

For immediate release

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Friends of John Jay Homestead Celebrate Nancy Jay Bedroom Opening with Gala Luncheon

Bedford, NY, October 22, 2010 - The Friends of John Jay Homestead will hold a ladies luncheon on November 3, 2010 from 11:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. to celebrate the reinstallation of a room in the Bedford House. The room, which had formerly been depicted as the Farm Manager's, has been reinterpreted as that of John Jay's daughter, Nancy. During the last two years, the space has been completely transformed with custom millwork, textiles, and prints from a dreary, rustic 1790s appearance indicative of an employee's quarters, to an elegant, feminine, 1820s room, fitting for the woman of the house.

"Many hours were spent researching written documentation and various manufacturers in an effort to evoke the original design," said Heather Langham, Trustee of Friends of John Jay Homestead and Chair of the House Committee.

The event begins with a house tour focusing on the decorative arts followed by a luncheon which will feature a panel discussion during dessert. Panelists include: NY Times writer, Wendy Moonan, speaking about antiques; Natalie Larsen, the nation's leading authority on historic textiles; and Allan Weinreb, John Jay Homestead Site Curator, speaking about Nancy Jay. Linda Sherbert, Features Editor of Veranda Magazine, will serve as moderator.

"We are so pleased to be hosting this distinguished panel of guests at the luncheon." said Kathy Abbott, owner of Kathy Abbott Interiors, Inc. and Chair of the Nancy Jay Luncheon.

Ann Jay (1783-1856), familiarly called "Nancy", assumed the role of head of household at the age of 19 upon the death of her mother, Sarah. She managed the house for her father until his death in 1829, overseeing household finances and staff, ordering foodstuffs, planning meals, and being responsible for entertaining, home decorating projects, and the gardens.

Previously, the tour of the historic house focused on the lives of John Jay and his son, William Jay. With the bedroom's official re-opening, it will include a discussion of Nancy's role in the management of the household, her life as a single woman in her 30s living in 1820s Bedford, her involvement in the anti-slavery movement and other reform movements and her relationships with family and friends. The restoration also gives staff the platform to expand on important broad concepts such as the role of women in society and the education of girls in the 18th and 19th centuries.

"The room's interpretation brings it in line with the other rooms in the house and gives the docents a chance to tell the story of the critically important role of women in early America," said Heather Iannucci, Site Manager of the State Historic Site. "The accomplishments of Nancy Jay, and other women from that era, seem doubly impressive when viewed in context of their circumstances."

About the Friends

Friends of John Jay Homestead is a non-profit, educational organization founded in 1977 by local Bedford residents. It is New York State's day-to-day partner in providing volunteer assistance and critical funding for the purpose of: increasing public appreciation and awareness of the history of our nation, our region, and John Jay's contribution to the founding of our nation; encouraging use of the site for both educational and recreational purposes; and restoring and interpreting the Main House and 62-acre landscape. For more information, visit www.johnjayhomestead.org.