

WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION



Newsletter



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McMinnville, Tennessee



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Fig 1 WCGA Tours Oaklam/Magness Home

Oakham located on the Sparta Highway, was built as a one and one half story brick residence with a central double-pile (two rooms deep) plan.



The following is a History prepared from a 1982 report prepared for the Warren County Historical Society prepared by the Historic Preservation Program, Dept of History, Middle Tennessee State University. A special thanks to Delce Dyer, Chris Ertel, Ernest Edington, Martha Hagedorn and Carol Hoffman

Methodology - The study of an old building can be compared to trying to solve a puzzle; it is necessary to use all available tools to uncover the story of the building & its inhabitants as they have changed over time. The search for the history of the people who have lived at Oakham centered primarily around original historical sources, i.e., deeds, tax records, court records, census records, & maps. These materials were found through many hours of research at the Warren County Courthouse & Magness Library in McMinnville, & at the TN State Library & Archives in Nashville. Other materials found in the house itself were also a valuable source of information. Personal interviews helped to answer some question & to fill in gaps where no written records are available. Concurrently, Oakham itself was searched for clues to its structural evolution. Architectural components were analyzed & compared. This process included the use of paint analysis, molding profiles, room & construction element measurements, & photographs. Special attention was directed toward the apparent causes of Oakham's present structural problems & to some recommendations for alleviating them. The result of these investigations, plus a good deal of theorizing, is a historical structures report which is meant to serve as a documentation of Oakham as it now exists & as a foundation on which to base its restoration & future use. Approximately 600 hours ere contributed to the preparation of this report.

Oakham: Four Eras

Lying on fertile ground bisected by a rail line bordered by rivers and facing a major transportation route, Oakham has long been an

important site in McMinnville. During its century of use as a private residence, its 3 principal owners were noteworthy merchants, businessmen, & farmers. For 50 years as county property, Oakham has continued in service to the community as the Elizabeth J Magness Home for the Aged & the Indigent. Medical, educational, & industrial facilities now occupy its adjacent lands. Its future can well be based upon its rich assets, combining geographical, historical, architectural & agricultural significance, and community service into a cohesive whole.

Predating the house by several generations are the road & the huge oak trees. Known as the McMinnville & Sparta Stage Road & providing a direct route from east of the Alleghenies to Alabama & Mississippi, the route was probably used by buffalo & Indians before the white man settled the area. According to local lore, an important landmark was the "birthing tree," a place where women could give birth, or where migrants could rest along the trail. This tree still stands across from the house. During the Civil War, the road was in active use. It appeared on an area map drawn by Engineers of the Union Army in 1862.

Oakham had been home to 3 prominent families, 2 of whom were among the early residents of McMinnville. The Black family settled in McMinnville shortly after 1820. John, Alexander, & William Black each built Federal-style brick homes on lots in town. John & William married sisters, Ferrabee & Hannah, daughters of Howard & Priscilla Mercer. The partnership of the 3 men, known as John Black & Brothers, was one of the few commercial activities between 1820 & 1830. They engaged in land speculation & banking, evidenced by many documents of record. In 1847, William & Alexander Black formed a partnership with Asa Faulkner to establish a cotton spinning factory on Charles Creek, known as the Central Factory. Black's Mill (a saw & grist mill first owned by Wm, then by Alexander); Black's Ferry (described in an heir's conveyance in 1873 & in operation until 1890); the mercantile business of Wm Black & brother-in-laws, Lorenzo D. Mercer, known as Black & Mercer; and a stable in town run by Alexander are a few of their other enterprises.

Around 1840, Wm Black moved to the Sparta Rd, about 3 miles east of McMinnville,

where he built Oakham. Originally a Federal-type building of 4 rooms & central hall, the actual construction is attributed to Philip Hoodenpyl (sometimes spelled Hoodenpyle), a building contractor, who, with Wm & Edmund North & Salmon J. Mitchell, erected many early brick buildings in and around McMinnville.

In 1840 the partnership between Wm Black & L. D. Mercer was dissolved. Mercer received the merchant mills & adjoining lands by paying \$6,000 for Wm.'s business interest plus \$1,300 for his personal debts. The Oakham land transfer date & documentation to Wm is unclear, but the property may have passed to him through the Mercer & Black family connections or other business transactions.

The acres on the Oakham tract were valuable farm land, well watered by nearby rivers & springs. According to Joseph B. Killebrew, noted local agriculturalist of the mid-nineteenth century, "very fertile & desirable farms lie between Barren Fork & Charles Creek. By many they are accounted the best in the county.

The value of Wm Black's land in 1850 was \$1,000 & he owned 10 slaves. The 1850 census of Dt. 9 of Warren County lists the members of Wm's household as follows: Wm Black, age 50, a manufacturer, Hannah, age 42, Samuel, ages 22, student, Howard M, ages 20, clerk, Forrester, aged 17, student, John, aged 14, school, Priscilla, aged 11, school, Hannah, age 4, Wm, aged 2, James A, aged 19, student. According to the Black family history, Pioneer Preacher, 5 of these were children of deceased brother John. Indicative of the family's prosperity is its apparent interest in education & in large slave & land holdings.

Wm Black & his family moved to Arkansas in 1853 or 54. He joined his wife, Hannah Mercer Black, & other heirs of Howard Mercer, Sr. in deeding the Mercer home place to Joseph G. Mercer, in March 1853, one of his final transactions in Warren County. The last son of the marriage was born in 1853, & Hannah died in Arkansas shortly thereafter.

Although the exact date of purchase is not known, Philip H. (P.H.) Marbury became the 2nd owner of Oakham, adding this to large acreage he already held in the area. Again, the chain of title is unclear, complicated by incomplete county records. Benjamin Marbury, son Philip and wife, Mary Hoodenpyl Marury, settled in

McMinnville before 1820. Together with the Philip Hoodenpyl family, they ran an early hotel in town located on present Main Street. According to Goodspeed's early history, Philip had an academic education, a 1 year medical apprenticeship under Dr. Melchisedec Hill, 4 years of employment as a clerk for John Cain, then a 20 year business partnership with Alexander Black which began in 1833. In the same year he married Rebecca Mercer, sister to Ferrabee (Pherrabee) & Hannah Mercer, who were married to John & Wm Black.

