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ASHLAWN

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ASHLAWN

On the east side of Highway 31, two miles south of Brentwood, is a stately, three story, ten room brick house which was built around 1820 by "a man named Christmas, who raised race horses." It was later the home of Henry and Martha Hughes Zellner, who came to Brentwood from Godwin, TN. It is not known if they were the next owners after Mr. Christmas. At Mr. Zellner's death in 1901, his only son, William James Zellner, who had married Sarah Rebecca Alexander, moved his family from Thompson Station to his father's place. James Zellner died in 1905 and the next year Ashlawn was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Wizell, Sr., who made it their home for more than 40 years. The bricks for the construction of this home were made on the place and the stone for the massive gate posts and mantels over the large fireplaces was quarried there. The rooms are 20 ft. square and a wide hallway runs through the center of the house. This hallway is rounded at the end, with a curving stairway going to the third floor. 83 year old Mrs. Rebecca James Boyd, a daughter of James and Rebecca Zellner, who returned to live in the community in 1954, remembers well the thrill of sliding down the entire length of this bannister! The small, trim, brick building to the side of the house was an office, which at one time was used as a school house for the children of the neighborhood. Ashlawn is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Stirton Oman, Sr., of Oman Construction Co. which, among other things, erected a telephone line from Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, to Fairbanks, Alaska, during WWII, had a part in building the Al-Can Highway and more recently has finished constructing Oro Dam, in California.

REFERENCES:

Rosalie C. Batson

ASHLAWN

Ashlawn was built in the 1830's by Richard and Mary Ann Smith Christmas. She was the granddaughter of James Leeper of the Cumberland Settlement and a sister of the wife of the builder of Hadleywood on the adjoining plantation. The walls of handmade brick are 13 inches thick and each room is 20 by 20 feet with 13 foot ceilings. The doors are pegged and many have the original locks, which were made in London. All woodwork is yellow poplar except the downstairs hall floor which is white ash. The handrail and spindles of the three story winding staircases are cherry. The staircase, which winds gracefully to the third floor, has no visible means of support. Ashlawn has had several owners, including Montgomery Bell, a prominent TN ironmonger, who endowed the Nashville school which bears his name. The house was restored by Mr. and Mrs. Stirton Oman and remains in that family.

Brentwood Brochure

ASHLAWN

Ashlawn is a beautiful three-story house located on Highway 31, two miles south of Brentwood. It's floors are made of ash and yellow poplar and it's stairway is made of solid cherry. Ashlawn's interior resembles the interior of the Hermitage.

Ashlawn has a long history. It was built by Richard Christmas soon after his marriage in 1832. Christmas, an impulsive man, made his living by raising race horses. The land came to Richard and Mary Emeline Christmas from the Leiper land grant.

Captain Leiper was the first white man married in Tennessee. Soon after his marriage he was killed in Fort Nashboro's Battle of the Bluff. Leiper never saw his daughter, who would become the mother of Ashlawn's first mistress, Mary Emeline Christmas.

This death was the first of a long string of deaths. For soon Captain Leiper's young widow died, leaving their daughter a young orphan. Mrs. Leiper died in an accident where a rifle fell from it's rack and went off. The tragedies must have followed Mary Emeline Christmas to Ashlawn, for in 1837 her baby boy, Richard, Jr. died. William, another son, while traveling away from home with a large amount of money, disappeared from Earth without a trace. One day in 1839, Richard Publicly announced that he was selling Ashlawn. He died only two years later, which saved him the grief of knowing that his wife would die only a few months later in a steamboat accident. Thus the tragedies ended.

Many people bought and sold the house. It was purchased by Montgomery Bell in 1850, who didn't treat the house well. His servants started open fires on the floors, which destroyed them.

Henry and Martha Zellner bought Ashlawn in 1871. David Lipscomb, founder of the Nashville Bible School-now David Lipscomb College, married their daughter, Margaret Ophelia Zellner. David Lipscomb's brother was William Lipscomb, founder of Lipscomb Elementary School.

It was remodeled by Stirton Oman, who bought it in 1945.

ASHLAWN—BEAUTIFUL & HISTORIC



ASHLAWN

By Virginia McDaniel Bowman

Ashlawn, one of Williamson County's most beautiful and historic homes, is located south of Brentwood on U.S. 31. Although this house is thoroughly adapted to modern living, it had its beginning in the earliest days of the settlement of Nashville.

Late in the spring of 1780 the socially starved pioneers at Ft. Nashborough were treated to a wedding—that of James Leeper and Miss Susan Drake, whose father and brothers were among the first to arrive in the new community. As the young people stood before James Robertson repeating the age old vows they became the first couple to be married in this section of Tennessee.

It was a happy occasion, a brief surcease from the constant anxieties and uncertainties they had known since leaving the safety of their homes. There was a wedding feast prepared by their friends from whatever game they had killed and a marvel of ingenuity—a wedding cake baked by Mrs. McNairy. This was something of a culinary triumph considering she probably had neither sugar nor flour. Later there was dancing, but even in the midst of gaiety men, with guns in the crook of their arms watched the forest, for Indians needed but a moment's carelessness to wreck their vengeance upon the new settlers.

During that first year only one man died a natural death; all the other heavy loss of life was caused by Indian raiding parties who not only mercilessly killed men, women and chil-

dren, but made off with the precious livestock and burned the few crops.

Early on the morning of April 2, 1781, all inhabitants of Ft. Nashborough were busy. Women were milking, children were reciting to the schoolteacher, Zachariah White, some of the men were off hunting, others were in the fields when the Indians attacked. Those who were near enough to hear the shots dropped what they were doing and scurried for the sheltering walls of the fort. Zachariah White ran out to fire at the attackers and fell mortally wounded, but the encounter was brief and the Indians soon fled, content with stealing what horses had been hitched outside ready for the day's work. A vigorous argument arose as to whether or not the men should go after them, some were for it—others opposed the risk. Finally, headed by James Robertson, they saddled up and rode out. Once before, when Freeland's Station had been attacked and horses stolen, they had ridden out in just such a manner, frightened the thieves away and returned with the horses. Pioneers to the Cumberland risked their lives every day. They were killed milking, hunting, gathering nuts and picking berries, working in the fields, getting firewood, carrying water from the spring and even in their cabins. The numerous tragedies did not stop them, however, from doing the things that made up their lives and part of this was to ride out to rescue a stolen child, retrieve pilfered livestock and drive off troublesome and deadly raiding parties.

Unfortunately, this time proved to be different from Freeland's Station. They had hardly disappeared over the hill before heavy firing broke out and they discovered they had ridden into a well devised trap. One group of Indians had concealed themselves near the fort while an-

other hid further away in heavy brush. As soon as the white men were far enough away from the stockade to be cut off, this group opened fire. Dismayed by such a concentrated attack, the settlers jumped down from their horses and took cover behind trees to reload. No sooner had their riders' weight left their backs than the horses bolted with the savages nearer the fort in full pursuit.

