

# McCoy Farm & Gardens

## NEWSLETTER

Main entrance: 1604 Taft Highway • Front gate: 1715 Anderson Pike • Mailing address: P.O. Box 443, Signal Mountain, TN 37377 • Website: [www.mccoywalden.org](http://www.mccoywalden.org)

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### Horses at the McCoy Farm

In response to recent news, Kay & Joe Gaston wrote, "Great newsletter. Glad you have fixed up the barn! I remember Martha's donkey, who I think outlived all the horses. It was a great loss for her when he passed away. Who knows, someday you might have a resident horse (or another donkey)." These comments led us to believe there might be an interest in the horses, and the donkey, who used to live on these acres, and in the people who loved them.

Fortunately, Tommy Garland responded to our inquiry and wrote, "As young boys we had chores to do whenever we visited Danny (Grandmother Martha McCoy). My younger brother Shank and I would, each morning, race to the barn with kitchen scraps to feed the chickens, collect eggs and spend time with the small herd of old horses: Chief, Red and Donkey Grey.

"We were young pony riders in Charlottesville so we had no fear of the big retired horses. Unfortunately Danny did not have tack (bridles and saddles) so we didn't ride but always delivered carrots, peppermints and wa-

termelon rinds. Occasionally we'd also grab a couple of apples from the orchard but were wary of feeding too many to avoid stomach aches. Oh wait a minute – that was our stomachs and not the horses'!

"Donkey Grey was our fond furry friend. As an older nag she tolerated us brushing her and petting her enormous ears."

Ellis Smith, Jr. said in a recorded interview February 18, 2000, "Marthey loved horses, and she had a horse to ride all the time ... The field over where the white fence is – that, I believe, was made into a place [ring] where Marthey ran the horses – was a ten acre field where my dad grew hay to feed the horses. I can remember ... there was one [apple] as big as a grapefruit. We used to like to pick it up and feed it to the horses."



*Donkey Grey and the three grandsons: Johnny, Tommy and Shank.*

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### Cliché Horror Film Setting

Students from Chattanooga State recently made a short film at McCoy Farm & Gardens. The shoot was part of the Professional Actor Training Program where students learn not only to act for the camera, but also to write for the camera, and to fill the functions of everyone behind the camera.

Rachel Burdyshaw, the screenwriter, lives on the mountain and chose the McCoy house as the locale for her "cliché horror film." According to Sherry Landrum, Artistic Director of Theatre Programs at Chattanooga State, "The students loved it. It was a foggy, spooky day, and it made a perfect setting."

In thanking the Board for allowing access to the site, Landrum said the production was one of three short films created during this Professional Semester, and the students have learned a lot about the technical aspects of film through the process.

**The Mission** of McCoy Farm & Gardens is to restore, enhance and preserve the historic McCoy homeplace so that it may serve the community as an arboretum, natural area, and venue for public and private events.

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Martha McCoy in Kaleidoscope, 1922

This description of Martha Bachman was in the GPS 1922 annual, *Kaleidoscope*, "If ever you're seriously considering starting a ranch, or a livery stable, or any such horsey project, go first for advice from Martha, for whether or not she understands everything from bit to spur, from snaffle to

chaps, at least she gives you that impression."

Perhaps the daughter inherited her interest in horses from her father. Mickey Robbins, in the *Chattanooga Times Free-Press*, May 10, 2015, remarked, "Nathan [Bachman] ... had a special sense of humor and bore the reputation, which he did not deny, of having taken a horse into a dormitory at the University of Virginia."

To be CONTINUED. Look for part two in the April newsletter.

## Annual Fund Report

by Micky Robbins, Board Chair

Our annual fund continues to support improvement of the property, including renovation of the house upstairs, bracing of the barn, maintenance of the grounds, and programs. A donor match enlarges the impact of any contributions to the annual fund. Moreover, preparations have begun for a Master Plan, and that will need some ongoing support.

## Apple Orchard

Experts are advising about the apple trees, and the health of the orchard is an important consideration in the upcoming Master Plan.

*THANKS to the good samaritan who found my wallet at McCoy, gave it to the police who returned it to my house. What a blessing in a safe and diligent community. ~ Andy Jones*

## Home Tour and News Story

Now you can take a virtual tour via Internet and see the newly renovated rooms in the McCoy home. At [www.mccoywalden.org](http://www.mccoywalden.org) anyone thinking of renting our great venue can learn what is available before they schedule a personal visit. Please pass the word.

Enjoy John Shearer's report – with pictures – of his visit to McCoy Farm & Gardens at [www.chattanooga.com](http://www.chattanooga.com) Saturday, Jan. 13, 2018.

## Ornithologist Named

In response to the success of Wildlife Walks and bird surveys over the last few years, the McCoy Farm & Gardens Board has identified an ornithologist to aid in future endeavors. Luke Thompson, a very busy and conscientious student at Baylor School, was introduced to us by a letter from Dan Williams and recommended by Doug Newton, Wildlife Walks sponsor.

Luke was chosen for the position because he is interested, enthusiastic, capable, and already engaged in the identification of birds by their calls, habits, shape and plumage. Additionally, he has studied with Kevin Calhoun, Assistant Curator of Forests, Tennessee Aquarium, who has led the bird walks here.

Thanks, Doug and Dan, for your suggestion. Linda Collins will serve as liaison between Luke and the McCoy Farm & Gardens Board.

## Hours, Access & Information

The 1.1 mile long walking and running trail is open during daylight hours, seven days per week. Access the trail at the 1604 Taft Highway entrance and park in the first gravel lot located outside the inner gate.

The McCoy grounds are open to the public Saturdays and Sundays, 10:00 am - 5:00 pm. Please enter through the Taft Highway entrance and park in the main gravel lot. A handicapped accessible portable toilet is located at the orchard end of the gravel lot.

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## Support McCoy Farm & Gardens

McCoy Farm & Gardens is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. All contributions are charitable and tax deductible to the maximum extent allowed by law.

The 33 acre parcel, with the Bachman-McCoy home, pavilion, carriage house, barn, blacksmith workshop, apple house, various other structures and gardens, is leased from the Town of Walden. Volunteers are very important to the organization in all areas. Your donations are welcome and will be used to improve the structures and gardens.

**Please send your check to:**

**McCoy Farm & Gardens**

**P.O. Box 443, Signal Mt., TN 37377**

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