

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MARIETTA JOHNSON MUSEUM

July 1994
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The Marietta L. Johnson Museum was established in 1990, to preserve and promote the educational philosophy of Marietta L. Johnson, founder of the School of Organic Education, to provide resources that disseminate this philosophy to the public, to foster these principles in the home, school and community and to make this philosophy and its application available to educators and educational institutions.

The Museum was the dream of Dot and Kenny Cain who conceived the idea and worked tirelessly for many years to ensure its success. It was their hope that Mrs. Johnson's philosophy and teaching methods be adopted by teachers in all schools. The Museum was established to promote this as well as to be a memorial to Mrs. Johnson.

The crux of Mrs. Johnson's philosophy is that the purpose of education is not preparation for the future, but the "proper nurturing of immediate needs of the whole organism". She believed that this kind of environment (designed to meet all the needs of the growing organism - body, mind and spirit) will produce a person so strong and integrated that he can meet situations successfully, harmoniously, confidently.

Mrs. Johnson was strongly influenced by the writings of Nathan Oppenheim, C. Hanford Henderson and John Dewey as well as earlier philosophers Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel. In 1907 she founded the School of Organic Education to test her beliefs and as a result of her many lecture tours describing her beliefs and the application of them at the school she became famous in educational circles worldwide. She was sought after to speak to

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educational organizations across the U.S. and made talks at the International Conference of the New Educational Fellowship at Heidelberg, Germany, the World Federation of Education Associations and the International Conference of the Girl Scouts at Cambridge, England. She was instrumental in founding the Progressive Education Association in 1919.

A charismatic woman of tremendous energy and creativity, Mrs. Johnson was far ahead of her time in her convictions and promotion of what came to be known as "progressive education" in the 1920's and 1930's.

The Marietta Johnson Museum is a repository of writings, artifacts and pictures tastefully and artistically arranged to give the visitor a glimpse of what the school was like in Mrs. Johnson's day. The Museum includes manuscripts of theses and doctoral dissertations by educators about Mrs. Johnson's philosophy and the practical application of it. Displays include folk dance costumes, apparatus for working with clay, and a wide variety of craft items made by students of the school. A lovely diorama gives an accurate representation of how the school campus appeared in the 1930's.

The Museum and the Fairhope Public Library has on file VCR taped interviews of former teachers and students. A biographical sketch of each interviewee is included.