The women were evidently left with no protection except what they could afford themselves. Along with Charlotte Robertson, they peered through unchinked places in the logs but could see nothing but ribbons of gunsmoke rising through the dark cedars and an occasional glimpse of a riderless horse with reins dangling and stirrups flapping as it galloped this way and that to escape the circling savages.

The dogs, fastened in by the men before they left, clawed the bark covered walls and jumped around the women, whining and barking in a frenzy over the nearness of Indians. The yells of the settlers and blood-curdling whoops of the Indians reaching their ears over the continued firing filled the women with mounting fear and alarm. Mrs. Robertson stood tensely, listening, jostled by the heavy dogs. More than likely she put her hand on the bar of the gate and hesitated, looking at them, before she resolutely lifted it and let them out. They were usually gentle enough but when necessary they were fierce, muscled hunters trained to bait bears and attack Indians. Straight to their masters they flew changing from affable companions to snarling furies.

Both whites and Indians had become entangled in more than they could handle. The settlers had not expected so large a force was near them and the savages had thought the few pioneers caught in the open and cut off from the fort would be an easy prey. However, when the redmen emptied their guns they could not reload with the dogs tearing them to pieces and with this diversion the settlers began their painful retreat to the palisade. The ground covered in a matter of seconds an hour before now became a ghastly obstacle course over which the wounded must be dragged, dropped while they fired and loaded then dragged a few more inches. Some of the wounded were beyond reach and helpless; a way had to be devised to get to them before the

scalping knife finished their chance of survival. Every foot of ground was witness to deeds of heroism as time and again men risked their lives to save their comrades. The dogs began coming back one by one, bloody and satiated, and letting them in the gate. Mrs. Robertson remarked grimly she thanked God that He had given Indians a love of horses and a fear of dogs.

Susan Leeper must have looked anxiously at the men who were able to come back under their own power and not seeing her husband glanced with dread toward those who were being hurriedly dragged and half carried the remaining few feet across the clearing. Her heart must have thudded with terror when she saw the blood spreading over his worn buckskins and noticed the pallor of his face where it was not hidden under the grime of gunpowder. The women who helped open up the frontier were spared little which their men endured.

The losses of this day proved very costly. Nineteen horses were stolen but the greatest hurt was the lives lost. Several were killed at the scene of the fight but for days afterward the wounded died. As for James Leeper, an old manuscript records the sad statement "could he have had a good surgeon he would have recovered." When Captain Leeper realized his wound was mortal he made his will which he signed in the presence of Andrew Ervin, Andrew Lucas and Thomas Spencer. It read in part: "I, James Leeper, on Cumberland River in the State of N. C. do this Sixteenth Day of Apr in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty One Make This My Last Will and Testament . . . That if My Welbeloved Wife Susannah be now Pregnant With Child. That the Lands I have Entered In Henderson's Office may hereafter be Secured for it. If otherwise, that the Sd Lands be Secured The one Half of my Wife and the Other for my Father. And that all my Legal Debts be Satisfied . . . I also appoint James Robertson and Hugh Leper Executors of This My Last Will and Testament. In Witness Whereof I hereunto set my hand and Seal . . . James Leper."

It would be well if we could know more of James Leeper. (or Leiper as it is variously spelled) --more of his personality, his appearance and his life up until the time he cast his lot with

those at Ft. Nashborough. It is known that he was a seasoned borderer, a skilled and experienced woodsman, that he fought with Captain Ben Logan in the War for Independence and came to Ft. Nashborough from Kentucky. Without question he was brave; he was esteemed by the leaders of the Cumberland settlement. He, along with George and Hugh Leiper, signed the Cumberland Compact and he stood ready to serve where ever needed, a man among men.

Even cut down in his prime, as a typical example of a pioneer to the treacherous wilderness, he stood tall enough to cast a long shadow across the State of Tennessee. Those who died in the effort to establish a new nation are no less worthy of praise than those who lived to contribute their talents for long years. Countless young men and women, though early dead from the harsh realities of frontier life, nevertheless, became the ancestors of families whose abilities for two centuries have been of inestimable value to America.

Susan Drake Leeper continued to live at Ft. Nashborough after her husband's death and on October 25, 1781 bore his child, a daughter, named Sarah Jane. When barely twenty years old, Mrs. Leeper was killed when a gun fell from a rack above the door and exploded. She was buried by Captain Leeper south of the hill where the Capitol stands.

It was a tragic end to the happy day not far back when they had danced at their wedding. Then no thought of the wild light, the slashing tomahawks, the hiss of arrows, the thudding feet of the stampeding horses and the din of snarling dogs marred their future. At the end of that spring day in 1780 no noise louder than the night sounds in the darkening forest and the quiet lap of the waters of the Cumberland against the bluff disturbed them. In so short a while there was for them nothing but the silence of death.

After the Battle of the Bluff that April day in 1781, Nashville almost died at birth. Discouraged to the point of desperation, the settlers would have given up and gone home if they had not feared the Indian infested roads back to Virginia, North Carolina and Kentucky more than they feared the situation in which they found themselves. Unable to plant crops or hunt without being mur-

dered they came close to ing, but gradually a tried new settlers gave them hel fresh courage. Like Neb of old "everyone with one hands wrought in the wor with the other hand held a pon." In such a fashion were able to provide for selves and the lucky sur

Slowly the occupants o stockade made their w their own lands. The l child was taken by one c uncles, either Joseph or l min Drake, to his cabi White's Creek north of the

berland. At the age of seven-teen she married Alexander Smith on November 22, 1798 and with that event the surname of Leiper as far as descending from her father was concerned passed into oblivion.

Alexander Smith was the son of Robert and Sarah Clemmons Smith who were also the parents of three daughters all of who married prominent men. Nancy had married Richard Hightower, Elizabeth was the wife of John Criddle and Sarah's husband was Captain Alexander Ewing who had settled just east of Franklin on a grant of land received for his services in the Revolutionary War.

In April of 1782, in an act passed by the Legislature of North Carolina, land was granted to the settlers who had held the Cumberland since the spring of 1780. Among those who had perished but whose heirs were to receive 640 acres was James Leeper. His grant was signed June 26, 1783 by "William Collinsworth, Richard Dobbs Spaight, John Buchanan and George Leeper, C.C." but the property at this time was still in Davidson County and under the jurisdiction of North Carolina.