Evidence of the business association between Alexander Black & Philip Marbury are numerous. In 1840, John L Forsyth, "being desirous of trading in the store of Black & Marbury of McMinnville, Tennessee," secured his debts with a trust conveyance of a "Dark Bay Blind Mare...worth \$25 & a carriall worth \$75." Together they purchased several tracts of land and bought & sold slaves, sometimes taking collateral in settlement of debts owed them.

Marbury's land accumulations on the Collins River & the Barren Fork began in the 1840'. With Black, he purchased shares of a 50 acre tract joining the partners & Sarah Christian, Hill & Marbury. 400 acres were purchased from Stokley D. Rowan in 1847; 100 more were added in 1849 by transfer from Melchisedec Hill to Philip Marbury.

Rebecca Marbury died at Oakham in 1848, survived by her husband & 7 children, 5 sons & 2 daughters, & was buried there in the family cemetery. Due to the connection with Mercers & Blacks, it is possible that they also were living at Oakham at that time. However, the 1850 census shows Philip and 7 children living in Dt. 9, Dwelling 44, & the Wm Black family in Dwelling 96. The 1850 agriculture census indicates the following information for Marbury: Improved land 200 acres, Unimproved land 370 acres, Value of land \$7,000, Value of farm implements \$500 Livestock \$1,129.

The livestock included 8 horses, 4 mules, 6 milch cows, 2 other cows, 72 sheep, and 100 swine. Farm produce for that year included 50 bushels of wheat, 2000 bushels of Indian corn, 200 bushels of oats, 150 pounds of wool, 150 bushels of Irish potatoes, 300 bushels of sweet potatoes, & 150 pounds of butter. He owned 10 slaves.

Philip Marbury's visionary project, the McMinnville & Manchester Railroad, began in 1850 with a charter from the Tennessee General Assembly. The line was incorporated in 1852. 40,000 shares of stock were sold at \$25 per share by the commissioners, among whom were some of McMinnville's most prominent citizens: Wm White, Wm C Smartt, George Smartt, Stokley D Rowan, L. D. Mercer, J Woodlee, R. A. Campbell & Alexander Black. The railroad would provide connection with the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad, a route described in Marbury's own words: "Commencing at McMinnville, it passes through the counties of Warren & Coffee, in a direction west of south, to its terminus at Tullahoma, a distance of 34 miles, having but little curvature..." The cost of building this road was enormous, running into several hundred thousand dollars. It was believed, however, that the large service area, through which ran no other rail lines, & the vast resources & products available in the area would warrant the high cost. At least 2 locomotives, the "Wm Moore" & the "W.C. Smartt," were owned by the road which opened in 1855, bringing for the first time supplies never before accessible & providing transportation to market for the area's products.

Meanwhile, Marbury was collecting more land near the Collins River. He purchased the 126 acre Howard Mercer, Sr. home place in 1853 & 128 1/2 acres from Francis K bell in 1857 among other tracts. During the 1850s, he is attributed with building the pavilion wings on Oakham. He married Mary E Scott on October 14, 1858. They had 2 children, Nellie, in 1860, & John Grundy, in 1862 The 1860 agriculture census describes his farm production: he now owned 935 acres, 335 of which were improved, at a total value of \$20,000. Farm machinery was \$350. His livestock holdings, valued at \$2,000, including 8 horses, 7 mules, 12 milch cows, 20 other cows, 10 wine, & 25 sheep which produced 25 pounds of wool that year. A variety of crops were grown, including 300 bushels of wheat, 3000 of Indian corn, 20 bushels of oats, 20 bushels of peas, 50 bushels of Irish potatoes, 100 bushels of rye, 320 bushels of sweet potatoes, 10 tons of hay, 100 bushels of grass seed, & 300 pounds of butter. He owned 25 slaves in 1860.

These must have been happy times - a large family of 7 children, a new wife, 2 children

on the way, one of the town's finest homes, vast property holdings, a productive farm, & a new railroad project. Unfortunately, this was the proverbial "calm before the storm."

On the eve of the Civil War, in 1859, Marbury's good friend & business associate, Alexander Black, died unexpectedly while out of state on business. The same year as his death, he had executed a trust deed to Sam Henderson to secure debts, the inventory of which illustrates the property & livestock holdings & household furnishings of a wealthy landholder in McMinnville during this era:

467 acres on Collins River, House & lot in town, 11 slaves, 6 horses, 1 2-house wagon, 27 cattle, including 3 mild cows, 50 hogs, 8 bedsteads & furniture, 1 bookcase with 100 books, 1 bureau, 1 set of dining tables, 24 common chairs, 12 cane (cane) chairs, 1 cooking stove, 2 large kettles, 5 ploughs & gearing, 1/2 of 2 town lots in Morrison (possibly fronting depot) Marbury was appointed administrator of the estate. There were insufficient funds to pay outstanding debts, but little else is known due to the chaotic conditions of the Civil War.

McMinnville exchanged hands 7 times during the Civil War, resulting "in the capture & recapture of the McMinnville & Manchester RR...by both Confederate & Union Forces." Goodspeed says no business was conducted during the Civil War in McMinnville, while the railroad suffered devastating blows. In 1864, the U. S. military seized operation on the line, but shortly thereafter tracks & bridges were demolished to hamper further accessibility. The "depot bottom" was burned. Courthouse records were moved to private homes for safekeeping during this siege.

Aside from railroad losses, the Civil War brought devastating personal losses to Philip Marbury. 3 of 6 sons, Horatio, Benjamin & Wm, joined Company C died in battle of Perryville, Ky, on Oct. 8, 1862. Marbury's wife of only 5 years, Mary, died on Nov. 14, 1863. Wm died a prisoner of war at Camp Morton, Indiana, from tuberculosis in 1865.

