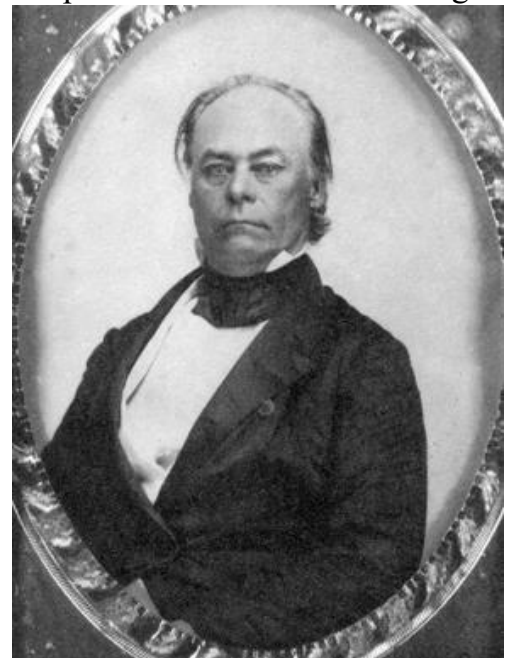


The Jemison-Van De Graaff Mansion



The Jemison-Van de Graaff Mansion was built between 1859 and 1862 by Alabama State Senator Robert Jemison. Robert Jemison was born on September 17, 1802. He was the grandson of an Irish immigrant who moved to Pennsylvania in 1742. Robert's father, also named Robert, married Margaret Kirkham in Philadelphia. They moved to Augusta, Georgia seeking fortune in the frontier South. Robert Jemison Jr. was the oldest son. He grew up and was educated in Georgia. Jemison spent a short period of time as an apprentice to a lawyer, where he undoubtedly made contacts in the federal land office. In the 1820s, Robert Jr. urged his family, including his parents, to move to Pickens County, Alabama where they built a plantation called "The Garden." In the 1830's, Jemison moved to what is now Northport and built a plantation outside of town called "The Orchard." Robert soon found himself within the political and business realms surrounding Tuscaloosa. He became a state legislature in 1837 and was voted in as a state senator in 1851. Jemison began his fortune through his six plantations, but he also heavily invested in diverse industrial and commercial enterprises including stagecoach lines, railroads, a livery



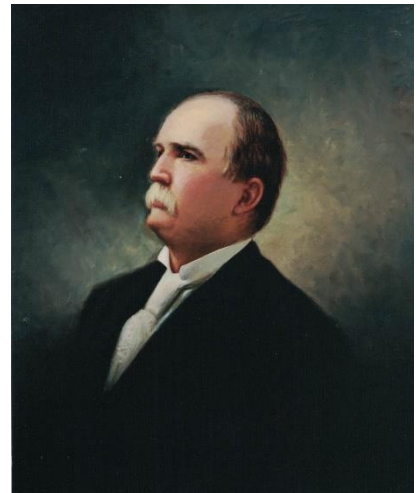
stable, a lumber and sawmill business, and even several surface coal mines. Being a prominent politician and businessman, Jemison wanted a home closer to Tuscaloosa, which had served as the state capital from 1826 to 1846. Jemison originally built this mansion for entertaining and housing visiting colleagues. The house is a break away from the traditional architecture of the mid-1800s, which saw many Greek Revival homes. The mansion is an Italianate, or Italian Villa, style house. The architect who designed the house, Samuel Sloan, was in Tuscaloosa working on the Bryce Hospital complex. Senator Jemison was instrumental in having the Bryce Hospital being built in Tuscaloosa, and he was very impressed with Sloan's work.



