

THE L.Q.C. LAMAR HOUSE: FACTUAL SUMMARY

The mission of the L.Q.C. Lamar House, a National Historic Landmark, is to interpret the life and career of the distinguished 19th-century statesman L.Q.C. Lamar within the context of his times and to encourage the ideal of statesmanship in the 21st century.

-Adopted by the L.Q.C. Lamar Interpretation Team, February 2008

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In June 1868, Virginia L. Lamar, wife of L.Q.C. Lamar, bought two lots in Oxford, MS from John Cullen for \$3,000, with a first installment of \$1,500. She and her husband jointly executed a note to pay the remainder 12 months later, and the second installment of \$1,500 was paid in full on June 12, 1869, as noted on the deed. Neither the deed transferring ownership from John Cullen to Virginia Lamar, nor the previous deed transfer from Alfred Barger to John Cullen in 1862, give any indication of there having been any structures on the property. However, we have a clear indication of when a house was built in the biography *L.Q.C. Lamar: His Life, Times and Speeches 1825-1893* written in 1895 by Edward Mayes, Lamar's son-in-law.

Mayes reports the house was built in 1869-1870, as follows: ***"The year 1869 was distinguished by nothing of note in Mr. Lamar's history except the marriage, in May, of his oldest child—a daughter. In the fall of that year also he purchased a body of land, about thirty acres, in the northern part of the town of Oxford; and on this premises began the erection of a residence, which was completed in the following April. This home, the first of his own since he had left "Solitude" in 1857, was the slowly earned fruit of hard labor at his profession; for at this time his practice had so increased that he, with his moderate ideas in that particular, described it as "very large."***

Starting in 1873, Lamar's consecutive service as congressman, senator, cabinet member, and associate justice kept him in Washington, D.C. much of the time. On June 18, 1888, the house was transferred from L.Q.C. Lamar et al to his daughter Fannie L. Mayes, wife of Lamar biographer Edward Mayes. In January of that year, Lamar had been sworn in as justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

RECENT HISTORY

The Lamar House passed through a series of owners starting in about 1895. In 1965, Adeline and Harold Houston purchased the house from M.G. Fite of Grenada, MS.

In late 1973, the National Park Service contracted with the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) to identify sites relevant to the theme of "Political and Military Affairs 1865-1900" as candidates for National Historic Landmark (NHL) status. AASLH arranged a site visit to the home of L.Q.C. Lamar in April 1974 and subsequently prepared a NHL study. On May 15, 1975, the Lamar House was officially designated a

National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior, a position that Lamar held from 1885 to 1888. The NHL Statement of Significance reads as follows:

From about 1868 to 1888, this was the home of Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar (1825-1893), Mississippi statesman. In 1861, Lamar resigned his seat in Congress and drafted a Mississippi Secession Ordinance. During the war, he served the Confederacy as a soldier and diplomat; afterward, he was a leading Southern spokesman for reconciliation during Reconstruction. Exponent of Southern industrial progress and leader of the "New South" movement, late in his career Lamar served in the U.S. Senate, as Secretary of the Interior, and on the Supreme Court."

In 2000, the Mississippi Heritage Trust included the Lamar House on its "Ten Most Endangered List," with this explanation: *"A classic case of 'Demolition by Neglect,' the last remaining house in the state with ties to Lamar will be lost without intervention. If this house were in Virginia, it would be a state shrine."*

On January 29, 2004, the Oxford-Lafayette County Heritage Foundation (OLCHF) became the new owner. With an allocation by the Mississippi Legislature, OLCHF purchased the property from the Houstons for \$425,000. At this point, the house had badly deteriorated with evidence of a porous roof and parts of the foundation having collapsed.

OLCHF immediately began planning to resurrect the house. A summary of their accomplishments on behalf of the Lamar House follows:

- In May 2004, it was declared a Mississippi Landmark, insuring its long-term preservation.
- In July 2004, it was declared a local landmark as another protective status.
- Also July 2004, a strategic plan for the house was published, prepared by historic preservationist Stella Gray Bryant Sykes.
- In October 2004, the Mississippi Forestry Commission declared an osage orange tree (Bois D'arc) to be a Mississippi Champion Tree as the "largest of its species known at this time." Standing close to the house, it is estimated to be 150 years old, placing it within Lamar's lifetime.
- In December 2004, Howorth & Associates Architects were contracted to plan the house's restoration.
- Restoration funding was secured, including a \$296,000 NHL grant, a \$390,000 Save America's Treasures grant, a \$390,000 Mississippi Community Heritage Preservation Grant, a \$500,000 Congressional add-on grant, and a \$16,000 allocation from the City of Oxford.
- By early January 2007, construction drawings were approved by the National Park Service and the Mississippi Department of Archives & History.
- Full-scale restoration began May 2007.
- Convening July 2007, a 12-member L.Q.C. Lamar Interpretation Team has been making decisions about how the house should tell Lamar's story.
- Major work on the restoration concluded June 2008. Restoration highlights are:
 1. Cleared nearly three-acre lot of privet, underbrush, invasive vines.
 2. Developed parking lot at N.16th St. boundary.
 3. Created pathway from parking lot to house on N. 14th St.
 4. Replaced house foundation.
 5. Removed modern rear addition.
 6. Rebuilt original rear dining room.

