

Hundred Oaks
Oak Street, near U.S. Highway 64
Winchester
Franklin County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-221

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1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HUNDRED OAKS

HABS No. TN-221

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Location: Oak Street, 100 feet of U.S. Hwy. 64, south of Winchester, Franklin County, Tennessee.

Present Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Hawkersmith.

Present Use: Residence.

Significance: Hundred Oaks was begun 1889-1892. It was built for Arthur Handly Marks, a local wealthy dilettante, of local materials, by local craftsmen. Its architecture, though based on Scottish precedents, is a combination of Jacobean, Romanesque and Dutch styles. Samuel M. Patton, Chattanooga architect, is responsible for the original design and plan, but construction ceased with Marks's death in 1892. The residence's construction continued a few years later under the direction of John Marks Handly and according to the designs of Hathcart C. Thompson and Julian G. Zwicker, Nashville architects. Further work was done by the Catholic Paulist Fathers who owned and occupied the estate from 1901 to 1955. Here they established their third mission to serve American Protestants. In 1901 this was the site of the first Paulist Convention at which the Catholic mission to Protestants was defined. Hundred Oaks was a major site for Catholic religious activity in the South during these years. The house stood vacant for several years afterward but has been recently restored.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The building was begun in 1889 and work stopped with the death of Arthur Handly Marks in 1892. Most of the exterior had been completed but not entirely. Later work continued as late as 1903. The residence has never been completed.
2. Architect: Samuel M. Patton of Chattanooga is credited with the original work. Later work on this residence was done by Hathcart C. Thompson and Julian G. Zwicker, Nashville architects and one-time partners.

Samuel M. Patton was born near Jackson, Mississippi in 1852. He was educated there and in Louisiana. From age 14 to 21 he worked in a printing office. Meanwhile he took up the study of architecture on his own. He journeyed to New Orleans and there became associated with architects Sully and Toledano. In 1884 he executed in New Orleans his first architectural work. In 1888 he came to Chattanooga to supervise for the firm of Sully, Toledano,

and Patton the construction of the Richardson Building "the plans of which he had drawn before coming here."* In 1888 the firm designed the \$80,000, 200-room Lookout Mountain Hotel built on the summit of Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, opposite the inclined railway. In 1889 they designed the six story, \$100,000, luxuriously modern Vicksburg Hotel at Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Thomas Sully, great nephew of the famous 19th Century artist, was the architect for the famous St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans. The plans of all the above structures are in the archives of Tulane University School of Architecture, New Orleans.

In 1889 Patton severed his partnership, and worked independently in Chattanooga until his death. Besides his participation in the design and supervision of the Lookout Mountain Hotel and his work on the Richardson Building, Patton was chiefly responsible for the Mountain City Club Building, the Loveman Building, Temple Court Building (extant), the Fourth National Bank Building, and the Merchant National Bank, all of Chattanooga. He was responsible for the design of Tennessee State Prison at Nashville. It was said of him that "he had originality of design combined with practical utility. He is not a dreamer on paper, but some of his conceptions in stone and wood are as unique and beautiful as his dreams...With but little to worry about financially, he is enabled to give his best and closest attention to his calling." **

An obituary of Patton appeared in American Architect and Building News (Vol 56, p. 42) in 1897. He had lived in an apartment atop the Richardson Building which he designed and supervised. He died when the building was consumed by fire that year.

Julian G. Zwicker was active in Nashville from 1892 to 1897. In 1892 he took over the practice of T.L. Dismukes who died suddenly. He became an AIA Fellow in 1892. Both men were very active in the buildings for the 1897 Tennessee Centennial Celebration. In 1897 they issued a publication with many of the buildings they designed illustrated. Among these was a rendering of the "Residence of Governor Albert Marks" (Hundred Oaks). Other buildings illustrated are: Fletcher Baxter Building; Castle Hall, Joel A. Battle Lodge; residence of A. Kolsky; residence of Charles Breyer; residence of J. P. Williams; residence of J.B. O'Bryan; residence of Edward B. Stahlman; residence of John A. Pitts; residence of H.H. Barr; the City Hospital; Medical Department, Vanderbilt University; Mission Home; Warner School; (all of Nashville); Hopkinsville Hotel, Hopkinsville, Kentucky; Pythian

* No sources were included with the quotations. A bibliography on page 13
** includes some information which may lead to the identification of the sources.