After their marriage Alexander and Sarah Jane Smith went to live on this fertile tract in the Little Harpeth Valley where her parents would have settled had they lived. Alexander Smith was a surveyor, an esteemed and profitable but dangerous occupation in the early days, and he was one of the three commissioners appointed by Tennessee to settle the boundary line between that state and North Carolina. The Smiths spent a life time building and improving their homeplace. Besides their house they built a grist mill and furniture factory but much of their efforts was ruined when the railroad was run through their land.

The Smiths were the parents of seven children: Elizabeth who married Denny Porterfield Hadley; James Leeper who lived in Texas; John; Stephen who died as an infant; Benjamin Drake who was a prominent lawyer and Presbyterian minister though blind. He married Harriett Criddle; Susannah Drake, who became the wife of Thomas Maury Petway; and Mary Emeline. Before he made his will in 1838, Alexander Smith deeded to Elizabeth Hadley and Mary Emeline a little over two hundred acres each. On September

12, 1832, when she was seventeen, Mary Emeline was married to Richard Christmas by Bishop Otey in St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Franklin.

On her two hundred acres from the Leeper grant they built the beautiful brick house which is today owned by Mr. and Mrs. Stirton Onian. Richard Christmas owned land in other states and had a winter home in Mississippi. Stories have come down of his great coach drawn by six matching horses, of his fashionable clothes and charming manners. The Christmases used the big brick house only as a summer home living the rest of the time in Mississippi, but here Mary Emeline was happiest close to her family, most of whom lived nearby. He must have been some years older than his bride to have had the good taste and intelligence to oversee the construction of such a beautifully appointed house. Careful and

skillful attention was given to every detail.

The walls made from hand-made brick were thirteen inches thick and each room was twenty by twenty feet with thirteen foot ceilings. Each bedroom had built in armoires with shelves and a space for hanging clothes concealed by paneled doors. The stone for the front porch, columns and the carved mantels which were rubbed as smooth as marble was quarried on the place and underneath the structure was a rock-lined cellar. The doors are pegged and many of them still have the same heavy locks made by Carpenter and Co. of London. All of the woodwork in the house is yellow poplar with the exception of the downstairs hall floor which is white ash and the handrail and spindles of the staircase which are cherry.

The entrance hall is singularly beautiful with its curving wall and graceful stairway winding up to the third story. Tradition says the builder sketched the design on the floor then lying on his back worked for a year fitting the spiraling steps into the walls. Finished the stairway curves out of sight with no visible support. Much of the interior is almost exactly like that at the Hermitage and although Jackson's house is older, this house was being built near the time his was being remodelled after the fire in 1834. It is

possible that the same workmen could have done both. Mrs. Christmas used the third story as a sewing room, and a huge table which remained there into this century was thought to have been the one she used in cutting the cloth.

Among the outbuildings near the residence were the outside kitchen and Mr. Christmas's office, both brick, and nearby there was a thick-walled ice-house. Further back were the stables and barns necessary to any plantation as were the smoke house and carriage house.

On May 1, 1837, their fourteen month old son, Richard, Jr., died and was buried in the Smith Cemetery near her parents' home. In 1935, this historic cemetery was destroyed and, of the many tombstones once there, only two escaped the bulldozer's blade—that of this child and another inscribed to the memory of Joseph Pugh, the two year old son of Henry and Nancy Christmas who died three months later.

Abruptly, on September 11, 1839, Richard Christmas sold the house and 315 acres to Reuben A. Gentry for \$20,000, and with a heavy heart his wife left the beloved walls. In 1842, at the age of twenty-seven she died as a result of a fire on a steamboat on the Mississippi and she was burned near her father and baby boy. In later years her only other son left his father's home accompanied by a guide for an extended trip, his saddle bags stuffed with money. Somewhere he met with foul play and was never heard from again. The Christmas name was very prominent in the early days of Williamson County, but as descending through the Leepers it died with this young man.

When this property left the hands of the Leeper heirs it was the first of a long series of sales



Thurso, built by James Johnston

the Red River district where he settled near the present site of Port Royal. The other two brothers came here in 1800. Alexander built a log cabin at Haysboro above Nashville while James went to be near William on the Red River.

William Johnston had married Martha Scott in 1770 and among their children was the daughter Rachel who married Robert Johnston. No doubt they were relatives since it was often the custom for families to inter-marry in early days.

When old age crept up on David Johnston he conveyed his property to his son Robert thinking that in the natural course of events the younger man would long outlive him. However, a capricious fate willed otherwise and Robert Johnston died in 1827. When he realized that death was imminent he immediately set about through his will to make certain his parents would be well cared for. He left his wife Rachel one third of the plantation where they were residing and made fair bequests to their six children. Then, when David Johnston died in 1829, he willed the whole of his estate to his grandchildren—David, Robert, William, James, Lancelot, and Martha.

In the settlement James Johnston was given the home-place while Lancelot's land was west of Nashville Pike except for one field on the east side. James Johnston, who married Narcissa Merritt in 1834, is credited with building this house around 1840. Old pictures show it having a one-story veranda with low bannisters on the ground level and around the roof of the porch which was supported by eight slender one-story columns. It lacked the pediments and tall pillars which distinguish the north and west sides today, although there was a doorway and uncovered stoop on the north side and a second story front doorway identical to the main entrance on the west.

Since the lawn ran to the Nashville Pike it was often traversed by both Federal and Confederate forces. Its fields were ruted by heavy cannon and wagons and trampled by the feet of marching men and cavalry horses as the armies advanced and retreated between Nashville and Franklin. No home in the neighborhood escaped marauding Yankees and women were often forced to nurse and feed wounded enemy soldiers as well as Con-

federates.

After the house went out of the Johnston family, it fell on evil days. For years it sat forlorn and dejected by the roadside with wisps of hay hanging from its paneless windows. It seemed doomed to destruction when, happily, it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. John Oman, Jr. who restored it to its former elegance and named it after the Oman ancestral hometown, Thurso, in Scotland.

With beautiful landscaping and tasteful remodeling it is one of the most outstanding landmarks in Williamson County.

Ashlawn

Late in the spring of 1780 the socially starved pioneers at Fort Nashborough were treated to a wedding—that of Captain James Leiper and Susan Drake. As the young people repeated the age old vows before James Robertson, they became the first couple to be married in this section of Tennessee. It was a time when the Indians were exerting their utmost efforts to wipe out the new settlement precariously clinging to life along the forest-bordered bluffs of the Cumberland. During that first year only one man died a natural death; the other heavy loss of life was caused by savage raiding parties.

Within the year James Leiper had fallen their victim during the Battle of the Bluff, April 2, 1781, and died of his wounds some days later. A sad commentary on his death was "that could he have had a good surgeon he would have recovered." Little is known of James Leiper save that he was with Captain Ben Logan during the Revolution and that he was a seasoned borderer and an experienced woodsman. He came to Fort Nashborough from Kentucky and was a signer of the Cumberland Compact.

