



August 26, 2019

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Hawken House

Dear Century Home Owner,

When Chris and Mary Ann Hawken moved in to their handsome, new two-story brick house in 1857, their first-born son, Jacob, was just over a year old. He was followed by eight more children who helped make the Hawken house into a family home.

The Webster Groves Historical Society was incorporated in 1965 as a 501(c)(3). Its initial goal was to save Chris and Mary Ann's home, which needed extensive repair and was facing demolition. In July 1970, the house was split in half and moved by truck to a new foundation in its current Southwest Park location at 1155 South Rock Hill Road. Today, the beautifully restored Hawken House with its elegant period furnishings is a living museum. Our extensive Archive devoted to local history is maintained just a few feet away in the 30-year-old History Barn that also houses the Hearth Room, a community event venue with seating for 120.

The Hawken House was a family home for over 100 years, making it a bridge for us between the past and the present. The Hawken House Museum promotes learning, inspires the imagination, deepens our understanding of a shared history and how it has shaped the present, and perhaps even encourages others to explore their own family lore. As the owner of a Century Home in Webster Groves, you may have learned something about the early families who lived in your house. In addition, you may have first-hand knowledge of the challenges inherent in keeping your home viable for future generations.

It should come as no surprise to you that the ongoing maintenance of this 162-year-old home is daunting, and the threat of major problems is always present. In 2017, large cracks appeared on the rear façade. Structural engineers determined that extensive work to pier the foundation was urgently needed to prevent further, irreparable damage. Our costs exceeded \$40,000 for this work, which included the tuckpointing needed to complete the job of securing the rear façade.

This project severely depleted the reserves available for the ongoing restoration and upkeep of this home. We have recently accumulated conservative estimates of \$60,000 for exterior repair work that includes restoration of wood porches, columns, window sills, shutters, corbels and soffits, and tuckpointing. Interior painting and repairs to plaster, wallpaper, light fixtures, and flooring are also vitally needed.

The Webster Groves Historical Society feels strongly that the unique qualities of the Hawken House should be preserved for our future generations. We must continue to make the past come alive for our visitors by sharing both the compelling stories of how the 19th century Hawken family lived and the tangible artifacts of their era.

This summer, we are beginning a 3-year **Capital Campaign** to raise \$100,000 to pay for much needed repairs and to replenish a reserve for future maintenance. Please see the enclosure for the donation information and join us in preserving this Webster Groves treasure.

Thank you very much for your generous consideration.

Warm regards,

Nancy Leahy, President, Webster Groves Historical Society

1155 South Rock Hill Road, Webster Groves, MO 63119

Hawken House (314) 968-1857 • Hearth Room (314) 968-1776

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