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Historic Winchester Home Meets Its End

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Located at 309 First Avenue, N.W., the Henderson-Clark-Moore house was built around 1835 by William Reeves. It served as the temporary home of General William T. Sherman during the Civil War as well as presidents James A. Garfield and Ulysses S. Grant.

The house was also home to Bernie H. Moore (April 30, 1895 – Nov. 6, 1967). Moore was a football, basketball, track and field coach and a college athletics administrator. He served as the head football coach at Mercer University (1925–1927) and Louisiana State University (1935–1947). Moore was also the head basketball coach at Mercer (1926–1928) and the head track and field coach at LSU (1930–1947). He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1952.

Soon, though, this historic home will only be a memory.

Construction crews could be seen at the first avenue home tearing down what some say is Franklin County's living history.

Advocate for the renovation of the historic home, Jamie Lamb, said it's a tragedy that Franklin County hasn't done a better job of preserving its history.

"It's a shame that Franklin County has no more regard for its history because this is their history," Lamb, an Atlanta native, said.

Lamb, who's continuous efforts for the past several years was to save the home, acknowledged it was a full-time job. Part of that full-time job included plans to move the home from its current spot to several proposed places.

Still, Lamb said, that would've destroyed the historical significance of the sight itself.

"If the home would have been moved, it would have cost \$10,000 to do, and it would lose its historical significance because something can't be registered on a 'register of historical places' if it doesn't exist on the place of its original existence."

There's no timeline of how long it will take dismantle the home.

After several attempts, the owner of the home, Mr. Leon Baker, could not be reached for comment. According to Coldwell Banker, they're asking \$295,500 for the 1.4 acre lot.

Ian Skotte

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Resident Hopes To Save Historical Home

Save

If walls could talk, Winchester's Henderson-Clark-Moore Home would tell wonderful stories of the history of our little corner of the world, and a Winchester resident wants those memories preserved.

Located on 309 First Ave., N.W., the house has been continuously owned, lived in and enjoyed by six generations of the same family and is named for three families who once lived in the house, all of whom made their own mark on the pages of history.

Built in the 1830's, possibly by William Reeves, F.A. Lockmiller sold the house in 1860, to Mark Henderson for \$3,250, according to the Franklin County Historical Review.

Originally, the home, built in the federal style, had two stories, eight rooms, either three or four fireplaces, a detached dogleg kitchen and a root cellar.

The Story of Sam Tag Age Ten to Fifteen, 1860-1865, by S.J. Kennerly, tells the tale of a ball held at the Henderson home in the fall of 1861. As the author states later in this portion of his book, "Oh, but it was an inspiring scene."

One night in the early fall, while the weather was yet pleasant, the news went forth that a party or dance would be given at the Henderson home. Mr. Henderson was in the army, but his goodnatured wife and his two beautiful and lively young daughters were ever ready to open their hospitable home to the young people. And oh, the joys of a country dance! Never a train nor a pompadour, nor yet a dress suit or a Tuxedo were seen in those halls of mirth. The girls' skirts were of dancing length and the boys wore their "store clothes," and every man of them brought his good manners along as his chief asset.

Nearly all of the men, old and young, were in the army, and so the younger boys were utilized as beaux and escorts for the girls-young girls, old maids, widows and wives, God bless 'em! And all of them were there.

I tied my horse to a nearby tree, hitched up my "galluses," straightened my coat collar, took off my hat, gave my hair a final pat and was on the point of entering the house, when Tom Elkins and his sister, Miss Sallie rode up.

"Where is your girl, Sam?" Tom asked, when he saw that I was alone.

"Miss Sallie is my girl," I replied. "I am waiting to take her in."

"Why, certainly, Sammy is my beau," (Lord, how I hated to be called "Sammy") said Miss Sallie, "and we will dance the first set together."

"Stooping slightly, she placed her hand on my arm, and proudly I escorted the charming young lady up the steps and into the great living room, from which all the furniture had been removed to make room for the dancing. There a gay scene met our eyes. In the great fireplace hickory logs roared and sputtered and blazed, shedding a glow throughout the room that was not materially enhanced by the lamps that hung around the wall. Everybody seemed to be talking at once, and good-natured laughter was heard on every hand. Suddenly, above the uproar, rang out the voice of Uncle Steve, the neighborhood fiddler: "Choose yer partners fer de fust quadrille."

Soon two sets were formed, each boy clinging to the hand of his fair partner, as if afraid she might try to escape. Miss Sallie kept her promise, and I stood holding her hand and wishing I was as tall as Arch Woods, who was but little older than myself, but tall for his age.

Uncle Steve tucked his fiddle under his chin, drew the bow across the string in a long drawn preliminary squeak, and then fell into a rollicking tune that set all of one's dancing blood in motion. All over the room was heard the rhythmic patting of feet and clapping of hands, keeping time with the music. And as we danced, Uncle Steve called the figures:

"Hon'ah yo' pa'tners; ladies on de lef'. All han's aroun', an' circle to de right. Swing yo' pa'tners and all promenade."

