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February Update on the Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH): FONLH on Target for Reconstruction Goal

February 2023

Tony Indovina, SHHS Board Member and FONLH President

Mission Statement for the Friends of the Neill Log House (FONLH Inc.)

Adopted February 2022



"We secure funds to restore and maintain the Neill Log House, foster knowledge of its historic significance, and work with interested parties to ensure the continued educational use of the structure and its site for future generations."

Individual support for the FONLH restoration effort will always be needed. To make online donations by credit card or PayPal, go to the SHUC website, shuc.org, and click on the "Projects" link in the black menu bar at the top of the page. A pull-down menu will appear. Select "Friends of the Neill Log House." Alternatively, checks can be sent to SHUC (put FONLH in the memo line) at the following address: SHUC, 5604 Solway Street, Pittsburgh, PA, 15217.



Recent Funding Makes Reconstruction of the Neill Log House in 2023 a Realistic Goal!

Developments are occurring rapidly with the Neill Log House, sometimes so rapidly they occur between when I write these updates to when you read them. Our Building/Design and Funding committees are working on separate activities focused on allowing us to meet legal and monetary goals to realize our first-phase goal of stabilizing and reopening the log house. The biggest end-of-the-year news for Friends of Neill Log House (FONLH) was being awarded \$75,000 toward construction costs by the Allegheny Foundation at the end of December. Other funds previously approved from the Stewart Foundation, Burke Family Foundation, ColCom Foundation, PA DCED, and individual contributions completed FONLH's reconstruction goal. Completing work during 2023 is now absolutely realistic.

At the same time, our Usage committee is focusing on care for the contents in the log house and the beginning of a usage plan for how they can best represent the period. Artifacts and furnishings from the Neill Log House will soon be put in a space donated by Guardian Storage. Since our conservators inspected every item, decisions need to be made on which of them best represent the period and are appropriate for restoration.

Fundraising for both large and small amounts will continue for later-phase site work and usage plans for when the house is open to the public. And before reconstruction, we must finish negotiating our long-term license agreement with the City, permitting us to hire contractors and make other decisions going forward. Planning for educational programming requires utilizing existing and new sources of information about the era in which Robert Neill and later tenants lived in the house. The fine work begun by a Chatham History Department intern, Madison Smith, will enable us to better utilize our expanding files of research toward this end. We were fortunate to have Madison present her organizational system to staff at the Detre Library of the Senator John Heinz History Center, where the files of FONLH will one day be digitally archived.



Rhonda Wozniak, object conservator, examines a spinning wheel from the Neill Log House. She and lead conservator Patty West are certified by the American Institute of Conservation as AIC Associates.

Reminder: Check out the Neill Log House Updates on the SHHS Website!

All the **Neill Log House Updates** from past SHHS Newsletters can now be viewed on "The Neill Log House" link on the SHHS website, squirrelhillhistory.org without having to log onto our Members Page. Browse them to learn about the progress being made on the house's restoration.

LATE BREAKING NEWS: The Henry Koerner House on S. Negley Ave., which was the focus of a major fundraising effort for the Neill Log House, has now been officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. More about this will appear in the March SHHS Newsletter.