

MAPLE GROVE/SLOAN HOUSE

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Maple Grove/Sloan House

John Sloan came to Brentwood in 1929 and purchased the old Jabez Owen Allen farm. He named his new farm the Maple Grove Farm. It was a "working farm" where he raised fine blooded horses and registered Guernsey cattle. The home that he built could be described as a mansion in the English manor-house style.

He, and others, became a part of the development of the Brentwood area in terms of the large horse farms that pre-date the business park atmosphere known today. Pre-Civil War plantations had fallen into disrepair and decay making the land available for speculators and wealthy Nashville merchants like John Sloan. The kinds of houses and barns they built set the stage for the success of the City of Brentwood.

Horse racing and foxhunting drew many people to the area. The Sloan House and Farm were a main attraction on most Saturday afternoons.

Maple Grove Farm

John Sloan came to Brentwood in 1929 and bought the old Jabez Owen Allen farm. He became one of Brentwood's most prominent and respected citizens. He left a legacy that has gone a long way toward making Brentwood what it became.

John Sloan was one of the principals of Cain-Sloan, at one time Nashville's leading department store. It was located on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Church Street in downtown Nashville before it moved to the suburbs. It later became Allied Stores, Dillards, Proffetts, and other commercial establishments. He built his mansion in the style of an English manor house. It commanded a spectacular view of his farm.

John Sloan was tall and courtly. He looked every inch of the gentleman that he was. He named his farm Maple Grove Farm. It was, first of all, a working farm. He raised fine blooded horses and equally fine blooded registered Guernsey dairy cattle. His cows won as many blue ribbons at the State Fair as his horses did at the Steeplechase.

John Sloan carved a niche for himself in the Brentwood community. No single person has had a greater influence on the way in which Brentwood has developed. He was one of several men and their families who moved to Brentwood in the 1930's and 1940's. They bought up the old plantations that had fallen into decay. They restored Brentwood to its pre-Civil War Splendor. It was indeed the Brentwood Renaissance. Sloan was in the lead of the group. He is quoted as saying that *people were attracted to Brentwood by the three H's – Houses, Horses, and Hounds.*

A foxhunting group was formed called the Hillsboro Hounds. They rode the hills and farms of Brentwood every Saturday afternoon. Riders were resplendent in their *pink coats* and riding habits. They would gather on the front lawn of Maple Grove for a blessing of the hounds. Then it was off for the run.

It was a new world for Brentwood, but it was carried off in impeccable good taste. The foxhunting newcomers to Brentwood were careful to gain and maintain the respect of the old-time Brentwood landlords. They received permission to hunt on the lands of the old-timers, who were invited to join the chase. They built rail gaps for accident-free jumping.

John Sloan represented the 15th Civil District of Williamson County on the Williamson County Quarterly Court (old name for the County Commission) for years. Every September he entertained the members of the Court for a Bar-B-Que at this home.

Sloan and a group of visionary Brentwood citizens saw the need for organized and systematic planning. They organized the first Brentwood Planning Commission before the city was incorporated. They conceived a plan for the development of Brentwood, much of which is still in place.

John Sloan seldom missed a meeting of the Brentwood Planning Commission nor the Brentwood City Commission. His oldest son, John E. Sloan, Jr., was one of the first Mayors of Brentwood.

John Sloan's influence reached beyond Brentwood. He was president of the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, served on the Vanderbilt University Board of Trust, was director of First American National Bank, and served on the boards of many other civic organizations.

One of Sloan's greatest contributions to the local area was in the founding of the Iroquois Memorial Steeplechase, which has been held every year, save one World War II year, since 1941 at Warner Park. His horse, named Bank Robber, won the main event in 1944.