7. Replaced front porch with original design.
8. Restored all windows and doors.
9. Replaced roof and restored chimneys.
10. Restored lap siding and painted original color.
11. Reinstalled missing portion of original brick walkway from street to porch.
12. Replaced plaster in four rooms off central hall.
13. Consolidated old plaster and restored hand-painted designs in hall.
14. Repaired all fireplace hearths and restored mantels.
15. Replaced rotted floor in southwest corner room.
16. Refinished original floors.
17. Repainted with original colors or repapered with reproduction stock.
18. Insulated and installed HVAC system.
19. Built disabled entry to house.
20. Built a new outbuilding in probable location of original kitchen to house restrooms and catering kitchen.

DEVELOPMENTS

The long-term preservation and stewardship of the L.Q.C. Lamar House is intrinsic to strategic planning for the house. To that end, ownership of the Lamar House was transferred to the City of Oxford in June 2008.

Planning for the Lamar House is aimed at creating a sustainable historic house museum. The primary goal of the L.Q.C. Lamar Interpretation Team to design and install thematic exhibits on Lamar's life was fulfilled with partial funding by a Preserve America Community Grant, awarded October 2008. An exhibit team worked with Malone Design & Fabrication in Decatur, Georgia starting fall 2009. Exhibits were installed in March 2011 and opened to the public April 1, 2011.

LIFE OF L.Q.C. LAMAR

Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar was a statesman in the truest sense of the word. If he was not Mississippi's most important statesman of the 19th century, he was certainly among the most distinguished statesmen the state has ever produced. Declaring his house a National Historic Landmark recognized the influential role he played during a critical period of U.S. history. What makes this Southern statesman stand out from others during the Civil War era was the extent of his involvement in national affairs both before and after the war.

During his varied career, Lamar practiced law, held teaching positions at the University of Mississippi, served the Confederacy as military officer and diplomat, and dabbled in agriculture whenever he could. But it was primarily his life of government service that remains his legacy. As a politician, his exceptional oratorical skills helped him both advance his career and recover from setbacks when his personal integrity put him in opposition with his supporters.

As an oldest son, L.Q.C. Lamar carried on the name of his father, who also was a lawyer and judge. When Lamar was nine, his distraught father committed suicide. Years later, while studying at Emory College, Lamar's life intersected with Emory's president, the

Reverend Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, who soon became both Lamar's father-in-law and a beloved second father. Lamar and his wife Virginia Lafayette Longstreet had four children: Frances Eliza (Fannie), L.Q.C. III, Sarah Augusta (Gussie), and Virginia Longstreet (Jennie).

The particulars of L.Q.C. Lamar's life and career can be summarized as follows:

- 1825: Born September 17 in Putnam County, Georgia.
- 1845: Graduated from Emory College in Oxford, Georgia.
- 1847: Admitted to the Georgia bar; married Virginia Lafayette Longstreet.
- 1849: Moved to Oxford, Mississippi at the inducement of Judge Longstreet.
- 1850: Practiced law; taught mathematics at University of Mississippi.
- 1851: Debated Senator Henry Stuart Foote for which classes were dismissed.
- 1852: Returned to Georgia and practiced law.
- 1853: Elected to Georgia Legislature.
- 1855: Moved back to Oxford, Mississippi; bought plantation ("Solitude").
- 1857-1860: Served in U.S. House of Representatives.
- 1860: Resigned from U.S. Congress and left Washington December 12.
- 1861: Drafted Mississippi's Ordinance of Secession passed on January 9.
- 1861-1862: Lt. Col. of 19th Mississippi Regiment until vertigo forces resignation.
- 1863: Sent by the Confederate States as Special Commissioner to Russia.
- 1864-1865: Appointed Judge Advocate of military court in A.P. Hill's Corps.
- 1866: Taught at University of Mississippi as Professor of Ethics.
- 1867-1870: Professor of Law at University of Mississippi.
- 1870: Judge Longstreet died in July at age 80.
- 1873-1877: Served in U.S. House of Representatives.
- 1874: Delivered famous eulogy of Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner.
- 1877-1885: Served in U.S. Senate.
- 1884: Wife Virginia died December 30.
- 1885-1888: Served as Secretary of the Interior under Grover Cleveland.
- 1887: Remarried to Mrs. Henrietta J. Holt on January 5 in Columbus, Georgia.
- 1888-1893: Served on the U.S. Supreme Court.
- 1893: Died on January 23 near Macon, Georgia; re-interred in St. Peter's Cemetery in Oxford, Mississippi fall 1894 next to his wife Virginia.