Threats from the Yankees were constant in McMinnville, & to Oakham on the Sparta Rd. Lore relates that Marbury's trusted slave, Aunt Emily, took her master's cattle to the mountain during the war. The Marbury silver was hidden above the front porch at one time. Yankees at

another time set fire to the wooden front porch. Loss of slave labor, and important outcome of the war, was no doubt detrimental to the Marbury household & farm activities. It is known, however, that Aunt Emily remained, living for many years across the road in a 2 story log house on the site of the present Three Star Mall. Many other former Marbury slaves remained in McMinnville, evidence by subsequent census records. Perhaps the most notable was a stone mason who formed Marbury & Leftwich, the company that later constructed limestone piers in the Collins River for the railroad bridge & turnpike to Sparta.

The 2 locomotives, "Wm Moore," & "WC Smartt," were returned to the rail line after the Civil War, but the company never recouped its losses. Due to an act of the General Assembly to sell & dispose of delinquent railroads, the McMRR was bought by stockholders in 1871. President & receiver at this time was B. J. Hill; Philip Marbury & others of the original board had remained active in the line. Soon afterward this track became part of the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis system, & the line was continued through Sparta & points east, transversing the Manbury property.

In 1868, Marbury, among others, was granted a charter to organize the Bank of McMinnville, which, however, never opened. Instead, in 1874 the National Bank of McMinnville began operation. The president was W. H. Magness, Sr., a wealthy merchant from DeKalb County, who had recently settled in McMinnville. P. H. Marbury became the first Cashier. Marbury had married a 3rd woman, Lila Thomas Garner, in 1869. Between 1868 & 1884, Philip Marbury sold about 130 acres of land from the tips of the Oakham tract. 3 more children died during these years: Priscilla & Benjamin in 1875 & Mary in 1878. Of these, only Benjamin had married & left 3 heirs. The first mortgages on the Oakham tract appear in 1879.

In 1887, the Marburys deeded 1/2 of their home place including 514 acres & 85 poles to W. T. Blue of Ohio, for \$5,000. Lila died in 1889. In 1890, Philip deeded the remainder of the home place to W. T. Blue, & moved to Alabama to live with his son, John Grundy Marbury, until his death in 1897. Marbury's remaining 200 acres in Warren County were left to the heirs of his 2nd marriage, John & Nellie.

John's wife, Eula, received his gold watch & chain. The household furnishings, including "table-" (perhaps including the silverware said to have been hidden over the porch during the Civil War), notes, bonds & money all passed to John. Marbury's 1/2 interest in 1500 acres on Cumberland Mountain, purchased from L. A. Kincannon's bankruptcy liquidation in 1843, passed to his remaining heirs, Rev. Philip H. Marbury, Jr., John, Nellie, & the heirs of Benjamin.

W.T. Blue brought his wife & 5 children from Henry Co., Ohio to McMinnville around 1890. During that same year, a 6th child was born in Warren County. Again, Oakham, now known as "The Blue Place," was full of life. Very few alterations were made to the house. Christmas festivities were held in the "Big Parlor," a room used during special occasions. Lila & Winnie used the upstairs rooms. The kitchen was moved into the house.

The Blues were farmers whose agricultural interests included crops of wheat & corn & livestock breeding. Introductions to the Angus breed of cattle to Warren County is attributed to W. T. Blue. He kept a Belgian stallion for breeding & also raised mules & goats. His barn & cistern were located a short distance across the road. During threshing time, Negro workers came from Hoyts Ford (near Three Star Mall) to help with the harvest. Susanna set a dining table laden with food under a backyard tree for the hands.

According to the 1900 census, all the Blue children were living a home. The names, ages, & occupations of the household members are as follows:

Wilson T Blue	b. 5-1846, farmer, married 1866;
Susann	b. 8-1844, housewife
Frank P	b. 7-1867, sawmiller
George P.	b. 8-1869, travelling machine man
Maggie	b. 3-1873
Bertha	b. 12-1875
Lila E.	b. 10-1877, a student
Winnie G.	b. 1-1890, student

The son's had business of their own. George, along with James T. Jones & George Steidley, leased numerous tracts of land in DeKalb & Warren counties for mineral exploration. Many of these leases were later transferred to W. T. blue. A McMinnville implement company called Carson & Blue belonged to Frank.

Since the railroad line now ran through their land, a stopping place called "Blue's Crossing" provided easy access from town for visitors. Friends & relatives arriving via rail were met by a family member in a buggy. Grandchildren remember playing in a huge sinkhole about 200 feet east of the house. It reportedly held a cave that ran all the way to the bluffs of Barren Fork. After she married, Bertha Blue Hawkins frequently stayed at the Blue place while her husband travelled. She is responsible for the elaborate flower garden, mostly of annuals, that adorned the west side of the house. Other site features included a cedar plank fence which paralleled Sparta Rd & walks of creek gravel around the house. Behind the house were a few acres of woods, later cleared for fields. While the Blues lived at Oakham, there were many more trees in the front yard.



In 1919, W.T. & Susann Blue sold half of the farm to the south side of the Sparta Rd, containing 250 acres, to their son, George. George sold it back the same year for the assumption of a mortgage to the Federal Land Bank of \$7,500. On Feb. 24, 1926, W. T. sold the tract to Frank P. Blue on the same terms, now reduced to \$7,000. Portions of these lands still remain in the hands of the Blue heirs.

On the same day in 1926, W.T. Blue deeded his home place, including the railroad & 250 acres to George Blue, for the assumption of a \$6,000 mortgage. 2 days later, the sons & their wives deeded a life estate in all their lands to their parents, "to provide comfortable & proper support." W. T. Blue died April 7, 1926. The home place was rented by F. M. Hobson, a tenant, until 1932. Due to failure to pay property tax for the year 1931, the lien holders foreclosed. The home place & 250 acres were sold publicly at the Warren County Courthouse to the "highest & best bidder," E.W. Walling,

husband of Lila Blue Walling, who purchased the property for \$7,000 on Feb. 13, 1932. The 3rd & last residential era of Oakham ended with this sale.