University, Gallatin, Tennessee; Office of the Southern Building and Loan Association, Huntville, Alabama; and the V.E. Shab's Broad Street Saloon, Nashville.

(Information on Hathcart C. Thompson was not available at the time of the write-up of this survey).

3. Original and subsequent owners:

a. Legal description: Tract "A" and Lots #7-41 in Hundred Oaks Subdivision to Winchester, in the first civil district of Franklin County, Tennessee, containing 25 acres, beginning at the southwest corner of Winchester and Belvidere Roads (Hwy. 64 at Oak Street).

b. The following is a complete chain title. The references are all Franklin County Deed Books.

Bk. 2, p. 120 3/17/1860.

C.R. Embrey to John Fizzell. for 12,433.17 Recorded 8/13/1866.

Bk. 2 p. 121. 1/9/1863

John Frizzell to George W. Hunt for \$15,000. Recorded 8/13/1866

Bk. D. p. 199 9/1/1869.

John W. Syler, Administor of C.R. Embrey (deceased) vs. George W. Hunt. Decree. First filed 8/18/1866 (Bk. C, p. 526). Out of this decree the property was purchased by A.S. Marks.

Bk. 17, p. 109. 5/23/1891.

Arthur H. Marks to A.S. Marks, Trustee. Deed of Trust. "...nearly all I Possess was derived by my marriage with my wife". the whole estate was left to A.H. Marks's son and wife. The library books went to Mrs. Mary H. Gholson of Texas. Recorded 6/14/1893.

Bk. 22, p. 17 1/28/1899.

Clarksville Bank and Trust Co., by H.C. Merritt, President, et al (appointed trustees by the Chancery Court in the case of Albert D. Marks vs. A.R. Gholson et al) to Kate M. Thompson for \$9000. 400 acres. Recorded 2/10/1899.

Bk. 23, p. 41 1/1/1900

J.E. Thompson et al to George Deshon et al, Trustees for the Paulist Fathers. Recorded 3/17/1900

Chancery Court Bk. EZP, p. 249. 11/7/1922 (date of filing) A.R. Miller et al, Trustees of the Mission Society of St. Paul the Apostle of the State of New York vs. the National Life and Accident Insurance Co. of Nashville. In order to divest title into plaintiffs and authorize a mortgage on the property for \$3000. Finalized 12/30/1922.

Bk. 91. p. 53. 7/2/1955

Missionary Society of St. Paul in the State of New York, William A. Mitchell, President, et al, Trustees to Earl M. Shahan, Jr. and wife for \$1.00. Recorded 7/9/1955

Bk. 91, p. 345. 10/5/1955

Earl M. Shahan Jr. to M.T. Gossett and Co.
25 acres for \$10. (for subdivision). Recorded 10/27/1955

Bk. 94. p. 212. 9/17/1957.

M.T. Gossett Co. Inc. of Nashville to Earl M. Shahan, Jr.
Recorded 9/25/1957

Bk. 97, p.6 5/28/1959.

Earl M. Shahan, Jr. To Roy W. Parker. (1/2 interest)
25 acres for \$10,000. except lots 1,2,3 conveyed to the City of Winchester 12/22/1958. Recorded 6/1/1959

Bk. 100, p.564. 8/2/1961.

Earl M. Shahan, Jr. and Roy W. Parker to R.W. Bradshaw
for \$10. Recorded 10/2/1961

Bk. 108, p. 225 8/29/1964.

