to diverse perspectives, historic site staffs began to explore ways to make the interpretation of their sites more inclusive.<sup>6</sup>

Inclusiveness goes beyond the roles of the persons that populated a site. This idea can be extended to aspects of architectural history, landscape history, decorative arts and innumerable other social contexts presented in any given site. Diversity of thematic elements not only creates a more interesting program for visitors to the site, but it can also be used to generate return visitation. Special tours, which focus on multiple thematic elements, can be offered above and beyond traditional interpretation of an historic site.

The idea of inclusiveness most often reflects the need to consider the experiences of all the persons from every social class that lived and worked in a particular household. It argues that the experience of the slave is just as important as the slave master to understand a plantation;

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<sup>6</sup> Rex Ellis, "Interpreting the Whole House," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 62.

the experience of the chambermaid tells a story as legitimate as that of the lady of the house. By interpreting the experience of principle family members, domestic servants, caretakers, and laborers, you broaden the range of the backgrounds that the general public can relate to. You also enrich the context in which these individuals lived and worked, and by doing so create a more complete picture of the lives you represent.

Historian Sherry Butcher-Youngmans cautions house museums not to overdo multiple interpretive themes in standard programming. “Too much information can cause visitors to feel confused and disoriented, and they may leave without understanding why the house was significant enough to be saved or restored.”<sup>7</sup> However, a standard tour supplemented by specialty tours offered at different times can expand the interpretive efforts at historic properties, reach different audiences with different specialized interests, and encourage people to return multiple times to hear new information. The Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina, has developed a series of highly successful specialty tours that take visitors behind the scenes and beyond the rooms open on the general tour. Additionally, they provide a landscape tour, which calls attention to the detail that went into designing the grounds and the management of the environmental component of the estate.

One of the principle ideas to be understood from a holistic interpretive program is that research and interpretation are never complete. According to Ellis, “guided by its mission and its particular historical footprint, the staff of a historic house should work on expanding the collection, research, archaeology, and documentation to fill these gaps [in interpretation].”<sup>8</sup> The information presented in the following chapters addresses the role that heritage tourism will play

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<sup>7</sup> Sherry Butcher-Youngmans. *Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbook for Their Care, Preservation, and Management*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 188.

<sup>8</sup> Rex Ellis, “Interpreting the Whole House,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 67.

and the broad thematic elements that should be considered at Arnocroft. But it by no means is a complete or conclusive narrative of the interpretive potential of this site. Rather it is an attempt to begin to do justice to the historical significance of the site and the generosity of Mrs. Eugenia Arnold Friend. It will provide the data necessary to make a favorable argument for the use of Arnocroft as a house museum, but in addition to this, further research will continue to enhance interpretive offerings at the site and contribute to the development of a successful museum.

## CHAPTER 3

### HERITAGE TOURISM AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Because of the nature of the discipline, historic preservation initiatives work cooperatively with many other areas of civic organization. Preservation can help provide solutions to housing problems, containing urban sprawl, and land use planning. Its impact can also be significantly felt in the area of heritage tourism throughout the United States. To a large degree, the overall success of Arnocroft will be measured by its ability to attract visitors and be a financially sound investment for the Junior League over the long-term, and as an historic house museum, Arnocroft must find its place in the larger context of heritage tourism.

In the larger scheme of tour and recreation opportunities offered by communities, developing heritage tourism has become a priority. According to The Economics of Historic Preservation, a publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, historically significant architecture has the potential to attract visitors to both large and small cities.<sup>1</sup> “Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington – all cities that have at least made earnest attempts to save the best of their historic architecture – are reaping daily the benefit of visitor dollars.”<sup>2</sup>

Large cities all over the country are renowned for specific characteristics which are largely attributable to their unique built environment. Many of the buildings are either designed by famous architects or were the point of significant historical events. Large cities also boast specific urban design patterns that have come to dominate their character, such as L’Enfant’s design for the street system of Washington, D.C., or Frederick Law Olmstead’s plan for Central

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<sup>1</sup> Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, (Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 79.

Park in New York. But this is not a characteristic that is unique to the large metropolis. The preservation of the eighteenth century layout of Savannah, Georgia around a series of squares is perhaps the best-known characteristic of this city. And the French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana seems to be a small world in and of itself.

“Fewer and fewer of us are passive tourists, content to lie on the beach or sleep by the fire. We travel to see and learn.”<sup>3</sup> The increasing wealth, education level, and leisure time enjoyed by the middle class in America, as well as safer and more convenient modes of travel, have exploded the heritage tourism market in this country. Along with the rest of the United States, Georgia has felt this eruption of economic activity. In the year 2000, “travel expenditures in Georgia totaled \$11.5 billion dollars.”<sup>4</sup> A study of travel trends in the state of Georgia in 2000, commissioned by the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism, showed that 34% of respondents cited historic tourism as their reason for visiting the state.<sup>5</sup> Thirty-seven percent of respondents listed the Atlanta Metro area as their primary destination in Georgia.<sup>6</sup> This information is helpful, considering the close proximity of Athens to the Atlanta Metro area, suggesting that a substantial promotional effort in the Atlanta area could entice visitors to Athens. Additionally, when respondents ranked specific attractions in the state, Savannah’s historic district was ranked first.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that promoting Athens historic attractions at visitors centers and historic sites in Savannah, may attract that particular type of tourist that would make heritage tourism a success for the Athens-Clarke County community.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 77.

<sup>4</sup> Georgia Institute of Technology Economic Development Institute – Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers, *Travel and Tourism in Georgia: 2000 Travel Year Fact Sheet*, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Georgia Institute of Technology Economic Development Institute – Tourism and Regional Assistance Centers, “Georgia Travel Trends 2001: Promote It and They Will Come,” *Focus On TRACS*, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



Finally, this study found that, “. . . in rating trips to Georgia 16 percent of respondents said the state is noted for customs and traditions, 12 percent pointed to history, 12 percent favored its interesting small towns, and 12 percent cited unique local cooking.”<sup>8</sup> These are all characteristics that can be found in Athens and the surrounding area. Using this information, Arnocroft and other heritage tourism entities in Athens-Clarke County could launch a target-marketing campaign to specific regions of the state that could bring local heritage tourism to a new level. Groups such as the Athens-Clarke County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, and the Athens Historic House Museum Association have all been working together to develop a successful heritage tourism product for this community. Arnocroft has real potential to get in on all of these activities while they are developing and make significant contributions to the heritage tourism market in this community.

According to The Economics of Historic Preservation, “Museums have major local economic impact.”<sup>9</sup> Museums are more than just repositories of artifacts or the hobbies of antiquarians. They have tremendous potential to educate communities about their past and create a sense of place. They are landmarks that give definition to a geographic location, a cross-section of the population, or the cultural traditions of a group. “The historic house museum or historic site is the single most common type of museum in America. This preponderance testifies to American’s well-known interest in their history, both national and local.”<sup>10</sup> According to the Directory of House Museums in the United States, there are 67 house museums listed in the state of Georgia.<sup>11</sup> Of these museums listed, only eight of them emphasize early to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader’s Guide*, (Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 83.

<sup>10</sup> American Association of Museums, “Museums Count,” in *The Economics of Historic Preservation*, Donovan D. Rypkema, (Washington D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994), 83.

<sup>11</sup> Patricia Chambers Walker and Thomas Graham, *Directory of Historic House Museums in the United States*, (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2000).

mid-twentieth century history in their interpretation, and only two of them specifically list a woman as a key player in their history.<sup>12</sup> This information suggests that there is a unique niche, which Arnocroft could fill, in the larger network of historic house museums in the state.

Establishing Arnocroft as an historic house museum sets it in a larger context of professionals and institutions working toward the ends of heritage awareness and historic preservation. There is already a large support network in place in Athens-Clarke County to help identify the resources necessary for managing and maintaining this site, as well as an increasingly visible presence of heritage tourism efforts which can help to promote Arnocroft to the larger tour market. The initial steps toward incorporating the property into this tour market are to understand the history that is represented by this site and to develop a plan for its short-term and long-term management.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 4

### MILLEDGE AVENUE

The largest and most visible artifact at 925 Milledge Avenue is the house itself. Arnocroft, named in honor of Eugenia Arnold Friend's immediate and extended family, can tell us many things about itself if the right questions are asked. One of the first things to consider is the location of the house itself. Like much of the land in Georgia, the land near Athens had an abundance of natural resources to recommend itself for the settlement of people. Of particular importance to this region was the Oconee River and the advantages it provided for farming, hunting and transportation. But the committee that selected this area as the location of the University of Georgia was not the first group to realize this. There is evidence to suggest that the land which became South Milledge Avenue was once a part of the Native American nations that flourished in the southeastern United States. In *Strolls Around Athens*, William Tate reminisced, "as I walk along South Milledge, I remember that this was once Indian Territory, ceded by the Cherokees in 1783 and the Creeks in 1790."<sup>1</sup> This is of particular importance in considering the historic significance of Arnocroft not only in a contemporary context, but as the potential for having archaeological evidence of prehistoric cultures.

Milledge Avenue is as old as the University of Georgia. A large section of it was part of the original land purchase for the University. According to Tate, "in 1800, the square mile (640 acres) bought by John Milledge and his committee as the site of the University, contained the Milledge Street area from Prince to Baxter, approximately. We named this street for John

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<sup>1</sup> William Tate, *Strolls Around Athens*, (Athens: Observer Press, 1975), 39.

Milledge. . .”<sup>2</sup> In Annals of Athens: 1801-1901, Augustus Longstreet Hull, another famous Athenian describes the settlement of Milledge Avenue in more detail. He notes that, “. . . from 1815 to 1860 Milledge Avenue was settled.”<sup>3</sup> The area that Hull is describing is principally the land between Prince Avenue and Broad Street. He records that homes along this stretch were occupied by residents of some of the most influential families in Athens. They were the homes of Cobbs, Hodgsons, Lumpkins, Jacksons, Dearing, and Stovalls.<sup>4</sup> Many of these names are synonymous with the history of this community, and a variety of streets, buildings and other landmarks.

The time before the Civil War was a time of much prosperity for the community of Athens. It was developing the kind of character and amenities that would attract residents from surrounding communities as the South began to rebuild itself after the War. According to Hull, in the early nineteenth century,

Athens was now in her palmiest anti-bellum [sic] days. Population was increasing, business was enlarged, wealth accumulated. Taxes were low – 12 ½ cents per \$100, and provisions cheap. Chickens at five cents, beef at three cents, turkey gobblers at three for a dollar, were attractions that could not be withstood. True there were no daily papers, no butchers’ market, no delivery of goods, no pavements, no street lamps, but there was comfort and elegance in living, a refined and cultivated society, and all the elements of an attractive home.<sup>5</sup>

Athens was never formally occupied during the Civil War. According to James K. Reap,

In August 1864 it was learned that a troop of Union cavalry was coming toward Athens from Watkinsville. The local home guards quickly manned the fortifications near the paper mill on Barber’s Creek and fired shells into the midst of the approaching forces as they neared the bridge. The Union troops turned away and Confederates soon captured about 300 of them. The tired ragged prisoners were marched into Athens and held on the college campus before being dispatched to the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Augustus Longstreet Hull, *Annals of Athens: 1801-1901*, (Athens: Banner Job Office, 1906), 161.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 161-162.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 160.

Confederate prison at Andersonville. These were the only Federal troops seen in Athens during the War.<sup>6</sup>

The town suffered the hardship and deprivation common to many other Southern towns during the Civil War, and after the War, there were similar problems adjusting to the Reconstruction laws and the new role of freed colored persons who had formerly been slaves. However, “as conditions became more settled, a surprising economic revival took place in Athens. Businesses began to multiply, and new buildings were constructed in the downtown area replacing some of the older homes. New houses in the eclectic Victorian styles were erected on Prince and Milledge Avenues and in Cobbham.”<sup>7</sup>

The first record of a land transaction for the property at 925 Milledge Avenue was in 1869. Williams Rutherford purchased one-and-a-half acres from Cyrus Hamilton.<sup>8</sup> Deed records at the Athens-Clarke County Courthouse indicate that Williams Rutherford continued to acquire parcels of land around this area through the rest of the nineteenth century. Rutherford acquired a piece of property which was formerly part of the Adams estate from Habersham Adams in 1877,<sup>9</sup> and subsequent purchases enlarged his estate even further (see Figure 1).<sup>10</sup> Upon the death of Williams Rutherford, the property was purchased by J.Y. Carithers in 1900,<sup>11</sup> and subsequently sold to Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr. in 1902.<sup>12</sup> The 10.90 acre tract of land was bounded by Milledge Avenue, Rutherford Street, and Lumpkin Street. The purchase price was for \$1,375.00. The deed makes no reference to improvements on the land at this time, but does

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<sup>6</sup> James K. Reap, *A Pictorial History of Athens: 1801-2001*, (Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 2001), 44.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>8</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book Y, Page 288, 31 August 1869.

<sup>9</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book BB, Page 145, 03 November 1877.

<sup>10</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book GG, Page 252, 06 February 1891, and Book JJ, Page 312, 29 April 1891.

<sup>11</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book TT, Page 161, 12 November 1900.

<sup>12</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book WW, Page 216, 06 July 1903.

note that it was commonly referred to as “the Rutherford homeplace.”<sup>13</sup> A plat map drawn for J.Y. Carithers in 1902 shows the boundaries of the tract of land in this area, and it does indicate that a cabin was built on the land facing Rutherford Street (see Figure 2).<sup>14</sup>

A business and social presence like Arnold’s required a suitable residence. According to an article by Brittany Freeman, the house was completed in 1903.<sup>15</sup> It has been described as a wood-frame house with a wrap-around front porch, and information obtained from the 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map confirms this (see Figure 3). Recovered building materials confirm that the house was painted a dark grey-green color and had a black asphalt shingle roof. Through the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Milledge Avenue remained one of Athens most fashionable streets and a highly desirable residential location. But by the mid-twentieth century, the nature of this street was changing.

Old homes were being torn down and replaced with new buildings, residences were becoming commercial establishments, and fraternity and sorority organizations were occupying homes that once accommodated single families. These changes were observed very early on by Tate, who noted:

I step onto Milledge and look four blocks to Broad, then five more to the distance to Baxter. From Prince to Broad, this beautiful street is slowly becoming commercial. Zoning should be carefully planned and permanently enforced. Otherwise, a city becomes ugly, the quiet of residence is broken by commercial traffic and glaring signs; there is a confused future as owners hesitate to maintain a house when it may be torn down or converted to commercial use.<sup>16</sup>

This prophetic statement has been realized on Milledge Avenue, and most of the buildings no longer serve as single family private residences. However, even if the use is lost, the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book WW, Page 591, 26 February 1903.