Wm. H. Magness, Jr., a prominent McMinnville financier & philanthropist, was recognized during his lifetime for contributions to the public library, renamed because of these contributions the "W. H. & Edgar Magness Community House & Library" in honor of his father and brother. When Mr. Magness died in 1936, he willed to several charitable and religious institutions thousands of dollars each, outlining specific instructions for the use of the funds. Among institutions receiving bequests were the First Baptist Church of McMinnville, a trust fund for the above-named library, a scholarship fund for Cumberland Mountain School in Crossville, & a trust fund for the Salvation Army of Nashville. Most importantly, however, were funds earmarked for "establishing & maintaining a home for the aged & indigent people of Warren County, Tennessee, to be known as the Elizabeth J. Magness Home for the Aged and Indigent, as a memorial to my mother." The sum of \$50,000 was provided for this purpose, \$20,000 of which could be used for acquiring land & constructing & equipping buildings, with the remainder to be held in trust by the Commerce Union Bank of Nashville. Interest from the trust was to be paid to the Trustee of Warren County & dispersed for the maintenance of the Hoe's residents. Magness's purpose was to replace an older "Poor Farm," & to provide "greater comfort & enjoyment of living in their declining years" for persons therein. A clause insuring the fulfillment of this bequest required that if the provision was not accepted in total by the Warren County Quarterly Court, the entire sum would revert to the estate, and thus become part of the Salvation Army endowment. During the April 1936 term of the Quarterly Court, the commissioners voted county funds for the land purchase not to exceed \$20,000, so the total Magness bequest could be used for the erection & maintenance of buildings. A jury of view was appointed to take options on desirable sites & report their findings to the Court. In the May term, the Walling tract (formerly the Blue Place/Oakham) was selected at a price of \$15,000. Subsequent records show organization of the building committee (responsible for the annex) & other pertinent data concerning the operation of the Home. Meanwhile, on May 14, 1937, a private act was passed by the Tennessee General Assembly outlining legally & more specifically the terms laid out in the will of W. H. Magness.

Governmental care & support of the poor is a concept of English origin, dating to the Reformation. The idea was instituted in America early on. An Act of the General Assembly in 1826, enlarged in

scope in 1827, provided the basis for the poorhouse system in Tennessee. The features outlined in the 1827 Act are very similar to those enacted through the private Act which created the Magness Home.

In 1937, 81 or 95 counties in Tennessee had poorhouses. However, through disinterest or mismanagement, the typical "county 'poor farm' in Tennessee exemplified....poor buildings, poor facilities, poor sanitation, poor land, & poor care." In spite of Warren County's having at this time a county farm, improvement of the situation was the motivation behind the Magness bequest.



The Elizabeth J. Magness Home was operated as a farm for several years, making it generally self-sufficient. However, as its maintenance costs became greater, the county saw the need to use the facility to provide revenue. In 1958, the Quarterly Court voted to see portions of the tract for industrial development, & the farm operation became less active. Today all the land except 2.72 acres surrounding the house is in use or slated for further development.

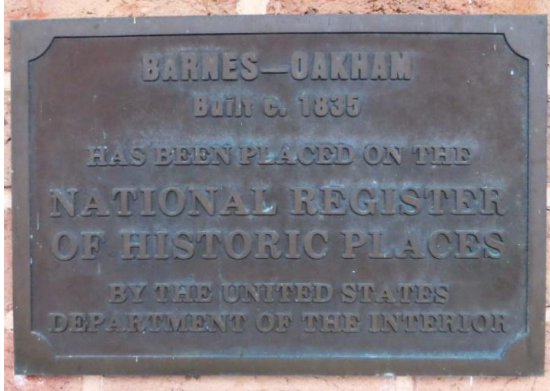
On April 27, 1981, the Quarterly Court passed a resolution authorizing the conveyance to the Warren County Historical Society "on which to construct a historical project in the form of an historical village," an endeavor which must begin within 3 years.

Oakham was once the center of an immense working farm. It was the home of men important to the history of McMinnville, men who were civic-minded & deeply involved in their community. The road on which it fronts has evolved from buffalo trail to a major 5 lane artery which, fortunately, provides easy accessibility to the house. The evolution of style & materials make the home architecturally significant. To appreciate the vast area that once surrounded the home, one had only to drive the distance from Oakham to the Collins River. A few of the immense trees, for which the house was named, remain, noteworthy for their size.

It is hoped that this history can enhance community pride in Oakham, resulting in its preservation for the fifth era. Oakham is a valuable historic resource which, as a physical link to the community's past, can never be replace.



The home was purchased February 1982 by Paul and Ann Barnes, owners of B&P Lamp Supply, Inc. They refurbished the home with period colors and bought back the old charm. In the mid 1980's the Barnes used the location for an International Antique Market and furnished the home with antiques from around the world.



If you would like to inquire about the Magness House, please email mike@bplampsupply.com or call (931) 473-3016.

The following is an Architectural History prepared from a 1982 report prepared for the Warren County Historical Society prepared by the Historic Preservation Program, Dept of History, Middle Tennessee State University. A special thanks to Delce Dyer, Chris Ertel, Ernest Edington, Martha Hagedorn and Carol Hoffman.

Oakham began as a simple one-and-a-half-story brick residence with a central double-pile (2 rooms deep) plan. The facade was 5 bays wide with a central entrance. **(Fig 1)** Its style was the vernacular late-Georgian which appeared in Warren County's first brick houses. The time necessary to establish permanent settlement and civilization on the frontier created a time lag in architectural fashions reaching many areas of Tennessee from the East Coast. Federal features such as semi-circular or semi-octagonal bays were seldom used. Therefore, the overall form remained essentially Georgian with more up-to-date Federal treatment confined to

details. Such was the case with early Oakham, built in the 1830's. The form was Georgian with vernacular Federal details. It is very likely that Oakham had a fan-lighted front doorway, that the French doors on the front facade were originally 12-over-12 pan double-hung sash windows, and that there were garret windows in the gables. These are stylistic characteristics of late Georgian-Federal houses and occur in other McMinnville houses of this period.

