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HUNTSVILLE**

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QUARTERLY

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Editor's Note. Nancy W. Van Valkenburgh, Chairman of The Historic Huntsville Foundation, Inc., recently proposed to Huntsville Mayor Joe Davis that a tourist center be established in the city's building on the corner of Madison and Gate Street: (The old Traffic Engineering department building).

In a letter accompanying the proposal Mrs. Van Valkenburgh states:

The building is a valuable property, both in terms of architecture and historic value. It is still in fairly good condition, but as the length of vacancy increases, chances of deterioration from both vandalism and weather also increase. Indeed, weather deterioration is already becoming apparent to those who frequent the downtown area.

I feel the proposal is so important, both as to the possible restoration of a major structure in Huntsville and as an example of the type of things we are trying to do as a foundation that it is printed here in its entirety as the only subject for this issue.]



A PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TOURIST CENTER
AT 401 MADISON STREET

Huntsville is beginning to attract tourists and visitors with the Von Braun Civic Center, conventions, local museums, and the medical district. The tourist dollar is becoming increasingly important to the city and an effort should be made to encourage visitors to come, stay, and spend money. A Tourist Center would be an excellent method of promoting this resource by making visitors feel that the city welcomed them and was concerned about making community facilities readily available for their enjoyment. Huntsville is a difficult city for the newcomer to get around because of its decentralized layout; a Tourist Center would help to overcome this disadvantage.

The house at 401 Madison Street (the old Traffic Engineering department) could be converted with minimum effort and expense into an outstanding Tourist Center which would become a great financial and public relations asset to Huntsville. It is ideally suited for this function because of its prime location and open floor plan, and this would be an excellent way to preserve one of Huntsville's finest older homes. It is located one block off the Square and immediately across Gates Street from the proposed Constitution Park. It is within walking distance of the Von Braun Civic Center, the Huntsville Depot Museum, and both Preservation Districts. It would be an aid to the redevelopment of the central business district by drawing people into the area who would be partaking of the activities and services. (Figure I) And of course, it is already owned by the city and now standing vacant.

Tourists arriving in Huntsville by car or plane would be advised by appropriate advertising that their first stop should be the Tourist Center on Madison Street to pick up city maps and pamphlets and to have answered any questions about activities, history, etc.

On arrival at the Center, they would find a staffed information desk with free material on all phases of Huntsville entertainment, sports, shopping, eating, and motels. The staff would make reservations at local establishments or get tickets to current functions. Available to the public would also be telephones, clean restrooms, and perhaps soft drinks or coffee. A comfortable Victorian lounge would be available for them to relax, make their plans, meet, or read the literature. Free post cards of city sites would be provided for them to send home, thereby spreading the good word about Huntsville. Local newspapers and magazines would be supplied for them to read. Slide shows of Huntsville could be run at request. Small displays could be mounted showing Huntsville's history, etc. These displays could be set up by various city groups.

Walking tours of the two Preservation Districts could begin at the Center where the sponsoring group could also have their office. A program might be established to open various historic homes on a revolving schedule. Local publications would be on sale. When the Center is not open to the public, it could be used by the city or rented to other groups for small receptions and meetings.

A lunchtime program could be instituted offering music, lectures, etc. to encourage the Huntsville people and particularly the downtown office workers to feel that the house was part of their city. In nice weather these and other activities could be held in the adjoining garden. The Center could also serve new residents to the area as well as providing information to old residents who may not be familiar with the full range of activities available in the region. A guidebook to the Huntsville area could be published and distributed by the Center.

Conversion of an existing building makes good economic sense. Since the structure is already owned by the city, the only cost to create a Tourist Center would be restoration. The house needs basic repairs no matter what it is next used for (such as roof repair and maintenance). The cost of restoring the turn of the century interiors in the four main rooms would not exceed the cost to convert them into modern office space. The difference is that when completed, the city would own a valuable asset instead of a desecrated old building. It would also be much cheaper than building a new Tourist Center which would possess none of the charm nor interest of a restored building. Furthermore, there are numerous Federal programs that will pay for or assist in historic restoration; it is highly possible that the city could get the building restored at very little actual cost to the city.

Restoration of this building is highly feasible since the rooms to be restored are nearly original with most of the architectural elements present and in good shape. It would be a matter of repairing rather than re-creation.

The four main rooms of the first floor would be restored to their 1900 appearance and fitted with furniture appropriate to the period. This should include comfortable chairs and end tables, as well as a large dining or library table which could be used by tourists to write post cards and for serving food, if a kitchen were installed. The original leaded glass windows should be located and reinstalled if at all possible. The main information desk would be in the hall and would be in keeping with other furnishings. One room would be furnished with chairs, a screen, and projection equipment for slide shows and lectures. (Plan I)

The second floor has already been badly altered; some windows and all the fireplaces have been closed. This area could be rented at a nominal fee as offices to local groups who are concerned with tourists or history, such as Historic Huntsville

Foundation. Or, it could provide office space for a small city department. There are four large rooms. The closed windows should be reopened but there is no reason to restore the fireplaces. (Plan III)

The four rooms to be open to the public should be furnished with furniture appropriate to the age of the home. Local civic groups could be approached for donations. Any remaining furnishings that would have to be purchased by the city would probably not cost any more than buying new office furniture.

There are several additions on the rear of the house which should be removed to restore the structure to its 1900 configuration. These additions detract from the appearance of the house and are not very functional since one in particular is a three-story elevator shaft. (Figure II) Necessary changes inside would include removal of the temporary partitions and false ceilings and rerouting the ductwork in the front hall.

The asphalt parking lot to the south of the house should be removed and the area landscaped as a Victorian garden. This could be made a project of one or more of the garden clubs. The new garden would provide a pleasant parklike setting in which to relax or have small meetings during nice weather. A Victorian iron fence might be reinstalled along Madison Street. (Figure III) Adequate parking would still be provided behind the house. (Plan IV)

By placing the Tourist Center in a restored older home, Huntsville would be adding to the image of Huntsville as a city that cares about its past. With the two largest preservation districts in Alabama already established in Huntsville, the city can begin to draw tourists by building a reputation as a city dedicated to historic preservation. (Galveston, Texas, and Port Townsend, Washington, are two cities that have made their names synonymous with historic architecture and the effort has paid off handsomely in increased tourism.) This image will be further enhanced by the completion of Constitution Park, the Huntsville Depot Museum, and the Weeden house. Seventy-five percent of the buildings in the central business district are over forty years old. Many are being restored and put to new uses, especially on the Square. It makes good sense to improve those elements which make Huntsville unique and to use them to attract visitors. Providing a Tourist Center in a restored home would be one more way for Huntsville to take advantage of its historic resources.