R.W. Bradshaw to John H. Tucker
for assumption of \$30,000 note of deed of trust (Bk. 166, p. 301).
Also see plat in Deed Book 91, p. 297. Recorded 9/5/1964.

Bk. 192, p. 141. Deed of Trust. 8/1/1966.

John H. Tucker to Arthur L. Cole, Trustee.
Property sold at courthouse 8/1/1969.

Bk. 129, p. 621. 8/1/1969.

Arthur L. Cole, Trustee to Associate Capital Corporation for \$7000.

Bk. 130, p. 594 9/8/1969.

Associate Capital Corp. to Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Hawkersmith.
Recorded 10/28/1969.

4. Builders, contractors, suppliers: The clay was dug locally and the bricks were pressed on the site. The foundation stone was cut and hauled from nearby Sewanee Mountain. Construction components and the interior oak panelling were cut from trees on the estate. It was worked by local wood carvers. The idiosyncracies of the buildings result from local artisan interpretation of European precedents.
5. Original plans and construction: The original ante-bellum Hunt home is still evidenced by the solid masonry core of the building, its brick foundations as compared to the random ashlar of the additions, and the obvious break in the brick work in the front facade behind the Venetian loggia. The only facade of the

original building exposed is that behind this loggia. Additions were made to every side of this original central hall plan, symmetrical, two-story home to make it irregular in shape, asymmetrical, and three stories. The interior except for brick partition walls (2 feet thick) was gutted. (Additional information is on pages 7 and 8 of Historical Context).

6. Alterations and additions: In 1902, the ballroom was converted into a chapel. The present elaborate wood cornice and pilasters were added. Also a balcony was added to a second story bedroom on the south facade. Brick walls which enclosed the free-standing wine cellar to the southwest of the house were removed. In 1922, Father Arthur Miller made some changes to the house: installation of steam heat, redecoration of the chapel, refinishing of the hardwood floors, and re-working of the grounds. In the 1960's the house stood vacant and was victimized by vandals who robbed it of much of its furnishings and details. From 1969 to 1973 the house was extensively restored, especially the interior. The slate roof was replaced with asphalt.

B. Historical Context:

Arthur Handly Marks was described as a bookish dilettante who always wore flashy dress and carried a cane. In his early years he was tutored by his mother, Novella Davis Marks. His brother studied law under her for five months and then went on to Cumberland University where after only five additional months he was admitted to the bar.

Arthur was a dreamer and an indifferent student. He went to Vanderbilt, then to John Hopkins, and finally finished at Sewanee in 1882 at age 17. Bishop Thomas F. Gailor of Sewanee said of him, he "loved to translate the Odes of Horace and imitate the meter of the poet, but he did not exhibit much enthusiasm for the technical subtleties of the syntax." Nevertheless he was kind and very popular. He was described as impractical, visionary, but warm-hearted and loving. He had great appreciation for all beautiful things. Being literary he gave a noteworthy commencement speech on "The Dignity of Human Nature." He also wrote prose and poetry, some of which were later privately and posthumously printed and called Igerne and Other Writings of Arthur Handly Marks.

After graduation he began to read law in his father's office. His father, Albert S. Marks, was born in 1836. He came to Winchester in 1855 and studied law under the firm of Colyr, Marks, & Fritzell. In 1858 he was admitted to the bar. With the coming of the Civil War, Marks joined the Confederate Army and was appointed Captain and later Colonel of the 7th Tennessee Division. At the Battle of Murfreesboro, Marks underwent crude amputation of a wounded foot. During his infirmity he married Novella Davis of Wilson County in 1863. He was assigned to the military hospital in LaGrange, Georgia where in 1864 Arthur Handly Marks was born. After the war he returned to Winchester to practice law and he soon became involved in politics. In 1870 he was elected Chancellor of the 4th Chancery Division and in 1879 he was elected 21st Governor of Tennessee.

