

This Place Matters

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I remember the first time I saw the lithograph that was done of the mansion. I studied the stone work, admired the sturdy lines and wondered to myself, “where is this building”. I worked for Norma Bair at the time and she had brought the framed print into the office to adorn the wall in the hall. For several years, I frequently helped Norma with publishing the newsletter. My computer behaved better than hers during the publishing process.

I always I admired Norma’s dedication to the preservation of this lovely building. Having grown up in the house just around the corner, may have had an impact on her sense of the need to preserve this beautiful historic home.

But as life is busy, full of things to do and places to go, I never made the trip across the river to visit the mansion. Norma had always shared the new photos that were taken of the mansion so I felt as though I knew what it looked like. I also felt that helping with the newsletter was a way for me to help with the mansion.

In 2007, I found myself in charge of a field trip for a small group of my close friends, so I asked Norma if it would be possible to have a private tour of the Mansion. She was delighted to act as tour guide and what a day it was. My dear friends really enjoyed visiting the Mansion and still talk about how much fun they had that day.

When we walked through the doors into the kitchen, I thought to myself that this place needs a ton of work. As we made our way from the kitchen through the first floor, I found myself feeling a strong sense of the past. Within each new room I could almost visualize the glory that had existed there. The walls were talking to me. The home of Samuel S Haldeman must have been a stunning place. That beauty still exists today and with time, money and hard work, the restoration will some day be completed.

Yes, there are many historic old homes, especially here in Central Pennsylvania. We are blessed with a having a rich history. But there is something special about the Haldeman Mansion. Maybe it’s the way it sits so splendidly atop the hill with its majestic view of the river. If we, as good stewards of today and days past, do not work to preserve homes such as the Haldeman Mansion, they will not last into the future and the next generations will not as easily know or be able to sense the past.