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5-18-2020

Newsletter, May 2020

Cedar Oaks Guild

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Recommended Citation

Cedar Oaks Guild, "Newsletter, May 2020" (2020). *Cedar Oaks Guild Newsletter*. 21.
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/cedaroksguild_news/21

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CEDAR OAKS GUILD NEWSLETTER

May 2020



As we come to an unexpected end of the **2019-2020** year, we can reflect on some of our accomplishments. Several new members joined the Guild and are generously sharing their skills; we hosted the community for the Fringe Festival, Halloween trick or treating, Cookiepalooza, and a Valentine's party; and we have all the planning done for fundraising events next spring! We've enjoyed good speakers, good food, and good fellowship, and the house is looking great.

A virtual round of applause for Martha Huckins and the board for all their accomplishments! **2020-2021** should be a very good year with another great new board that will serve for the next two years. Congratulations and appreciation to all the women who were willing to serve as officers and committee chairs. The outgoing officers will work individually with the new officers to help with the transition of duties.

Despite the necessary closing of Cedar Oaks and all of Oxford's historic properties, landscaping work continued and we will return to a beautiful home.





Welcome to our newest member, **Claire Dickerson**, sponsored by Sheila Roberts. We're glad to have you Claire.



Claire Dickerson

Get acquainted with Nancy Mitchell:

Nancy moved from Natchez to Oxford 10 years ago with her husband Charlie. She has two daughters and five grandchildren. Nancy is an accomplished artist, illustrator, and a National Board Certified art educator. She has received accolades for her teaching and creative work, including being named STAR teacher and Head of the Fine Arts Department, and she was accepted into several Mississippi Art Colony shows that travel around Mississippi. Nancy created “More Than a Painting” art class for non-artists, teaching participants about composition, color mixing, and art history, leading them to create their own work of art. Nancy has served as vice president and president of the University Dames of UM, and is an active member of Mississippi Plein Air Painters, Art Guild of Oxford, Vicksburg Art Association, and Mississippi Art Colony. Despite all her activities, Nancy said she “had not volunteered here in Oxford and thought it was time. Vicksburg is full of older ‘saved’ homes. I like the idea of keeping this one going for Oxford.”



Nancy Mitchell

Happy Birthday:

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| Peggie Roder | May 9 |
| Claire Dickerson | May 10 |
| Beth Ducrest | May 10 |
| Nancy Davis | May 23 |