<sup>15</sup> Brittany Freeman, “Legacy of Style,” *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> William Tate, *Strolls Around Athens*, (Athens: Observer Press, 1975), 39.

architectural integrity of the residential character of Milledge can and should still be preserved. Using Arnocroft as an historic house museum is a great step in not only accomplishing this, but also providing a venue whereby the story of Milledge Avenue, as one of Athens' premier residential neighborhoods, can be told.



Figure 1 Map of Athens, 1895. Arrow shows proximity of Williams Rutherford's property to Adams Estate. Source: Map room located at the University of Georgia Science Library.





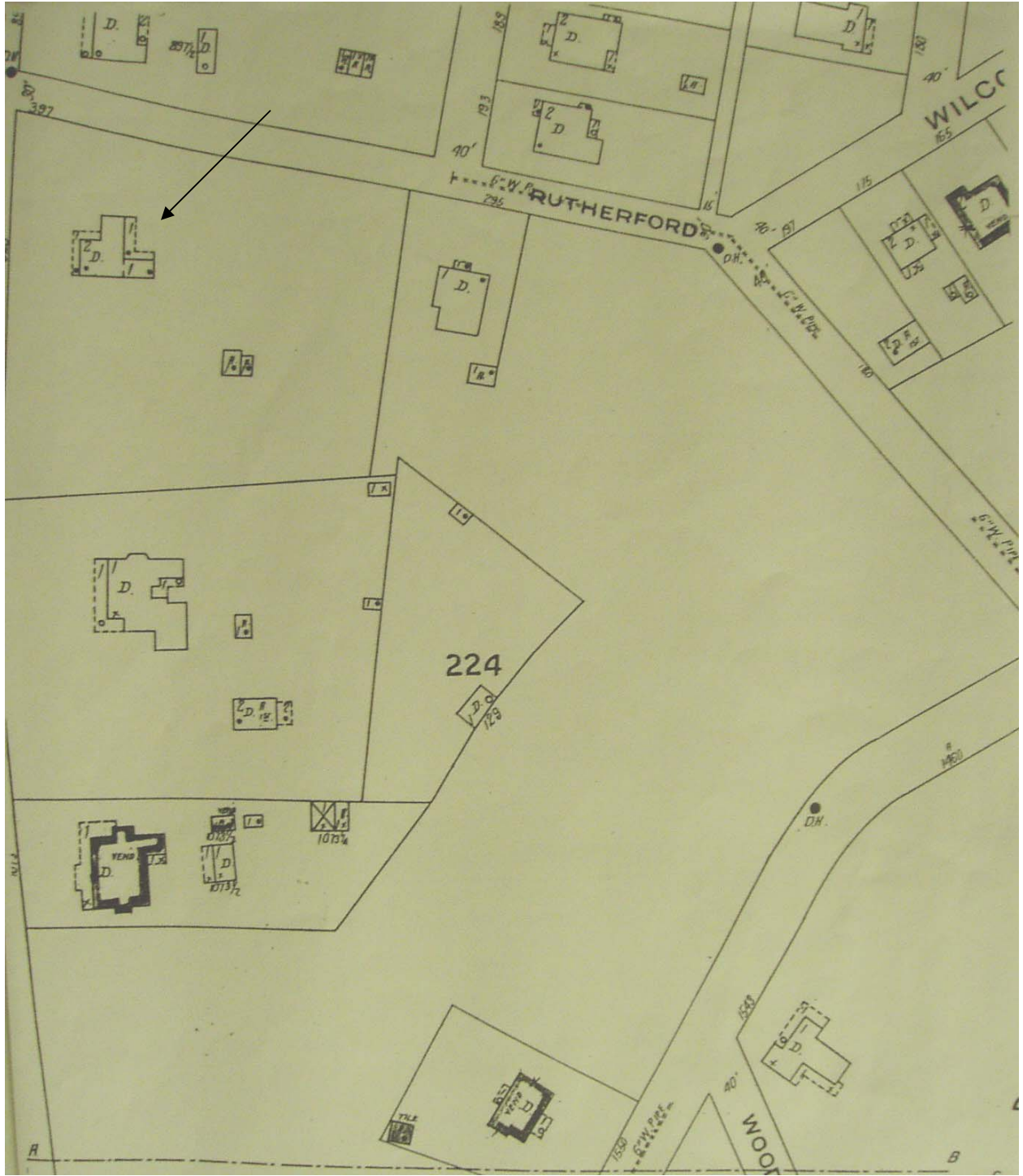


Figure 3 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1926. Arrow indicates location of Arnocroft. Source: Athens-Clarke County Planning Department.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVOLUTION OF THE HOUSE

When author David Owen purchased an eighteenth century farmhouse in Connecticut, he launched a number of home improvement projects on his new property. During this process he found a number of tangible reminders of past occupants of the house: items left in the walls or dropped behind radiators, names written on walls that had since been covered over with wallpaper, scraps of old papers, etc. He notes, “as the hired workers and I gradually took apart my house and put it back together, I began to think deep philosophical thoughts about remodeling. An improved home, it occurred to me, is the only major creative work most of us will leave behind when we step into the void. How will future generations judge us?”<sup>1</sup> The idea that Owen articulates is that homeowners leave their particular mark on a property. The decisions they make about the physical appearance of their house and the possessions they own have as much potential to tell us about them as their letters, diaries and other written records. One just has to consider the house in its appropriate context and ask the right questions. Arnocroft is no exception to this idea. By examining the physical structure of Arnocroft, a great deal of information can be ascertained.

The Victorian era in America is often associated with a wide variety of eclectic architectural styles. Among them, the most popular styles included the Queen Anne, the Folk Victorian and the Gothic Revival. Victorian era homes were characterized by the use of elaborate scrollwork and ornamentation, a non-symmetrical façade, and irregular arrangement of interior

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<sup>1</sup> David Owen, *The Walls Around Us: The Thinking Person's Guide to How a House Works*, (New York: Villard Books, 1991), 5.

rooms. By the late nineteenth century, prevalent social themes suggested that these housing styles reflected out-dated social ideas and conventions. “What started in the 1890s as an attempt to revive housing standards, became after 1900 a full-blown crusade to demolish older Victorian beliefs.”<sup>2</sup>

In architecture, these changes were manifested in several new and different styles. According to architectural historian Clifford Clark, during the post-Victorian period, “the profile of the residence should be straight and clean. Whether the exterior favored Colonial Revival forms, the low horizontality of the Prairie School designs, or the simple outlines of the bungalow, the principles of design were the same: structural simplicity, balanced proportions, and minimal decoration.”<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to consider Arnocroft in this context. When it was originally constructed in 1903, it most likely would have had either a Queen Anne or Folk Victorian façade. Structural evidence reveals that in 1903 the house would have had an asymmetrical façade and an irregular floor plan. The 1926 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows an irregular footprint of the house and indicates that it had both front and rear porches (see Figure 3). The Sanborn Map also indicates that it was a two-story, wood-frame building covered with wooden clapboards. Remnants of the original clapboards have been recovered from the attic, where they were reused as flooring. A significant portion of the 1903 roof exists under the present-day roof indicating there were two intersecting hipped roof lines (see Figure 4). The roof remnant shows the black asphalt shingles and the gutter that were part of the 1903 house. Additionally, remnants of flashing suggest that there would also have been a dormer protruding out over the northwest side of the front façade (see Figure 5). Structural evidence in the crawl space below the house shows that the main part

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<sup>2</sup> Clifford M. Clark, Jr., *The American Family Home, 1800-1960*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 132.

of the house was constructed on brick piers with a small rear kitchen wing constructed on an irregular assortment of brick and rubble masonry units, possibly remnants of an earlier building on the property (see Figure 6).

Records indicate that in 1933, the Arnolds remodeled the house. The new façade reflected an American Georgian influence from the Colonial Revival tradition (see Figure 7).<sup>4</sup> During the depression years of the 1930s, economic hardship had severely deflated the consumer market, and materials and labor could be had relatively cheaply for anyone with any money. Instead of wood clapboards, the house was now faced with brick veneer. The 1947 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map shows the change in the footprint of the house (see Figure 8). The irregular footprint was squared off by adding the front room on the northwest corner and enclosing the back porch. The front façade became symmetrical, and the front door features a classically influenced architrave with a broken scroll pediment, Corinthian pilasters, and a transom window styled to suggest a fanlight. One continuous hipped roof covers the entire structure, with the exception of the rear kitchen wing, which has a small, hipped roof.

Little information is known about the interior before the house was remodeled. However, when the exterior was changed to reflect the Colonial Revival, so too was the interior. The interior has decorative ornamentation on the fireplaces, ceiling medallions, and door and window moldings that reflect the influence of American Georgian and Federal eras. It is highly probable that the entry hall was remodeled and the placement of the stairs was altered. Though it is not immediately apparent where the original staircase would have been located, the 1903 floor covering is visible under the present staircase. The northwest side of the house was expanded into one large double living room. The arrangement of the second floor was reconfigured to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, vol. 1, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1977), 380.

allow for additional bedroom, bathroom, and closet space, and the enclosed rear porch was made into a library (see Figures 9 and 10).

The library is one of the most curious rooms to consider in the context of remodeling the house. The floors, bookshelves, cabinets, and wood paneling in this room are examples of extraordinarily fine millwork, and this room is one of the most distinctive in the house. It has been noted that the wood in this room was salvaged from another home in Oglethorpe County, perhaps in their former hometown of Arnoldsville (see Figure 11). The idea of relocating the decorative architectural features of entire rooms is indicative of a larger trend in connoisseurship during the Colonial Revival period. Specifically, Henry Francis Du Pont was famous for purchasing period rooms from houses in areas such as Charleston, South Carolina. He would then recreate these rooms at Winterthur, his estate in Wilmington, Delaware. These recreations included using not only furnishings, but wall and window treatments, decorative details, hardware, and floor coverings. These rooms became artifacts of an earlier era in and of their own right. This idea could be incorporated into the overall interpretation of the structural and decorative evolution of the house.

Even less is known about the original mechanical systems that operated in the house than is known about the interior. The crawl space under the house shows evidence of numerous, haphazard alterations to the mechanical systems, and there are few records that document changes to these systems prior to the management of the property by the Junior League of Athens, Inc. However, given certain general trends in the evolution of building technology, some general assertions can be made.

Arnocroft still retains features of a very early electric lighting system. According to Jan Jennings, “the turn of the century system had open, or knob-and-tube wiring. Insulated copper

wires needed for each circuit were stretched from point to point, supported by white porcelain knob or cleat insulators.”<sup>5</sup> These porcelain knobs and copper wires are still visible in the attic and crawl space of the house, suggesting that when the house was built in 1903 it was wired for electricity (see Figure 12). Athens Railway and Electric Company was providing service to residential customers by the mid-1890s.<sup>6</sup> In lieu of electric lighting, homes of this era relied on gas or oil lamps. There is no evidence of gas pipes or fixtures that may have been used for lighting at Arnocroft. However, early electrical systems could prove to be unreliable, so it is likely that the Arnolds had some supplemental lighting system, even if it was simply oil lamps.

It is most likely that the house was originally heated by a warm air furnace. These systems were commonly used by the 1870s.<sup>7</sup> Warm air furnaces heated basement spaces, and then hot air would rise either through pipes or by natural convection through the rest of the house. Family member Eugenia Creekmore Wilson remembers that the house was originally heated by a furnace and a man named Jim would come twice daily – once in the morning and evening – to stock the furnace with coal.<sup>8</sup> Scattered large chunks of coal are still in the crawl space under the house. Furthermore, each room has some kind of wall or floor vent, which are indicative of warm air furnaces. The house also was constructed with fireplaces in each room, and though these could have been used to heat the house, it is unlikely this was their only form of heat. According to Jennings, “fireplace heating was also ineffective, but it had a strong emotional appeal and has remained a part of heating to this day.”<sup>9</sup> Mrs. Wilson recalled that Eugenia Arnold Friend installed a gas furnace in the mid-1950s, and at the same time installed

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<sup>5</sup> Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1993), 218.

<sup>6</sup> James K. Reap, *A Pictorial History of Athens: 1801-1901*. (Virginia: The Donning Company, 2002), 97.

<sup>7</sup> Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1993), 162.

<sup>8</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

the first central air-conditioning unit. She also recalled that the fireplaces were used rarely, and could not remember seeing the fireplaces in the front double parlor ever used.<sup>10</sup>

Bathrooms, and the plumbing to facilitate them, became more common in the twentieth century. By 1906, Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company was offering their standard bathroom designs, which suggests this was a feature in homes that had become common by the turn of the century.<sup>11</sup> It would not have been unusual for the Arnolds to have at least one, and perhaps two bathrooms in the house when it was built in 1903. There is not any visible structural evidence to suggest that the existing bathrooms date back to 1903. It is certain that they were added in 1933. The three bathrooms feature multiple common characteristics including the same floor tile and the same ogee-arched ventilating panels, which are unique to the bathrooms.

The development of kitchens closely paralleled the development of bathrooms in regard to plumbing technology. There is no reason to suppose that the small rear wing at Arnocroft was ever used as anything other than a kitchen. In addition to showing bathroom models, the Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Company also offered standard kitchen arrangements by 1906.<sup>12</sup> Illustrations of these kitchens indicate that by the early twentieth century, kitchens had sinks with running hot and cold water, hot water heaters and holding tanks, ice boxes, and stoves, which were fueled by wood or coal. After 1915, another popular feature of the kitchen area became breakfast nooks.<sup>13</sup> The space between the kitchen and dining room has been commonly referred to as the breakfast room; although it may not have been used in the capacity in 1903, it is possible that this was an area deliberately created at the time of the 1933 remodeling. Also by

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<sup>9</sup> Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1993), 164.

<sup>10</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Jan Jennings and Herbert Gottfried, *American Vernacular Interior Architecture, 1870-1940*, (Ames: Iowa State UP, 1993), 192.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.



1933, storage space for food stuffs and other kitchen supplies became a necessity. According to Jennings, “the trend toward packaged food lead to an increased storage capacity, and that lead to the accumulation of more household goods. When these accumulations were tied to the desire to alleviate kitchen congestion, that prompted the design of pantries as separate spaces.”<sup>14</sup> This idea suggests a reason for enclosing the section of the porch, which was closest to the kitchen and building in shelves, closets and cupboards (see Figure 13).