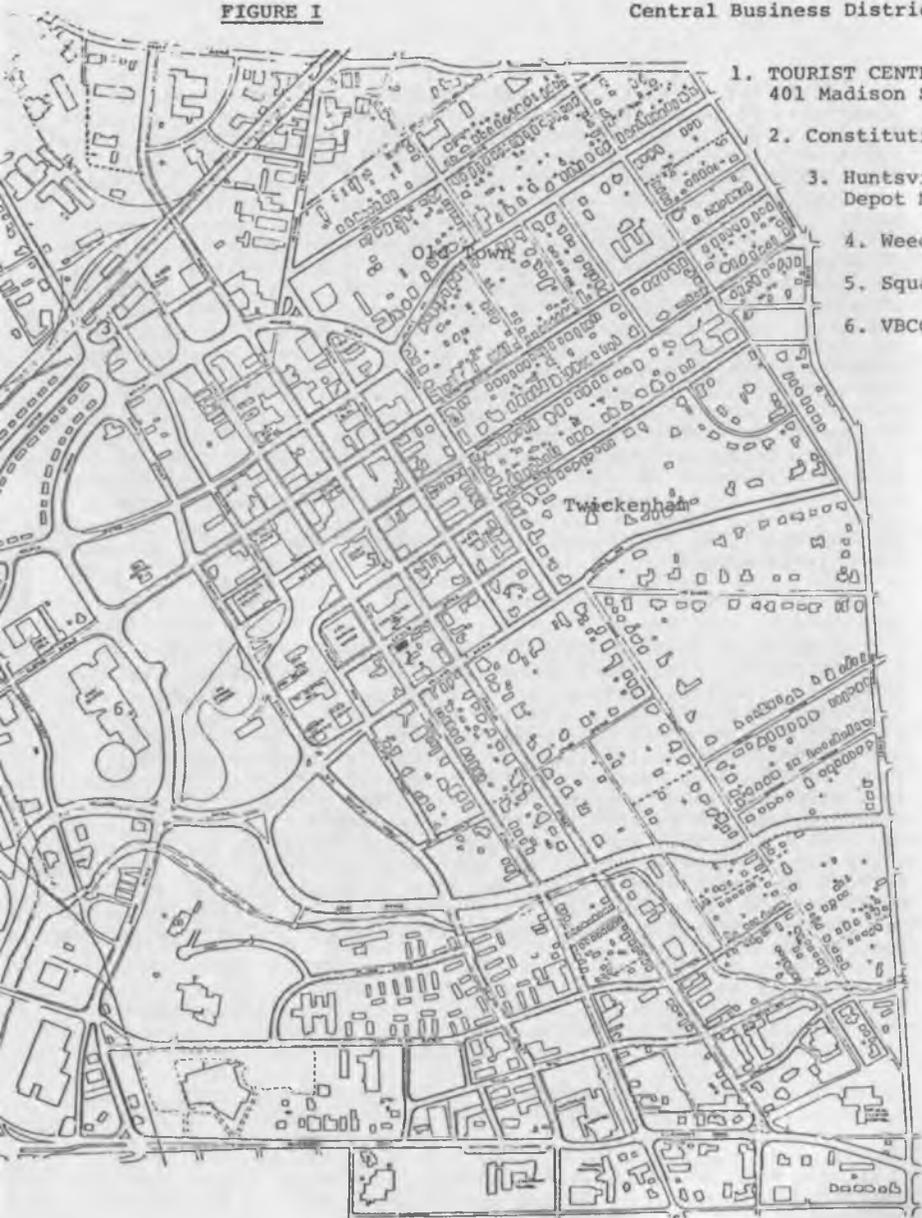
When restored and furnished, the house would not only be an exciting Tourist Center, it would also be a functioning museum of architecture and taste at the turn of this century in Huntsville. On completion of the Weeden house, the city would possess two fine instructive examples of Huntsville architecture, one at the beginning and the other at the end of the nineteenth century.

Since the house is situated outside of both Preservation Districts, it is in danger of mutilation or even total destruction. It has already been stripped of some of its architectural elements but enough remains to make restoration and preservation highly practical. But it must be started now. The house is an outstanding architectural structure that should be saved as part of Huntsville's past; it was built by Oscar Hundley who was city attorney three times and served as both a state representative and a senator. He also served briefly as a federal district judge, 1907-09. Completed in 1900, his home is representative of domestic building at the turn of this century in that it combines elements of two eras, the Victorian and the Neo-Colonial. Inside, the house possesses one of the finest interiors in the city with its elaborate open stairway, panelled wainscot and coffered ceilings, and ornately modeled doors. The doorways and mantles are flanked by beautiful columns and the floors are inlaid with various woods to produce a different pattern and border in each room. The floor plan features a large living hall with fireplace and open staircase which makes it ideally suited to function as a Tourist Center. Although some alterations were made to this area before the Traffic Engineering department moved in, they appear to be mostly non-structural and non-destructive so that the first floor could be returned to its original appearance with little effort.

Huntsville is currently making a serious bid to attract tourist dollars with the Alabama Space and Rocket Museum, the Von Braun Civic Center, Huntsville Depot Museum, two Preservation Districts, and Constitution Park. By providing the tourist with a place of his own where he can easily obtain all the information he needs, Huntsville will project a good initial impression and, in turn, receive more dollars from each visitor. Placing the Center in a restored home shows that Huntsville has a sensibility about the past, and the future, and that it has style. All of this will pay both financially and in improved public relations for the city. Other forward-looking cities are providing this type of sophisticated service for their visitors and there is no reason why Huntsville should not do at least as much. The house at 401 Madison Street is now standing vacant and the time is right to put it to work for the good of the city.