In 1888 ex-Governor Porter, assistant Secretary of State to President Cleveland and relative of Mrs. Marks, appointed Arthur to the consular services. He was sent to London as secretary of the American legation where he stayed one year. Free time was spent

hiking in England and Scotland and admiring the many estates. Later he went to Berlin. There he met Mary Hunt whom he had known in Nashville. In the fall he resigned and he and Miss Hunt went to Stirling, Scotland where they were married in November. The following February the two of them returned to Winchester and Hundred Oaks.

Hundred Oaks was a large tract of land which Albert S. Marks had bought from George W. Hunt around 1870. Later the Marks family moved onto the estate and into the ante-bellum mansion. The appearance of the house had gone unrecorded other than that it was large, two storied, brick, symmetrical, and rectangular. It had three suites - one for Gov. and Mrs. Marks and one for each of the two boys.

Young Arthur came into much money after his marriage. With it he began to seek ways of improving the estate that would reflect the romantic notions of gentility which overwhelmingly impressed him during his stay in Europe. One account claims that he attempted to incorporate in Hundred Oaks all the features he had admired in the castles of Europe that he had seen. "Neither time nor money should stand in the way of the implementing of his ideas," wrote another account.

Upon returning from Europe he recommenced his law practice but actually paid it little attention and soon he abandoned all pretense of labor for a life of contemplation, writing, and attending to the building of his estate and dream. He frequently exercised specious and foolish displays of manorialism. Supposedly he once rode out upon his horse in the manner of an English baron tossing coins to the children of his tenants. And for the sake of noblese oblige he taught a Monday class in English composition at Winchester Normal School to fulfill his social responsibility toward the unenlightened. A man of flowery language, he delivered the seconding nomination for Governor Turney. Literary and philological discussions were held in the drawing room of his new "castle." Among other idiosyncracies there were no clocks in the house as Marks had a disdain for time schedule.

Although popular accounts credit the planning of the house to Marks himself, Samuel M. Patton of Chattanooga was the architect. About the old Hunt mansion Marks created a great multiroom, multistory, crenelated, castilated, asymmetrical "castle"

which included towers, cloisters, loggias, ballroom, portrait gallery, library, portecochere, wine cellar, Swiss barn, carriage house, laundry, swimming pool, and aviary. A particularly notable feature of the house are the corbiestopped gables, originally a Dutch precedent widely copied in Scotland. The library is a reduced replication of that of Sir Walter Scott at Abbotsford.

The bricks were pressed from local clay at the site. The stone for the foundations of the additions was hauled from Sewanee Mountain. The three story structure measures more than one hundred feet long, the tower more than five stories tall. A wood carver from Winchester did all the panelling and woodwork. The floors are all hardwood and the dining room has oak panelled walls and oak beams and panels in the ceiling. The ballroom is two and one-half stories high and forty-four feet long. On the south side of house a small replica of a castle served as a wine cellar. It was covered with ivy taken from Kenilworth Castle. The ivy covering the house was imported from Abbotsford, and the vineyards were imported from Southern France. The house combined towers and huge windows in the landscape vista tradition of the 19th Century.

Marks was not a practical man. Most of his vines sickened and died. Most of his wife's money was spent. What's more he was never able to really enjoy his creation. One year after his father's death in 1891, Arthur contracted typhoid fever and died September 7, 1892, at Monteagle, at the young age of 28.

Construction of the house ceased. Mary Hunt Marks stayed on for a year but the house passed into judicial custody. For eight years the building stood incomplete. Towers, walls, and interior details were unfinished. A family by the name of Alexander occupied the house. Finally the court sold it in 1899 to Kate Thompson. She sold it to the Paulist Fathers, a missionary order of Catholic priests in 1900. Architect Patton of Chattanooga had died in the Richardson Building fire of 1896. Completion of the building was left to John Marks Handly, a relative of the Marks from Winchester who had converted to Catholicism and had become a Paulist Priest. It is assumed that he involved architects Thompson and Zwicker of Nashville in the completion of the house.