The 1 and 1/2 story double-pile house type was common in the second half of the 18th century in the upper coastal South, especially in Maryland and Virginia. It contrasts with the more usual 2 story single pile housed common in both Tennessee and North Carolina. At Oakham, a pair of chimneys protruded from each end wall with shouldered stacks. This feature was present in the 18th century tidewater architecture and continued in use into the 19th century west of the Allegheny Mountains. Although exterior stacks are found in classical houses, they are a vestige of medievalism which is suppressed in more high-style examples.

In the 1850's, this late Georgian-Federal vernacular house was enlarged and remodeled in the Greek Revival style. 2 gables fronted brick pavilions were placed on a cross axis at each end of the house, thus creating long colonnades at the front and back of the original building which became recessed between the pavilions. This 1 story house form appears sporadically from the 1850's through the 1879's in Middle Tennessee, where is called "a piano-box house" because of its resemblance to pianos of that period. Oakham's remodeling into this form solved the problem of enlarging the existing house and brought it up to date with current architectural fashions.

The style to these additions, although predominantly in the classical mode, shows certain concessions to the Romanticism which was appearing in architecture at the time. The gables of the pavilions are almost Gothic in form because of their acute angle. The sloping eaves are dressed in a simple denticulate entablature treatment in the Greek Revival style. It is also unusual that pediments, which are used in the classical mode to define major gables, are not employed. The principal windows on the pavilions also indicate a Romantic influence. On the front and rear of each pavilion is a double window composed of 2 vertical

4 over 4 pane double hung sash windows divided by a bar with a lintel spanning the top of the opening. These double windows are common in the Gothic Revival and Italianate style houses of that period. The slender square pillars of the recessed colonnades are quite similar to those found on Italianate houses. The pillars have panels formed by raised applied moldings and are of attenuated proportions. Oakham therefore marks the eclecticism which would manifest itself in the architecture of the 1870's and 1880's.

Oakham changed little after this point during its use as a residence. Dormers were added to the roof over the original house block sometime after 1880 and before 1900. Their design with pediment tops indicates their Colonial Revival style, popularized in the 1880's. The almost complete absence of dormers in Greek Revival houses makes it unlikely that the dormers were constructed in the 1850's. Wire nails and machine-milled lumber were used in the construction of the dormers, indicating a construction date after 1870. Pictures of the house taken in the late 1890's show dormers. While the evidence for dating is not conclusive or complete, it is logical and convincing.

The residence was acquired by Warren County in the 1930's for use as a Home for the Aged and Indigent. An annex was built adjacent to the house on the east, set back from the line of the facade. The annex is a simple hipped-roof brick structure in the Colonial Revival style **(Fig 2 Annex).**



It is linked to the main house by a colonnaded breezeway which cuts across the back of the east pavilion to join the original rear gallery. The breezeway is supported by plain square pillars. Because of its quiet, unassuming design, the annex does not detract seriously from the original residence. Other changes made during this period included the addition of a bathroom in the hall dividing the front and rear rooms of the east pavilion and the conversion of the corresponding exterior door to a window. The last change came in the 1950's when an exterior bathroom was added

to the northeast corner of the east pavilion, closing off part of the breezeway.

Oakham once had a variety of outbuildings which serviced the house. While most of these buildings no longer stand today, a brief discussion of function and placement on the property is important for a well-rounded understanding of the house itself. A brick kitchen was located in back of the east pavilion. It contained a large fireplace for cooking. To the west of the kitchen was a brick smokehouse, somewhere behind the large white oak tree. A well house stood about ten feet outside the back door. This was an open structure that had a gable roof supported by 4 square posts. Farther away from the house to the north stood the utility shed. Northwest of the west pavilion stood the outhouse. The brick outhouse had 2 sections served by 2 doors separating the toilets for use by whites and blacks. West of the west pavilion stands the milk house, the only original outbuilding still standing. **(Fig 3 Milkhouse at present day)**



During its use as a milkhouse, it had an open front facing east and a slightly sunken earthen floor. The structure had been altered through the enclosure of the front by a brick extension. The west wall of the milkhouse shows traces of an attractive venting design that is slowly disappearing as the brickwork fails. Efforts to restore the milkhouse should be made, as it is the last vestige of the outbuildings which once surrounded Oakham.

Across the Sparta Highway on the spot where the medical offices are today stood the barns. It is clear that the landscape has changed much since the time of Robert Elkins' recollections, and it is also clear that without a concerted effort the historical landscape will be forgotten.

The building materials and technologies used in Oakham reflect the skills and materials locally available during the different periods of Oakham's construction. The principal building material used

was brick, which formed all exterior walls and interior partitions. 2 types of brick, corresponding with the 2 residential stages, were used to build Oakham. The brick used in the 1830's house is a soft, orange red, oversized type. It was probably fired on or near the site; the softness is the result of a low firing temperature. When compared to the hard brick used in today's construction, its form is almost unrecognizable. The brickwork of the original section is probably laid in common bond, but because the exterior walls are covered with stucco and the exposed walls in the attic may not accurately show the bond, this is a conjecture. The mortar joints are raked and pencilled (painted), a stylish feature used in Georgian and Federal design. The bricks used in the pavilions are somewhat smaller, harder and darker, reflecting a change of design, materials, and methods over a 20 years period **(Fig. 4). Common Brick Bond Wall on**

Limestone Foundation



The brick is laid in a common bond with a row of headers over each lintel. The mortar joints, which are flush with the brick, are also pencilled, which is an unusual feature for Greek Revival design. Today the original block of the house is covered with stucco, a stylistic feature which Romanticizes the house. The stuccoed surface is scored to imitate large stone blocks, a design feature popular in Georgian architecture, thus antiquated when adopted as the treatment for the stucco in the mid-19th century. The stucco may have been added when the pavilions were built, to make the broken brick resulting from the window and door enlargements, structural cracking, and the different brick colors. The original stucco is a very soft, sandy lime mortar. A later type used for patching is harder, greener in color, and probably has a small amount of cement mixed into it. All modern patching of the stuccoed surface was done with Portland cement patches are most commonly found along the bottom and top of the wall. No effort to continue the scoring of the stucco on the cement was made. Use and treatment of this material

indicate a very poor understanding of building materials and architectural style. The outer walls of the house rest on a limestone foundation. The interior partition walls rest on hardened clay soil. The house had no basement--only a network of tunnels which were probably dug when the heating and plumbing systems were installed. The foundation of the original house is of rough-cut sandy gray limestone. The foundation of the pavilions is of tolled and dressed gray limestone laid in regularly coursed ashlar. The limestone was most likely quarried locally along the banks of the Collins River.

