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Become a Member

Rosewood group seek support for moving historic home

By Margo Wilson/For the Chronicle Aug 12, 2021



The John Wright house, which is being donated to the Real Rosewood Foundation.

[Photo from realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com)



A Rosewood cabin burning. The photo is from a commercial that the Real Rosewood Foundation had made for them.

Can a historic house that's more than 100 years old safely roll down 35 miles of State Road 24 from the site of the former nearly all-black community of Rosewood to a spot in Archer, where it might become the cornerstone of a museum commemorating the 1923 Rosewood massacre?

Board members of the Real Rosewood Foundation want to find out.

They are seeking someone with house-moving expertise to advise them about the feasibility of moving the house, which the county Property Appraiser's Office says was built in 1901. Can the home survive the trip and how much might that cost? So far, board members haven't been able to find a mover. They also would welcome donations to help finance the move.

But they are elated that their dream of a museum seems closer, ever since the residents of the house, Ian and Hannah Stone, decided to donate the house to the foundation.

Board member Jordan Marlowe, the mayor of Newberry, said when some of the board met with the Stones in July and the Stones said they'd like to donate the house, "You could feel the elation of all the board members. It was more than we could hope for. They want to save the same history we want to save."



Pedro Jermaine, vice president of the Real Rosewood Foundation.

[Photo special to the Chronicle](#)

Pedro Jermaine, foundation vice president and resident artist, said when the Stones said they'd like to donate the house, the board members tried to stay calm.

"We didn't want to scream and cry. We waited until we got in the car to go crazy," he said.

If the home can be moved, it will wind up on the land in Archer upon which Lizzie Robinson-Jenkins grew up and where she heard tales of Rosewood from her mother, Theresa Brown Robinson, and her aunt, Mahulda "Gussie" Brown Carrier, who was a Rosewood survivor.

On New Year's Day in 1923 and for several days thereafter, a gang of whites, incited by the Ku Klux Klan, burned Rosewood to the ground. At least five blacks and two whites died. The white owner of the Rosewood general store, John Wright, gave refuge to some of the blacks in his home along Highway 24. This home, in which the Stones live, is the only building that survived the Rosewood fire.

Robinson-Jenkins has devoted many years to telling the story of Rosewood.

Marlowe said the house donation "validates the work Ms. Lizzie has spent her life doing."

Ian Stone is modest about the importance of what he and his family are doing by giving the house to the foundation.

He is a clam farmer in Cedar Key and said he and his wife plan to keep the nearly 35-acre property along Highway 24 and use it to store equipment, boats, and to maybe set up a clam shop. The Stones are having a manufactured home delivered in the fall and will continue to live on the property.

Stone said he felt he might be “a little over my head” in preserving the Wright home himself.

“I don’t want to tear this house down or demolish it,” he said. “I do like the house and history, and from that regard, I’m happy to see it being preserved.”

Keeping the house isn’t “feasible for what I’m trying to do,” he said. “I’m a pretty analytical thinker,” he said, and donating the house “checks off all the boxes.”



Hannah and Ian Stone, who are donating the house to the Real Rosewood Foundation, with their son, Silas, 1. They are visiting Seahorse Key.

Photo courtesy of the Stones



Ian and Hannah Stone in their boat, Sheila Baby — named by the previous owner. They are off Dock Street in Cedar Kay. Ian is a clam farmer.

Photo courtesy of the Stones

Board member Joy Glanzer was present with other board members on the porch of the Wright house, sampling lemonade and cookies, the day that Stone and his wife offered to donate the house to the foundation. Glanzer said Stone is “a very unassuming young man,” but by donating the building, his family has “become part of the history of Rosewood.”

The county Property Appraiser’s office shows that Gregory and Angela Stone — Ian Stone’s parents — purchased the property for \$300,000 in April 2020. The house is valued at \$164,977, and the land, which is agricultural, is valued at \$117,130. According to [realtor.com](https://www.realtor.com), there also is a pole barn, workshop, and covered carport. The Property Appraiser’s office puts the value of “extra features” at \$4,508.

