

in the most excellent taste, carrying out the motifs of the Colonial and Federal periods. Many of the handsome pieces of furniture were authentic antiques, selected with great care and expense. The smaller pieces and some of the adornments were all excellent reproductions and in perfect harmony with the period and atmosphere.

While operated as an Inn it became the social center of the town for entertainments of all kinds, including card parties, teas, receptions, luncheons, buffets, and drop-ins.

Recently this choice property was given to the Mount Zion Society by the United States Rubber Company. It was then leased by the Society to the Fairfield Country Club.

Now it is a most attractive and modern club with golf course and tennis courts, a large swimming pool, and other recreational facilities.

RION HOUSE

HALL — RION — RABB — STEPHENSON

Mansell Hall was a gentleman planter who had a flair for designing and building fine homes. Several of the houses that he designed, built, or helped with are still standing and bear witness to his talents and good taste.

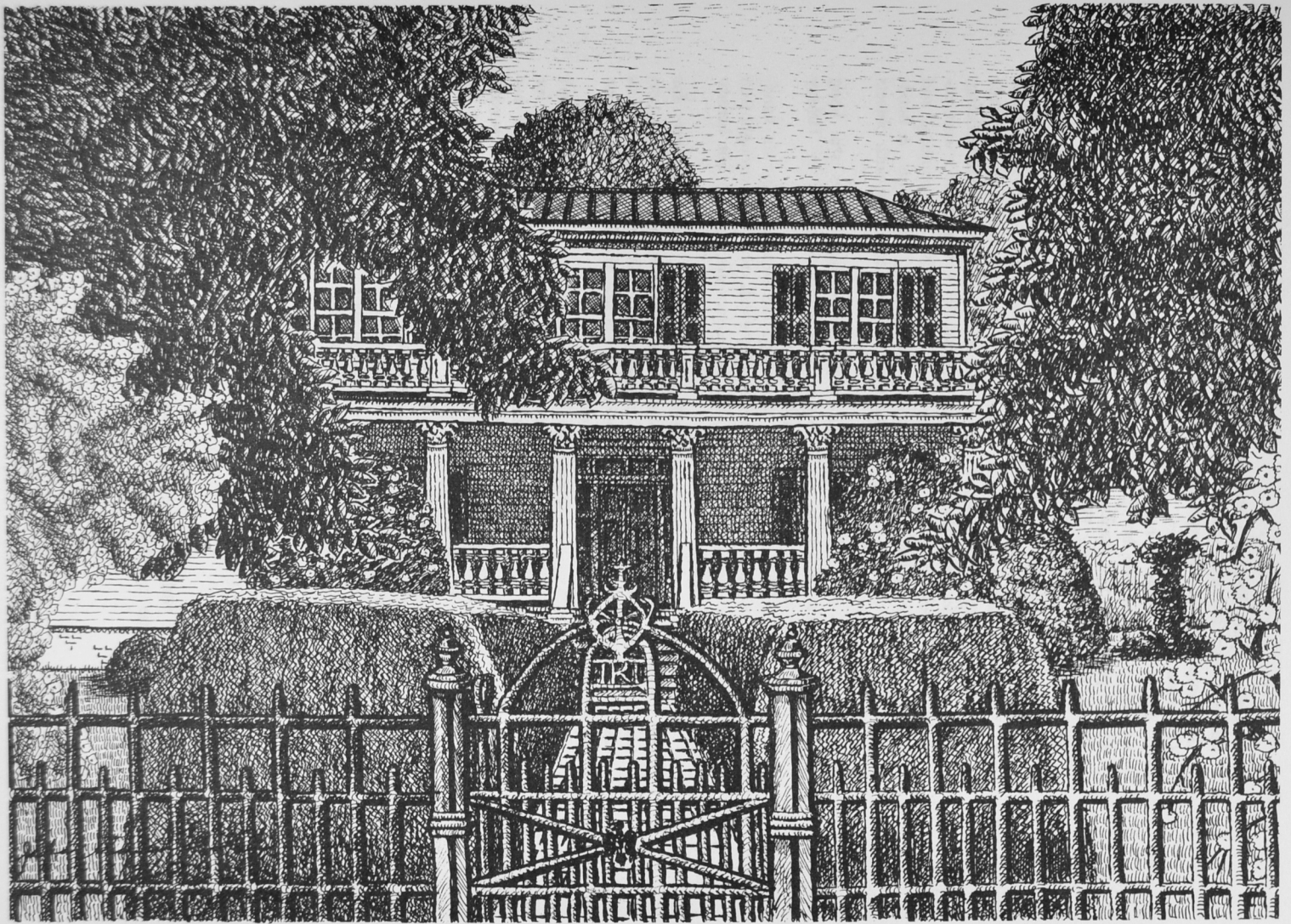
Among his Negroes were several well-trained and highly skilled artisans. He used their talents and labor to execute his designs and plans, first for himself and later for friends and neighbors who desired his services.