The original flooring in the house is constructed of wide tongue-and-grooved oak planks of random width and length, tacked down with large headed wrought nails still visible in the central hall and the west parlor. The hall flooring runs north to south. The flooring in the west parlor runs east to west, and it can be assumed that the flooring in the other 3 rooms of the original house also ran east to west. Many of the rooms have had new floors installed on top of the old floors, which accounts for the difference in floor levels. The newer flooring, of narrower oak and poplar tongue-and groove construction, is tacked down with small floor nails.

Underneath the original section of the house, the floor joists run from north to south. They are 3 inches by 8 & 1/2 inches and are spaced about 25 inches apart. Underneath the pavilions of the floor joists run from east to west. These measure 2 & 1/4 inches by 9 inches and are spaced about 21 inches apart. The floor joists are built into pockets in the brick wall, which rest on the limestone foundation wall. Support piers and beams have been added under the original section of the house. These probably date from the 1930's when the heating and plumbing systems were installed. Difference in construction can also be seen above the house in the attic. In the original section of the house the rafters measure 2 and 3/4 inches by 5 inches. The ceiling joists measure 3 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches. This woodwork is mortised and tenoned and secured with wooden pegs. In the pavilions the rafter and joist measurements are somewhat smaller, and the construction is held together with square machine-cut nails. The early wooden structural elements used in the house were either pit or reciprocally sawn while the elements used in the later parts of the house were circularly sawn.

Oakham's present appearance is the result of 2 stages of development with some features remaining from the original construction and the rest dating from the remodeling in the 1850's. The brick mass of the present Oakham is an "H" shape with a central gabled-roof mass flanked by 2 gabled-roof pavilions placed transversely. In the recesses between the pavilions, running along the original block, are colonnaded porches in the front and rear. The facade is composed of 7 bays. The innermost 5 bays recessed behind the portico comprise the original structure, with the central bay being the principal entrance. Projecting from the main block are 2 gable-ended pavilions of 1 bay each which are flush with the portico. The portico is formed by 6 square paneled pillars supporting a denticulate entablature with the frieze and architrave divided by a fillet. The recess formed by the portico is covered with stucco scored to resemble stone. Old photographs indicate the presence of a baseboard on the interior of the porch which was replaced in modern times by cement. The platform from which the portico rises was originally wood, but the present one is of red-colored cement scored to resemble tile

(Fig 7). Wooden Porch & Baseboard, Circa 1900



(Fig 8). French Doors The windows in the house are 4 types. Those on the facade of the original main block are French windows of 2 leaves with a 2 light transom above

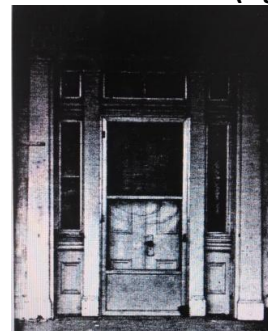
Each leaf contains a vertical glazed panel of 3 lights over a short wooden panel. A wooden lintel with a molded upper edge surmounts these windows as well as all other openings on the house except the entrance. The principal windows on the pavilions facing the front and rear are double 4 over 4 pane sash windows with a wide vertical bar dividing the pair of windows

Fig 10 Side Pavilion Windows



(Fig 9). Main Pavilion Windows. The windows on the sides of the pavilions are double hung with 6 over 6 pane double hung sashes **(Fig 10)**. The rear facade of the original main block has 2 wide 12 over 12 pane double hung sash windows which reflect the original sash configuration, but the sashes themselves are replacements. All of the windows had exterior louvered shutters on 2 panels each.

The exterior door treatments are less varied, with only the main entrance receiving a different treatment. This entrance is a pilastered tripartite front piece with an entablature **(Fig 11)**. **Front Door**



The bi-leaf door of 2 panels each is centered in the opening with a 2 light transom above. 2 pilasters separate the flanking sidelights from the door. The sidelights are of 3 panels each with a panel below and a single pane transom above. The entablature over the four pilasters had the frieze and architrave combined into 1 unadorned fascia with a denticulate cornice above. All other exterior doorways are composed of a 4 panel door surmounted by a 3 light transom and lintel above. This type occurs in the 4 doors opening from the 2 pavilions onto the 2 porticos and in the 3 doors of the rear facade. The cornices including the raking cornices of the gable are broad fascias with a dentil course above which corresponds with the proportions for a portico entablature **(Fig 12)**. **Raking Cornice w/Denticulated Entablature**



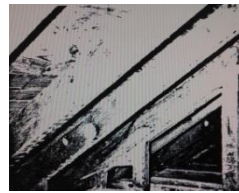
The present materials used to roof the house are asbestos singles, which cover most of the house: asphalt shingles, which cover the south slope of the original house; and poured tar, on the porch roofs. The roof was tinned in the 1950's. Its original roof may have been cedar shingles. 3 dormers are centered on the south slope of the roof of the original section and 2 on the north slope. These dormers are pedimented and have 6 over 6 pane double hung sash windows. The 3 front windows had their sills shortened at one time to increase the pitch of the roof in an effort to solve the drainage problems which afflict the house. The house had 7 brick chimneys with corbeled tops. 4 chimneys rise from the main block and are equidistant from the main roof ridge. 2 chimneys rise flush with the east wall of the west pavilion. On the east pavilion 1 chimney rises from an interior partition, centered on the ridge of the roof.

