

I. History of the Building and People Who Lived There

Before approaching the specific recommendations for use and areas of restoration, some insight into the history of the building and its owners should be considered and understood in relating to decisions to be made.

Origin and Evolution

John McCullough, a Scottish immigrant who made a fortune in the wool industry, constructed the original two-story central, rectangular structure (approximately 64' 0" x 45' 0") in 1877. It was built on the edge of the ravine in a castle-like style with a domed cupola on top, two octagonal turrets on the corners, overlooking the valley. Evidently, the site was selected because it reminded him of his homeland. He called it Alisa in recognition of his youthful life spent near Alisa Crags in Scotland. In 1902, he returned to Scotland and the house was sold at public auction.

Mrs. Garret Hobart, widow of the Vice-President of the United States, was persuaded to bid on the place, and she bought it for \$5,000.00 with little thought of using it for other than a weekend play spot for her children. However, the beauty of the place and the affection that her children acquired for it evidently took hold and when her son was 18 years old, she gave the "castle" to him. Four years later, he married and moved in permanently until his death in 1941. They changed the name to Alisa Farms and acquired up to 250 acres. Garret, Jr. was very successful in banking and first president of the County Park Commission. He and his wife were leaders in the social life of the Patterson area and entertained frequently on a large scale. His house underwent many changes and additions. In 1915, he added the 40-room brick wing to the original house and the spiral stairway in the entrance hall.

In 1948, Alisa Farms was sold to the State and became the new home for Patterson State Teachers' College in 1952.

Numerous partitions were added, fire escapes, stairs changed and adaptive measures taken to readjust the Mansion into offices and functional administrative suites for the College. Fortunately, most of these changes did not alter or destroy the original fabric of the building. Such restoration work as is contemplated can be done economically and will still permit the continued usage of much of the space now occupied, and with a partial restoration provide the original rooms used for entertainment for use by top administrators and public functions.