Susan Drake lived on at the fort after her husband's death, and in October of that year bore him a daughter, Sarah Jane. When barely twenty Mrs. Leiper was killed when a gun fell from a rack above the door and exploded. On their wedding day no thought of slashing tomahawks, hissing arrows, stampeding horse and snarling dogs marred their happiness. At the end of that spring day in 1780 no noise louder than the night sounds in the dark forest and the quiet murmur of the Cumberland disturbed them. All too soon there was nothing but the silence of death.

Those who died in the effort to establish a new nation are no less worthy of praise than those who lived to contribute long years in its behalf. Countless young men and women, though early dead from the exigencies of frontier life, were the ancestors of families whose abilities for two centuries have been of inestimable value in America's development into a world power.

Sarah Jane Leiper was reared by the Drake family until her marriage in 1798 to Alexander Smith, the son of Robert and Sarah Clemmons Smith. They settled on the 640 acre grant in the Little Harpeth Valley near the present site of Brentwood which had been given her father posthumously for his Revolutionary service. The Smiths were the parents of seven children, one of whom, Mary Emeline, married Richard Christmas in 1832. Her father gave them 200 acres from the Leiper grant where they



Ashlawn, built as home of Richard Christmas

built the beautiful brick home owned today by Mr. and Mrs. Stirton Oman.

Fabulous stories have come down through the years about Richard Christmas and his fine horses, his Mississippi home, fashionable clothes, and charming manners. The son of Thomas and Mary Ann Christmas, he spent money with a lavish hand and is wrapped in an aura of mystery and romance. He must have been some years older than his young bride to have had the good taste and intelligence to oversee the building of such a beautifully appointed house. The walls of handmade brick are thirteen inches thick. Each room is twenty by twenty feet with thirteen foot ceilings. The stones for the front porch, the columns and carved mantels were quarried on the place, with that used in the mantels rubbed as smooth as marble. The doors are pegged with many having the original heavy locks made by Carpenter and Company of London. All woodwork is of yellow poplar except the downstairs hall floor which is ash and the handrail and spindles of the staircase which are cherry.

The entrance hall is singularly beautiful with its curving walls and graceful staircase winding up to the third story. Tradition says the builder sketched the design on the floor, then lying on his back, worked for a year fitting the spiraling steps into the wall. The staircase curves out of sight with no visible support. Much of the interior corresponds closely to that of the Hermitage. Although Andrew Jackson's house is older than Ashlawn, this house was being built near the time his was being remodeled after the fire in 1834 and the same workmen could have done both.

Abruptly in 1839 Richard Christmas sold the place and with his heavy-hearted wife left the beloved walls. Court records show him dead by 1841. In 1842, at the age of twenty-seven, Mrs. Christmas was killed in a steamboat accident on the Mississippi. The Christmases had a son, Richard, Jr., to die as a baby in 1837. Another son, William Hardeman, evidently met with foul play while on a trip: having left home with his saddlebags full of money and accompanied by a guide he was never heard from again. The once large and historic Smith-Christmas-Hadley Cemetery on Concord Road was destroyed and the valuable inscriptions lost. Two little markers—one to Richard Christmas, Jr., and another to a little son of Henry Christmas—escaped the bulldozer's blade and are the only remnants to mark the place.

The Christmas home passed through a number of hands until 1850 when it was owned briefly by the ironmaster, Montgomery Bell, who was old at the time and took little care of the house. His servants burned the floors while cooking on open fires, and foundry workmen quartered here added to the abuse. In 1854, it was bought by James Owen who made it his home for seventeen years. In 1871, it was bought by Henry and Martha Jane Hughes Zellner of Maury County. Of their seven children three died young; the other four married into prominent Tennessee families. Margaret Ophelia married David Lipscomb, noted Nashville educator; Mary Jane married William Callender of Brentwood; Martha Henrie became the bride of Horace Lipscomb here at Ashlawn; and the only son, William James, after his service in the Confederate army married Sarah Rebecca Alexander. Mr. Zellner was a prominent farmer, bridge builder, and the inventor of a cotton baler, clover huller, and a hemp brake, a device used when hemp was grown in this section.

After Mr. Zellner's death in 1899, James Zellner bought out his sisters and lived here until he died in 1905. The place was then bought by Andrew and Lucy Merrill Mizell. Mr. Mizell, prominent in the wholesale grocery business in Nashville, and his family retained ownership for thirty-seven years.

In 1945 Ashlawn was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Stirton Oman who extensively remodeled the house. The one-story columns which had formed the front portico were moved to the north side with two-story pillars being erected at the front and across the back. The hallway has a graceful arch with a finely carved dentil; while the remodeling was underway, Mr. Oman had molding carved to match it. The old kitchen and office were incorporated in the main house while other major changes were made both inside and out.

The house has been a beloved landmark for one hundred and thirty-five years. It lost none of its dignity while it was being passed from hand to hand, and when love and care returned they only added complete serenity to the charm that has always enfolded it.

Green Pastures

Although situated between two busy highways, US 31 and I-65 just south of Brentwood, Green Pastures maintains a tranquil, rural atmosphere most pleasing and restful in our turbulent society. This beautiful Georgian home and its broad acres have played a colorful and valuable part in Williamson County history.

Its builders, Denny Porterfield and Elizabeth Smith Hadley, were products of families prominent long before they came to this section when Tennessee was nothing but a trackless wilderness. Thomas Hadley was born in England in 1728, emigrated to America and settled on Cross Creek in Cumberland County, North Carolina with his wife Mary Thompson (1730-1780). He was soon an outstanding man in this county, representing it at the Provincial Congress which met at Halifax in 1776 to form a Constitution for government of the states. As Captain of a Troop of Light Horse, he was killed while defending his home near Fayetteville, N. C. in September of 1781.

Thomas Hadley's son Joshua (1753-1830) was also in

Jan. 27, 1986

Dear Sirs

I am writing to see if you can help me find if the name of an old estate would still be named "Ashlawn" in Brentwood. Built in 1830's by Richard and Mary Ann Smith Christmas - who spared no expense in building the elegant styled home. It is Georgian with Greek Revival influence. Bricks were hand made on the property with laid to the depth of over 12". The doors are pegged, and many have a very unusual lock. which were made in London. it has a spiral staircase lock room measured 20x20

all the woodwork was yellow poplar except the hall floor was of oak.

Why I am writing the "question" is did the house still stand today we are planning our trip to Brentwood if "Ashlawn" be still standing as my great, great grandfather Henry Zellner purchased Ashlawn 1870 from the Christmas. and who says it now is a? but it is very interesting how you have in Brentwood to see, or take pictures of. we would like to take a picture. Henry Zellner's daughter ^{no longer} Mary Jane & her son ^{no longer} married David Lipscomb founder

Henry Zellmer Baughton

founder of the David Lipscomb College in
Nashville Tenn.

