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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

Randolph, Virginia

“A Very Mulberry Christmas”

Picture Underline: Join in the Christmas celebration as Mrs. Nancy McPhail opens her Antebellum home, Mulberry Hill, to visitors and guests. First-person demonstrations by docents and re-enactors will provide the public with tastes and pleasures of the past. The Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. is hosting this Antebellum Christmas Open House at Mulberry Hill on Saturday and Sunday, December 4 & 5 from 1-4PM for \$5/person. Pictured (left to right) in period dress are Darlene Foster, Grace Elliott, Holly Owen, Hazel Bayers, and Patt Graves.

The “halls are decked” and the “trees are trimmed” at historic Mulberry Hill Plantation in Randolph, Virginia. Mulberry Hill is the backdrop for the 2010 Antebellum Christmas Open House hosted by the Staunton River Battlefield State Park and the Historic Staunton River Foundation, Inc. The plantation is the ancestral home of the Virginia Carrington family. Among those who walked these venerable buildings and grounds were prominent founders of our nation, politicians, lawyers, war heroes, and successful planters. The namesake, Mulberry Hill, was derived from Judge Paul Carrington’s endeavor to raise silk worms, which fed on the overabundant mulberry trees located throughout the rolling fields and acres. The manor dates back to the mid 1700s. Its outbuildings, law office, and grounds provide a perfect timeline of history and culture for interpreting the life of a successful colonial family that with their progeny encompassed more than two hundred years of history in Southside Virginia. Most notably, the house served as headquarters for the advancing Federal Army during the Battle of Staunton River Bridge in 1864. In 2003, the descendants of Judge Paul Carrington donated the house and an impressive collection of furnishings, documents, pictures, and accessories to the Commonwealth of Virginia so that all could enjoy and learn.

Several years ago, it was the dream of the Historic Staunton River Foundation, the 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, promotion, and development of the Staunton River Battlefield State Park, to host a Christmas-themed open house so that this historic home, its impressive contents, and its unique story could be told and enjoyed. This year marks the ninth year of the Antebellum Christmas Open House. It is held each year during the first weekend of December.

Come out and share in the yuletide and cheer of the beginning of the holiday season by making plans to attend the Antebellum Christmas Open House at Mulberry Hill on either Saturday or Sunday, December 4 & 5 from 1-4PM. Don’t forget your cameras! The event is open to the public and admission is \$5/person and children under 6 are admitted free. Tickets are only valid for the one-day pass and can be purchased at the Roanoke Station Depot in Randolph. Parking is available at the Depot in downtown Randolph, and a free shuttle service will usher visitors to and from the Plantation.

Once at the Plantation, Mrs. McPhail, the woman of the house who bravely protected her home and family from the Union Army during the War Between the States,

will greet you at her home. From that warm and cheerful greeting, you will be given a tour of her home meeting some of her relatives, seeing the Carrington family heirlooms, and hearing some family stories and legends along the way. In the boxwood gardens, fresh Confederate troops from the area will be bivouacked to provide you with a glimpse into the hardships of War and camp life. This unique first-person interpretation will provide you with a foretaste into a working Antebellum Plantation at the turn of the War.

The money raised from this event will go towards fulfilling the Foundation's mission of supporting the Battlefield State Park and its continued restoration efforts at Mulberry Hill. The Foundation is exclusively operated by a dedicated group of volunteers and its yearly dues-paying members; if you are interested in joining the Foundation or would like volunteer with this event or future events, please call 434.454.6219. Also, please visit the Foundation's Facebook or website at www.stauntonriverbattlefield.org.