The physical structure of the house has the potential to reveal a great deal more information about the original design and the changes that were made. By ascertaining such information, the house tells its own unique story of the influences that changing architectural traditions and building technologies had on homes in the area. With all of this information, the house becomes an intriguing artifact and a repository of significant data on early twentieth century architectural practices.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 198.



Figure 4 Remnant of 1903 intersecting roof line. Photo by author.



Figure 5 Remnant of dormer in 1903 roof. Photo by author.



Figure 6 Irregular foundation under kitchen. Photo by author.



Figure 7 Front (west) elevation of Arnocroft, 2003. Photo by author.



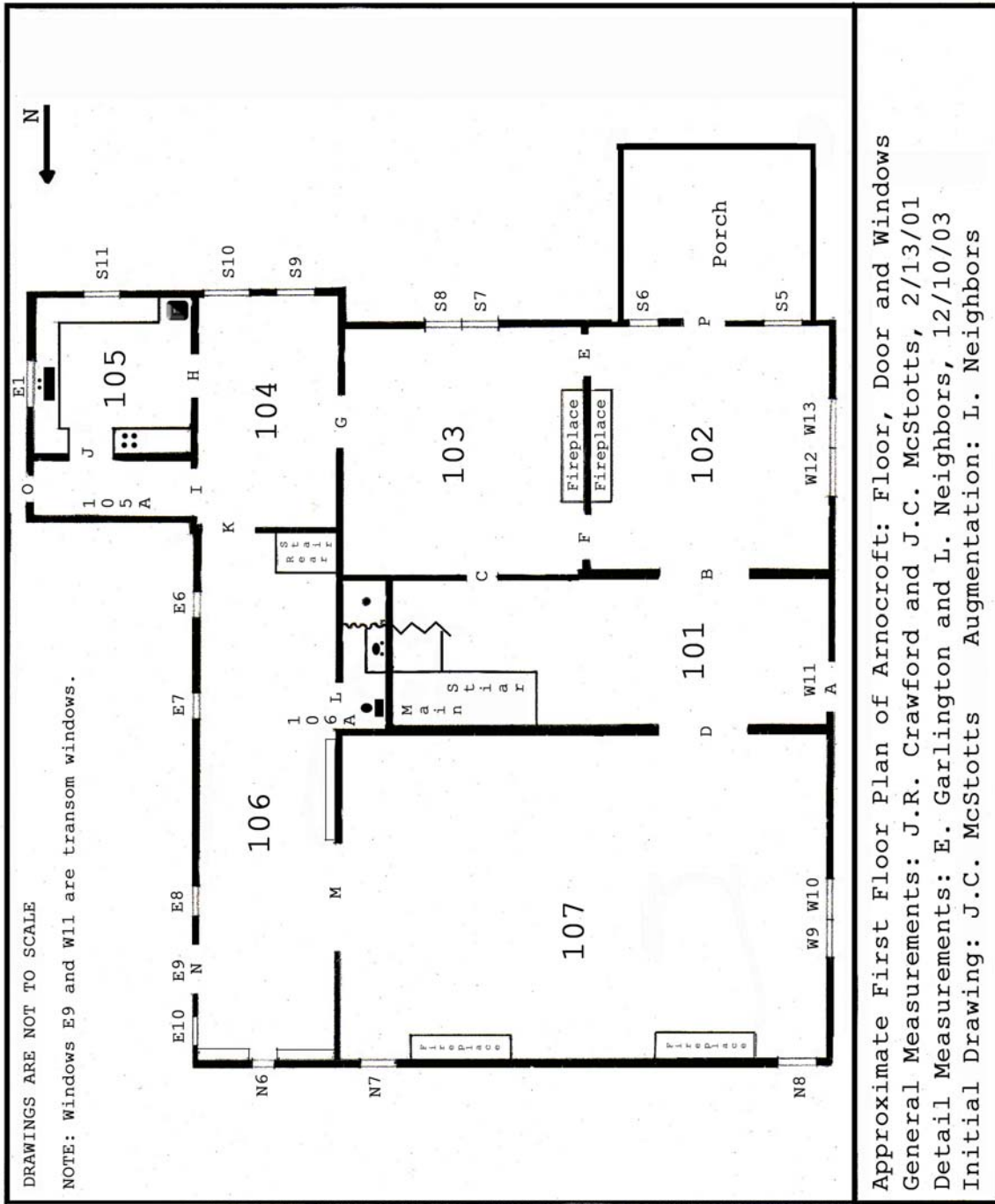


Figure 9 Arnocroft first floor plan. Source: Arnocroft Historic Structure Report, 2003.

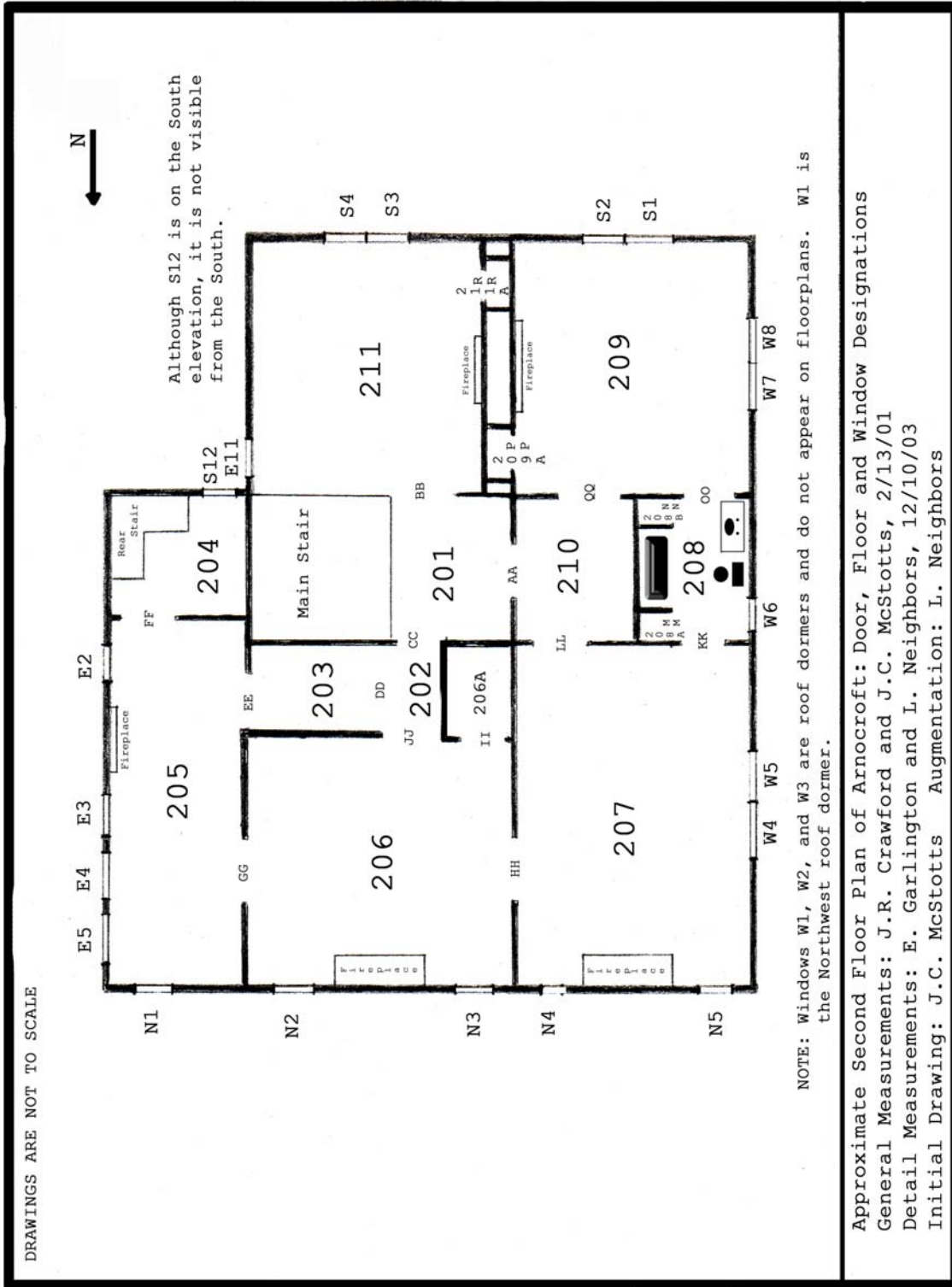


Figure 10 Arnocraft second floor plan. Source: Arnocraft Historic Structure Report, 2003.

Room Number	Room Name
101	Entrance Hall/ Foyer
102	Living Room
103	Dining Room
104	Breakfast Room
105	Kitchen
105A	Pantry
106	Library/ Pine Room
106A	Bathroom
107	Double Parlor/ Double Living Room
201	Main Stairway Landing
202	Hallway
203	Bathroom
204	Library Stairway Landing
205	Nursery
206	Bedroom
206A	Bedroom Closet
207	Bedroom
208	Bathroom
208A	Bathroom Closet
208B	Bathroom Closet
209	Bedroom
209A	Bedroom Closet
210	Vestibule
211	Bedroom
211A	Bedroom Closet

Figure 11 Room references for Figures 9 and 10.



Figure 12 Detail of woodwork in library. Photo by author.



Figure 13 Remnant of 1903 knob and tube wiring. Photo by author.





Figure 14 Pantry created by enclosing rear porch. Photo by author.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE ARNOLD FAMILY

When Eugenia Arnold Friend deeded Arnocroft to the Junior League of Athens, Inc., she left very specific instructions on how she wanted the house to be memorialized. “I also direct that a bronze placque [sic] be placed on every entrance door to the home located at 925 Milldge Avenue, and on all entrance doors to any addition made to the property, indicating that it is in memory of the Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr., Family and containing the names of the above named people for whom it is given in memory.”<sup>1</sup> Those individuals are her parents, Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr. and Aurie Baynes Arnold; her two sisters and brother-in-law Elizabeth Octavia Arnold, Jennie Arnold Dorsey, and Edward Hill Dorsey, Jr.; and herself and her second husband, Eugenia Arnold Blount Friend and Theodore Wood Friend, Jr., and finally, her first husband, John Jacob Blount.<sup>2</sup> These individuals are the main characters in the story to be told at Arnocroft.

For the sake of interpretation, there are two main characters whose lives should be further expanded upon: O.H. Arnold, Jr. and Eugenia Arnold Blount Friend. These two have been selected because of their significant contributions in the overall thematic elements expressed in the house. O.H. Arnold, Jr., purchased the land and constructed the house, and he was ostensibly the person responsible for remodeling the house in 1933. It was through decisions made by him that the most impact was made on the physical structure of the house. Arnold moved his family

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<sup>1</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 286, 01 June 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

to Athens from Oglethorpe County,<sup>3</sup> which was rural agricultural land in the early twentieth century. It is suggested that early in life, Arnold's financial interests were primarily in rural lands held in Oglethorpe County, but perhaps his ambitions moved him to Athens, Georgia. His political interests led him to serve as mayor of Athens and as a representative for Clarke County in the Georgia General Assembly. And as was recorded in his obituary, it is also known that his financial investments went beyond agricultural lands, as he had interests in the Arnold Grocery Company, the Arnold Candy Company, the Athens Foundry, the Athens Mattress and Spring Bed Company, and the Citizens Pharmacy. Furthermore, he and his wife enrolled their three daughters in the fashionable Lucy Cobb Institute for girls.<sup>4</sup> The Lucy Cobb Institute educated the daughters of many of Athens most prominent citizens, and introduced his daughters to a social environment which they may not have otherwise had access to. Moving to Athens provided Arnold and his family with social and financial opportunities and successes that they may not have enjoyed in Oglethorpe County.

Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr., had the reputation of being a frugal and self-reliant man.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps as a result of his agricultural roots, he was not inclined to be wasteful, and the most excellent testament to this fact is the house itself. Arnocroft poses a puzzling question: why go to all of the trouble to completely remodel a house so dramatically inside and out? Why not just move further out of town and build something new? The answer, simply put, is that it wasn't in Arnold's nature. A survey of the information examined in the evolution of the house reveals many indicators of this fact. The physical structure of the house suggests a great deal about this man's character.

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<sup>3</sup> Brittany Freeman, "Legacy of Style," *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

Milledge Avenue was one of Athens most fashionable neighborhoods. There are many elegant homes that still survive along Milledge that serve as testaments to this fact. This alone may have been reason enough to stay. As the economic wealth of the Athens community increased, so did the scale and style of their private residences. It was suggested by one Athens historian, that a possible reason for remodeling Arnocroft would have resulted from the construction of a large Prairie style house across the road.<sup>6</sup> The house is no longer standing, but its design and scale made Arnold conscious that the two-story, wood frame house his family occupied might seem inadequate.<sup>7</sup>

Arnold took advantage of the cheap labor and materials resulting from the economic hardship of the Depression years, and he remodeled the house to reflect the popular Colonial Revival style. Remodeling the house allowed for the creation of a casual dining area separate from the formal dining room, and a separate living room from the new double parlor. He was able to create a library on the rear of the house and install additional bathrooms, which were becoming a more common feature in private homes by the 1930s.

In undertaking this remodeling, the evidence suggesting that he reused a number of building materials salvaged from the old house and from other areas in Athens indicates something about his inclinations. Such examples are the remnants of the green clapboards from the original wood frame house and pieces of decorative molding from the downstairs rooms that were reused as floor boards in the attic. Also, when the hip roof was constructed on the new house and the faux slate shingles put on, it was apparent that reinforcement was needed to support the weight of the new shingles. Arnold used large, old timbers clearly differentiated from those he used for the roof addition, to brace the ceiling (see Figure 15). He also saved piles

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<sup>6</sup> Charlie Rowland, interview by author, 7 October 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

of faux slate shingles and boxes of floor boards in the attic and the basement crawl space. Finally, the reinforcement of the foundation of the house with large rubble masonry units points to his frugality as well. These masonry units were comprised of some very fine stones, including granite and marble, which clearly were recycled from some other place. There are also places where a beaded mortar joint was used to decorative finish a stone veneer (see Figure 16). The unusual assortment of brick and masonry units and the decorative mortar remnants under the southeastern corner of the house have even lead to the speculation that the original construction of Arnocroft in 1903 may have incorporated foundation elements from an earlier nineteenth-century structure on the property.<sup>8</sup>

Recycled materials were also used decoratively in the house. Not only do several accounts detail that the wood paneling in the library came from an old barn out in Oglethorpe County, but also, the wrought iron decorative railings on the front and rear of the property were salvaged by Eugenia Arnold Friend from a house that was torn down on Prince Avenue sometime after the 1950s (see Figure 17).<sup>9</sup> It could be suggested that the ad hoc nature of the construction and remodeling of the house was a product of a lack of good taste on the part of the Arnold family, however, it is more important to look at what these kinds of things tell us about the character of the persons that occupied this house, particularly in the Depression era. Rather than belaboring an esoteric point of decorum, it is more helpful to consider the sensible resourcefulness displayed in the decisions made and the wealth of information left behind about the evolution of the house.