"Henric" married Hara Dora Lipscomb
founder of the H.C. Lipscomb Hardware
Co. in Nashville

Mary Jane Merrid Callender formerly
of Brentwood. - Henry Zellmer had also a
son.

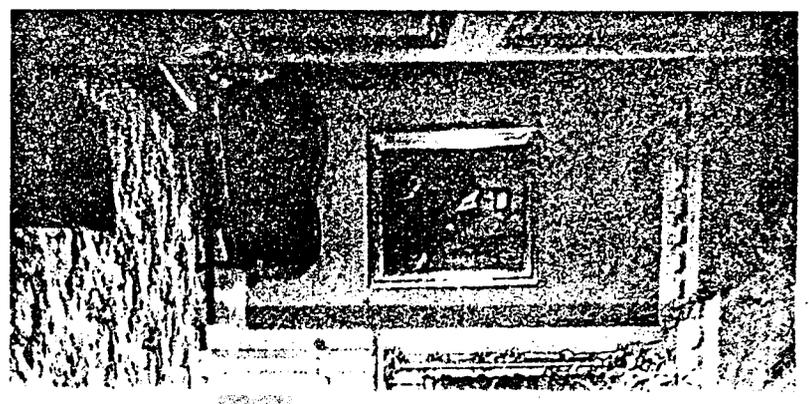
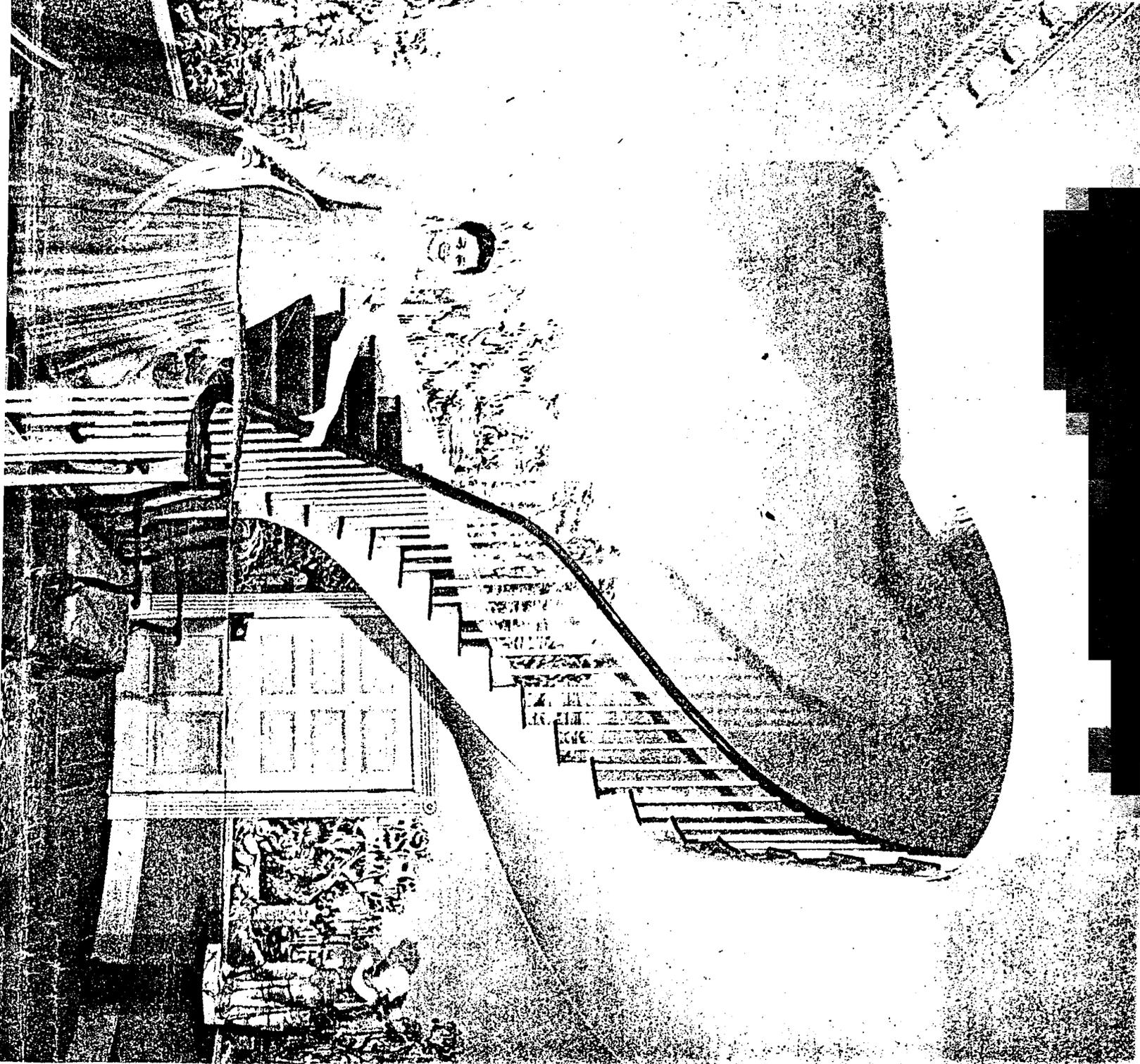
I would have you to
answer my letter on Ashlawn

Thank you

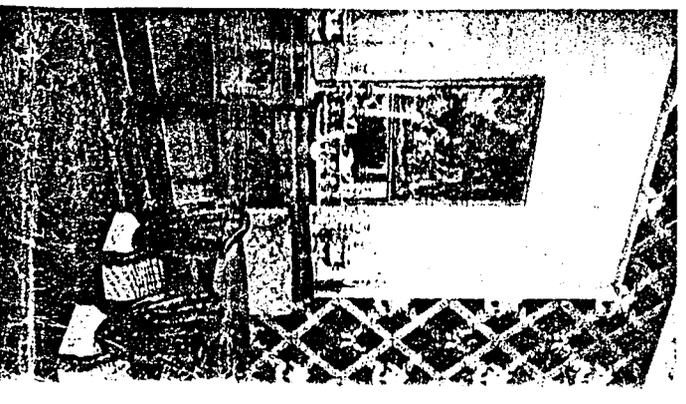
Norma & Dorothy Wilson

Box 930

Nicomma Park, Okla.
73066



Mrs. Oman sits beside a gra





Betty Bond Oman poses on the spiral stairway which rises for three stories

Photos by Terry Tomlin

A New Lease on Life

(Continued from page 18)

workmanship in stairway, woodwork, fireplaces and mantels at the Oman home and in the Hermitage, it is believed they were built by the same workmen. The Hermitage, home of Andrew Jackson, was first built in 1819, some 15 years before the home of Dick Christmas was completed, and was twice remodeled in the early 1830s.