FIGURE I

Central Business District



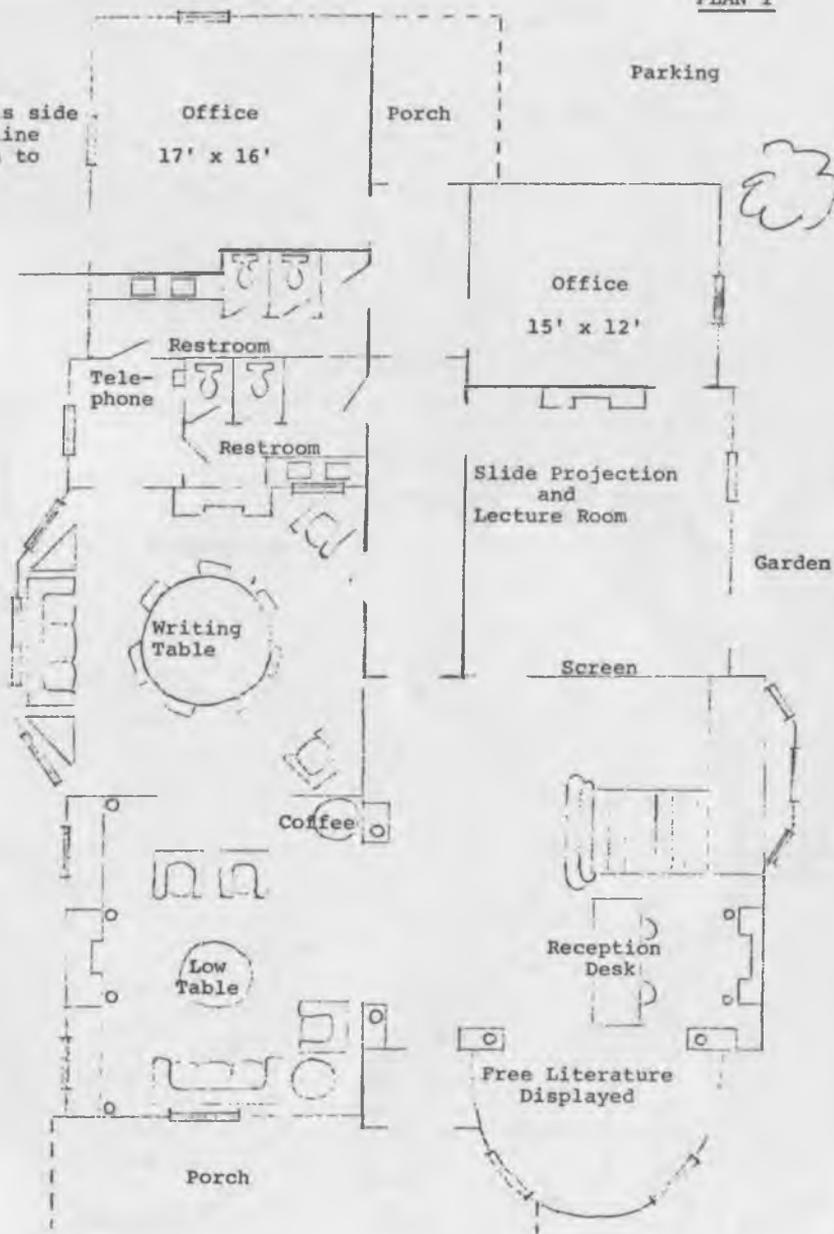
1. TOURIST CENTER
401 Madison Street
2. Constitution Park
3. Huntsville
Depot Museum
4. Weeden House
5. Square
6. VBCC

Proposed Tourist Center at 401 Madison Street

First Floor

PLAN I

Area this side
of red line
not open to
public



Office
17' x 16'

Porch

Parking

Office
15' x 12'