The second generation of family history at Arnocroft is told through the experiences of Oliver Hazzard Arnold's daughter, Eugenia. She was born in 1907, and was his third child.

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<sup>8</sup> Ethiel Garlington and others, eds., *Arnocroft Historic Structure Report*, (Athens, 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

Until her marriage to Theodore Friend in the 1960s, Eugenia spent her entire life in Athens, Georgia. Her young life at Lucy Cobb Institute introduced her to the well-established families of Athens and brought her into that social circle. As a young woman, she served as the first president of the Athens Junior Assembly in 1935, the forerunner to today's Junior League of Athens, Inc.<sup>10</sup> In 1940, she married her first husband, an attorney by the name of John Jacob Blount (see Figure 18).<sup>11</sup> Blount died unexpectedly of a heart attack in 1941, at which point Eugenia returned to live at Arnocroft.<sup>12</sup>

In 1945, after the death of her father, Eugenia continued to reside at Arnocroft with her mother, Aurie Baynes Arnold. Though both widowed, mother and daughter continued to live a contented and comfortable life.

Following their husbands' deaths, Eugenia and her mother often traveled together and took month-long trips to Europe and the Far East. Mother and daughter followed a tradition of collecting, previously established by the family, and purchased furniture and art that pleased their eclectic tastes and complemented their home. They purchased many items during their travels following World War II, when English estates were being liquidated for tax purposes, and objects could be shipped back to the United States at no cost on ocean liners.<sup>13</sup>

The many souvenirs from their trips were given with the house in 1994 to the Junior League of Athens.

The traveling done by Eugenia and her mother is a particularly interesting part of the story of Arnocroft. These activities are suggestive of a larger trend that was going on in America at that time. A number of authors such as Edith Wharton and Henry James captured the picture of Americans traveling abroad during the early and mid-twentieth century in novels like The Customs of the Country (Wharton) and The Golden Bowl (James). Historian Rex M. Ellis,

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<sup>10</sup> Brittany Freeman, "Legacy of Style," *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

looking at the experience of African Americans in the plantation-economy of the antebellum South, suggests, “when site-specific documentation about a known minority presence is limited, a museum’s staff should study evidence available elsewhere in the region to determine what situations, people, and topics might parallel their site’s history, or help the public understand the interconnections that may exist.”<sup>14</sup> This comment can extend past the experiences of minorities, to include a wide range of topics. Interpreting the lifestyle of Eugenia and her mother and their various collecting trips to other countries in the context of a trend that had begun early in the twentieth century and continued through their lifetime, helps the public to understand the larger picture of the lifestyle embodied at Arnocroft.

It was on one of these trips that Eugenia met Theodore Friend, described as “a wealthy industrialist from Pittsburgh.”<sup>15</sup> Friend would become Eugenia’s second husband, and she moved with him to Pittsburgh. However, she maintained Arnocroft through the years and returned to it several times a year to visit friends and family in Athens. The actions of giving the property to the Junior League, a group she had been instrumental in forming, and naming it in honor of her family, strongly suggest that Eugenia was leaving to the citizens of Athens, the best part of her experiences in this community.

The relationships of family members form distinct sub-themes to the overall interpretation at Arnocroft. The suggestion that these are sub-themes is not intended to marginalize the experiences of these people at all. Rather, it helps to sharpen the focus of the history of the house without overwhelming visitors with great detail. Their stories make interesting footnotes to the overall interpretation without distracting from the central ideas that

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Rex Ellis, “Interpreting the Whole House,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 67.

the house conveys to the public. One such idea is reflected in the story of Eugenia's sister Elizabeth Arnold. Elizabeth was a strongly religious person, and she intended to use her talents as a missionary to what would be considered third world countries. However, being strongly attached to Elizabeth and fearing for her safety, her family prohibited her from traveling to such places. In 1924, at the age of 21, Elizabeth died of blood poisoning after a routine tooth extraction. Her family felt that her death was punishment for not letting her travel to the countries she wanted to work in. Her death devastated her family, and for a long time after, Arnocroft was a very somber place.<sup>16</sup>

A less morbid story from Arnocroft's history is that of Eugenia's other sister, Jennie Arnold Dorsey. Jennie was part of a group of young women who formed the "Not-A-Chance Club" in 1916. This playful organization was comprised of ". . . a group of Athens young ladies resigned to maidenhood."<sup>17</sup> Though several of them, including Jennie Arnold, went on to marry, they nonetheless held a reunion in Atlanta in the 1950s.<sup>18</sup>

There are still family members and friends of the Arnolds that remember the gracious living that Arnocroft embodied. These people are important resources to developing the interpretation of the site. In giving her house to the Junior League of Athens, the historical data suggests that Eugenia Arnold Friend was motivated out of a strong affection for her family and the community she grew up in. But beyond this, it has been suggested by family member, Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, that she was also trying to counter the idea that the early twentieth century South still suffered from the ravages of the Civil War and the post-war Reconstruction

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<sup>15</sup> Brittany Freeman, "Legacy of Style," *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.



era.<sup>19</sup> The lifestyle represented by Arnocroft was long removed from the time of the belle of the southern plantation. It was reflective of a sophisticated citizenry of modest means enjoying an amiable and comfortable quality of life. And though they had access to the advantages of the proximity of the University of Georgia, the story of Arnocroft is not singularly wrapped up in the history of the University as are so many other historic sites in Athens. These are the types of insights to be gained from those people that actually lived the history we find so interesting, and these insights provide the initiative to continuously expand the story of the site.

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<sup>19</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 12 February 2004.



Figure 15 Ad hoc roof reinforcement with old timber. Photo by author.



Figure 16 Beaded mortar joint on foundation remnant. Photo by author.



Figure 17 Rear (east) elevation with wrought iron railings. Photo by author.



Figure 18 Wedding portrait of Eugenia Arnold, 1940. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.



**ONE FROM THE ALBUM**—This candid shot was taken in 1916 of a group of Athens young ladies resigned to maidenhood and who organized themselves into the Not a Chance Club. The picture was made on the porch of the Milledge Avenue home of Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Dorsey. Most of them married later and two of them are now living in Atlanta. They are, left to right, seated on floor, Jennie Arnold (Mrs. Ed Dorsey, Atlanta), Florence Hooper (Mrs. Dean White, Newark, Del.), Nellie Phinzy (Mrs. Malcolm Fortson, Jacksonville, Fla.); in chair with tea cup, Miriam Hazelton (Mrs. Jerome Watrous, Northampton, Mass.); pouring tea, Marian Nicholson (the late Mrs. Barrington Flanagan, Athens); with cup, Louise Dorsey (Mrs. John W. Nicholson, Jackson,

Miss.); hand to mouth, Natalie Babcock of Athens; in chair knitting, Harriet Benedict (Mrs. Howard McCall, Atlanta). The group rallied in Atlanta Tuesday for a luncheon given in their honor by Mrs. Marion Seabrook Jr., the former Sarah Mell of Athens. They were en route to Athens for their first meeting in 35 years, on Wednesday, at which time they were entertained at luncheon by Mrs. Malcolm Fortson of Jacksonville at the home of her late parents, Mr. and Mrs. Billups Phinzy, now occupied by her sister, Mrs. Thomas Tillman. That evening they were the dinner guests of Col. Barrington Flanagan, U. S. A. retired, and Mrs. Flanagan, sister of the late Mrs. Flanagan who was a member of the club. They hope to get together before another 35 years.

Figure 19 "Not-A-Chance" Club, 1916.

Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE LANDSCAPE OF ARNOCROFT

Only in recent years have historians, historic preservationists, archaeologists and landscape architects begun to pay closer attention to the relationship between landscapes and historic structures. Much effort has been concentrated on preservation of man-made artifacts and buildings, but the natural landscape – even as it has been altered by the activities of man – has been largely taken for granted. According to landscape architect Catherine Howett, “yet in spite of its centrality and importance to a proper understanding of any historic place, especially a house museum, the landscape story is the one most often left untold – or worse, told badly.”<sup>1</sup>

It is unfortunate that much information about landscapes at historic sites has been completely ignored or irretrievably lost as a result of efforts to beautify the property around an historic site. Once again, Arnocroft is unique in that much of its historic landscape is intact. Furthermore, though sorely neglected over the past several years, the remnants of the formal “outdoor rooms” in the landscape are still clearly visible, and with a bit of maintenance, the order to this landscape may be reclaimed.

When Oliver Hazzard Arnold, Jr., purchased the land in 1903, he acquired a bit over ten acres.<sup>2</sup> By the time the Junior League received the property in 1994, only two acres were left with the property.<sup>3</sup> The other eight acres appear to have been subdivided and sold off as lots, which now contain a variety of residential and commercial properties. The earliest photographic

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<sup>1</sup> Catherine Howett, “Grounds for Interpretation: the Landscape Context of Historic House Museums,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 126.

<sup>2</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book WW, Page 216, 06 July 1903.

<sup>3</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 286, 01 June 1995.

records of the property surrounding Arnocroft date from the mid-twentieth century, and from these photographs it would seem that much of the principle activity carried on around the landscape was on the two acres immediately surrounding the house.<sup>4</sup> Several features are visible in these mid-twentieth century photographs that are no longer visible on the land. Furthermore, interviews with a family member provided additional information about features of the landscape that do not appear in the photos.

It is known that a walkway or driveway historically entered off of Milledge Avenue to the front door in the center of the front façade.<sup>5</sup> This would suggest that this feature may have been as old as the 1933 remodeling of the house, but it is unknown if this configuration is representative of the driveway or walkway for the entire history of the house. Additionally, it is known that as of the mid-twentieth century, a driveway circled around to the rear of the house and had an exit onto Rutherford Street.<sup>6</sup> A second drive seems to extend past an outbuilding and down the southern end of the property. This was perhaps used more often when the property extended down to Lumpkin Street, but in the 1946 aerial photograph, it appears to run to the rear of a neighboring property (see Figure 20).<sup>7</sup>

In 1945, there was a small outbuilding in the rear of the property (see Figure 21).<sup>8</sup> This building has been identified by family members as a garage.<sup>9</sup> There is still evidence on the grounds of where that garage would have been. Archaeological excavations may help to determine the exact size and placement of the garage, and the materials from which it was constructed. Family member Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, also remembered that there was once

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<sup>4</sup> *Aerial Survey of Athens, Georgia*, (Lansing, Michigan: Abrams Aerial Survey Corp., 1946).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview by author, 11 December 2003.

a tennis court on the southwestern part of the yard near Milledge Avenue.<sup>10</sup> Though there is no easily discernible tennis court in the photographic evidence, under magnification, a roughly rectangular outline is visible in this area on the aerial photograph. If there were a lawn tennis court, the hedges around this area may have served as the boundaries of the court itself; however, as of the time of this writing, there is no substantial data to suggest this is the case.

Interpretation of the landscape plays a role as significant as that of any other artifact to the overall understanding of the historic property. According to Howett,

When we look back at the stages in a residential property's evolution at which specific decisions were made about how the site would be developed, we can be certain that the same strong impress of landscape design models that had captivated the imagination of the decision makers – an owner or owners acting independently or in collaboration with one or more designers – helped to generate the specific ideas and design intentions that eventually added up to built outcomes, the place that was finally (or perhaps only partially) achieved.<sup>11</sup>

It is known that Hubert Bond Owens, landscape architect and Dean of the School of Environmental Design at the University of Georgia, played a role in the development of the landscape (see Figures 22, 23, and 24). There is no evidence to support the idea that Owens undertook a commission to formally design the grounds, however it has been recognized that he was a long-time friend and neighbor of the Arnold family, particularly Eugenia, and he often advised her how to shape the landscape.<sup>12</sup> Family member Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, also remembered a man named Jim who seemed to serve dual roles as a gardener and handyman. Not

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Howett, "Grounds for Interpretation: the Landscape Context of Historic House Museums," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 114.

<sup>12</sup> Eugenia Creekmore Wilson, interview with author, 11 December 2003.



only did he perform tasks such as stocking the old coal furnace twice a day, but also worked in the yard.<sup>13</sup>

Another field that has developed out of the emerging discipline of landscape history is that of landscape archaeology. This study allows historians to understand landscape not only from visual evidence and photographic records, but also from remnants of previous plantings and alterations to the land.

More and more, researchers are interested in how people in the past made the landscape – intentionally or otherwise – and in how people made active use of the landscape at both conscious and unconscious levels. What’s more, landscape archaeology is increasingly a rubric for the study of not just gardens and formal landscapes but of land use over time through a broad, intensive use of sources in a multidisciplinary and fully ethnographic enterprise.<sup>14</sup>

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the land at 925 Milledge Avenue was settled in the mid-nineteenth century or earlier, it is interesting to consider the potential which landscape archaeology has for yielding information about that site. There is a considerable amount of evidence to suggest that an old brick well, which predates the time that the Arnolds occupied the land, exists under the foundation of Arnocroft (see Figure 25).<sup>15</sup> This feature may be just the beginning of finding archaeological evidence of other buildings and landscape features that existed on this property well in advance of the twentieth century.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Mary C. Beaudry, “Why Gardens?” in *Landscape Archaeology: Reading and Interpreting the American Historic Landscape*, ed. Rebecca Yamin and Karen Bescherer Metheny, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ethiel Garlington and others, eds., *Arnocroft Historic Structure Report*, (Athens, 2003).



Figure 20 Aerial photo, 1946. Arrow indicates location of Arnocroft. Source: University of Georgia, Hargrett Rare Book Library.

location of Arnocroft. Source: University of



Figure 21 Location of garage indicated by arrow. Source: University of Georgia, Hargrett Rare Book Library.



Figure 22 Front landscape, c. 1950. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.



Figure 23 Rear landscape, c. 1950. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.



Figure 24 Rear landscape, c. 1950. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.



Figure 25 Old brick well under house. Photo by author.

## CHAPTER 8

### THE COLLECTION

In his book, Conservation Skills: Judgement, Method, and Decision Making, Chris Caple states an idea central to the significance of the furnishings at Arnocroft. “Every object is in part a *historic document*.”<sup>1</sup> A major strength of using Arnocroft as an historic house museum is the fact that when it was given to the Junior League of Athens, it was given with a substantial number of the original furnishings. Each of these individual objects tells its own story. As Caple further expresses, “it [the object] contains information about the materials from which it was made, the way in which it was assembled, and every incident which occurred in its life. It could have traces of DNA and fingerprints from everyone who handled the object or damage from the light which fell on it when on display.”<sup>2</sup> But beyond this, the collection viewed as a whole is the most complete document to reveal the details of the daily life at an historic house.