Robinson-Jenkins said she’s in the Rosewood area frequently. There’s a marker at the site that discusses the Rosewood tragedy. One day she saw Ian Stone in his yard, and she introduced herself and told him of her involvement with the Real Rosewood Foundation. They exchanged contact information.

Then in February of this year, she took a group to Rosewood to film a commercial about Rosewood. She had contacted the Stones ahead of time. That day, the Stones met the group and gave them a tour of the house. They mentioned they might be interested in selling the home if it could be moved off the property.

“We were super happy,” Robinson-Jenkins said. “We expressed a big-time interest.”

She stayed in touch with the Stones and said that at one point, the Stones offered to sell the house for \$100,000.

Board member Marlowe said after the board started thinking about the costs of purchasing the house, moving it, and then restoring it, the price started to get out of hand.

Board members met again with the Stones in July, and Robinson-Jenkins said they went with heavy hearts, expecting to ask the Stones to give them more time to raise the purchase money.

Instead, when the Stones offered to donate the house, the offer was “very amazing,” Robinson-Jenkins later said in a text message. “People need to know what they did.”

All of the parties stress there are many pieces of the deal that still need to be put in place.

Marlowe said he’s contacted every house-moving company in North Central Florida and hasn’t been able to find one willing to come out and tell him if it would be possible to move the house.

“I need an expert to go out and look around, to look at the foundation and tell us if it would be astronomical to move the house, or if it’s not too far gone, or if it just can’t be moved.”

Marlowe, Jermaine, and Robinson-Jenkins said if the house simply can’t be moved, then the board would see to it that the house is disassembled and would try to recover as much of the original wood, and the staircase and fixtures as possible. They then would build a replica in Archer.

Marlowe estimated it might cost more than \$100,000 to move the house and another couple hundred thousand to restore it.

Robinson-Jenkins and Glanzer said the foundation is applying for grants to help fund the move and museum. Robinson-Jenkins also has been working with a professor at Florida International University, where architecture students have designed the Archer museum as a small town.

Six student plans are under consideration. “They’ve got a cemetery, a wall, train tracks. There are cabins, a library, a conference room, a video room, a restaurant — a town,” Robinson-Jenkins said.

Jermaine said the plans call for the museum, itself, to be in the John Wright house, and for there to be an arts hall, including a gallery, with recreation and an outdoor theater, as well as a memorial site.

He said acquiring the Wright home is like “the cherry on the top of what of what we’ve accomplished with the Rosewood Foundation, especially in being able to share with the community and with the youth.”

The house will allow the foundation to not only tell about Rosewood, but to physically show it, Jermaine said.

Glanzer said there’s still a bullet casing in the floorboard in the foyer.

The board members suggested that if people would like to donate to the cause, they can do so at: <https://rosewoodflorida.wordpress.com/get-involved/> and click on the “Make a Donation” button.

“Every \$5 or \$25 helps,” Marlowe said.

He said people who can help with the move also may contact him at 352-339-4670.

Even though there are many hurdles ahead, the donation of the house “is one giant step forward,” Marlowe said.

“I’m so excited. It’s a great project,” Glanzer said. She praised Robinson-Jenkins for “her tenacity and passion for preserving Rosewood.”

According to Glanzer, Robinson-Jenkins “has taught me so much. ... I can’t imagine the world without Lizzie. ... I am glad she’s in this life at the same time that I am.”

Jermaine said, “Lizzie has dedicated 30 years of her life to this. This is the fruition of all her dreams.”

As Robinson-Jenkins sees it, “God is helping the survivors heal. We are going to see that their legacy will be remembered.”



Lizzie Robinson-Jenkins, who has been pursuing the story of what happened at Rosewood for about 30 years.

Photo by Margo Wilson/For the Chronicle



The Rosewood historical marker, along State Road 24.

Photo from realtor.com