Restroom
Tele-
phone

Restroom

Slide Projection
and
Lecture Room

Garden

Writing
Table

Screen

Coffee

Low
Table

Reception
Desk

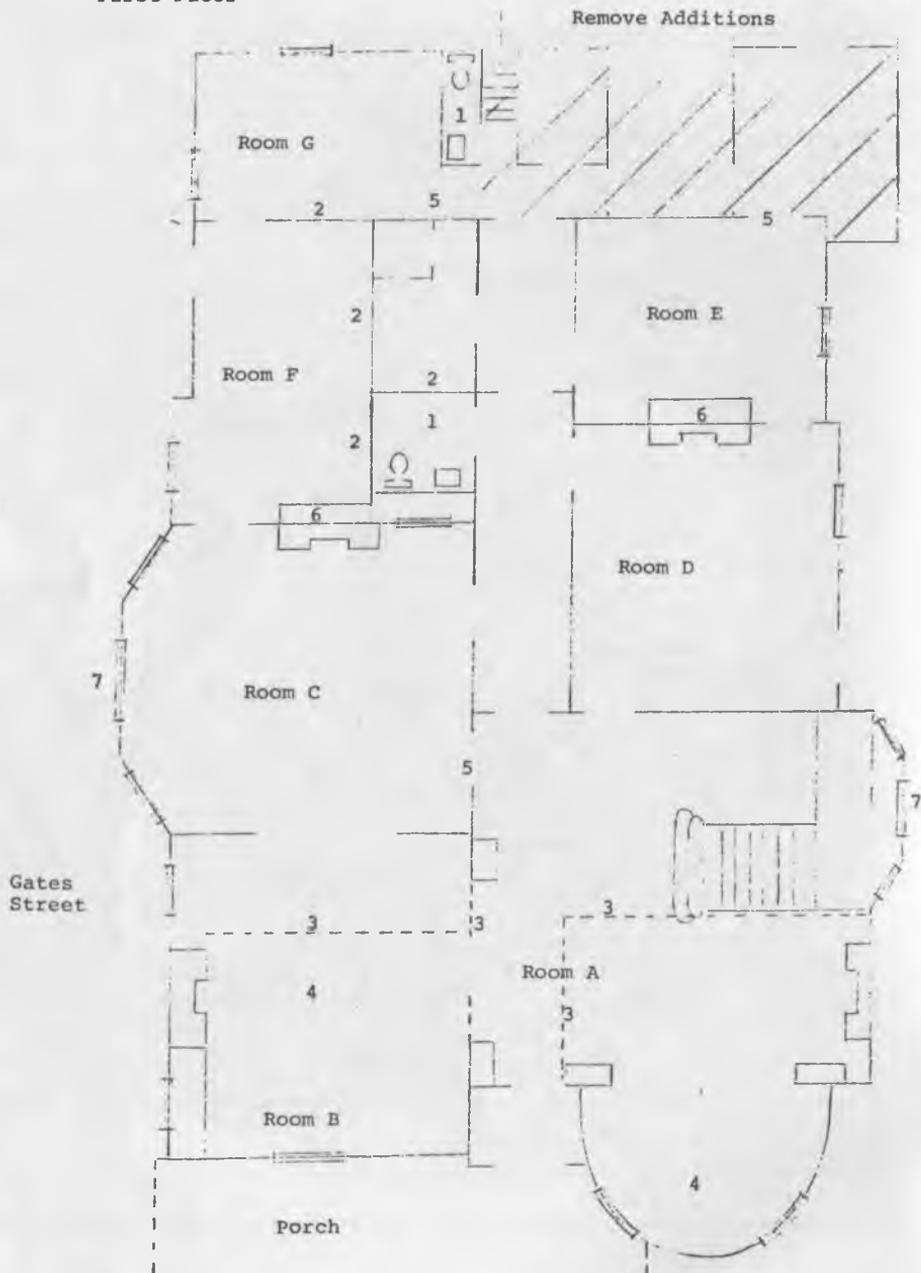
Free Literature
Displayed

Porch

401 Madison Street Now

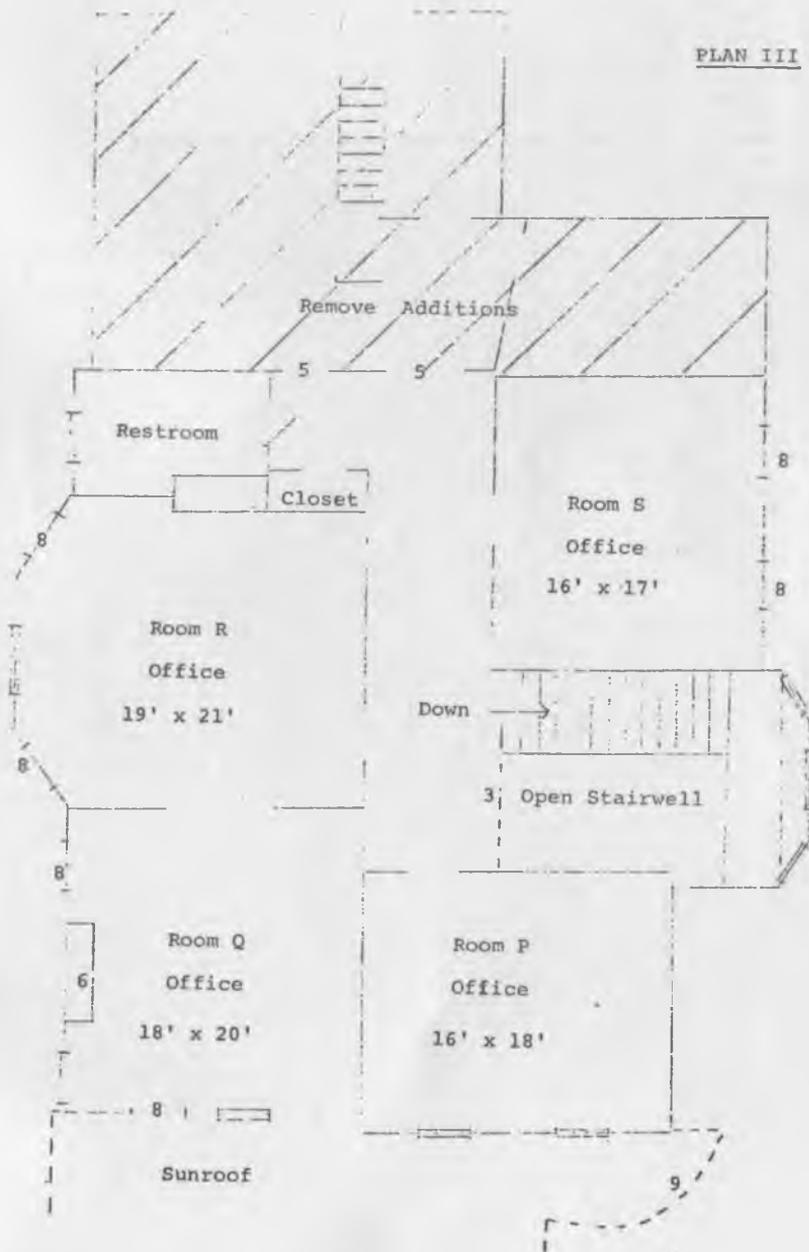
PLAN II

First Floor



Proposed Tourist Center at 401 Madison Street
Second Floor

PLAN III



Key to Changes Marked on Floor Plans

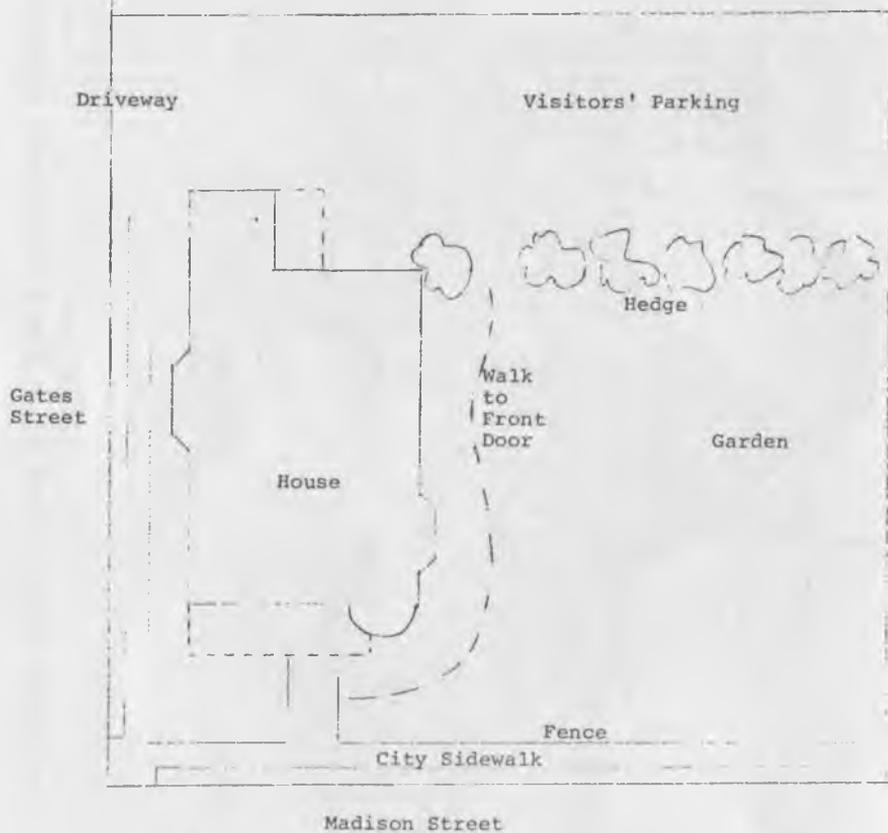
1. Remove bath
2. Remove wall
3. Remove temporary partition
4. Remove false ceiling
5. Close doorway
6. Remove fireplace
7. Replace stained glass windows if they can be found
8. Reopen windows
9. Replace balustrade



FIGURE II

401 MADISON STREET - Gates Street Facade after Removal of Additions

PLAN IV



CHANGES NECESSARY TO CONVERT 401 MADISON STREET TO A TOURIST CENTER

General:

- Repair roof leaks
- Close attic by replacing windows
- Remove pigeons
- Remove additions as outlined on floor plans
- Add exterior stairway on back porch, if two exits required by law
- Heating, air conditioning, wiring?
- Repaint exterior
- Remove parking lot on south and landscape
- Repair front porch tile
- Replace original back porch
- Remove garages
- Install walkway through garden from parking lot to front door

First Floor:

Room A: Bay - Remove carpet and refinish floor
Strip woodwork of white paint
Remove false ceiling