It can be understood that the objects given with Arnocroft are those items that the family chose to surround themselves with. Those items were particularly functional to their needs or suitable to their tastes. Those objects helped create the environment in which the family lived and worked (see Figures 26 and 27). “It is the collection – the objects exhibited and stored – that is the very essence of the historic house museum. Objects help to flesh out the stories that make up our world. Objects are what draw us to museums: they teach us about our past and help us to

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<sup>1</sup> Chris Caple, *Conservation Skills: Judgement, Method, and Decision Making*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

understand the present. Objects are powerful.”<sup>3</sup> In this context it is important to consider more than the exquisite furnishings, fine art, and decorative porcelains that adorn the interiors of Arnocroft. It is just as important to consider the everyday artifacts as well. It is this wealth of everyday artifacts that could be considered most significant to the value of this property as a house museum. The attic, basement, closets, and cupboards contain many wonderful items such as everyday china, and old liquor bottles. The books on the shelves tell us what kinds of things they read. The old pressure cooker in the attic is a wonderful artifact from the early days of modern culinary conveniences. An old chamber pot suggests that indoor plumbing may not always have been a convenience in that house.

In this context, Arnocroft can be considered a documentary museum, as opposed to a representative site. Museum curator, Bradley C. Brooks, distinguishes between the two ideas: “Documentary historic houses are often expressive of contemporary architectural and decorative styles. Such a site frequently contains a high proportion of objects with provenances traceable to the property, or is furnished with objects that research has demonstrated are similar to those used there in the past.”<sup>4</sup> This idea is contrasted with a representative site, which he claims, “by its nature, is far less concerned with objects known to have been used at the property, or with their rarity or aesthetic qualities, concentrating instead on objects generally correct for the time, place, and socioeconomic level of the interpretation.”<sup>5</sup> Often times, historic house museums have lost a significant number of the original artifacts used at the site. Or the site may be so old, such as a mid-eighteenth century farmhouse, that many of the artifacts used in its early years have long-since been discarded or destroyed.

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<sup>3</sup> Sherry Butcher-Youngmans, *Historic House Museums: A Practical Handbook for Their Care, Preservation, and Management*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1993), 49.

<sup>4</sup> Bradley C. Brooks, “The Historic House Furnishings Plan: Process and Product,” in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, ed. Jessica Foy Donnelly, (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 131.

Another source of loss for significant artifacts, which museums should be particularly mindful of, is snobbery or connoisseurship. Certain objects may be deemed less valuable than other objects, and thus sold or discarded. Often, a lack of holistic interpretation can be the root of this evil. The attempt to provide an idealized picture of life in an historic house museum may lead interpreters to focus on the more attractive aspects of its history, such as a fine arts collection, at the expense of the less attractive artifacts, such as pots, pans and kitchen utensils. It is important to remember that drudgery tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, are as legitimate to the interpretation of a site as parties and social celebrations. During the majority of the research period for this thesis, the collection at Arnocroft was in a storage facility located away from the property. Therefore, access was tremendously restricted, thus a further discussion of the collection as a whole cannot be provided here. However, as interpretive plans for the site are developed, further research and documentation of the furnishings and decorative arts will be necessary.

The fine array of furnishings and decorative arts at Arnocroft has been recognized. The Georgia Museum of Art held an exhibit of some of the more attractive pieces of the collection called *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft*. This exhibit, which took place in the winter of 1998, highlighted furnishings, which are attached to some of the most widely-recognized styles in the decorative arts, including Queen Anne, Chippendale, Rococo, and Eastlake. It also included examples of furnishings that were considered part of the Georgia Plain Style and originated from local craftsmen in the Georgia Piedmont region. The gallery guide for this exhibit described the special nature of Arnocroft and its collection: “Although many of the grand old homes on Milledge Avenue now house sororities and businesses, Mrs. Friend’s house remains much the same – house and furnishings at ease with each other. Just as the house’s

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



façade is composed of layers, added as styles changed, so are the contents a mirror of a Southern family's habit of collecting and their appreciation of changing times.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Brittany Freeman, “Legacy of Style,” *Elements of Style: The Legacy of Arnocroft Gallery Guide* (Athens: Georgia Museum of Art, 1998).



Figure 26 Double Parlor, c. 1950. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.



Figure 27 Double Parlor, c. 1950. Courtesy of Eugenia Creekmore Wilson.

## CHAPTER 9

### AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Arnocroft was an incredibly generous gift – not only to the Junior League – but to the community of Athens. Also, it was an incredible gift for the larger field of historic preservation. Embodied in the theoretical principles of the preservation movement are tools and resources that could help to make Arnocroft a success. However, since no specific use for the property has ever been determined, its future is uncertain.

The Junior League negotiated the transfer of the property from the Estate of Eugenia Friend through most of 1994, and they officially assumed ownership in May 1995.<sup>1</sup> Over the last decade, a variety of uses have been discussed. An article in *the Athens Daily News/ Athens Banner Herald* published in June 1995, suggested, “A bed and breakfast, a fine arts museum and a party and reception site are just a few of the possibilities being explored as the Junior League of Athens plans the future of Arnocroft, an historic home located at 925 Milledge Avenue.”<sup>2</sup> When they received Arnocroft, they already had experience maintaining a historic building. Since 1968, the Junior League has served as the steward of the Taylor-Grady House on Prince Avenue, though legally, the property is owned by the local government. However, there was optimism for Arnocroft expressed by former Junior League President, Martee Horne, when she stated, “because of the success of the Taylor-Grady House, expectations are very high.”<sup>3</sup> But regarding its future use, she also commented that, “we’ll probably take our time making a final

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<sup>1</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 286, 01 June 1995.

<sup>2</sup> Betsy Shearron, “A Historic Challenge,” *Athens Daily News/ Athens Banner Herald*, 11 June 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

decision. . . the Arnocroft committee will continue to research the possibilities and then make recommendations and discuss options with the full League membership.”<sup>4</sup>

An article published later that year in November 1995, announced that the Junior League was holding an open house at Arnocroft, focusing on the first floor of the home. It was to be open for one day, November 19, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.<sup>5</sup> But the article also notes that, “the Junior League is still not sure to what long-term use the house will be put. [Susannah] Dance [former Arnocroft committee chair] said they would like to find a company to rent the home for entertaining during the Olympics. Beyond that, the League has considered making Arnocroft a house museum or a bed-and-breakfast inn.”<sup>6</sup>

By June 1998, the story had not changed very much. An article from *Online Athens* noted that,

Members plan to make the lavish lawns and gardens of the home available to members of the Junior League. They will make the house available for rent to the active and sustaining members of the Junior League. A house museum tour is in the works with the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau, and future plans include making Arnocroft a center for study of the decorative arts as well as a house museum. The house will also be available for any charitable activities hosted by the Junior League which fulfill its focus of child welfare.<sup>7</sup>

This article suggests that the membership was actively considering alternatives for using the property, however all activities are referred to as things they will do in the future, suggesting that they were not making the property available for such events at that time.

Beginning in October 1998 and running through January 1999, the Georgia Museum of Art featured pieces from the Arnocroft collection in an exhibit at the museum. Though the exhibit did not focus on the house itself, it nonetheless raised awareness of Arnocroft in the

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen Folkerth, “Junior League to hold open house at Arnocroft,” *Athens Daily News/ Athens Banner Herald*, 12 November 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

community. Also beginning in 1998, the minutes of the Athens Historic House Museum Association (AHHMA) reflect that the Junior League was sending a representative from Arnocroft to their meetings.<sup>8</sup> In 2000, the AHHMA printed a brochure entitled *Explore the Historic House Museums of Athens, Georgia*. Arnocroft was listed in this brochure, and though no set hours of operation were listed, it did indicate that the home was, “open upon request when available.”<sup>9</sup>

Up to this point, the Junior League seemed to be making a sincere effort to find a niche for Arnocroft. However, the pervasive dilemma regarding Arnocroft has been that a series of structural issues have prevented the house from being opened and utilized on a regular schedule. When the Estate of Eugenia Friend transferred the house to the Junior League, it was acknowledged that certain repairs were needed. Specifically, items Sixteenth and Seventeenth in her will state:

Sixteenth: I direct that my Executrix shall pay over to the Junior League of Athens, Georgia the sum of FOUR HUNDRED THOUSAND AND NO/100 (\$400,000.00) DOLLARS to be used for the upkeep and repairs of the above house and direct that some of these funds are to be used to repair the plaster in the building and direct that it shall be repaired by putting on a coat of Weld then a skim coat of plaster and after letting it cure to paint it with oil paint if painting said plaster shall be required. All improvements are to be made before turning the house over to the Junior League.

Seventeenth: . . . I direct that the guest room be plastered by putting on a coat of Weld than a skim coat of plaster and after letting it cure to paint it with oil paint if painting said plaster shall be required and that the second floor over the pine room be repaired in the manner suggested to me by the painter.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> M.A. Barnes, “Junior League provides loving care to a piece of Athens history,” *Online Athens*, 3 June 1998.

<sup>8</sup> *Athens Historic House Museum Association Minutes*, by Wendy Cooper, chairman, 17 November 1998 to 24 January 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Athens Historic House Museum Association and the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau, *Explore the Historic House Museums of Athens, Georgia*, 2001.

<sup>10</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 287, 01 June 1995.

Specific details of repairs needed at Arnocroft were given by S&W Development in Exhibit A, which was appended to the deed in the Athens-Clarke County Deed Record.<sup>11</sup> Pursuant to the details of Estimate #1 of Exhibit A, the Executrix paid \$22,500.00 for the following repairs: “interior plaster repair in breakfast room, minimal plaster repair elsewhere, repaint walls, trim and ceiling, matching existing.”<sup>12</sup> Additionally, in 1994-95, expenses related to the upkeep of the property during the transition of ownership totaling \$6,555.36 were paid out of the initial \$400,000.00 endowment.<sup>13</sup> Thus, at the time of the formal transfer of ownership, the Junior League was given \$370,944.64 to maintain the house.<sup>14</sup>

Since this time, Junior League records indicate repairs made to the house between June 1997 and June 2000 totaled \$40,209.00.<sup>15</sup> Additionally, it had been estimated that the annual operating costs for Arnocroft, which include insurance, grounds maintenance, security, taxes, utilities, etc., is \$25,000.<sup>16</sup> It appears that beginning in 2001, a series of structural needs were addressed. This included major repairs such as removing asbestos shingles, re-roofing the house, demolition and repairs to chimneys, replacement of gutters, and stabilizing the main staircase and foundation. Additionally, hefty estimates were given for two other substantial projects, plumbing and electrical repairs.<sup>17</sup> Between 2001 and 2003, total costs for these repairs is recorded as \$223,316.00.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of 2003, the Junior League records indicate that they had approximately \$75,000 left from the investment of the endowment left by Eugenia Friend. This amount equates to roughly three years of operating expenses, assuming these expenses average \$25,000 per year

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Junior League of Athens, *Junior Directions*, April 2003.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

without any major unforeseen disasters. The diminishment of the endowment has made considering the future of Arnocroft an imperative. This has brought forth a considerable amount of discussion regarding the property, and several articles have been published among the Junior League membership, which consider the pros and cons of keeping and maintaining Arnocroft.

The express prohibition against the sale of the property or its furnishings leaves the Junior League with few alternatives other than finding a way to maintain the property in an economically viable and responsible way. Even if the majority of the Junior League membership may advocate severing their ties with the property, this could not be done without a considerable amount of time, money, and effort being expended. As the prohibition of sale is a legal restriction placed on the property in the deed, this issue would ultimately have to be decided in a court of law. Item 5 in the formal record of transfer of ownership in the deed indicates,

The League acknowledges that the devise of Realty is made subject to certain conditions and limitations. The League agrees to fulfill the duties and obligations imposed upon it by the acceptance of the devise, including without limitation the directions of the Will that the home will not be sold and premises shall be kept as is but can be added onto and must be properly kept.<sup>19</sup>

The terms of this agreement are solid, which makes it even more imperative that a financially viable use be found.

Beyond just the legal considerations surrounding Arnocroft, the ethical ramifications of the future of the property must be considered. In an article by a Junior League member, some excellent questions are raised about future use of the property.

While we proceed through the rigors of debate regarding Arnocroft, I want you to ask yourselves these questions: If we do not take on the task of creating a physically and financially sound Arnocroft, what will happen to it? Are we truly willing to hold our noses and throw its fate to the four winds? How are you going to feel 20 years from now when you drive by Arnocroft and see that it has become an office for

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Athens, Georgia: Athens-Clarke County Deed Record, Book 1504, Page 296, 01 June 1995.

physicians or lawyers or stockbrokers? How are you going to feel about the fate of Arnocroft knowing that you had the chance to change its course in your day?<sup>20</sup>

These are compelling questions that need to be addressed, however the financial considerations as highlighted by another Junior League member are just as important to the future of Arnocroft.

She asks,

How committed is our membership to achieving the goal of caring for Arnocroft. . . think of how much time, effort and money you are personally willing to give. . . how can our League raise the needed funds to re-build and maintain Arnocroft? It will be difficult due to the suffering economy. A purpose has not been defined for Arnocroft which decreases its marketability. . . My fear is that the monumental task of rebuilding and maintaining Arnocroft to its full potential would drain our resources and leave our members with a tremendous burden.<sup>21</sup>

Both of these members should be applauded for taking determined stands and thoughtfully contributing to the on-going dialogue regarding Arnocroft, and both of them raise excellent considerations. However it is interesting to note that neither of the articles considers a proposed use for the property. Rather the issues are focused around the ethical, financial and legal ramifications of maintaining the property. Furthermore, records do not indicate that a discussion of realized or potential revenue from Arnocroft has been included in the on-going dialogue. The discussion has mainly focused on the expense of operating the house without considering the potential for revenue.