The Christmas home has a three-story spiral stairway but the Hermitage stairway reaches between only two floors. And the Omans have added a skylight over the stairway to give

dramatic lighting to the architectural masterpiece of the house.

The third floor of the home was planned as a vast sewing room for Emmaline Christmas, and it is said that she loved the sunny place so that she wept all one September night in 1839 when her husband told her that he decided to sell it. His promise to build another summer home on Franklin road was little consolation. Besides there was never time to keep the promise.

For when Emmaline and Dick Christmas signed the deed that September and let the property out of her family for the first time in 46 years, it was the end of Tennessee for Emmaline. She went home to their Mis-

issippi plantation for the winter, "took a fever" and died, only 26 years old.

Her only surviving son later went "out West" with his fortune, was supposedly murdered for his money and thrown off a bluff, and was at least never heard of again. And so ended the history of the Christmases who built Ashlawn, with its solid rock cellars and its thick-walled ice house to supply refreshments for functions in double parlors and double dining rooms.

THOSE bright first five years at Ashlawn were the prelude to a century of transactions by which the farm was broken off into various tracts. *(Continued on page 23)*

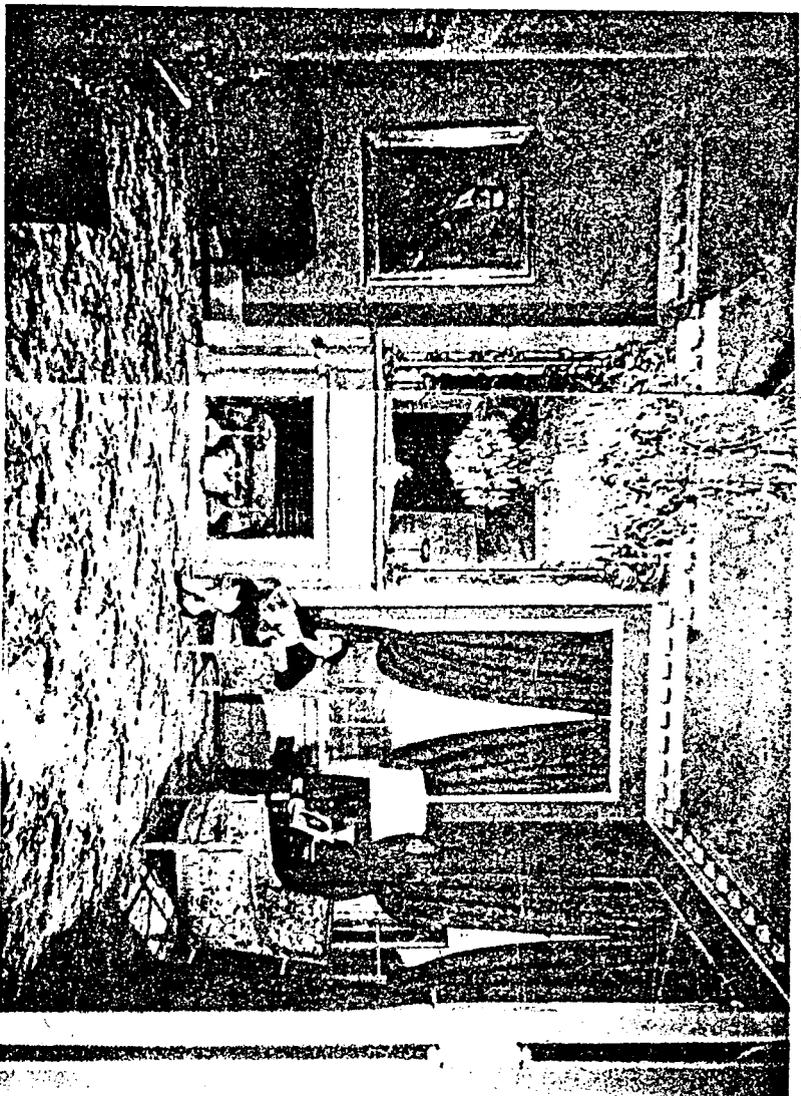


Buffet in the dining room si



In the informal dining room,

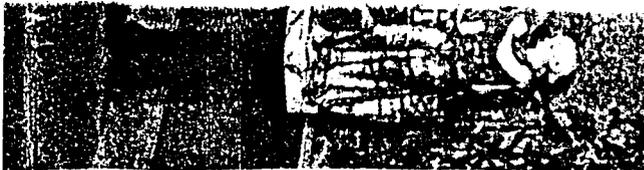
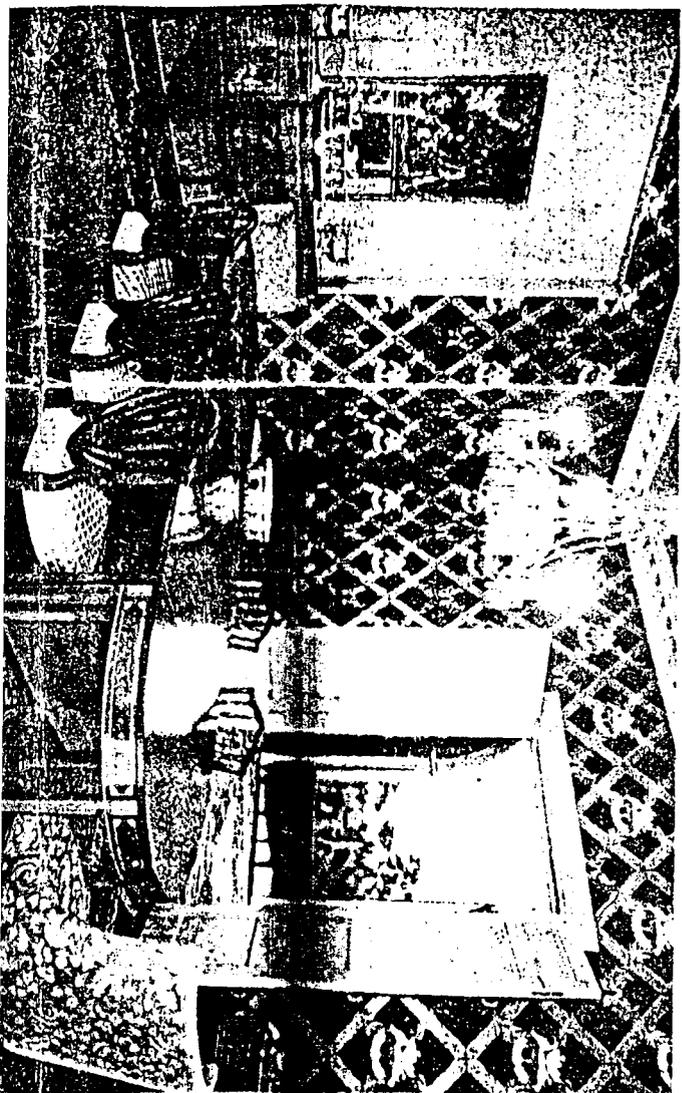
THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN MAGAZINE, SEPT. 14, 1952

