



ABOUT ANTIQUES | by jim barfield

Photography by danny gilleland

# Sleuthing the Hay House

The new man in charge at Macon's historic Johnston-Felton-Hay House brings a wagonload of impressive credentials to the job. Jonathan Poston was at the Historic Charleston Foundation for 22 years, most recently as director of museums and preservation initiatives. He served as lecturer for Clemson University and the College of Charleston in their joint historic preservation program. Subsequently he served as director of the Southwest office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. It was only because that position was eliminated in an organizational restructuring that Jonathan could be recruited by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation to serve as their director of properties as well as Hay House director.

After six months at his new job Poston is very much at home in Macon, and he is making a real difference at the Hay House. Being a consummate professional, he believes in devoting some time each day to research. His probe into the extensive files archived at the Hay House continues to produce new and meaningful discoveries about the house, its furnishings and about the families who lived in it.

The restoration of a house as large, elaborate and important as the Hay House must be a careful and lengthy process. The new director is an ideal guide in this ongoing process. Work on the main floor is almost complete with the library being the last major room to be restored. The restoration committee was planning to re-

name the room "the gentlemen's parlor" until Poston's research revealed that in the 19th century it was known as "the green parlor" and served as the family's gathering room. It is now beautifully re-finished and ready to receive its furnishings. Poston's skills as a historical detective are helping to determine the most appropriate furniture and accessories for the room's proper interpretation.

Johnston family papers reveal they were avid card players. Poston was planning to acquire some vintage playing cards for use in the room until he opened a trunk that had been given by the family's descendants a few years ago and found the very cards they had used. Also in the trunk were countless other objects that can be displayed in the house.