It seems hasty to assume that the property cannot be viably used when there has not been an effort to utilize it to its full capacity. Of the myriad suggestions for possible uses of Arnocroft, the Junior League has failed to set a determined path and follow it to some logical end. Maintaining any property, historic or otherwise, does demand dedication and sound resource management. Up to this point, the money left by Eugenia Friend has covered the expenses and repairs for Arnocroft, so it is incorrect to assume that anything has been lost in this

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<sup>20</sup> Junior League of Athens, *Junior Directions*, April 2003.



endeavor. This should not be the end of Arnocroft; rather, it could be the beginning. The information presented in the following chapters outlines a framework for opening and operating Arnocroft as a house museum and developing programs to generate revenue and sustain the property in the future.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER 10

### GETTING THE DOOR OPEN

Establishing a place for Arnocroft within the larger context of house museums is the easy part. The challenge begins when faced with the task of formulating short-term and long-term plans for the management and maintenance of the property. Once the decision has been made to utilize Arnocroft as a museum, some pressing issues must be addressed. It is highly recommended that the first step to take is to complete the process for getting the site designated as a local historic landmark of Athens-Clarke County. By doing so, the Junior League is indicating that they plan to use this property in a manner that respects its historical integrity. This may also mitigate certain restrictions normally placed on public buildings in Athens. Historically, difficulty has arisen in trying to figure out how to accommodate modern building codes within the physical context of Arnocroft. If the Junior League commits to treating the house as an artifact and operating it as a museum, they will not necessarily be held to the same level of compliance with the installation of fire safety equipment and handicapped accessibility features, and they have a better chance of having the property declared tax exempt by the city.

#### **Fire Safety**

This is not to suggest that any area of safety or accessibility should be ignored or circumvented. The Junior League has taken the first step in addressing fire safety issues by commissioning the architectural firm of Armentrout, Roebuck and Matheny to evaluate the physical structure of Arnocroft and make recommendations about improvements that need to be

made to the property.<sup>1</sup> Regarding fire code issues, the recommendations made by this group include:

- Change front and rear exit doors to open outward (replacing existing doors as needed)
- Replace the rear stairs because winder stairs are not permitted as a means of egress except in dwelling units. . . the ‘new’ rear stairs must be enclosed with 1-hr fire rated walls (or located on the rear of the structure)
- Enclose the front stair with one-hour fire rated walls to create a front vestibule, and add fire-rated interior doors as needed.
- Reconfiguration of a second floor plan to create an exit access corridor and two separate exits.
- It is also possible that a sprinkler system may be required (or ‘new’ wall and ceiling finishes installed) depending on the level of protection that the existing wall and ceiling finishes can be assumed to provide to wood members. If a sprinkler system is required, a ‘new’ drop ceiling may be desired throughout the residence to conceal the sprinkler system piping. Also, it is possible that firestops may be required within stud wall at the second floor level depending on the type of wall framing used. This would require finish demolition and replacement of wall finishes.<sup>2</sup>

These points of fire safety concerns are not issues to be taken lightly, however given the historic nature of the property, the recommendations made by this group would have a significant deleterious impact on the historic fabric of the house. The Historic Structure Report for Arnocroft addresses this concern.

The Armentrout Report also recommends upgrades to Arnocroft to ensure that it meets fire codes. Again, these recommendations assume a commercial use for the space. We do not believe these changes would be necessary if the building was used appropriately. These alterations would require serious compromises of the historic integrity of the building, and we recommend that the building be put to a use that avoids these modifications.<sup>3</sup>

Emphasizing the historic significance of the property by designating it as a local landmark would most likely mitigate the need to replace existing doors and to change the wall materials around the staircases. Furthermore, the suggestion of removing the rear staircase in the library is

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<sup>1</sup> Armentrout, Roebuck, Matheny Design/ Build Group, Inc., *Evaluation of the Arnocroft House, 925 South Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia*, February 2002.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

completely unacceptable if Arnocroft is used as an historic house museum. Installing a sprinkler system and a drop ceiling is not a viable option for this property, but it does not mean that a compromise cannot be reached.

It is the recommendation of the author that the Junior League contact the local fire department and meet with a fire marshal at Arnocroft. The purpose of this meeting is to work directly with the fire department to come to a mutually acceptable agreement that balances fire safety with historic integrity. Elements of a compromise plan may include having fire extinguishers in each of the principle rooms of the house, a centrally-monitored fire alarm system connected into the general security system, posted emergency exit plans in highly visible locations, annual inspections of the property by fire personnel, and mandatory annual fire safety training with staff persons working at Arnocroft. It is also important to note that a new fire station has just been constructed at the Five Points area of Milledge Avenue, which is less than five miles from Arnocroft. When such an agreement is reached, the Junior League may find that the city authorities are more willing to compromise on specific mandates of contemporary fire codes.

### **Handicapped Accessibility**

The Armentrout, Roebuck and Matheny report also addresses concerns regarding handicapped accessibility requirements in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Their report stipulates that it would be necessary to:

- Install a uni-sex ADA compliant bathroom on the first floor level
- Modify one of the existing second floor bathrooms for ADA compliance
- Construct ADA compliant ramps at the front and rear exit doors. Due to the grade elevations adjacent to these entrances, the front ramp will be much shorter than will the rear ramp
- It is also possible that raising the floor of the first floor study area by approximately 15 in (to match the elevation of the floor for the remainder of the

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<sup>3</sup> Ethiel Garlington and others, eds., *Arnocroft Historic Structure Report*, December 2003.

residence) may be required for ADA compliance. Raising the floor would (if needed) require new floor joists, sub-flooring, and finish flooring as well as additional substructure (beam/foundation) modifications.<sup>4</sup>

Once again, as with fire safety concerns, the Armentrout report assumes contemporary standards and commercial uses. Though historic buildings are not exempt from complying with ADA regulations, special consideration has been given for mitigating factors.

The ADA's General Rule regarding alterations to qualified historic buildings requires that they must comply with the same standards as alterations to non-historic properties unless it is determined that such compliance would threaten or destroy the historic significance of a feature of the building or facility.<sup>5</sup>

In an effort to further clarify the relationship between the ADA and historically significant properties, the National Park Service has published a preservation brief, which addresses the issue.<sup>6</sup> According to this brief, "under Title III of the ADA, owners of 'public accommodations' (theaters, restaurants, retail shops, private museums) must make 'readily achievable' changes; that is, changes that can be easily accomplished without much expense."<sup>7</sup>

Regarding the specific needs of Arnocroft in reference to ADA requirements, the author strongly disagrees with the suggestions of the Armentrout report. Modifications of the sort they prescribe would have a significant deleterious effect on the historic integrity of the house. Instead, the following recommendations are proposed. Constructing a ramp to the front or rear entrance of the property is not acceptable. A ramp to the front door would compromise the visual integrity of the front façade of the house. A ramp to the rear door would require an enormous length to meet the provisions of the 1:12 slope restrictions (i.e. for every 1 foot in rise, the ramp must accommodate 12 inches of run; the back door of Arnocroft is approximately 4 feet

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<sup>4</sup> Armentrout, Roebuck, Matheny Design/ Build Group, Inc., *Evaluation of the Arnocroft House, 925 South Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia*, February 2002, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Valeria Coons McAllister, "Balancing Our Commitments: Access and Historic Preservation," in *Interpreting Historic House Museums*, Jessica Foy Donnelly, ed., (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2002), 175.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, "Making Historic Properties Accessible," *Preservation Brief #32*, [www2.cr.nps.gov/TPS/briefs/brief32.htm](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/TPS/briefs/brief32.htm).

off the ground, which would require a ramp length of 48 feet). Even if the ramp could be constructed, the rear pantry space which you would enter does not provide adequate circumference for a wheel chair to move conveniently (which by law would be 60” of square turn around space). The rear door which enters into the library poses the similar problem of being high off the ground, thus requiring a lengthy ramp, but also poses the problem of entering into the library, the floors of which are approximately 15 inches lower than those of the rest of the house.

Instead, the author proposes that the entry off the patio on the south elevation of the house be the main point of handicapped accessibility. The brick patio is raised less than six inches above the driveway. By sloping this patio down to the driveway, a wheelchair could gain easy access to the doorway. Another small ramp could be constructed to transverse the threshold of the door allowing access to the main level of the house.

Once inside the house, a handicapped person could move easily into all of the principle rooms of the main floor. From the large doors leading from the double parlor to the library, a handicapped person has a complete view of the library, thus they would not need to elevate the floor level to provide access to this room. Furniture on the main level should be arranged in such a way that a wheelchair could maneuver through these rooms without bumping into items.

The second level of the house could not be made accessible to all handicapped persons. However, it is not necessary that it need be. According to Preservation Brief #32,

In some cases, programmatic access may be the only option for extremely small or unaltered historic properties, such as a two-story house museum with no internal elevator. Programmatic access for historic properties refers to alternative methods of providing services, information, and experiences when physical access cannot be provided.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

If Arnocroft is used as a house museum, it is not necessary that an elevator or chair lift be installed to provide access to the second level. Rather, the requirement of programmatic access would suggest that information on the second floor rooms be made available in a visual format such as photographs or video recordings that a guest could view on the main level.

The need for restroom facilities on the main level does pose a greater problem than the other issues of accessibility at Arnocroft. The only restroom facility on the main level is located off the library, which is not easily accessible to handicapped persons. There is no way to alter this arrangement without going to considerable expense, and possibly adversely affecting the integrity of the house. It is the recommendation of the author that a separate restroom facility for all guests, handicapped or not, be available outside of the building. This can be accomplished in several ways; the two that will be explored in more detail are reconstructing the garage building that was formerly located to the rear of the house and including modern restroom facilities or acquiring an additional property across the street on Milledge Avenue as an office/ welcome center for the property. These two ideas would be discussed in a later chapter.

The Junior League should consult with a representative from Georgia's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the issue of handicapped accessibility and historic sites. This agency will have experience with such issues, and may help reach a compromise with contemporary building codes. Also, consider the other historic properties, specifically house museums, in Athens. Find out how these properties address ADA requirements at their properties.

### **Parking Requirements**

As a facility open to the public, Arnocroft will be required to provide parking spaces to accommodate guests to the property. Parking is an issue that will have to be addressed in the

short-term and the long-term development strategies for the property. The Armentrout report states that, “our preliminary code evaluation indicates that a parking field of approximately 60 to 65 spaces will be required for the proposed change of use. This number of spaces will require an approximately ½ acre parking field with associated site work as needed. (The Athens-Clarke County Tax Map indicates the area of the lot to be slightly greater than two acres.)”<sup>9</sup> It is true that there are just over two acres of property associated with Arnocroft, but all of that is part of the formal landscape that contributes to the historic significance of the site. Every attempt should be made to avoid significantly altering the grounds to accommodate parking.

The author recommends that the short-term solution to the parking needs at Arnocroft should be to use the space immediately surrounding the house. Specifically, the loop that exists off of the southeastern corner of the driveway could be cleared and utilized as a temporary space, which would accommodate eight to ten cars. Additionally, according to the suggestions of the Arnocroft Historic Structure Report, the large tree located behind the kitchen wing of the house should be taken down due to its advanced age and deterioration. Removing this tree would allow for more space near the building itself. During the initial months of developing a strategic plan for the management of the site, a small parking field should be sufficient to accommodate the minimal traffic the house will encounter.

As plans for the site expand, parking needs will expand as well. There is the potential for use of adjacent property parking by arrangement with those property owners while a long-term solution is being considered. The author recommends that the Junior League consider the purchase of the building across the street at 920 Milledge Avenue, which has a large parking field in the rear. Guests to the property could utilize this lot for parking during their visit to

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<sup>9</sup> Armentrout, Roebuck, Matheny Design/ Build Group, Inc., *Evaluation of the Arnocroft House, 925 South Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia*, February 2002, 19.



Arnocroft. During times that the house is closed, this lot could be rented to other groups on Milledge Avenue, such as the sororities and fraternities, to generate additional revenue for the house.

### **Structural Soundness and Live-Load Capacity**

A final issue that must be addressed before the house can be opened to the public is the structural live-load capacity. According to the Armentrout report, the structural evaluation that was made was based on the requirement of a capacity to support 100 pounds per square foot (psf) of live load. This was done in accordance with the contemporary building codes for social function use.<sup>10</sup> The Armentrout report suggests that the floors currently only support a live load of 40 psf, and significant structural reinforcement would be necessary to bring them up to contemporary standards.

The Arnocroft Historic Structure Report questioned the determination of the live load capacity of the Armentrout report and came to a different conclusion regarding the live load capacity of the building.

The Armentrout report also calculates the allowable live loads for the structural members based on tables for contemporary materials. Specifically, they used the NDS 1997 (National Design Specification for Timber Construction) values for #2 southern yellow pine. The wood used to build Arnocroft represents old growth timber with considerably less soft sapwood and more durable heartwood than modern farmed lumber. Old wood is simply capable of supporting far heavier loads than new lumber. We calculated the allowable live loads for Arnocroft using the joist tables in an older version of Architectural Graphic Standards [Ramsey and Sleeper, Architectural Graphic Standards, 5<sup>th</sup> edition] that assumes the use of old growth timber and got different results.

We agree that Arnocroft should not sustain live loads of 100 pounds per square foot, but we believe that the first floor structure is sufficient for 60 pounds per square foot live loads. The second floor structure is adequate for loads of 40 pounds per square foot because it must be analyzed for deflection as well as bending to

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<sup>10</sup> Armentrout, Roebuck, Matheny Design/ Build Group, Inc., *Evaluation of the Arnocroft House, 925 South Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia*, February 2002.

protect the first floor ceiling plaster work, especially the medallion in the double parlor.<sup>11</sup>

The author recommends that a long-term strategic plan should be developed which balances the use of the house with the need for expensive structural reinforcement. If the interior of the house is used for a museum space where small groups of individuals tour the property escorted by a guide, the existing live loads as indicated by the Arnocroft Historic Structure Report should be sufficient. However, this would not allow for the long-term use of the house as a social events facility. But it is firmly the opinion of the author that utilizing the house for large social events is not considered to be a sensitive use of the property. Developing a plan for using the grounds for large events has the potential to contribute to the long-term viability of the house structurally and financially. Under such a plan, the house would serve as the “back drop” for events facilitated in the outdoor spaces. Constructing a catering kitchen and restroom facility in the location of the old garage would make it unnecessary for people to be inside the house during large events. A plan for outdoor special events is discussed in chapter 11.

### **Organizational Structure**

It is essential to define the leadership roles that will be necessary to facilitate operations at Arnocroft. Utilizing this house in any capacity is not a task for volunteers alone. A variety of options are available to the Junior League for staffing this house.

The Junior League already has one paid professional staff member to oversee business for the Taylor-Grady House on Prince Avenue. Though the property is actually owned by the local government in Athens-Clarke County, the Junior League manages many of the daily affairs of the house. It is possible that the Executive Director of the Taylor-Grady House could take on some of the initial responsibilities of transitioning the establishment of Arnocroft as a

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<sup>11</sup> Ethiel Garlington and others, eds., *Arnocroft Historic Structure Report*, December 2003.

house museum. This may require some additional compensation for taking on extra tasks, however it may be advantageous for the Junior League to consider this option to expedite the process of opening Arnocroft to the public.

