



GEORGIAN HOME NOTED FOR BEAUTY

LOCATION: Two miles northwest of Loudon on Highway 72 (Kingston Pike).

This stately mansion was built by Albert S. Lenoir in 1857 to replace a frame house constructed in colonial days. Albert was a son of William Ballard Lenoir, founder of Lenoir City. (See the Lenoir Inn, House #7). In 1837 Albert married Katherine Welker, daughter of the prominent Welker family of Roane County.

Albert Lenoir was well-known in his own right, being by profession an engineer and surveyor. In 1839 he went to "Ross's Landing" (as it was called at that time) where he laid out the city of Chattanooga. In fact, his oldest child, Elizabeth Lenoir, was the first white child born in Chattanooga, (Elizabeth later married Judge David McKendree Ker, who served as Postmaster General in President Hayes' cabinet.)

When the Lenoir family returned to Loudon County they built their home near the mouth of Sweetwater Creek. The elaborate double doorway can be seen through

a long walkway that is bordered by enormous boxwoods. The room to the right of the entrance way was used as a parlor and its window framings have beautifully carved paneling. The kitchen and dining room were on the basement floor until the house was remodeled, at which time they were placed on the main (or second) floor. A third floor houses bedrooms and modern baths. The outstanding feature of this house, however, is the beautiful, gracefully curved stairway connecting all three floors. (The upper part of this stairway is shown in the accompanying picture.)

In keeping with the exterior of the house, all furnishings are handsome antiques of this period. Several brick buildings used as slave quarters, smoke house, etc., are still standing.

Albert S. Lenoir and his eldest son, Henry, died during the first year of the Civil War and were buried in the family cemetery on the Lenoir farm. The widow, a young daughter, and three baby grandchildren were also buried there, but these tombs were later removed to a Chattanooga cemetery.

The Lenoir home remained in possession of family descendants until 1903, when it was purchased by L.M. Matthews. At his death, his son, Brig. General Hugh Matthews, U.S.M.C., purchased it. After General Matthews retired, he and his wife, Mary Higgins Matthews, resided here. They remodeled the home extensively, and its furnishings came from all over the world. Following the General's death, his widow returned to New Orleans to be near her brother, A. J. Higgins, the famed boat builder. The home was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. William J. Butler, who continue to reside there. When visiting the home today, one feels the clock has been turned back to reveal a gracious, unhurried way of living; yet, this house has kept pace with modern times.