Hall - Remove temporary partitions and desk
Repair balusters on stairs
Close doorway to Room C and match wainscot
Move ductwork and repair door frame if necessary
Install two appropriate doors, to hallway and Room D
Refinish floors and walls
Replace original windows on stair landing if they
can be located
Remove light fixtures
New hardware for front door

Room B: Remove false ceiling
Remove temporary partitions
Refinish floors and walls
Remove modern panelling

Room C: Refinish floors and walls
Replace missing transom to left of fireplace
Rework doorway to hallway to match others and install
appropriate door
Install new hardware on sliding doors
Close doorway to Room A and match wainscot
Replace original windows if they can be located
Replace light fixtures

Room D: Refinish floors and walls
Fix ceiling where ruined by a leak
Install appropriate exterior door
Remove light fixtures
Install appropriate door to Room E

Room E: Finish as modern office unless used as a kitchen
Close doorway to addition

Room F: Remove walls and baths
Install two new public restrooms and telephone foyer
as shown on Plan I

Room G: Remove walls and bath as shown on Plan I
Move doorway to back hallway
Refinish as modern office

Hallway: Refinish

Second Floor

This floor should be redone as modern office space. The placement of doorways must be determined by the future function of the offices.
The windows should be cleaned of paint
Remove temporary partition at top of stairs
Close doorways to addition

Room P: Refinish floor and walls
Either open or properly close doorway to Room Q
Replace one pane of broken glass

Room Q: Reopen two windows and install new frames (windows present)
Refloor

Room R: Reopen two windows and install new frames (windows present)
Refloor

Room S: Reopen two windows and install new frames (windows gone)
Repair ceiling
Repair or replace door
Refloor

Bath: Should be reworked as office restroom

461 Madison: Front





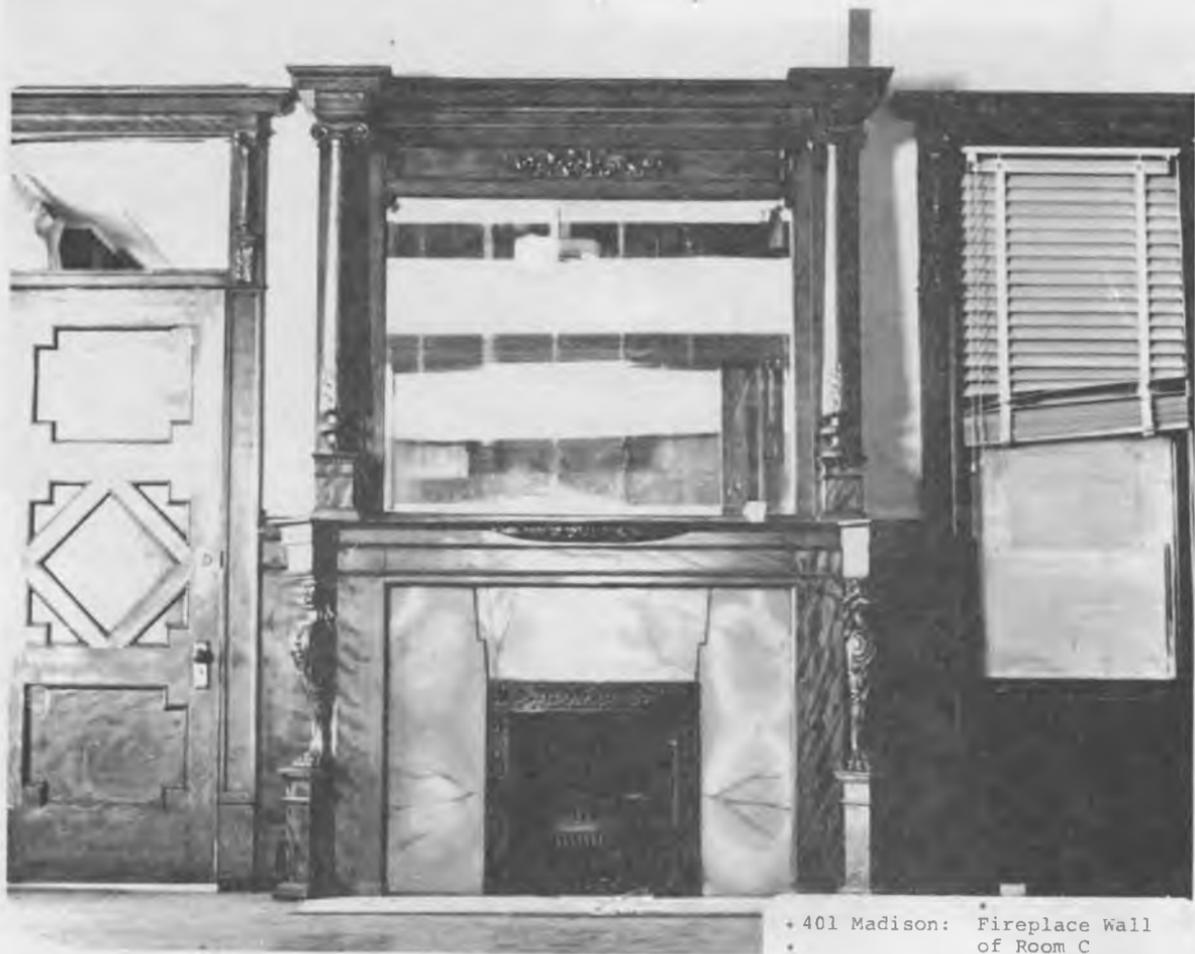
• 401 Madison: Gates St. Facade



• 401 Madison:
• Mantle in Room B
•



+ 401 Madison: Sliding Doors
* between Rooms
* B and C
*



* 401 Madison: Fireplace Wall
* of Room C
*



• 401 Madison:
• Mantle in Room D

NOTICE

HISTORIC PRESERVATION -- TAX
INCENTIVES -- AMORTIZING
REHABILITATION COSTS

Under the Tax Reform Act of 1976, taxpayers using designated historic structures in trade or business are given substantial incentives to rehabilitate the property in a manner consistent with its historic character. One such incentive allows the

capital expenditures on such rehabilitation to be amortized over a five-year period in lieu of claiming deductions for depreciation otherwise allowable (see Washington Supplement, November 1976, p. 171).

The Internal Revenue Service has issued temporary regulations providing the mechanism for electing to amortize qualified rehabilitation expenses. To elect, the taxpayer attaches a statement to its return for the taxable year in which the first month of the amortization period falls. The election may be made after a request has been made for, but prior to, certification of the project by the Department of the Interior. In such a case, proof of certification is to be submitted with the first income tax return filed by the taxpayer after receipt of such certification. (The certification procedure is discussed infra under "Federal Regulations Proposed.") If a certification is not submitted within 30 months of the commencement of the amortization period, the taxpayer may be asked to agree to an extension of time for assessment of additional tax for the period in which deductions are claimed.