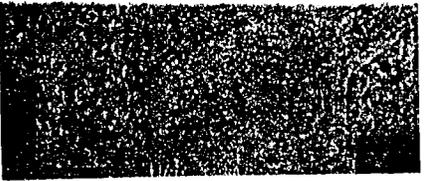


Mrs. Oman siss beside a gray stone fireplace in the large double parlors



The rose and green floral design of the pa



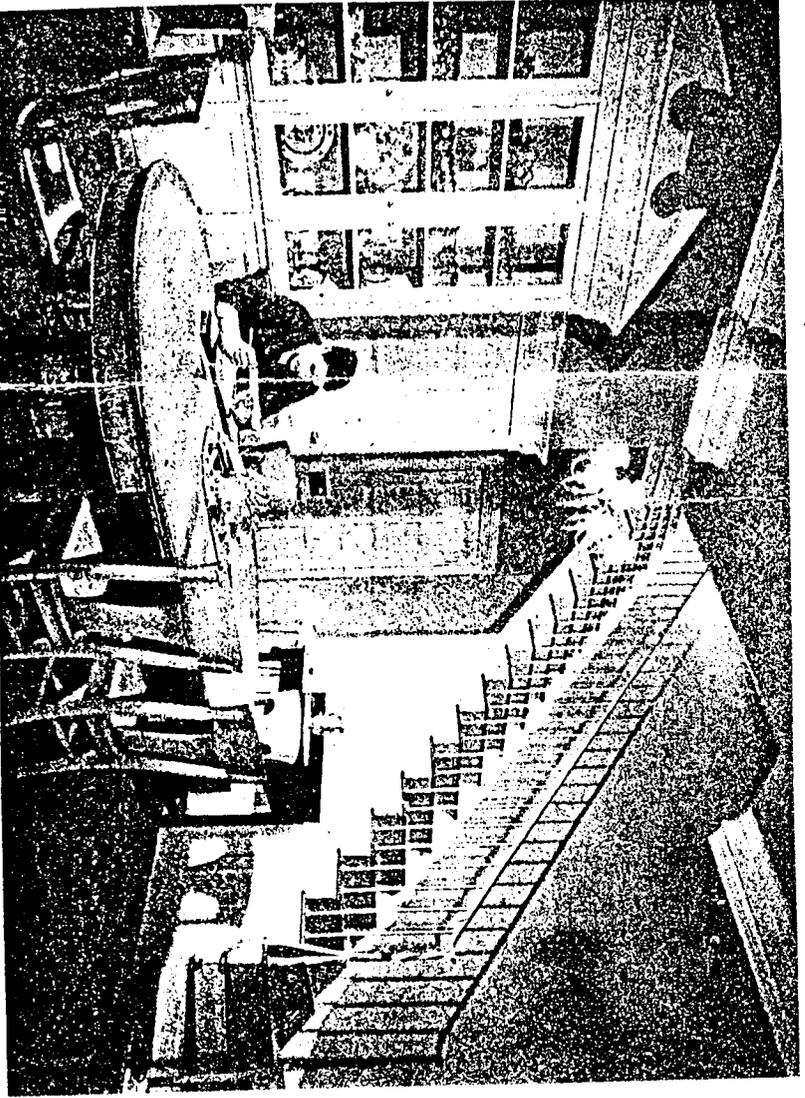


As by Terry Tomlin

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Buffet in the dining room sits in a recess created by extension of the walls

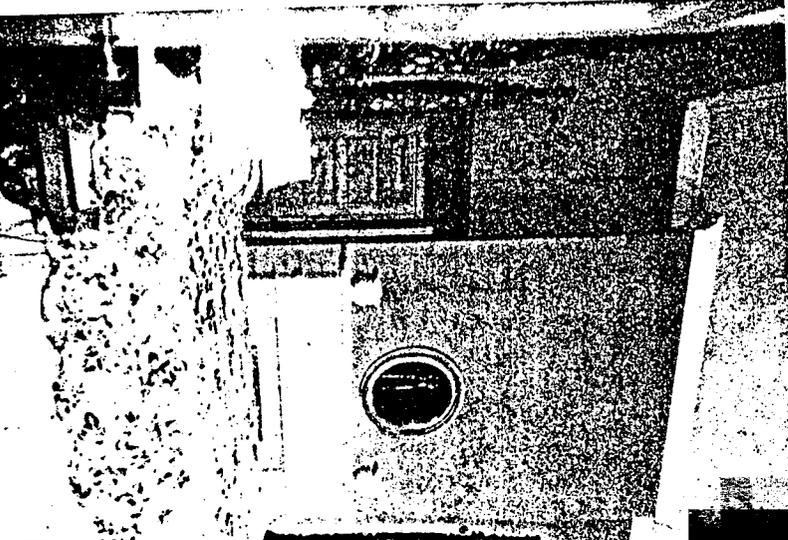


In the informal dining room,
NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN MAGAZINE, SEPT. 14, 1952

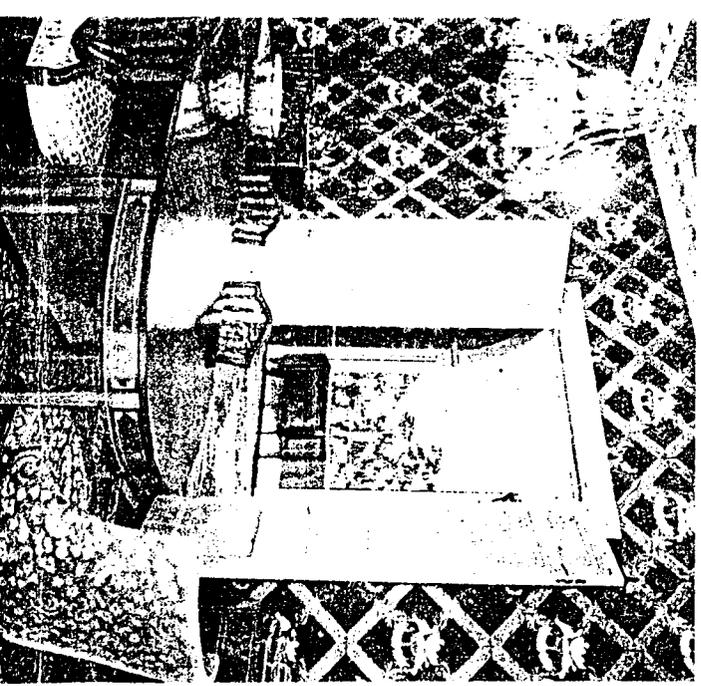
Sturton Oman Jr., finds a retreat for study
THE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN MAGAZINE, SEPT. 14, 1952



