

Renfrew Institute Joins in Completing the “Wagon Shed Project”

Visitors to Renfrew Museum and Park are sure to notice several recent projects that have left the facility looking well tended and well loved. The Visitors Center barn has a new roof and a fresh coat of paint. The grounds have been beautified by new plantings, and “prunings.” A more “walkable” limestone path now leads visitors to the Royer house. A newly created opening in the stone wall permits visitors easier access to happenings in the meadow. And, the wagon shed no longer houses wagons!

The Wagon Shed Evolves

Once upon a time, farm wagons were loaded and unloaded in the structure that adjoined the barn—a wooden frame affair with a corncrib on its outside wall. Open on the front with lumbering double doors at the rear that could swing wide open for egress of wagons, the wagon shed was an important element of the working farmstead.

Wagonloads of corn are no longer unloaded on this spot. Today’s activities are centered on sharing knowledge with students of all ages who attend institute school programs, and public programs offered by Renfrew Institute and Renfrew Museum and Park. Thousands of visitors arrive annually, eager to be informed, entertained and inspired.

In recent years, though still housing idle wagons, the wagon shed had become a spot for institute school programs on rainy days. Countless students will recall sitting among the straw bales, the scent of an earthen floor, and the whirr of barn swallows flitting in and out as they fed babies nested in high wooden beams. It was even the site for musical performances and puppet shows on inclement festival days.

Converting the Wagon Shed

In an effort to better serve a growing population of visitors, the decision was made to enclose the wagon shed, converting it for four-season use as Renfrew Museum and Park and Renfrew Institute host public programming, exhibit artifacts and conduct meetings.

Although facility care is primarily the charge of Renfrew Museum and Park, Renfrew Institute is committed to partnering with the Museum in ways that contribute to our shared use of this community treasure.

To that end, when considering its role in the wagon shed project, the institute elected to adopt a facet of the project—to oversee the selection and installation of the floor.

Choosing a Sustainable Floor

In an effort to model the institute’s mission statement, we were committed to choosing a sustainable material. With sensitivity to the aesthetics—an exposed limestone wall and the rich patina of the old wooden corncrib walls—we chose sustainably harvested wormy red oak.

Although wood is a renewable resource, we were able to take the sustainability factor a level higher by choosing a product from the **Woods Company**, thanks to guidance from **Karen Durning**. Our floor was constructed with lumber milled from standing dead wood, a result of gypsy moth damage, and harvested in our own state of Pennsylvania.

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The Woods Company President **Barry Stup** sweetened the materials choice by making a monetary contribution to the project, and providing free delivery of the beautifully kiln dried, random width tongue and groove lumber.

Heroes Install the Floor

There were ‘heroes’ involved in this project! **Lowe’s Heroes**, led by Lowe’s Assistant Store Manager **Jeremy Mays**, donated \$1,687 worth of materials (everything needed to complete the job but the wood!) and 287 labor hours to install the floor.

Included in the team were **Mike Cannady, Djordje Culum, Sarah Hurd, Paul Mays, Alison Mogle, Steve Paddack, Jeff Poffenberger** and **Missy Short**.

Team members came with their own tools on their own time, and then went to work at Lowe’s after their volunteer shift of floor installation!

Finishing Touches

Once the oak floor was in place, sanding and finish were accomplished. **Mark Manley** adjusted his busy **Antietam Wood Flooring** schedule to permit us to coordinate with one of a very few professionals familiar with *Rubio Monocoat*, the sustainable linseed oil based specialty finish we had selected.

Rod Hoffman not only slipped us into a packed calendar, he and his colleague **Mike** completed the job of applying the *Rubio Monocoat* and delivered smiles and hugs in place of an invoice!

Several members of the Lowe’s team also worked through temps hovering at 100 degrees to revamp the stone walkway at the museum house—lifting limestone boulders, leveling the trench and replacing the stones.



Lowe’s Heroes workers, left to right, Jeremy Mays, Jeff Poffenberger & Paul Mays helped to expertly install wormy red oak floorboards in the converted wagon shed room. Photo by Tracy Holliday.

Wagon Shed Project *Continued from previous page*

The job was completed under the guidance of expert stonemason **Dick Ressler**, with help from **Frederick Skroban, Jared Wilson** and **Gage Stoops**.

The bottom line for the institute's contribution was valued at more than \$9,000. In addition to the donations mentioned above, a bequest from the late **Judge John Keller** provided funds used to accomplish the project.

It was a pleasure for us to enjoy these generous partnerships as our beautiful new community room emerged. Please come for a visit to see the warmth of the once-upon-a-time wagon shed, now site of a wonderful tool exhibit mounted by members of Renfrew Museum and Park's staff and board. While you're there, be sure to notice the beautiful red oak floor!



The former wagon shed was a lovely setting for this year's garden volunteers' dinner. Old wooden corn crib walls on the left, and the vintage limestone wall on the right are complemented by the flooring. Photo by Pam Rowland.

Wagonshed Room Red Oak Floor Project

The floor you see in the Wagon Shed Room was researched, funded and installed by Renfrew Institute (in cooperation with Renfrew Museum and Park) as a contribution to the "new room project" here at Renfrew.

About our floor...

- The wood flooring was purchased from The Woods Company, Chambersburg, Pa. It is "wormy red oak" acquired from standing dead trees in our local region.
- The subflooring material and installation labor was provided gratis by Lowe's through its Lowe's Heroes program.
- The adhesive used to seal the concrete underneath and bond it to the subfloor is an eco-friendly product called "Bostic's Best."
- The finish on the surface is a linseed oil based "green" product called "Rubio Monocoat."

Our goal was to create the most beautiful, eco-friendly, durable and affordable floor possible. Special thanks to: **Lowe's** (*Jeremy Mays & crew*), **Rod's Flooring** (*Rod Hoffman—gratis labor for finish application*), **The Woods Co.** (*Karen Durning, expert guidance and Barry Stup, monetary contribution*), and **Antietam Wood Flooring** (*Mark Manley—schedule accommodation for sanding*). Funding for the project was provided through the John W. Keller bequest.

About the trees...

Northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*) is a native species to this area. Outbreaks of gypsy moth occur in 8 to 12 year cycles, causing defoliation, which stresses the trees.

During times of drought, this can be devastating to northern red oak growth and survival. Other impacts from the two-lined chestnut borer and Armillaria root rot increase mortality.

The small holes you see in our flooring are galleries made by ambrosia beetles, which use dead and dying trees for their nurseries. The dark stain edging the holes is caused by fungus the beetles bring in to provide a food source for their young.

—Information provided by Dr. Elizabeth Brantley, Forest Technology, Penn State/Mont Alto