Once made, the election may be discontinued by filing written notice with the Internal Revenue Service prior to the month in which amortization is to cease. 42 Fed. Reg. 18275, April 6, 1977.



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Huntsville Foundation**

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Huntsville Foundation

If you want to become a member of the Historic Huntsville Foundation, and to assist in enhancing Huntsville's future by preserving its significant architectural and historic heritage, send your name, address, telephone number (home and office) and check in the appropriate amount (made payable to the Historic Huntsville Foundation Inc.) to: Mrs. Richard Van Valkenburg, Jr., Chairman, Historic Huntsville Foundation, 104 Williams Ave. S.E. Huntsville, 35801

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Active (Individual)	10.00
Business	50.00
Patron	25. - 99.00
Benefactor	100. or more

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Re-Creating The Effect Of Colonial Plaster Walls



By Jack R. Cunningham, The Saltbox
Rohrerstown, Pennsylvania

WHEN WE FIRST MOVED INTO OUR 1830 Saltbox, we did some things in our youthful enthusiasm that we wished later we hadn't. So we have been slowly going about setting aright some of our early mistakes.

THE HOUSE HAD BEEN COMPLETELY "REMUDDLED" into a semi-Victorian semi-contemporary house. Since there was so little of the original detailing left, we have been reconstructing a "what might have been" house, based on our study of homes of a similar period. The style, if we should give it a name, might be "rural American country dwelling."

THE PARTICULAR MISTAKE that was giving me a headache recently was in the kitchen. About 7 years ago, I had panelled the kitchen with an inexpensive grooved hardboard. (Well, at that time I didn't know!) My motives then were quite pure. We had an insulation problem with the kitchen, and I had figured that the 3/4 in. air space behind the furred-out panelling would help. It did—but it sure didn't look very authentic.

I HAD PREVIOUSLY HAD good luck in simulating the look of old rough plaster on some new sheet-rock partitions, and it occurred to me that the same procedure might work equally well on those hideous hardboard panels. It worked out so well



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that I wanted to share my technique with other readers of The Journal who might be facing a similar problem.

FIRST, I painted the panels with a flat white oil-base paint to cover the blue that had previously been applied. Then I trowled on a thin skim-coat of "simulated plaster," which was in fact a thick mixture of joint compound—the kind you use on the seams in plaster-board partitions. I always use the dry powder and mix it myself to the desired consistency. (It costs about \$4.00 per 25-lb. bag.) You can also get it premixed, but it is more expensive this way—and you have to work with it as it comes from the can; you can't adjust consistency the way you can when you mix your own.

ONE GREAT THING about joint compound is that it stays moist and workable for a long time.

If you make up a large batch, you can even keep it overnight by just covering it with a damp cloth.

THE JOINT COMPOUND should be the consistency of thick mud so that it doesn't ooze off your trowel. Compound can be applied to the wall with a wide-bladed (6 in. or wider) joint knife or a cement trowel that has some flexibility in the blade. Work about a 2 ft. square area at a time. A wide

Have any Experiences to share with other readers? Send your ideas and hints to: The Editor, Historic Huntsville Quarterly, 405 Homewood Drive, S.W., Huntsville, Ala. 35801.





Restored kitchen at the Saltbox contains—in addition to its newly antiqued walls—a mixture of old pieces (the corner cupboard, dry sink and wall cabinet) plus reproductions created for the Saltbox collection.

range of textures and effects can be obtained, from smooth to Spanish stucco (if that's what you like). To create a realistic old plaster wall effect, you try for a generally smooth appearance, with scratches, bumps and gentle waves here and there. Ideally, you should have a look at a real old plaster wall before trying to sculpt your own.

FREQUENT "CAT-TAILS" will be created by the edge of your trowel. Some of these should be left, as they can be very effective in giving the over-all antique effect. Build-up should be 1/8 in. to 3/16 in. at the very most. In many cases I've gone from almost nothing to a 1/8-in high spot in the same general area. I create this variable-thickness effect by sticking a glob of joint compound about the size of a fist onto the wall and then work it out: Left to right, up and down... with most of the finishing being done with the vertical strokes. Once you start, you'll find the strokes pretty quickly that will give the effect you want.

ANY ROUGH SPOTS that you don't like once the material is dry can be sanded, or else smoothed over with a damp sponge.

WHEN DRY, the surface should be painted with #1 oil-base paint. I like to use a stiff 4-in. brush, spreading the paint on rather generously, because I only use one coat. It's not necessary to have complete paint coverage in all the little dents and valleys... in fact it's better to have a few little skips here and there when you're using an off-white paint as I was. The joint compound has a rather pleasant beige color when dry. So the skips here and there create subtle highlights in the surface and enhance the old appearance.

THE PAINT I USED was a warm off-white called "Candle Lite." I had it mixed expressly for The Saltbox by a large paint manufacturer after testing and rejecting literally dozens of shades of white. I find that "Candle Lite" gives a warm glow to the room and helps bring

out the colors in furniture and other decorations.*

THIS SAME BASIC PROCEDURE has been used with good results on plasterboard. Although I can't make any guarantees about longevity, I have nailed and screwed into a wall finished in this fashion with no problems. And since the joint compound seems to stick well for many years to plasterboard seams, there seems good reason to believe that my antiqued walls will similarly last for many, many years.

*Candle Lite paint is available only through The Saltbox. It sells for \$14.95 per gal. plus postage. Jack says he'll send Journal readers a sample on plasterboard for a 50¢ postage and handling charge. Contact him at: The Saltbox, 2229 Marietta Pike, Rohrerstown, Pennsylvania 17603.

Jack Cunningham is dedicated to the preservation of the old-time crafts. His personal specialty is the re-creation of Early American lighting fixtures. Both his lighting fixtures and his house will be featured in upcoming issues.

Gentle Restoration Of Furniture Finishes

MANY OLD PIECES OF FURNITURE with natural finishes that seem to be candidates for the stripping tank may in fact only need to have the finish restored. On fine pieces especially, it's far more desirable to revive the original finish than to strip and refinish. If the finish is smooth and not badly alligatored, chances are it can be rescued. Such defects as dirty dark color, scratches, dullness and cloudiness can often be remedied by the proper cleaning and/or restoring.

VARNISH OR OIL FINISHES should first be cleaned with mineral spirits or turpentine to remove any wax. Finish is then rubbed down with 3/0 steel wool...always following the grain of the wood. Finally, you can build up the surface with a thin linseed oil finish. Use a mixture that is 1 part mineral spirits and 3 parts boiled linseed oil. Apply to surface, then wipe off all excess, so that the thinnest possible film is laid down. Repeat two or three times. Each coat should dry thoroughly.

