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Historical Commission to honor Gibbs for work at Pritchett House

By Matthew Jackson

HUNTSVILLE — The Walker County Historical Commission will present a preservation award to Mary Laura Gibbs of Huntsville for her restoration work on the historic Pritchett House on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

The presentation ceremony will be held at the home, located at 1322 Avenue O.

One of Huntsville oldest homes, the Pritchett House was built by Joseph Lucien Pritchett and his wife Lenora in 1892. The family moved to Huntsville in 1888 after Mr. Pritchett was named to the faculty of Sam Houston Normal Institute as a professor of mathematics.

The Pritchett family owned the home, which they named “Oak Grove,” until 1945 when it was purchased by William Kellogg.

Kellogg lived in the home until his death, and the home was sold to Gibbs by his estate in 2006.

Gibbs undertook a restoration of the home, maintaining its Folk Victorian architecture while working to improve various features.

“She’s really done a good job working on it,” said Walker County Historical Commission Chairman James Patton. “Mr. Kellogg took good care of it and maintained it, and when she bought it she started working on it, restored the cistern and did some other things to it, but pretty well preserved everything as it is.”

In 2001, the home was recorded as a Texas Historic Landmark, and is frequently used for events and special events, including the Huntsville Historic Homes Tour held each December by the historical commission.

Since 1987 the commission has presented preservation awards to various groups and individuals for their efforts to restore and return to use structures over 50 years old. Previous preservation award winners include the Crabbs Prairie School House, St. Joseph’s Catholic Church and The Wynne Home.