Hiring an Executive Director for Arnocroft should be a priority within the first year of operation. There will be many aspects of development and operations that need to be addressed to ensure the success of the museum, and an Executive Director should be part of developing a long-term strategic plan for the property. The ideal candidate for the position would be someone with a professional degree in history, museum studies, historic preservation, public history, or some closely related field. Previous experience in museum work should also be considered. To ensure the success of Arnocroft as a museum, the Executive Director must understand the dynamic nature of the museum world, and must be able to facilitate all areas of museum programming. As programming develops, staff needs will grow beyond the resources of one individual and additional staff will be needed, however for the initial phase of planning, one professional staff position should be sufficient.

It would be advantageous to define the relationship between the Executive Director and the Junior League as early as possible. It is important to consider who the Executive Director will be accountable to, who has the decision-making authority, and who will be responsible for handling financial considerations for Arnocroft. It should be decided whether or not a separate Board of Directors beyond the membership of the Junior League will be established for the oversight of Arnocroft. In establishing these roles, it would be beneficial to consider other museums and non-profit groups in the area to ascertain how they have handled this situation. It is the opinion of the author that the best organizational structure for Arnocroft would be to have an Executive Director who is directly supervised by the President of the Junior

League. The Executive Director and the President must jointly approve significant long-term projects and financial expenditures for the property. Additionally, a committee comprised of Junior League members and professionals from the larger community should work in an advisory capacity with the Executive Director to facilitate planning and programming for Arnocroft. As the needs of Arnocroft develop and expand, the roles can be redefined to accommodate the organization.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE FIRST YEAR

Once consensus has been reached on using Arnocroft as a house museum, the first year is instrumental in charting the plan for future management. When the house has satisfactorily met the requirements of handicapped accessibility, fire safety, and provisions have been made for parking, it will be time to begin planning activities and programming that will attract people to the site. The Junior League should consult members of their organization, members of the larger community, and professionals from various fields relative to historic preservation, museum studies, and heritage tourism to plan a strategy. From this group of individuals they can form an advisory council to guide the formative stages of this undertaking. A good place to start with this strategy is a visioning process.

When considering a vision for the use of Arnocroft, the logical starting place is with the wish of Mrs. Eugenia Arnold Friend. She left the house to the Junior League with the mandate that it be used to serve the citizens of Athens. In her mind, Arnocroft manifested the best of her experiences in Georgia: her love of her family and friends; her affection for Athens as her hometown; and her esteem for the Junior League as a founding member of the organization. These ideas are the foundation of a larger vision for use of the property. From this point, members of the advisory council can contribute their ideas about the role that Arnocroft plays in the larger community and the kinds of activities it would be appropriate to host on this site. The final result of the visioning process is a mission statement.

The advantage of developing a comprehensive mission statement for Arnocroft would be the setting up of a guiding principle by which decisions are made regarding future use of the property. This mission statement should reflect an awareness of the historical significance of the house and its collection, and it should indicate the resolve to hold the security and the integrity of the physical property as a priority. Furthermore, it should reflect the desire to interpret all aspects of the history of the house truthfully and respectfully. From these ideas, decisions about programming should emphasize that only activities which are respectful of the nature of the house will be permitted. Examples of such activities would be house tours, modest rental functions, and educational workshops.

The task of implementing these activities will largely fall to the Executive Director during this first year. It is the role of the advisory committee to suggest the types of activities they think are appropriate for the house, and then, it becomes the responsibility of the Executive Director to choose the means that will achieve those objectives. For example, if it is decided that guided tours should be part of the programming, the Executive Director should determine how to best facilitate those tours. Additionally, it would be wise to develop a marketing and promotional campaign to increase the visibility of Arnocroft in the community and generate awareness that the property is open for visitation. This could be accomplished through brochures and other print media; newspaper, radio, and television advertising; and working with organizations that already promote heritage tourism in Georgia. When the Executive Director decides on a course of action and the expense to accomplish these objectives, with the approval of the President of the Junior League, a plan will be implemented.

It is the recommendation of the author that the first year be one of cautious planning and preparation to ensure the success of operating the property as a historic house museum.

Decisions should not be made hastily, and when possible, they should be made using data available regarding the larger trends in heritage tourism, museum management and collections maintenance. The following issues should be addressed by the Executive Director, the Junior League, and the advisory council to ensure the success of the property.

### **Inventory of the Collection**

One of the most essential responsibilities of the Executive Director during the first year is to inventory and catalog the collection at Arnocroft. As previously stated, the decorative arts collection of the house contains many significant and valuable pieces. An inventory of all the items in the house will have multiple benefits. It will lay the foundation for securing the collection and making certain it is appropriately insured; it will allow the Executive Director to assess any existing damage or needed repairs to pieces in the collection; it will create a database indicating which information should be gathered to augment knowledge of the decorative arts collection and thus enhance the overall interpretation of the house. It is important to remember that every artifact in the house should be considered part of the collection. Items that may not be particularly beautiful or valuable are still important for the interpretation of life at Arnocroft. This inventory will be time-consuming and may take several months or years to complete thoroughly. Entering this information into a database will help to organize the inventory and make the information easily retrievable. Many museums use computer programs such as PastPerfect to accomplish this, and it would be in the best interest of the property if such a program were utilized at Arnocroft.

This is also a good time to determine what the policy will be regarding accepting new items into the museum. It is not unusual that individuals will come forward with items they wish to donate to the collection, and the staff of Arnocroft should be prepared for this. It is the

opinion of the author that the donations to the collection should be accepted only if they were once a part of the house. The collection, as it was given to the Junior League by Mrs. Eugenia Friend, reflects a lifetime of connoisseurship and collecting by herself and her family members. As such, it tells a story of their wealth and their distinctive tastes. It is important to preserve this element of the interpretation as a respectful recognition of their family history and her intent in donating the house to the community. If it is decided that new pieces will be accepted into the collection that were not part of the original furnishings, every effort should be made to distinguish between what was original and what was donated, and there should be an interpretive basis for accepting such pieces.

### **House Tours**

One of the most popular ways of facilitating house tours is by the use of docents who conduct guests around the house in small groups. During the first year that Arnocroft is open, house tours may not be the most overwhelming area of museum interpretation. Initially, there may be large numbers of local community members who are interested to see inside a house that has been closed for so long. But generally speaking, visitation may be slow until the visibility of Arnocroft in the museum community attains a higher profile.

This does not mean that the development of house tours should be neglected. One of the strongest marketing tools the property has available to it is a successful tour program. According to figures for the Athens-Clarke County Welcome Center, the number of visitors that came through the center in 1999 was approximately 20,000 individuals.<sup>1</sup> If Arnocroft could attract 5,000 people to the house – only one-quarter of the total guests through the Welcome Center – and charge a modest admissions fee of \$5.00 per person, \$25,000 in revenue could be raised

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<sup>1</sup>Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, Comprehensive Plan for Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville, March 1999, 46.



from admissions alone. This figure is equal to the estimated annual costs of paying basic utilities, taxes and insurance for the property. Beyond this, a quality experience will encourage people to tell their friends about the site, and also induce them to return multiple times.

It is the opinion of the author that the best tour experience comes from audio stimulation of the guest. This can be accomplished through tours guided by docents who deliver a formal script or by incorporating contemporary audio guide technology into programming. In the initial months of providing tours of the house, the Executive Director, when available, should plan to give guided tours to guests. Volunteers may also be recruited to help accommodate busier schedules. When it is not possible to give a guided tour, a written, self-guided tour should be available for visitors. And at some point in the future, the Junior League should consider the use of audio guide technology to facilitate house tours. The initial costs of these systems, which can often be between \$30,000 and \$90,000, may be prohibitive in the early stages. However, in the long term, these systems are valuable resources for providing quality tour experiences. Regardless of whether the tour is self-guided, docent-guided, or audio-guided, the most important element of interpretive tours is to provide an excellent, interactive experience for every guest that comes to the house at any time of the day.

### **House Rentals**

During the occupancy of the Arnold family, the house was the site of gracious entertaining. Using the house for social functions is certainly within the purview of Eugenia Arnold Friend's mandate that the house should be used for the benefit of the citizens of Athens. In many ways, it is carrying on a tradition that she began years ago.

More often, museums are using property rentals as a way to generate revenue to support operations of the facility. Nevertheless, the need to generate revenue must be balanced with

preserving the historical integrity of the house and collection. Those in the museum and preservation communities view historic house museums as valuable artifacts and tangible links to our past. As such they are treated with great care and delicacy. However, there is no reason to believe that all people who visit a site will have the same depth of appreciation as the professionals who provide stewardship of these properties. It is for this reason that house rentals can be so dangerous for historic house museums. It is easy for use to become abuse.

At a rental, the house, its furnishings, and its landscape serve as the backdrop for the social function carried on there at the time. Guests to the social function may appreciate the aesthetic quality of the location without fully appreciating the need to carefully preserve it. Often times casual food and beverage service at house rentals can do irreparable damage to historic fabrics and finishes by leaving stains and water marks. Decorations may be inadvertently pinned, stapled, taped, nailed or otherwise adhered to walls, floors, balustrades and other surfaces of an historic house. The pressure of large numbers of guests in small spaces may cause someone to knock over lamps and porcelains, bump into pictures or mirrors, or otherwise harm valuable furnishings. Certainly, none of the occurrences are intentional, but the damage is done all the same. Any historic house museum that allows private rentals must dutifully mediate the demands of such events with the potentially deleterious effects they have on the site.

In the case of Arnocroft, it is the opinion of the author that house rentals initially should be gatherings of less than fifty people with limited food and beverage service allowed in the house. The kitchen facility at Arnocroft is inadequate to easily service more than this number. As part of a long-term plan, the Junior League should consider locating a kitchen facility elsewhere on the property (which will be discussed in more detail in a later chapter), but for the first year, there is simply not enough room to facilitate this. Second, when the house is used for

private events, care should be taken to deter guests from utilizing the furnishings of the house inappropriately. Chairs should be tastefully roped off to deter guests from sitting in them, and tables should be covered with glass tops to avoid stains and watermarks from beverages. Caterers should provide adequate bussing staff to ensure that dirty dishes do not pile up on collection pieces and that any spills are cleaned up immediately to avoid permanently damaging floors, carpets or textiles in the house.

During house rentals, either the Executive Director or a representative of the Junior League should be on site to ensure that the safety of the house, the guests, and the collection are maintained. The Junior League already employs an event staff to facilitate rentals at the Taylor-Grady House, and they should consider a similar arrangement be made at Arnocroft. Furthermore, it is the opinion of the author that a fire marshal should be hired at every private event at the house to facilitate the safety of guests in the event of an emergency. The services of a fire marshal are not only useful if a fire should break out, but they additionally can provide emergency assistance to a guest suffering from a medical ailment such as a heart attack. It also is wise to have a uniformed official on site to intervene with guests who may become belligerent or rowdy.

### **Hours of Operation**

To effectively operate Arnocroft as a house museum, there must be a set schedule of times when the house will be open daily. Initially, if the only staff person at the house is the Executive Director, the house should only be open part-time. For example, even though a director works full-time, perhaps the morning hours could be time for this person to work on activities relating to operations and planning, and the afternoon could be a time that the house is open for guided tours. It is the recommendation of the author that the house be open at least five

days a week, and one of those days should be Saturday. A theoretical schedule could look something like this: closed Sunday and Monday and open Tuesday through Friday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. To carry on a successful promotional campaign beyond the community surrounding Athens and Clarke County, guests must count on being able to arrive at posted times and being allowed into the house.

### **House and Grounds Maintenance**

A priority of the first year of operations at Arnocroft will be to set up a cycle for annual maintenance of the house and grounds. Recently the Junior League has undertaken significant plaster repair and interior painting projects, as well as structurally reinforcing the crawl space of the house and replacing the roofing material. The Arnocroft Historic Structure Report outlines suggested schedules for routine maintenance of the house during the initial phase of operations, and the author has nothing further to add to these suggestions regarding the physical structure (see Figure 28).<sup>2</sup>

The interior of the house will have to be routinely cleaned and cared for. This will probably be done on a daily or weekly basis as demanded by levels of visitation. However, in planning for interior care and maintenance, two things should be considered. First, it is not always advisable to use contemporary cleaning materials on historic furnishings. Second, routine cleaning such as vacuuming, sweeping and dusting, should be considered separately from actual care and cleaning of the collection. Commercial cleaning agencies may provide sufficient service for basic daily cleaning of the house, but the care of the collection should be delegated to someone who has been specially trained in the sensitive nature of the objects in the collection. Initially, the services of a commercial cleaning group may fulfill the weekly needs of the house,

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<sup>2</sup> Ethiel Garlington and others, eds., *Arnocroft Historic Structure Report*, December 2003.

but the ideal situation would be to employ a part-time housekeeper who is willing to provide basic cleaning needs and also be trained in appropriate conservation cleaning techniques.

Finally, the grounds at Arnocroft are an asset for interpretation. As such, they should be treated with the same regard as the house and the collection. Within the first year, a survey of the grounds should be undertaken similar to that of the inventory of the collection. Scaled drawings of the existing landscape should be completed, and the existing plant material should be documented. The few historic photographs showing the landscape that are known to exist should be examined for the clues they provide about the historic landscape. Ideally, the trees would each be evaluated by a professional arborist to determine their age and health, and to make recommendations for their routine pruning and maintenance needs. Much of the hedge around the formal landscape has been choked by secondary growth, which should be cleared out. Obscured features of walkways and steps should be dug out and reset in the landscape. It is also important to remember that before any significant changes are made to the landscape, it should be observed during all seasons. Different plants and bulbs are in their prime during different times of the year, and proceeding hastily with a garden restoration may lead to the destruction of unknown features. Once this survey of the landscape is complete, the grounds can be analyzed for their long-term maintenance needs, as well as their potential to be used in the overall interpretive programming of the house.