SHELLAC OR LACQUER FINISHES CAN BE re-amalgamated by careful application of the right solvent (alcohol for shellac; lacquer thinner for lacquer). First clean the surface with mineral spirits to remove any accumulated wax and dirt. Experiment with solvent in an inconspicuous test area. Brush on just enough of the solvent so that it will dissolve the surface of the finish, leaving a significantly improved surface when the solvent evaporates. You may want to apply another thin coat of shellac or lacquer for the best result.

Re-Creating Victorian Gingerbread

Many Victorian houses have been stripped of their exterior details by previous owners who wanted to "modernize" them. Yet it's not as difficult as it might seem to re-create much of the original Victorian character and richness. Here's how one homeowner did it.

By Jerry M. Lesandro

I HAVE HAD A LOVE OF OLD HOUSES since I was a small boy, and hoped someday to own a bit of Victorian elegance for myself. But most of the old houses I ran across were more than I could afford. When I finally found my current house, although there was little remaining of its original appearance I had faith that beneath the asbestos shingles was a thing of beauty waiting to be revealed.

THE WOMAN I BOUGHT THE HOUSE FROM told me that the house had been covered with asbestos shingles in 1950 at the cost of \$1,000. The reason given was maintenance freedom. But as far as I was concerned, this was destroying a thing of beauty just to get out of a little work. Besides, painting one's house is sort of an American tradition and it can be fun.

IN COVERING THE HOUSE WITH ASBESTOS, all the exterior trim and architectural detail was removed, including the decorative frame around doors and windows.



The Old-House Journal

The only thing they didn't remove was the fish-scale moulding that encircles the whole house beneath the eaves. I was very lucky in this instance, for I'm sure that this bit of re-creation would have been very difficult and time-consuming. Fortunately, the shingles had been applied directly over this moulding.

MY FIRST PROBLEM IN REMOVING the shingles was getting the proper equipment. A ladder I didn't consider safe; it wouldn't allow enough working space considering the tallness of the house. Luckily, I have a friend in the construction business and was able to borrow some scaffolding. I would advise anyone working on a tall Victorian house to do the same.

THE NEXT PROBLEM was what to do with the shingles after they were pulled off. I just let them fall to the ground and later collected them in boxes and hauled them away. The smart thing to do would have been to rent a dumpster; the disposal of all the trash would have been much easier. One other lesson I learned the hard way: Under the shingles was a layer of tar paper that created havoc with future paint jobs. The tar paper left marks on the house that later bled through the new paint... requiring a repainting of the house. The wood should have been prepared more thoroughly, probably using mineral spirits or washing soda to get rid of



the residue left by the tar paper.

NEXT CAME THE TASK of re-creating the gingerbread trim. To determine the kind of trim that had been on the house, I consulted old photographs of the area. Also, I found imprints of some of the decorative details when the shingles were removed. And by some quirk of luck, I found one of the corner pieces of gingerbread underneath a pile of wood in the backyard, even though at the time I didn't realize where it went.

BECAUSE THESE CORNER decorations are so large, additional pieces had to be cut from 3/4-in. plywood sheets. Using the salvaged piece as a pattern, it was a simple matter to cut out more pieces using a sabre saw. The curves were pretty intricate, but with patience and a steady hand they came out quite well.

ALL NEW GINGERBREAD PIECES—and especially those made of plywood—were carefully coated with a primer-sealer on all sides and then given several coats of paint. This is done before nailing the pieces in place. Once they are up, it is a simple matter to touch up any scars made during the installation process. Painting before installation is not only easier on the painting arm—it also ensures that all sides of the wood are protected from damage by water and rot.

RE-CREATING THE DECORATIONS around the top of the bay window and front porch was more difficult: I had only old pictures to go by. Since the photos were not too clear and were taken at a distance, I had to use some poetic license in making up a pattern. But my design fits in well with the estab-



Exterior restoration included ripping off the asbestos shingles and repainting, installing finials at roof peaks, creating a widow's walk atop the house, re-creating much gingerbread trim, and replacing the door and railing for the small second-floor porch over the front door.

lished theme. After drawing the pattern and making one master piece, the rest were cut from 1-in. pine with a sabre saw. I did experience some difficulty with the pieces breaking at the narrowest point, and had to repair them with corrugated fasteners. If I were doing it again, I would use 2-in. pine stock for added strength.

ABOVE DOORS AND WINDOWS, replacing the trim required only 2-in. cove moulding that is readily available at lumber yards. To create depth in this feature, two small pieces of the moulding were mitered to each end of the long front piece. After this unit was put in place above the windows, a piece of 1-in. pine was nailed to the top to function as a drip-cap. These units were made for all doors and windows. Joints where these caps butted against the house were carefully caulked. This pre-



Bay Window Ornament



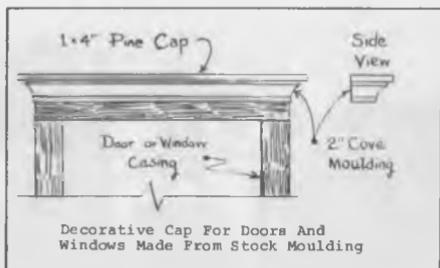
Piece of original gingerbread—found in backyard under woodpile—served as a pattern.



A re-created piece installed. The fish-scale trim under the eaves is original to the house.



Detail of the curved pieces that were restored to the top of the bay window.



Decorative Cap For Doors And Windows Made From Stock Moulding

vents water from seeping behind the moulding and rotting the whole section out.

FROM VERY OLD PICTURES of the house, it was evident that there once had been a widow's walk on the top. I thought that this was a nice feature that should be put back. Since the photos were somewhat fuzzy, here again I had to re-create it as best I could.

I WAS ABLE TO SALVAGE POSTS (from a house that had been torn down) for the four corners of the widow's walk. I also used them for the small second floor porch. I was fortunate because the age and style of the posts closely matched the woodwork on my house. For rails, I simply used 2x4's. The widow's walk is reached through a trap door in the attic. The area on top is approximately 8 ft. x 16 ft. and provides a delightful place from which to view the surrounding neighborhood.

THE OLD PICTURES also showed that a door led from the second story to the balcony. Why it was removed, I'll never know. Here again, I was lucky to find a door of the same period with stained glass. With the balcony completed to match the widow's walk, it now has an elegant access door that does it justice.



The Lesandro house is circled in this photo of The Plaza, Orange, Calif., taken about 1890. Of all the buildings in the photo, Lesandro's is the only one still standing.

COLOR OF THE HOUSE seems to have always been white, with the trim being many different colors. I decided to keep it white and paint the trim a chocolate brown. Happily, two other old houses in the same area underwent exterior restoration after my house was done. People pass the house now and remark that they had never noticed it before—even though they had been going by it for years. When that happens, you know all the effort was worth it!