LOOPER LIBRARY



(1) Senator Jemison had only one daughter. So naturally, when she was married, her last name changed. Cherokee Jemison married Andrew Coleman Hargrove. Hargrove fought during the Civil War and rose to the rank of Colonel. During the war, he was injured as a bullet grazed his head. Parts of the bullet were never extracted so he suffered terrible headaches. While suffering from excruciating physical and psychological pain, Hargrove went on to have a luxurious career as an attorney, Speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives, and later the dean of the University of Alabama Law School. So, the house is the Jemison-Hargrove-Van de Graff home, even though it's all one family.



Colonel Andrew Coleman Hargrove



Judge Adrian Sebastian Van de Graaff

(2) Cherokee and Hargrove had a daughter, Minnie Cherokee, who would marry Judge Adrian Sebastian Van de Graaff. Their children were the last generation of the Jemison lineage to grow up in the house.

Judge Adrian & Minnie's youngest son, Dr. Robert Jemison Van de Graaff is the inventor of the Van de Graaff machine, a device used to produce high amounts of voltage that would become a major contribution to splitting the atom. Robert received degrees from the University of Alabama, University of Paris, and his Ph.D. from Oxford University in England, in 1928. He would later teach at the University of Princeton and M.I.T. He is considered by many to be the Father of Modern Physics.



Dr. Robert Jemison Van de Graaff

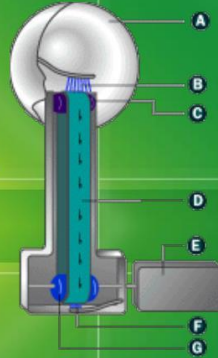
Van de Graaff Generator

The American physicist Robert Van de Graaff invented the Van de Graaff generator in 1931.

Charge transferred onto moving belt and up to the metal dome on top.

Silicon tape on lower roller and rubber belt cause charges to build up on belt that are taken up and collected on the dome.

The results are shocking!



- A Output terminal — An aluminum or steel sphere
- B Upper brush — A piece of fine metal wire
- C Upper roller — A piece of nylon
- D Belt — A piece of surgical tubing
- E Motor
- F Lower brush
- G Lower roller — A piece of nylon covered with silicon tape



- (3) The Looper room was originally used as a library. These two bookcases are original to the house.
- (4) The mantels in the house were originally created by Samuel Sloan. This is the only mantel that is original to the home. The other mantels were obtained from other Samuel Sloan designed houses that were demolished.
- (5) This is the only house in the state of Alabama that has been returned to one-time period. This is 1862 from top to bottom. The carpet patterns, wall finishes, all the decorative treatments are either original, exact reproductions, or interpretive pieces of what Senator Jemison and his family would have had in the 1860s. The door and window surrounds are plaster covered and painted to look like wood. The pocket doors, curly pine and walnut, are all woods from Alabama and Jemison's land holding. Jemison showcased his wealth and the wealth of the region by what he had here. The carpet patterns are reproductions of three patterns that Jemison ordered from Axminster Carpeting, in England. They had in their catalogs Jemison's original bill of sale and the pattern numbers. They were able find these pattern numbers and reproduce the exact patterns.



A.H. BEAN GALLERY



(1) Jemison ordered a wall pattern called Golden Sprig from a French wallpaper company called Zuber. Zuber will still make Golden Sprig. It is 24 karat gold stamped onto white silk, with a paper backing. In 1991, it was \$400 a square foot. Outside the budget of the Mansion Foundation, we replicated the finish with stenciling. Our reproduction gives you an idea of what it would have been like. Imagine the walls lined with real silk and gold, the way the gasolier light would have shimmered off the walls, it would have been beautiful.



(2) The gasoliers in these parlors are reproductions of the exact fixtures Jemison ordered from Cornelius and Baker. Jemison designed a gas plant for the house that fed into all the gas fixtures. The plant produced enough gas to light the streetlights on this block and the two blocks leading up to the house. Jemison loved to impress. Soon enough, the city of Tuscaloosa installed gas lighting of their own, buying the materials necessary from Jemison himself.

