

Press Release

History Salvaged acquires remnants **of 11th Presidents death home** **"Polk Place"**

December 22, 2020 - Nashville, TN

A **History Salvaged** private collection acquisition includes several small pieces of *Witness Wood*® from the home of our 11th President, **James K. Polk**.

This small collection included period photographs and postcards of "Polk Place" in the late 1800s and at the time of the property's demolition in 1901. **History Salvaged** expects to be able to create 4-6 handcrafted *Witness Wood*® pens from the acquisition.

While living in the White House in 1847 and preparing to return to Tennessee at the end of his Presidency, **President Polk** purchased a Nashville home built by Tennessee Attorney General Felix Grundy, between 1815 and 1820 and known as "Grundy Place" and renaming it "**Polk Place**".

After having Nashville architect J.M. Hughes renovate the home an accidental gunpowder explosion destroyed the rear of the home later that same year. **President Polk** took the opportunity to modernize and redesign the property to the Greek Revival style. Returning to Tennessee in 1849 and the construction not complete, the President and his wife Sarah stayed in Columbia, TN at the home of the President's Mother before returning to Nashville two weeks later when construction was finished. It was the President's final residence where he died of cholera in 1849 at the age of 53. He had lived in the home for a little over thirty days. After his death, his wife continued to reside there for 42 years until her death in 1891. The home was demolished in 1901, a decade after her death.

During the Civil War, **Polk Place** was considered neutral ground by both the Confederate and Union armies, despite the fact that Sarah had nephews fighting on the Confederate side. Union Generals Ulysses S. Grant and others frequently paid their respects to the former first lady, as had Confederate generals before the Union occupation. Following Sarah's death family members fought over the property with a judge ruling in favor of the Polk family giving control of the home to them.

President Polk's tomb was originally located on the front lawn until 1893 when it was moved to the Tennessee State Capitol. The Polk Family could not agree on what to do with the home and did not want to follow the President's will, in which he expressed the desire that a worthy and noble Polk relative run the home like the Andrew Jackson's Hermitage. Finally, the Tennessee State Supreme Court ordered the Polk family to sell the home and evenly split the money from the sale in 1900 and torn down in 1901.

ABOUT HISTORY SALVAGED

History Salvaged began with a simple goal: the reclamation, salvaging and repurposing of wood and other natural materials from historic sites throughout the United States that would otherwise be discarded and lost to history. We work primarily with *Witness Wood*® and timbers removed from historical buildings and sites during the renovation and preservation of existing structures as well as with trees and branches that have fallen in storms or are removed for safety reasons or expanded construction.

With the challenges facing all of us in the 21st Century and as the Greatest Generation and Baby Boomers age, the relationship with our forefathers and national identity seems to be fading. We are committed to preserving our national identity and preserving sites, buildings and materials that have not only witnessed but have been part of that national identity.