Cedar Oaks Treasure: Self-Rocking Cradle



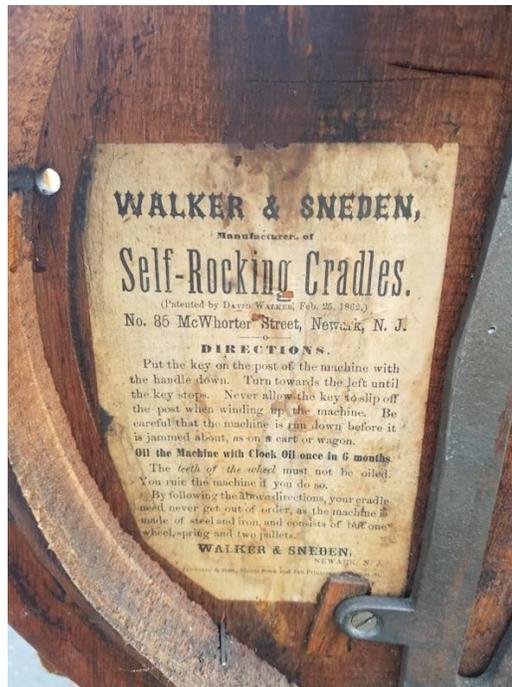
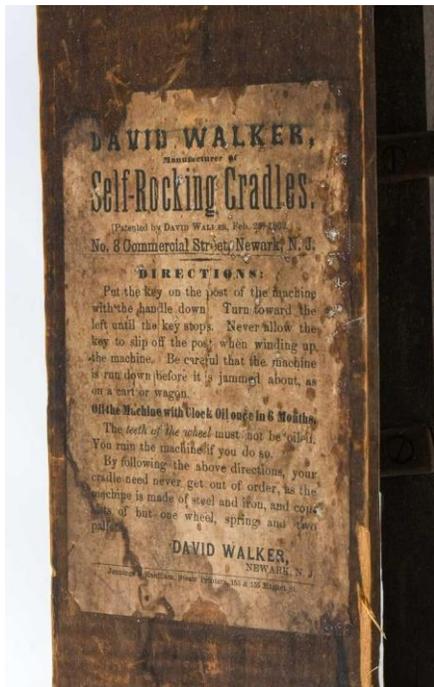
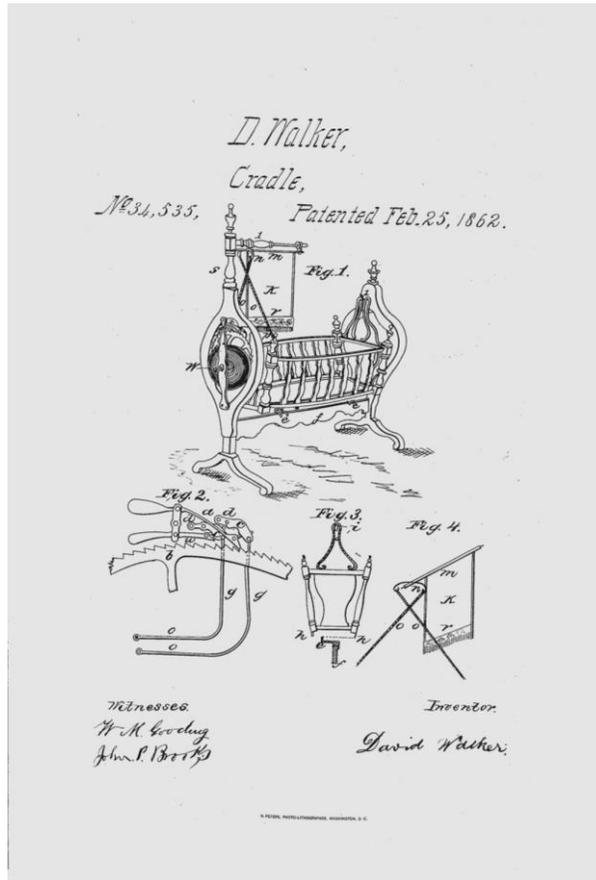
Upstairs in the Shaw bedroom is a charming cradle, which rocked by a key wound mechanism. The cradle was likely made in the late 1850s or several years later. The West Virginia State Museum has Andrew Summers Rowan's baby cradle, which looks like the same design. Rowan was a local Spanish American War hero, born 1857. The museum credits the clockwork mechanism to Aaron Dodd Crane, NJ.



Rowan's cradle

David Walker, also from NJ, obtained a patent for an "improved self-rocking cradle." Although the patent was not granted until Feb. 25, 1862, he was probably manufacturing and selling the cradles prior to receiving a patent. His improvements were to the rocking mechanism, regulating the amount of motion, and the attachment of a fan, similar to a "shoo fly fan" sometimes seen in

antebellum dining rooms. Aside from the image in the patent drawing, I have not found any pictures of cradles with the fan attached.



They were manufactured by David Walker, and presumably later by Walker & Sneden, Newark, NJ. A few cradles in antique stores still had the company label and instructions. The frame work of the actual cradle bed design was not specified in the patent: “may be of the form shown in Fig. 1, or of any other that may be found suitable.” The bed design varied somewhat, and whether the wood was plain slats or turned. The cradle rocked for about an hour after being wound. Apparently they were quite popular. Along with exhibiting curiosities, P. T. Barnum held baby contests in various cities. Barnum’s Museum, Boston, June, 1862 sponsored one of these baby contests, “The Grand National Baby Show.” The flyer stated that “Walker and Sneden’s self-rocking cradles, highly recommended by physicians” would be provided “for the use and comfort of the babies.”



Cedar Oaks cradle





The metal pieces underneath the cradle seem to be stops to prevent it from swinging too far.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/history-cribs-other-brilliant-bizarre-inventions-getting-babies-to-sleep-180972138/>

Walker's patent:

<https://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/10/08/ce/ce8b76758841c4/US34535.pdf>

https://www.letgo.com/en-us/i/antique-walker-and-snedden-cradle_2b2edebe-b775-4391-83db-cf268ad10b31

<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/victorian-walnut-mechanical-self-456489737>

<https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/victorian-patent-furniture-self-rocking-cradle-523-c-71a407db6f>

West Virginia State Museum: <http://travelphotobase.com/v/USWV/WVCM297.HTM>

Barnum:

https://fsu.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fsu%3A197817/datastream/OBJ/view/Barnum_s_Museum_June_9_1862_Herald.pdf

Sharon Schreiber, Newsletter Editor