The plan of Oakham follows the central hall type with 2 rooms flanking each side. The hall is divided into front and back halls. The present stairway runs from the back hall toward the front along the east wall. Several winders turn the corner around a wide turned newel of walnut and continue with a straight run to the upstairs hall, which is flanked by 2 rooms

(Fig 13). Stairway



It is believed that this is not the original staircase and that the staircase ascended in a different direction. A change in flooring direction, ghosts of plaster and laths on studs and wallpaper fragments found in the upstairs attic space show that it was once part of an open hall



(Fig 14) Hall Attic Crawl Space.

Certain patches and cuts made on the upstairs and downstairs hall flooring and baseboards strengthen the idea that the staircase is not original. It cannot be conclusively proven that the staircase did ascend from a different direction nor can it be proven where it ascended from. However, it is felt that the original staircase began its ascent near the spot that it does today but in the opposite direction. It was probably an "L" shape and made a 90 degree turn soon after its ascent began. It passed above the back door without obstruction, as the back door did not have a transom yet and was shorter. It then opened into the now closed off section of the upstairs hall where the wallpaper and plaster and lath was fragments were found. Another indication that the stairway has been changed was the discovery of significant amounts of transitional 19th century Greek Revival wallpaper on the plaster walls now **hidden** under the stairs (Figs 15 & 16).

(Fig 15 Greek Revival wallpaper under stairway)



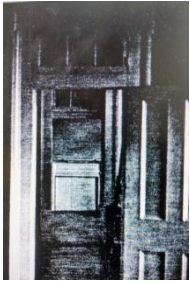
(Fig 16

Greek Revival wallpaper under stairway)

Why would 2 walls that were never meant to be exposed by papered? As the wallpaper is transitional, it may date to the 1850's, when the house was enlarged. If this is true, it may be that the present stairway was not built until the 1880's or 1890's. The stairway itself is or fairly new construction, the wooden elements are circularly sawn, and wire nails are used to secure it. The evidence for this change is important to note, but the original stairways should not be recreated as the evidence is not totally conclusive and the present stairway is well built and functional. Although this type of change would be almost unheard of today, it seems to have occurred frequently in the latter part of the 19th century. In the case of Oakham, the change was probably

motivated by a desire either to expose or to build the transom above the back door. The change did not affect the floor plan or function of the rooms, as Oakham's plan remained focused on the central hall axis.

Downstairs, the 2 rooms to the west of the central hall communicate with the hall and pavilion beyond. The pavilions are composed of 2 rooms in a line, with the larger room in front. Both of these rooms have exterior entrances onto the portico



(Fig 17) Room Communication.

The 2 rooms to the east of the hall have a door between them, but only the front room had doors communicating with the central hall and the east pavilion. The 2 rooms of the east pavilion have a hall between them which formerly opened to the outside. The section adjacent to the exterior wall has been partitioned for a bath. These rooms also open onto the porticos. The 2 front rooms of the main block each open onto the portico through 2 sets of French doors. The rear rooms of the main block also have exterior entrances. The proliferation of doorways speaks to a design element which is linked to the Southern Greek Revival style. These doorways all have transoms above them and in many cases are lined up with other doors and windows, all in an effort to enhance the effect of the breezes during the hot summer months. In general, this type of natural air-conditioning, where convection currents are harnessed for their best effect, works well. Thus, the approximate north/south sitting of the house is important from an engineering design standpoint as well as from an aesthetic standpoint, since the prevailing breezes blow from the south in the summer.

The interior woodwork is fairly consistent throughout the house. All window and door frames are composed of Greek Revival architrave molding with re-entrant angled corners, added presumably in the 1850's at the time of the enlargement, replacing the original Federal surrounds. The doorways all have 3 light transoms above 4 paneled



doors & corresponding reveals (Fig 18). The French doors are bi-leaf doors & have a glassed panel on the top of 3 lights and a solid panel below each leaf. This is also surmounted by a transom. The only door frames that differ from this type are those on the 2nd floor. These date from the original period and are of Federal design. Those in the hall have channeled boards which meet plain square cornerblocks to form a style which contrasts highly with more imposing Greek Revival surrounds on the



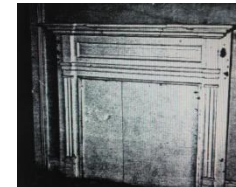
1st floor. (Fig 19).

(Fig 20 Plain door surrounds, upstairs).

The door surrounds in the rooms are plain (Fig 20) Comparison of the molding profiles of a chair rail found in the attic with the Federal door surrounds shows a great similarity in design. Evidence from the patch marks on the mantel in the west parlor of the original house indicates the existence of chair rails at one time; and, of course, the chair rail found in the attic fits the cut-out portions exactly. Thus, it can be concluded that there were chair rails in at least 1 room during the Federal period.

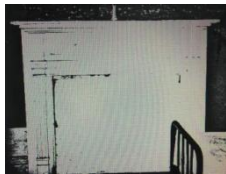
The mantels are of 3 types. The 2 in the front rooms of the main block, the 1 in the front room of the west pavilion & that in the east rear room of the main block, are in the Federal style with channeled pilasters & paneled friezes. (Figs. 21, 22, 23 & 24).

(Fig 21 West parlor mantel, main block)



(Fig 22 East parlor mantel, main block)

(Fig 23 West pavilion mantel)



(Fig 24

East rear room mantel, main block.) The mantel in the rear room of the west pavilion is a single, pilastered Greek Revival type. In the rear west room of the main block in a Greek Revival mantel with shouldered architraves. It is of the same design as the Greek Revival door & window surrounds & is probably a hasty replacement on an earlier, more elaborate mantel.

The baseboards in the 1830's section of the house are the original Federal woodwork, while those in the pavilions date from the 1850's. There are 3 types of Federal moldings used in the house, the most elaborate found in the 2 upstairs rooms. A Colonial Revival molding is used for the baseboards in the east pavilion bathroom.

All interior partitions are of plaster applied to brick, but the plaster dates only from the period when the house became as institution. The only original plaster is under the run of the stairway where the wallpaper is hanging and on the exposed stairway wall under the new plaster.