<p align="center"><b>Summary of Recommendations for Routine Maintenance for Arnocroft</b></p>
<p>Gutters should be cleaned twice per year. The most significant threat to an historic home like Arnocroft is water infiltration into the framing of the house. Water, if not properly drained will cause rot in wood and deterioration of masonry walls and support piers. The gutters and drainage system installed on Arnocroft are adequate for the most part, but to be effective they must be regularly maintained.</p>
<p>Cracks in plaster should be monitored carefully. Every little crack cannot be repaired economically the moment it presents itself, but over time a person can notice worsening in cracks which can be indicative of a structural problem not visible through the plaster.</p>
<p>Cracks in masonry and deteriorated mortar should be regularly observed and repaired using like materials. Like those in plaster, cracks in masonry walls can be a smoke for the fire of a structural failure that is not visible from the outside. Even when cracks do not worsen, they should be repaired to prevent water infiltration of the wall, which can lead to rot and mortar deterioration.</p>
<p>Floors should be regularly finished to prevent their deterioration due to foot traffic, spills, furniture movement, etc.</p>
<p>Landscaping should be maintained to keep all plants at least two feet from the base of the house. This regular pruning will prevent water problems from developing at ground level and causing rising damp.</p>

Figure 28 Source: Arnocroft Historic Structure Report, 2003.

## CHAPTER 12

### THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

Though the first year of operations is important in laying a course for future action, much of the initial success of Arnocroft will be felt within the first five years of business. This is the time that consideration should be given to hiring additional staff members on a part-time or full-time basis to expand educational programs, house rentals, and possibly begin a retail operation. Several ideas about the development of the site and its interpretation have been alluded to previously, but by the fifth year of business, certain plans should have been implemented to ensure that Arnocroft has the potential to grow and be used to its full ability.

#### **Acquiring Additional Property**

Presently, a small contemporary style building located directly across the street at 920 Milledge Avenue is for sale. To expand the interpretive and functional potential of Arnocroft, serious consideration should be given to acquiring this property. It is the recommendation of the author that this building be used as executive office space and a visitor welcome center for guests to Arnocroft as well as a gift shop. Additionally, acquiring this building will allow for access to handicapped restroom facilities for visitors and provide additional parking space for tourists and guests at private events. A pedestrian crosswalk could easily be installed at the corner of Milledge Avenue and Rutherford Street to facilitate traffic crossing the street to the house. Locating the staff offices outside of the main house will have several advantages. It will allow for the creation of a modern office facility without having to be concerned with the invasiveness of modern office equipment. This building could be easily wired (if it is not already) to

accommodate modern telephone and internet capabilities; it could provide supplementary audio visual material to accommodate physically or visually disabled guests to the property. Additional interpretive space is provided which could house special exhibits. And it would also allow for a true interpretation of the house and grounds at Arnocroft.

By not sacrificing rooms in the house for offices, reconfiguring restrooms to meet contemporary needs, or removing landscaped spaces for parking, the house is shown more authentically. Because this property is being used by the Junior League in conjunction with their interpretation of Arnocroft, there is a good possibility that the property would be declared tax-exempt by the city, thus making the only significant additional costs being those of acquiring and renovating the building itself.

### **Reconstructing the Rear Garage**

Photographic evidence indicates that there was a small building located to the rear of Arnocroft as late as 1946. Aside from the knowledge that it had a gable roof and was used as a garage, little else is known about the specific character of the building. It was located near the present day automobile turn-around in the back yard. There are large pieces of granite block in the rear yard suggesting the original location of the building, and archaeological excavation has the potential to yield more information about the size and building materials used to construct the garage.

It is the opinion of the author that this building should be reconstructed, and it should house a modest warming and preparatory kitchen to facilitate large-scale rental events. Additionally, restroom facilities, which can be accessed from the outside of the building, should be included in this reconstruction. The purpose of these two facilities is to allow the expansive grounds surrounding the property to be used to host large-scale rental events.



## **Rental Events**

The facilities housed in the reconstructed garage can effectively service a private party outside the main house of Arnocroft. There will be no need for guests to go inside the house with food or beverages, or to use restroom facilities. The purpose of this suggestion is not to make the house inaccessible to the public, but rather to treat it more like a museum while accommodating revenue-producing, large-scale social functions. It is also the opinion of the author that the executive staff of Arnocroft should enter into an exclusive contract with one tent and party-supply company to provide all the set-up and take-down of tents, tables, chairs, and other party props at the site. By having one company who provides all of these services, you can agree upon a standard arrangement of props for every event, ensure that services are being provided by someone who is familiar with the significance of the site, and receive a better rate for their services by granting them exclusive permission to work with Arnocroft. The cost for rental of tents, chairs, and tables from this company will ultimately be passed on to the renter, therefore there would be no additional expense incurred for the Junior League.

## **House Tours**

By this time, the visibility of Arnocroft should be at a point whereby visitors from other communities make Arnocroft a destination during their time in Athens. Interpretive needs will have expanded beyond what one person can accomplish on a part-time basis, and enhancing house tours by using hand-held, audio technology should seriously be considered. The one-time expense of creating content for and purchasing these units will financially pay off in the long run. It will mitigate the need to hire part-time docents to facilitate house tours, and alleviate the need for executive staff members to recruit, train and schedule volunteers.

This is also the time that the executive staff should consider expanding educational programs at the house. Specifically, plans could be developed for specialty tours that focus on specific interpretive areas such as decorative arts or landscape design. Developing children's programs and educational opportunities for students will further strengthen the overall mission of the site and further the aims of the Junior League to provide activities and services for the children of the Athens-Clarke County community. This also provides the opportunity to expose children to museums and historic preservation at a young age, thus potentially instilling in them an appreciation of the importance of these areas. Educational experiences for young people could include field trips, weekend activities, seasonal or holiday activities, and summer camps that expose the youth of the community to the larger preservation activities going on in the area.

### **Membership**

The success of Arnocroft at this point may largely be attributed to the time, talents, and resources of a small group including advisory committee participants and Junior League members. However, this does not preclude inviting members of the larger community to be a part in preserving Arnocroft. Once it is firmly established as an historic house museum, consideration may be given to the idea of developing a membership campaign that would offer incentives and special events to those individuals who donate their time or financial support to the house.

It is the opinion of the author that such a campaign should not be undertaken within the first year of operations simply because there is not yet a product to offer. It must be demonstrated to the public that Arnocroft does offer programs and opportunities that are worthy of their financial support. Beyond this, unnecessary pressure from outside sources may be placed on the advisory committee and Executive Director during the initial planning stages.

Such pressure may lead to decisions that are not in the best interests of the long-term viability of the house.

### **Retail Opportunities**

Museums of all types often incorporate some sort of retail operation to provide additional revenue for their site, and this is something that Arnocroft should also consider incorporating into their long-term plans. There is a nationally organized Museum Store Association (MSA) that provides information and services to museum institutions that carry on retail operations. MSA sponsors conferences and publications that provide assistance to small retail operations in museums, and it would be in the best interest of Arnocroft to consult MSA resources before establishing a museum store.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike generating revenue from membership, house rentals, house tours, and educational programs, retail operations are governed by certain restrictions above those normally placed on non-profit groups. Before beginning a retail operation at Arnocroft, the Junior League should consider the ramifications of the Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) laws on their organization. According to the general rules for UBIT provided by the Internal Revenue Service, “an activity will be considered an unrelated business (and subject to UBIT) if it meets the following three requirements: (1) it is a trade or business, (2) it is regularly carried on, and (3) it is not substantially related to the furtherance of the exempt purpose of the organization.”<sup>2</sup> The purpose of UBIT laws are not to unfairly target museums or other non-profits; rather they ensure fair competition among various groups. In certain areas where non-profit organizations use the same techniques as for-profit corporations to generate revenue, the tax-exempt status enjoyed by the non-profit may create an unfair economic advantage for that group. It is important to

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<sup>1</sup> [www.msaweb.org](http://www.msaweb.org)

remember that UBIT regulations theoretically cover all aspects of revenue-generating activities for non-profits. These laws are discussed here in particular because retail sales operations in non-profit museums is arguably the most visible area where UBIT laws are invoked. There is no question that retail sales are an activity regularly engaged in by for profit corporations. Often, museums which operate retail activities do so year round. These facts meet the first two requirements for UBIT restrictions as defined by the IRS. So the principle issue in determining applicability of UBIT restrictions to museum store sales lies within the third requirement: whether or not items for sale are not substantially related to the furtherance of the exempt purpose of the organization.

The UBIT regulations are most often applied on a case-by-case basis. Certain general guidelines can be extracted from previous IRS decisions, but to effectively interact with UBIT, museums should be very particular in their decisions. “The line separating related and unrelated commercial activities is imperceptibly thin. Before crossing it unwittingly, [a non-profit organization should] seek out legal counsel and plan your income-generating activities with a sensitive awareness of these sticky principles.”<sup>3</sup> UBIT regulations are not an area to be taken lightly, as the IRS has determined that an organization could lose its exempt status if it generates too much revenue from unrelated sources. Even in situations where an organization pays taxes on unrelated business, if the institution is not mindful of how much of their income is generated from sources determined to be unrelated, exempt status could be lost. This should not discourage the executive staff of Arnocroft from incorporating retail operations in the revenue-generating activities of the site. Many museums successfully balance these restrictions with the sale of items that support their efforts. Professional advice is essential to applying UBIT

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<sup>2</sup> Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, “Unrelated Business Income Tax General Rules,” *The Digital Daily*, 2003, [www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=96104,00.html](http://www.irs.gov/charities/article/0,,id=96104,00.html).

regulations, however a museum can also go straight to the IRS and seek a ruling on the exact nature of unrelated business income generated by their operations.

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<sup>3</sup> Marc L. Lane, *Legal Handbook for Non-Profits*, (New York: Amacom, 1980) 210.

## CHAPTER 13

### THE TEN YEAR MILESTONE

Careful planning and conscientious stewardship of Arnocroft and the surrounding property during the first several years of operations will set the site up for future success. The initial phases are easier to plan than anticipating what the entire first ten years will hold. However, certain suggestions can be made for future programming.

At some point in the first decade of operations, the institution should critically evaluate the overall success of programming and develop plans for increasing visibility and visitation. Arguably, this is an ongoing process, but creating a time for a comprehensive examination of all aspects of operations at Arnocroft could be facilitated jointly with developing a long-term strategic plan. At this point, executive staff and Junior League members will have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of programming at Arnocroft, and steps can be taken to strengthen their successful endeavors as well as remedy their ills.

The executive staff and the Junior League should also consider undertaking a capital campaign to rebuild the endowment. Initially, the house was donated with a \$400,000.00 endowment in 1994. Since that time, much of this money has been depleted as the result of necessary repairs and expenditures for the property. A capital campaign is something quite different than a membership campaign. The theoretical model of a membership campaign was an annual endeavor to generate surplus revenue to cover operating expenses for one financial year alone. A capital campaign is a one-time event where all revenue generated would be put into an endowment to support the ongoing operations and restoration of the house. Money

would be borrowed from the endowment only in emergency situations or to cover for operating deficits. Aside from that, these resources would be stringently restricted.

This would also be a good time for the executive staff and the Junior League to consider beginning a large fundraising event that would take place on an annual or semi-annual basis. Ideas for this type of event would be a decorative arts tour, a home tour, an auction, or a specialty seasonal event. Ideally, this large fundraising activity would incorporate multiple aspects of these events such as an antique show with a silent auction at a special preview dinner. Other community groups already sponsor these types of events, and it is possible that the Junior League could partner with those groups to take on a larger endeavor with mutually beneficial ends.

## CHAPTER 14

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The sentiment that Arnocroft could become an inordinate burden, which potentially could financially cripple the Junior League in years to come, seems to be the most threatening and overwhelming consideration for this site. Coupled with the fact that there has never been a deliberate effort to maintain an appropriate long-term use for the property, it would seem that there is tremendous potential for apathy toward Arnocroft to arise. This thesis has considered Arnocroft from a variety of angles through areas such as its history, its structural integrity, its location, its landscape and its place in the larger network of house museums in general. But perhaps more than anything, it has considered Arnocroft through the lens of historic preservation and suggested a new way of viewing Arnocroft as a significant part of the historic fabric of Athens, Georgia.

The first step in considering Arnocroft as an historic house museum is to complete the process for getting the site designated as a local historic landmark. Also, provisions must be made to bring the site into compliance with fire safety codes, ADA accessibility requirements, and parking needs without compromising the historic integrity of the house and grounds. The structural soundness of the house must also be considered, and steps should be taken to insure the short and long-term integrity of the physical structure. Finally, before the house is opened to the public, an organizational structure should be decided upon which will govern and operate the property on a daily basis.



Within the first year of operations, a comprehensive mission statement, which will guide the programming of the site, should be articulated. Along this same line, a list of goals should be developed, and the leadership of Arnocroft and the Junior League should consider activities that will help to achieve these goals. To further increase the visibility of the house, marketing and promotional endeavors should be developed in accordance with the mission statement and goals for programming.

The activities of the first year will be essential to laying a solid foundation on which subsequent programming can be built. During this time, an inventory of the collections in the house should be made, interpretive tour programs should be implemented for the house and grounds, a policy should be developed for house rentals, and hours of operation should be defined for all programs and events. Furthermore, the long-term maintenance of the house and grounds should be determined, and a schedule of routine functions relating to the upkeep of these areas should be implemented.

By the fifth year, the staff of Arnocroft and the Junior League should have considered the possibilities of expanding programming and event capacity by acquiring additional property or reconstructing the rear garage to provide additional space. Also at this point, a general reevaluation of existing programs and policies should be considered. It may be decided that it is time to expand the existing interpretive tours and rental functions, as well as begin to explore the possibility of generating revenue from additional sources such as retail opportunities or a membership campaign.

At the ten year milestone, it is time consider a long-term strategic plan for management and development of the site. Also at this time, Arnocroft will have proved its success as a museum, which will open up opportunities to launch a capital campaign in order to reestablish

the endowment for the site. Finally, the Junior League may want to consider developing a large-scale annual or semi-annual fundraising event to help generate revenue to support the site. This can be done on their own or in partnership with other organizations in the area.

The extensive network of preservation-related organizations in the Athens-Clarke County area, as well as within the state of Georgia, provide an excellent source of information and assistance for establishing and achieving the goals of Arnocroft as a house museum. Furthermore, within the framework of the Junior League of Athens, the site will have the advantage of the time and resources of many talented women to help insure its success. The property of Arnocroft embodies the legacy of the Arnold family, the legacy of the Junior League of Athens, and the legacy of Milledge Avenue as one of the most popular residential locations in the community. The significant gift of Arnocroft to this community was one of esteem and affection on the part of Eugenia Arnold Friend.

As such, the obligation of the Junior League to preserve the site authentically and respectfully should take precedence over considerations of financial adversity, which are at this point, purely illusory and speculative. The confluence of the resources and talents of all those involved in this project speaks volumes for the potential to make Arnocroft a success over the imagined machinations of critics and doubters. Identify the goal for Arnocroft and use these resources to follow it through to the end; success will be certain.

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