And around we whirled, dancing to the right in our places.

"Fust fo' couples fo'd, an' back."

Uncle Steve had never learned that four people were not four couples. But nothing daunted, we continued to dance; and how the boys did cut the pigeon wing and knock the back step. Oh, but it was an inspiring scene. A half hour of good hard dancing brought the first quadrille to a close, and after a few moments' rest Uncle Steve announced the "Ferginy reel."

The story says that the dancing continued until one o'clock in the morning.

Living through the Civil War, the Henderson home was integral in Winchester's role in the Civil War.

Current Winchester resident Mrs. Jamie Lamb is trying to save the home and has spearheaded a movement to do so. Mrs. Lamb's actions have led to the creation of the Friends of the Henderson-Clark-Moore Home.

Mrs. Lamb told this reporter one of the Civil War stories that have been passed down over the years. During the War, both Confederate and Union troops used the house for headquarters, because of the excellent view from the roof of the home. The Confederates' stay was short and not much was known about what life was like for the Hendersons with the Confederate officers underfoot.

However, but many tales were told about life in the white-framed house while Gen. William S. Rosecrans and his Union troops stayed there several months.

"When the Union troops were occupying Winchester, the officers stayed at the Henderson house," said Mrs. Lamb, "and they congregated the family into one of the front parlors." "It was an extended family, several children and possibly even aunts and uncles, and the family was hoarding food, hiding it from the Union officers," relayed Mrs. Lamb. Back then, that was treason, if the officers found out, they would have killed the family, said Mrs. Lamb.

The thing they were hiding was a smoked ham and they were hiding it in the ceiling between the rafters of the first and second floors, explained Mrs. Lamb.

"Well, at some point, a grease spot formed on the ceiling due to the heat, and eventually the ham fell through the ceiling with a loud thud," said Lamb.

Thinking quickly, Mrs. Henderson hid the ham under her skirt and reached over and pinched the baby to make it cry, explained Lamb. "So, that when the Union officers came in to investigate the noise, she said the baby had fallen out of her lap and that was the noise they had heard."

As a young officer, future President James A. Garfield stayed at the Henderson home at this time as well, but was asked to leave because of his foul language. Mrs. Henderson requested that he and some of the other younger officers be moved because she had young and impressionable boys. Gen. Rosecrans respected the Hendersons and gladly honored their request.

The famous Gen. W.M.T. Sherman as well as future President Ulysses S. Grant also stayed at the home during the War. Living in such close quarters enabled the Henderson family and the Union troops to form a close bond, despite their political and geographical differences. It is said that Gen. Rosecrans at one point saved Mark Henderson's life. The story goes that Mark had been accused of being a spy. He was brought to trial in Decherd before a military court. Gen. Rosecrans asked many questions of Mark in such a manner that Mark appeared foolish. The Union General released Mark, saving him from being hanged by saying, "He is not a spy! He is foolish-no man in his right mind would answer that way."

Once the war ended and the troops left, life returned to normal for the Hendersons.

On April 30, 1880, Mark Henderson conveyed the house and one-acre lot to his daughter, Ellen Elizabeth Clark. She and her

husband, Rufus Anthony (R.A.) Clark, the young principal of Carrick Academy, were married in this house. Some 200 guests were invited to the house for the wedding supper.

Carrick Academy became Normal College and sometime later, R.A. Clark was named president of the college.

The couple had three children Harry, Alice and Anna. "Tragedy struck the family in 1892 when the young mother was killed in a spectacular train wreck at Crooked Bayou, near Humphreys, Arkansas. She was accompanying one of the college's teachers, Ela Reid, to her home in Texas, where her marriage to Mr. Clark's brother, James, was to take place. However, the train on which they were passengers struck a freight train head-on as they met on a bridge over the bayou. All of the passenger train cars, except the mail and express cars plunged into the water. Many people were killed or injured. It was thought that Mrs. Clark's death was caused by a potbellied stove falling on her. Her body was brought to Winchester in the railroad president's private car and lay in state at the Winchester depot."

Anna Clark Moore, daughter of R.A. Clark, and her husband, Bernie Moore, came back to live in this house after Coach Moore's retirement and they remained there until their deaths. The house remained in the Clark family until the recent sale to a Clifton, TN couple.

More history of this fascinating home may be found in "Family Histories Franklin County, Tennessee" and in "Franklin County Historical Review."



HENDERSON-CLARK-MOORE HOME--Winchester resident Jamie Lamb is trying to save this house and has spearheaded a movement to do so. Her actions have led to the creation of the Friends of the Henderson-Clark-Moore Home. Contact Beth Rhoton at City Hall, 967-4771 to join the Friends.

By Shanna Relford Staff Writer