The Catholic population of Tennessee has always been very small. There were

Catholics in Winchester as early as 1828 however. Catholic priests who came here was allowed to preach in their congregations from the pulpits of the established Protestant Churches. Two events prompted the increased importance of the Catholic cause here. After the Civil War a Cumberland Presbyterian minister converted to Catholicism after a visionary dream. Later a Northern entrepreneur brought a factory here with a number of French and German artisans. The capitalist soon abandoned his project and the immigrants as well, many of which were Catholics. Instead of leaving, these newcomers bought farms and sent for relatives. In 1863 the first Catholic Church, St. Martin's, was established.

The Paulists are an American missionary order of Catholic priests. They were first formed in 1858. In the later 19th century there was much pressure within the order to establish a southern apostolate to serve the small but growing Catholic community and to teach non-Catholics the truth about Catholicism. Catholics had always been surrounded by distrust, superstition, and hostility.

Rev. Thomas Sebastian Byrne, Bishop of Nashville, and Father John Marks Handly, a kinsman of the Marks family, lobbied for Hundred Oaks as the seat of the southern headquarters of the apostolate. In 1900, James Francis O'Shaughnessy, an Alabama communicant, donated one-half the purchase price. The residence was thought to be a good home for the mission. It was spacious but also had intimate spaces to allow seclusion.

The Paulists bought the estate and began finishing its construction as well as adapting it to their needs. The Rev. Father Elias Youngman was the first superior and was assisted by Father William L. Sullivan and John Marks Handly. The building was rechristened the House of St. Francis de Sales. To glorify this new venture one of the priests wrote -

"Beloved, then, the Roman 'colonia' - a little Catholic colony transplanted to a Southern farming region whose citizens were quite ignorant of all things Catholic, transplanted to make common cause with the neighborhood in all its struggles for morality and prosperity, in its hopes and fears for crops and seasons, in its aspirations for the better gifts, both human and divine, but transplanted also to send out, morning, noon, and night, the sweet tones of the Angelus over the lovely valley, to practice in their fulness the customs of devout Catholic life, to adore in the beautiful chapel the ever present God..."

To help meet the cost of completion in 1904, the Mission sold off all but the present 25 acres of the estate. The principal task was the installation of the chapel in the unfinished ballroom. The new chapel was named St. Michael's. It was made possible by the donations of Martin Condon of Nashville in memory of his late brother. It was described as severely Roman, and having a high, arched ceiling, heavy hardwood cornice, and pilaster walls. There were also stained glass windows, made possible by a gift from a New York woman.

The Fathers began to win the sympathy of the people of Winchester. In 1903 they established a parochial school called DeSales Academy (later Winchester Academy) in a remodeled home. They persuaded the Dominican Sisters at St. Cecilia in Nashville to staff it.

In 1901 the Missionary Convention was held here and established and defined the policy of Catholic missions to non-Catholics in America. Attending were Bishops Allen of Mobile and Byrne of Nashville, Thomas F. Cusach - later Bishop Albany - Thomas F. Price, co-founder of Mary Knoll, Michael Irwin, Xavier Elliot of the Passionists, Father Elliot and A.P. Doyle, founders of the Catholic Missionary Union, and Father Conway, author of the "Question Box." The "Question Box" was first used at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 as an instrument for non-Catholics to learn about Catholicism. It was established by the Winchester Conference in 1901 as a standard instrument and continues to be used today by Catholic publications as well as other denominations.

Father O'Grady of Alabama expressed the aspiration of the Catholic missionaries to the South.

"The South is the most inviting field possible in the English speaking world. The non-Catholic people here have preserved more of the Christian tradition and have a greater faith in revealed religion than are possessed by any other people not of the fold. Though their belief is often vague and fragmentary it is a splendid foundation and affords an opportunity which the missionary will be glad to embrace. The Southern people are less deep and persistent in their prejudices, and are, moreover, hospitable and generous, and these traits facilitate the work of conversion."