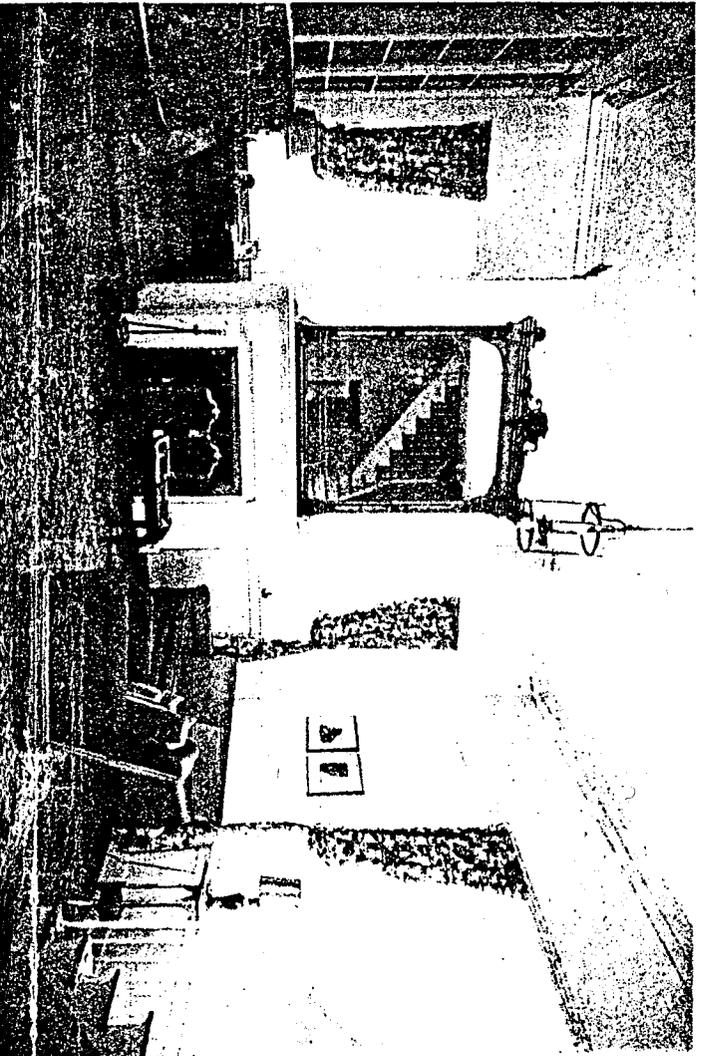
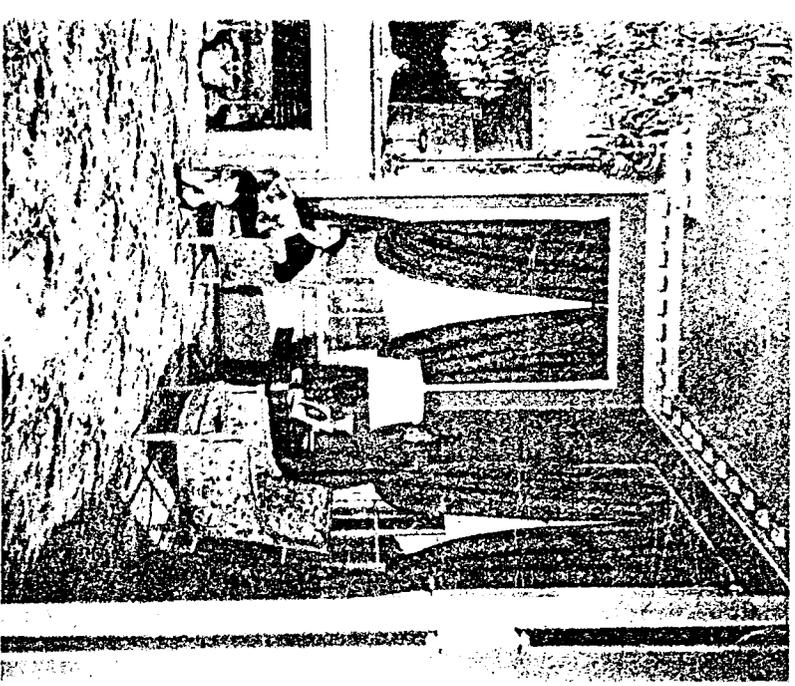
The restored office is now a library and re



The green and rose combination is carried



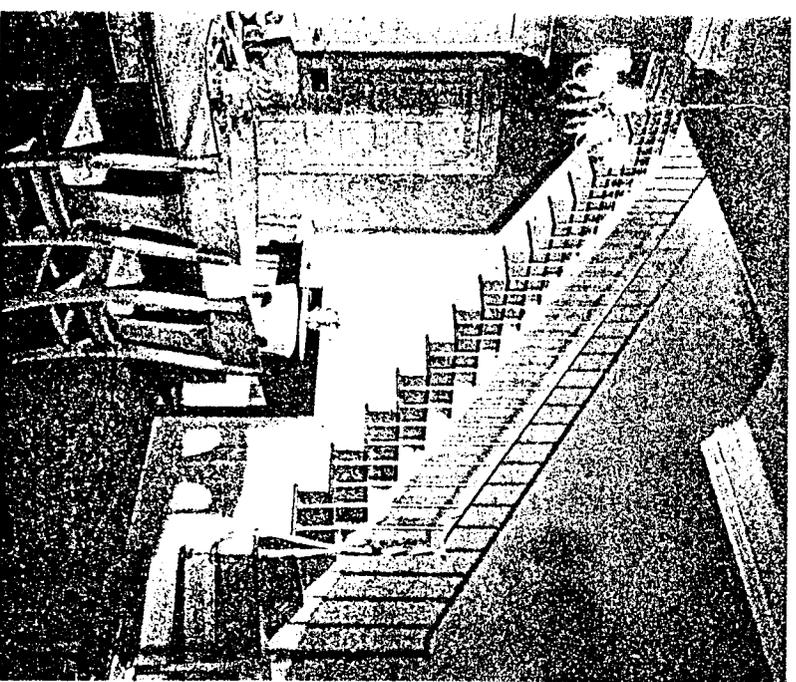
tone fireplace in the large double parlors



The rose and green floral design of the parlor carpets keyed the color theme



in a recess created by extension of the walls



irton Oman Jr., finds a retreat for study
HE NASHVILLE TENNESSEAN MAGAZINE, SEPT. 14, 1952

The restored office is now a library and recreation center for the Omans



The green and rose combination is carried out in an upstairs guest room