The original room use cannot be determined with accuracy, but an interview with Robert Elkins gives some idea of how the house was used as a residence. According to his description, the front room in the west pavilion was the "big parlor." The rear west room in the original block was the dining room; the rear east room was the kitchen. One of the front rooms of the main block was the "old parlor." The front room of the east pavilion was the principal bedroom. Other rooms cannot be determined with certainty.

Oakham is remarkable for its survival with so few changes considering its use for 130 years as both a residence and institution. It is significant architecturally as an example of the "piano box" type and for its fine details such as the scored stucco and the French doors. Oakham also represents a house which evolved in 2 stages yet achieved a harmony between the different elements. The house is notable for its adaptation to the Southern climate through porticos and many transomed doors. Because of its flexible planning, Oakham can be easily adapted to new uses with few structural changes and can serve as a local

landmark for years to come. These features make Oakham a likely candidate for National Register status. Declaration of eligibility or acceptance to the National Register of Historic Sites and Places allows a property financial advantages through the Economic Tax Recovery Act of 1981 and gives that property the distinction of national recognition.



Original Floors



Our Tour Guide ~ Mrs. Ann Barnes ~ Thank You



Front Door Entrance



Oakham ~ Magness House



WCGA Tour Group




The Birthing Tree across the street from Oakham/Magness Home as it stands today.



February refreshements provided by Cheryl Watson Mingle & Larry Boyd.

WCGA next meeting
Saturday, March 19, 2 p.m. Depart from
 WCGA office to tour Joe Kuhn Museum after Members
 Meeting around 3 p.m.



WCGA On The Radio



WCGA President Cheryl Watson Mingle was the guest for the “Behind The Mike” radio show on February 18. Pictured Cheryl & Kelly Marlowe who is host for the show on 96.0 AM radio in McMinnville

**Do You Have
 CIVIL WAR
 SOLIDERS
 who lived in WARREN
 COUNTY before, during
 or after the war?**

Submit your Civil War Solider
 for entry in our upcoming
 Warren County Civil War Soliders BOOK'S

You may obtain forms
 on our Facebook Page or at the Magness Library
 Genealogy Department or attached.

WCGA is on Facebook!
 Come visit us at:
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Warren-County-Genealogical-Association/135126859883450>
We're also on the web, visit us at
www.tngenweb.org/wcgatn

**Give a piece of
 Warren County History**



- The Courthouse, McMinnville, TN**
(First in a series)
 - First Methodist Church, McMinnville, TN**
(Second in a series)
 - The Birthing Tree, McMinnville, TN**
(Third in a series)
 - Hebe, McMinnville, TN**
(Forth in a series)
- All four available for \$18 each at
 Southern Museum
 201 E. Main Street, McMinnville
 Open Wed., Fri., Sat. 10:00 a.m.-4 p.m. and
 Warren Co. Genealogical Association
 County Administrative Building 201 Locust St.
 Open Fridays 1:00-4:00 p.m*



WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Meeting held in the rear of the
Warren County Administration Building
201 Locust Street, McMinnville TN 37110

Membership Renewal & Information Update Form

Annual membership fees for 2016 were due on January 1, 2016

Please make checks payable to **Warren County Genealogical Association (WCGA)** and mail to
WCGA, P.O. 411, McMinnville, TN 37111

Print Name and Address as desired on Membership Record:

Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Please check one:

Dues for year _____ Individual Member, \$20 year ____

Other Donation \$ _____

Would you like to receive our monthly Newsletter by E-Mail? _____yes

Our Bulletin is mailed two times each year

FAMILY NAMES I AM RESEARCHING:

We may be able to help you with your genealogy, so come by and visit our office. We are open on Friday from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. and we're located at the rear of the Warren County Administration Building, 201 Locust St. McMinnville, TN.

Thank you!

Civil War Soldiers of Warren County, Tennessee Questionnaire

Warren County Genealogical Association has been compiling data on our members' Warren County Civil War Veterans for many years and is now ready to publish this material. We want this publication to be as complete as possible, and we invite members of the public to contribute information on your Civil War ancestors if you would like to have them included in this important volume. Civil War participants, either Union or Confederate forces or Home Guard members, are eligible for inclusion. Give as many details as possible, using another sheet of paper if needed. **Please type, print, or write very plainly. WE WELCOME PHOTOS and will scan and return them to you quickly.** (Contact Warren County Genealogical Association at 931-474-4724 or come by our office in the Warren County Administrative Building on Fridays between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m.) Help us make this project a huge success!

Full name of Soldier: _____

His Company, Regiment, Branch, Rank and Army: _____

Date & Place of Birth: _____

Date & Place of Death and Burial: _____

Occupation before the War: _____

Amount of Schooling completed: _____

Approximate date of family's settlement in Warren County area: _____

Parents' names, with birth, death, marriage dates & places, and occupation, if known:

Father: Born _____ Died _____

Buried _____

Occupation: _____

Mother: Born _____ Died _____

Buried _____

Marriage: _____

Brothers & sisters of Soldier, with birth & death dates:

Name(s) of spouse(s), with birth and death dates and places, and date and place of each marriage:

Children's names, with birth and death dates:

Sources used – (circle appropriate ones): Official government records (from National Archives, Tennessee State Library & Archives, etc.), state pension papers, United Daughters of the Confederacy rolls and proof, Sons of Confederate Veterans records, county court records, regimental history, county history, census records, marriage records, Bible records, cemetery records, family traditions, Warren Co. Genealogical Association Bulletins', other, e.g._____.

Did this Soldier answer the 1914, 1915, or 1922 Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaire? _____
.....

I attest that the foregoing material is accurate to the best of my knowledge, and I give my permission for its use by the Warren County Genealogical Association.

(Signed) _____

Date: _____

Please return this form as soon as possible to Warren County Genealogical Association, P.O. Box 411, McMinnville TN 37111-0411 or email as an attachment to rhillis@blomand.net or ctmingle@blomand.net

Thank you!