Jerry Lesandro is one of a rare breed: A fifth-generation Californian who was born in Los Angeles. This California pioneer heritage has stimulated his interest in preservation, which includes numerous historical society activities.

17-Year-Old Restores Sawn-Wood Ornament On Family Home

INTEREST IN RESTORATION isn't confined to the over-30 set. One of The Journal's youngest readers, 17-year-old Peter Romano of Pitman, N.J., has sent along an account of a gingerbread restoration he has just completed on his family's home.

THE LINE OF CUT-OUT GINGERBREAD along the eaves was original to the house and is still intact. However, a 1913 photograph showed that the porch was also decorated with elaborate sawn-wood ornament—which had long since disappeared. Guided by the old photo, plus study of a similarly ornamented house across the street, Romano laid out a new pattern for the porch ornament. He cut the pieces from exterior-grade plywood, and nailed them in place.

TO COMPLETE THE DESIGN, Romano also added some sawn wood applique above the windows on the dormers in the Mansard roof.





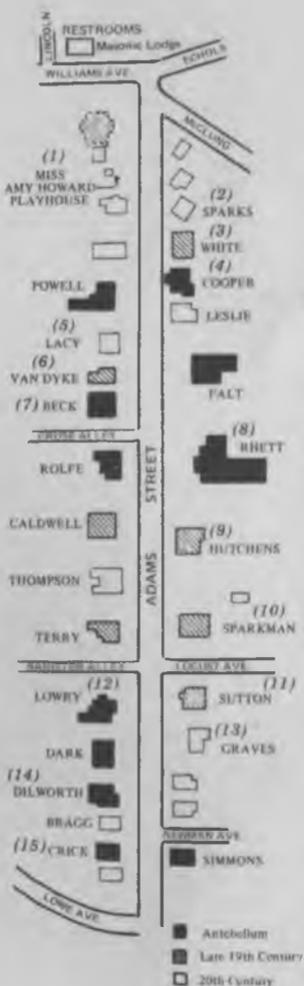
ADAMS STREET FAIR

CANDLELIGHT TOUR - AUG. 5, 1977, 7:00-10:00 p.m.
STREET FAIR & TOUR - AUG. 6, 1977, 12:00-5:00 p.m.

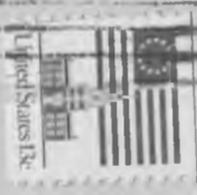


Architectural History of Adams Street

- 501 One story frame cottage built during the first quarter of the 20th Century on part of the garden of the McClung property to the east.
- 503 Two story stuccoed house, built during the first quarter of the 20th Century in the old garden as above.
- (1) 504 1/4 Frame Playhouse, ca. 1975, a great grandmother's gift.
- (2) 507 Two story frame house built during the first quarter of the 20th Century.
- 508 One story stuccoed cottage, built during first quarter of the 20th Century, on property which once belonged to Leroy Pope Walker, first Secretary of War of the Confederacy.
- (3) 509 Two story frame house, built during the fourth quarter of the 19th Century.
- (4) 511 Brick raised cottage, ca. 1837. Entrance modified. Owned during the Civil War by George W. Lane Union sympathizer, whom President Lincoln made Federal Judge. House retains much original interior detailing.
- 512 One story frame cottage, first quarter of 20th Century, retains "stick-style" trim of turn of the century.
- 513 One story frame cottage, first quarter of 20th Century.
- 517 Two story brick, ca. 1848, with original out buildings. Street facade resulted from error of construction overseer. Columned porch added ca. 1920 by Henry B. Chase, co-founder of Chase Nursery Co., which was at one time the largest wholesale nursery in the world. During the Civil War the house was occupied by Gen. Ormsby Mitchel, Commander of the Union Forces which occupied the city in April, 1962. HABS, 1935.
- 518 Two story brick Federal house, ca. 1835, with period out buildings. Home for merchanta' families like the Fackler, Pyncheon, and others. HABS, 1935.
- (5) 524 Two story frame house, ca. 1923. Built by Henry J. Certain. Long time home of the family of Jack Langhorne publisher of the Huntsville Times.
- (6) 526 Two story frame house, fourth quarter of 19th Century. Eastlake influence shown in wooden lace trim, interior woodwork, and other details.
- (7) 528 Two story brick Federal, ca. 1835, with entrances modified in recent years. Built by George Steele, leading local architect-builder of the time. Birthplace of John C. Greenway, mining engineer and leading military figure in the Spanish-American War and World War I.



- 600 Two story brick Federal house, ca. 1825. Home of Samuel Cruse, head of the Federal land office at Huntsville. Birthplace of Mary Ann Cruse, author of children's books, who donated the proceeds for stained glass windows in the Church of the Nativity. Facade altered in the mid-20's. Iron fence notable.
- (8) 603 Two story brick of Italianate Revival influence which fronts the original small brick house, ca. 1828. Served as headquarters for Gen. John A. Logan during the Civil War. Columned portico added ca. 1920 by Mayor and Mrs. Earl Smith. (Courtyard, Saturday only)
- 604 Two story frame house built ca. 1872 by Robert Weeden, brother of Maria Howard Weeden. House has been modified and gardens elaborated.
- 608 Two story brick built in 1974, showing Georgian influence.
- (9) 609 Two story frame house, modified, built in the 19th Century.
- 612 Two story frame house, modified, built in the last quarter of the 19th Century.
- (10) 619 Two story frame house, authentically last quarter of the 19th Century. Garage recently modified. Home of Senator & Mrs. John J. Sparkman. (Guest House only)
- 701 Two story frame house, fourth quarter of the 18th Century with Queen Ann Revival detail, modified.
- (12) 702 Two story frame house, ca. 1858 with Davis and Downing influence. Episcopal rectory from 1860-1908. Wooden lace trim incorporates church symbols.
- (13) 703 Two story brick Dutch Colonial style house, built ca. 1965. Serves as home for president of UAH.
- (14) 704 Multilevel brick house, ca. 1853. Residence of Dr. Carlos G. Smith, who became the fifth president of the University of Alabama. During his residence, he had a private school next door.
- 706 Two story brick house, ca. 1854. Was the building where Dr. Carlos G. Smith conducted a private school for years before he became fifth president of the University.
- 707 One story stucco bungalow, ca. 1925.
- 708 One story brick bungalow, ca. 1925.
- 709 One story stucco bungalow, ca. 1925.
- (15) 710 One story frame cottage, ca. 1830. Significant as a now rare example of a once common type. Porch shows early Victorian influences.
- 712 One story frame cottage, first quarter 20th Century.
- 715 Two story frame house, built in the 19th century.



FROM
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