

Matilda Joslyn Gage Foundation
***The Engager* Spring 2006**
Unabridged Articles

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG AT THE GAGE HOME THIS SUMMER

Kim Christensen will be returning to the Gage House this summer to complete the preliminary archaeological excavations started on the property last summer. These small-scale excavations – the first archaeological work done on the property - are intended to provide a window onto the archaeological deposits left in the yard so that future excavations and restoration work can be planned.

This past summer, the excavations found a large number of artifacts across the property that would have been trash from the Gage household and those after them – including broken ceramics; window, bottle, and lamp glass; and animal bone. We also found the stone stoop to the woodshed that was attached to the rear of the house during the Gage family's time on the property, and what may be part of the foundation to the bay window that was on the Walnut Street side of the house. In all, nearly thirty small test pits were excavated across the property, and this summer we need to do about fifteen more to be done with our preliminary look at the property. During the fall semester, fourteen undergraduate students at the University of California Berkeley helped Kim wash, sort, identify, and label all of the artifacts recovered from the excavations last summer, and now Kim is focusing on cataloguing these artifacts, the ceramics especially, and determining how old they are.

Once the excavations are completed this summer, a long-term plan for more extensive excavations, in concert with the ongoing restoration projects, can be made. Kim hopes to undertake more extensive excavations on specific areas of the property – to be determined based on our excavations during these two summers, and the remote sensing to be conducted by the Fort Drum Cultural Resources crew this month - during the summer of 2007 with both volunteer and student help.

The excavations for this summer are estimated to take about two weeks to complete, with another three weeks anticipated after that to process the artifacts recovered – and Kim wants your help! Volunteers are needed for both the excavation and artifact-processing tasks this summer, which will take place in late May through July. No previous experience is necessary to volunteer; just email Kim at kchristensen@berkeley.edu to sign up. Scheduling will be flexible and any help is appreciated. More information on the excavations from last summer, and plans for this summer as they are announced, can be found on the GageDig blog at: <http://iis.syr.edu/WP/gage/>

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

The committee has two items of note for 2006. First, we made our first presentation of the year on January 23rd to the Syracuse University Teaching and Leadership Social Studies Education Academy at JD Middle School. We used our curriculum packet to inform student teachers and their cooperating master teachers about Gage and the Underground Railroad connections in CNY. Second, we recently received an award from the Syracuse Federation of Women's Clubs. The club presented its Oberlander Memorial Achievement Cup at its annual meeting on April 6th

to an organization whose civic contributions in the last year have been most deserving of recognition. Our committee's work was nominated and honored as runner up for this year's award.

We have more work ahead of us to better serve teachers in schools and visitors to the Gage Home. The following areas have been identified: 1.) Check that the contents of the curriculum packet does not contain any legally copyrighted material so that we may sell it for a profit in the future 2.) Refine the packet to correct errors and present it in uniform type, etc. 3.) Extend our work to create written materials and activities for students and other visitors to the house. If you are able to assist us with any of these tasks or would like to serve on the committee, please contact Grace Clancy at 458-5132 or gmm4521@aol.com.

EVENTS AT THE GAGE HOME

The Gage Home has been as busy this year as when Matilda lived here: From Girl Scout Troop 959 to the Womyn's Resource Center from Utica College to a San Francisco woman suffrage memorabilia collector and an Australian author, we have entertained a number of interested and interesting people. A series of informal conversations about the Land Rights action filed by the Onondaga Nation was made possible by a grant from the Central New York Community Foundation and hosted by Jeanne Shenandoah from the Onondaga Nation Information Center and Dr. Wagner. An encore High Tea for Rosemary and Joe Agonitos' award winning novel, Buffalo Calf Road Woman raised funds and a presentation by Kim Christensen about the ongoing archaeological research at the Gage Home raised interest in the upcoming dig this summer. Board member Jack Manno hosted a salon with theologian, author (Sacred Sands) and leader in the global Earth Charter movement, Ron Engel. Ron helped to write the Charter and then promote it for adoption by local governments, organizations, businesses and individuals. The Earth Charter is a broad statement of environmental, social and economic principle that he and many others hope will one day be adopted by a renewed, democratic United Nations as the basis for international law on environmental stewardship, peace and social justice.

THE GAGE HOME THANKS SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY!

Syracuse Honors Program liaison, AnnMarie Leo, together with SU fraternities Community Service Chairs Grant Krieder, from Alpha Tau Omega, and Jason Goldberg, from Delta Tau Delta, work with the foundation on many special projects. Currently AnnMarie has inspired 10 of her comrades to take on 1,000 of the newsletter that you have in your hand. Grant and Jason are busy rounding up the extra hands we need to move the offices after this newsletter goes to print. Finally, the SU BIG Event took place here on March 25th which brought a dozen or more students in to do all the really ugly jobs no one wants. That included yard work and cleaning out our scary basement! Ewww! We love and appreciate each and every one of the students of Syracuse University who chose to do their Community work with the Gage Home. Sincere thanks to them all!