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“LOTZ HOUSE TO OPEN AS CIVIL WAR HOUSE MUSEUM IN HISTORIC FRANKLIN OCTOBER 30, 2008”

(Franklin, Tenn.)—(September 4, 2008)---J.T. Thompson announced today he will open the Lotz House, located at 1111 Columbia Avenue, as a Civil War house museum in Historic Franklin, Tenn. on Thursday, October 30.

The Lotz House, which has been on the National Historic Register since 1976, is located in the heart of downtown historic Franklin, Tennessee at “epicenter” of the Battle of Franklin which was a pivotal battle in the Civil War on November 30, 1864.

J.T. Thompson serves as Executive Director of the Lotz House and the Lotz House Foundation which is a 501 c 3 organization. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of The Carter House and serves on the Task Force for the Mayor of Franklin, Tennessee.

In making the announcement, Thompson said, “This has been a dream of mine for many years to both preserve this beautiful and historic home while using it as a backdrop to showcase our collection of antiques and decorative arts. I look forward to sharing the many colorful and historic stories of the house as well as that of the antiques and fine arts that are on display. When guests leave the Lotz House, it is my hope they will have a better understanding and appreciation for our history – which gives us the lives we lead today.”

Wendell Garrett, editor at large at The Magazine Antiques said, “This collection of antiques is by far the finest private collection of American Victorian Furniture in the Southeast.”

Thompson added, “The Lotz House is the perfect complimentary companion to the historic Carter House, Historic Carnton Plantation and the McGavock Confederate Cemetery. It takes only 110 short steps to walk from the front door of the Lotz House to the front door of the Carter House located directly across the street, and Carnton is just one mile away.”

History of the Lotz House

In 1855, German immigrant Johann Albert Lotz, purchased 5 acres of land from Fountain Branch Carter. Three years later, after doing most of the work himself, Lotz completed his home in 1858. By trade, Mr. Lotz was a master carpenter and a piano maker. He also repaired guitars and violins. His home, served as his "show house" to demonstrate his carpentry work to potential clients interested in hiring him for his services. The three fireplace mantles demonstrated his range from simple to very complex designs. There are also several battle scars including the charred rounded indentation in the wood flooring where a cannonball flew through the roof, a second story bedroom and landed on the first floor and rolled.

In addition, the home has an impressive solid black walnut wrap around the stair hand rail that starts on the ground floor and wraps all the way around and up to the second floor. To accomplish this engineering feat in the mid 19th century is truly remarkable. What's more, the newel post at the bottom of the staircase is actually an inverted leg of one Mr. Lotz pianos. The outside of the home indeed is a testament to Mr. Lotz talent. All the hand carved acorn finials, millwork and cartouches were constructed by Lotz.

When the Lotz family awakened on the morning of November 30, in effect the Union Line had been established in their front yard! Mr. Lotz, fearing that his family, his wife Margaretha, his sons Paul and Augustus and daughter Matilda would not survive the battle in their "wooden plank house," they sought refuge in the brick basement of the Carter House, a home across the street. For 17 hours while the horrific battle raged all around them, the Lotz along with 20 other people remained safe and survived. When they exited the basement the next morning, they were horrified to see the bodies of dead soldiers "so thick that you couldn't take a step without walking on one of them" between The Carter House and their home across the street. Indeed, historians describe the fighting that took place at the Battle of Franklin and in the Lotz front yard "some of the most severe hand to hand fighting during the four year long war." When the dust had settled the body count would be staggering. Ten thousand Americans had been killed, wounded or missing.

The Lotz house served as a hospital for the wounded soldiers on both sides until the following summer. To this day, one can step into the Lotz House and see numerous blood stains in all of the rooms. The house itself suffered severe battle damage, but as the structure served as Lotz' "show house," he was quick to make repairs. However, some of the battle scars do remain. During the battle a solid shot cannon ball crashed through the roof, smashing into the floor of an upstairs bedroom and down to the first floor. The large repaired patch made by Mr. Lotz remains in the second floor. And on the first floor where the cannon ball finally came to rest one can clearly see where the hot lead ball first hit, burning the floor then rolled.

Decorative and Fine Arts

While on the guided tour of the Lotz House visitors will learn about the history of many of the antiques and furnishings. Some of the most exquisite examples of John Henry Belter and Prudent Mallard furniture from the 1820's – 1860's will be on display. An extraordinary collection of Old Paris Porcelain pieces including an historic peach and cream colored formal set of dishes from which 3 United States presidents used at The Bedford Springs Hotel in Bedford Pennsylvania.

While you visitors may be familiar with Audubon paintings and prints, they may not be aware that John James Audubon actually painted from birds he captured and mounted to examine them in their more natural form. The Lotz House features an incredible display of Audubon's stuffed birds placed under their original glass dome. The Lotz House is currently not aware of any other surviving examples of his taxidermy work.

Lotz House Features

Appraisal Services: One of the services offered at the Lotz House is Personal Property Appraisals, specializing in Antique, Decorative and Fine Art Appraisals. Clients include attorneys, accountants, insurance companies, charitable organizations and the general public. Check the website for upcoming schedule of appraisal fairs which will be open to the public.

Museum Shop: The Museum Shop will be well stocked with unique, intriguing gifts and souvenirs awaiting discovery. A wide selection of items will commemorate each visit, including a variety of one of a kind antiques and collectibles as well as meticulously crafted items from local artisans. Also featured are an array of DVD's & VHS Tapes, prints and books, about The Battles of Franklin and Nashville, the Civil War and history in general. Relics will also be on display in the Museum Shop for viewing.

Volunteers: Volunteers are needed at the Lotz House. Those interested may contact J.T. Thompson at 615-268-7669.

Hours of operation: Monday – Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. or by appointment. Admission charged. The Lotz House is located at 1111 Columbia Avenue. The telephone number is 615-790-7190 and the website is www.lotzhouse.com which is currently under construction.

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