Obviously, the author is referring to the prejudice toward Catholicism.

During its existence the mission at Hundred Oaks continuously sent out missionaries to Virginia, Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, and all places in between. Locally the Paulist

were successful in establishing churches at Shelbyville, Brownington, Alto, Tullahoma, Eastlands, South Pittsburgh, Murfreesboro, Winchester, and a chapel at McMinnville and a school at Winchester.

Father Joseph Duffy, pastor of St. Martin's, helped build a new church in Winchester in 1906. He was also an important husbandryman. He convinced the local farmers of the importance of pure breed cattle. He also organized the South's first cooperative creamery.

In 1919 a terrible flu epidemic struck Winchester. Father Hugh Swift served the sick and abandoned only to die of pneumonia himself. He had been alone in the cold house which was so difficult to heat by wood or coal fires. Only the barn and dairy had steam heat for the cattle. In 1922 steam heat was finally installed in the house along with other renovations.

In 1926 Father Joseph Morris tried to set up the house as a lay retreat for the Church. It operated as such for two seasons but the remoteness of Winchester from Catholic centers defeated the project.

In the late depression years Fathers James F. Cunningham and Thomas Halloran inaugurated the "mobile missions" to reach the people in the small surrounding communities. They often set up at evening or at noon for the field workers much like the revival tents of the evangelical Protestants. Their "chapel cars" were 23 feet long and contained in the front living quarters which also served as a confessional. In the rear there was an altar and the rear wall let down to make a platform. Religious movies were shown and efforts to explain Catholicism were made. These mobile missions were quite successful and lasted into the early fifties.

During the Second World War, Father Francis Broome opened the mission up to many army chaplains stationed at Camp Forrest. It was a gathering place for many young adults and St. Michael's Chapel was the scene of many weddings.

The Paulists left Hundred Oaks in 1955. The same problem that had always plagued them - inadequate transportation facilities in Winchester and the town's removal from center of Catholic population - were compounded by the increasing and exorbitant cost of maintaining the aging structure. The headquarters were moved to St. Patrick's in Memphis.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This three-story red brick masonry country estate is irregular in shape and plan, and measures approximately 99 X 132 feet. It is eleven bays wide and five bays deep. It consists of major additions and alterations made to a two-story regular shaped central hall plan ante-bellum residence at its core. The original foundations of the central core are of brick masonry. The foundations of the additions are random limestone ashlar. The high pitched roof is supported by a frame truss and was originally covered with slate, now with asphalt. The third story has never been completed.

The building features a four-story tower, many dormers topped with dunces caps, a first story loggia, a second story loggia in double rhythm, stepped gables, corbie-stepped gables, raking, courtyards, porte-cochere, and a free standing wine cellar fashioned after romantic ideas of a European castle. Originally planned but never completed were an aviary and a swimming pool. The Swiss dairy and the laundry were completed but are extinct. A later carriage house is extant. On the interior is a two-story chapel or ballroom with vaulted ceiling and hardwood dado, pilasters, and cornice. A reduced copy of Sir Walter Scott's Abbotsford library is intact, and an oak paneled dining room with oak-beamed ceiling and large hearth graces the interior.

Copied from National Register of Historic Places
Inventory-Nomination Form for Hundred Oaks, prepared
in 1974 by Joseph L. Herndon

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

Franklin County Deed Books, Franklin County Courthouse, Winchester,
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New York, New York.

Cavalier, Julian. American Castles. New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1973.

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Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1974 project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the East Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the paper was written by Joseph L. Herndon, HABS Historian.

Susan McCown, Architectural Historian with HABS, reviewed and edited the paper in Spring 1986, for transmittal to the Library of Congress. The photographs of the house were taken February 1983 by Jack E. Boucher, HABS Staff Photographer.