The old mansion on Congress Street is one of his most impressive works. Originally it consisted of only two rooms and a hall on each floor, with a kitchen wing and outbuildings behind the main structure. It was designed so that it might be easily added to in the future. He built it in 1855 for his bride. She died shortly after they moved into the place, and in 1857 he sold it to Colonel James Henry Rion.

Colonel Rion was one of the most brilliant, interesting, and mysterious men ever to live in Winnsboro. He was foremost among the lawyers of the South, highly educated, a patron of the arts, and a philanthropist. He was a protege and a disciple of the illustrious John C. Calhoun, in whose home he was reared, and was reputed to be the son of the Dauphin of France. At the outbreak of the Confederate War he was made one of the first South Carolina colonels and threw his fortune into the Southern effort.

Colonel Rion's wife was the lovely and talented Mary Catherine (Kitty) Wier of Columbia. Her distinguished father was Samuel Wier, a native of Wiertown, Pennsylvania, a member of the family for whom the place was named and by whom it was made famous. This family owned and controlled the mines and steel mills in that area.

Mr. Wier, a talented writer and musician, broke with his family and espoused and wrote vigorously in behalf of the Southern rights. He moved to Columbia, South Carolina, where he established a newspaper and directed the music at the First Presbyterian Church until his death.



RION HOUSE

Colonel John Preston (later General) became Mary Catherine's guardian, and after her father's death she made her home with the Preston family in the Hampton-Preston Mansion, the show place and social center of ante-bellum Columbia.

Aside from being a beauty, Mrs. Rion was a very gifted and talented woman. She inherited her father's musical and literary abilities and wrote several pamphlets and books. One of her books was on horticulture and was called "A Southern Lady Florist." When Clemson College was founded, her friend, Thomas G. Clemson, left it to her judgment to select the site for the institution and to approve the designs and placements of the first buildings.

The Rions had a large family, and before they moved into their home in Winnsboro, they enlarged and embellished the house and the grounds extensively. Wings were added to either side and to the rear of the building. Plumbing and gas lighting (then almost unheard of in Winnsboro) were installed. A French decorator was employed to supervise the painting and the carving of the medallions and woodwork that adorned the rooms. A handsome mahogany staircase was added, and the house was furnished with objects of art and beauty from abroad.

The original chandeliers with their exquisitely etched shades still hang from the ceilings. Thick, beveled, cutglass side lights, imported by Tiffany of New York for the house, still decorate the entrance.

A veranda and balcony front the house and are supported by six handsomely turned and carved Corinthian columns, which, with the wrought-iron brackets and rosettes, were imported. The bannisters are massive but beautifully turned and handsome.

In the garden rare shrubs, boxwoods, roses, bulbs, and cut-flowers for every season were planted, the landscaping being planned by Mrs. Rion personally. Some of the boxwoods and original plants still remain, as well as the wrought-iron gates and the fence which enclose the lot. Worked into the iron of the front gate is an "R" monogram.

This house was spared during the War Between the States. Mrs. Rion's powerful relatives in the North obtained and sent letters of immunity for her homes (the Rions also had a beautiful plantation house). Many of her friends brought their valuables to this place for safekeeping, and several families whose homes were burned found refuge here. Among these was the family of Sailing Wolfe, a well-to-do merchant, who was the grandfather of the renowned statesman and financier, Bernard M. Baruch.

In 1908, after Colonel Rion's death, the place was sold to William Rabb, and in 1931 it was purchased by J. W. Stephenson. The Stephensons restored and redecorated the house. They now occupy it as their home, and today it is one of Winnsboro's most beautiful ante-bellum mansions.

JORDAN HOUSE

LIGON — LUMPKIN — CONNER — JORDAN — HANCOCK
STEWART

This quaint little building has stood on the corner of Congress Street since 1851. The architecture of the building, aside from being quaint, is