(3) This sofa was a Jemison family piece from their plantation. It predates the house. A lot of furniture experts don't necessarily find it to be a "fine" piece, because it doesn't have all the elaborate details that you'd expect to find in a house this grand, but it was a Jemison piece.

(4) One of the pieces that is not original to the house but has wonderful connection to us, is this mirror. This pier mirror was originally the property of Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy. It was located at his plantation Brierfield, in Mississippi, before the Civil War. After the collapse of Confederate government in 1865, Davis sent a telegram from Danville, Georgia, saying that he knew the war was over. He knew the Union would seize his plantation, so he wrote his



colleagues to at least get things out of the house, so he'd have something to live off of. They emptied

Brierfield and Davis never returned to the plantation. He retired to Beauvoir in Biloxi, Mississippi. This piece was too big for the ceilings at that home, so it stayed with his brother, Joe Davis. Joe and his grandchildren lived at the Jemison Mansion as refugees during the Civil War. Through that connection, we were gifted with the mirror.



BATHROOM

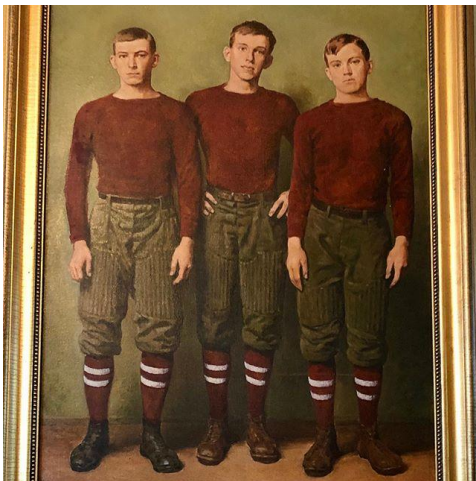


- (1) As we enter the bathroom, notice that the room is cut in half, top to bottom. You can see the window extends through the ceiling. This is to keep the outside scale of the building uniform.
- (2) This is the first built-in bathtub in the state. Older houses do have bathrooms that were added later but the Jemison Mansion is the first house where the tub was originally installed. The roof collected rainwater and sent it to two massive underground beehive containers. From there the water was pumped into the tank room, which is above us, and gravity fed the water back down. There was even a copper water boiler, allowing for hot and cold (although by our standards, it was more like lukewarm and cold) water at the turn of the tap. In 1856, the newspaper *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor* ran an ad informing those who enjoyed the "peculiar ritual of bathing" that a new bathhouse had been opened. During early to mid- 19th century, it was quite something for a bath to be inside the house.
- (3) It's the first house in Alabama built with an indoor toilet as well. In the far back of the house, off the back-kitchen wing, was a two-story room with toilets. Lower level was designated for the slaves... Top level for the family.

Jemison and Family



(1) On the left is a portrait of Senator Jemison painted by the Library Association.



(2) It's really an incredible family, from cotton, plantations, and politics with the Jemison's to the Van de Graaff's with physics and even football. Robert Jemison Van de Graaff's older brothers were all on the 1913 Rose Bowl team for the University of Alabama. Robert's brother William, also known as "Bully," was Alabama's first All-American.



(3) Now that you've seen most of the house, let's just put in perspective the wealth Senator Jemison possessed. This house, Jemison's weekend house, cost him \$89,000 to build. The state of Alabama spent \$50,000 building the state capital building, and that was for the land, materials, labor, and so forth. Jemison did not pay for the labor. His slaves built the house. He did not buy the materials. He obtained them from his own mill and land companies. Jemison spent almost twice the amount it took for the state capitol building just in the frills.



(4) Robert Jemison first became rich by inheriting his dad's plantations, expanding those properties, buying more slaves, and growing in agriculture. But Jemison gained his TRUE wealth through shares in steamboat lines, owning shares in railroads, and owning and contracting toll roads and bridges. However, The Panic of 1857 and the Civil War ends Jemison's endless stream of resources. After the Civil War, he gave a speech to his plantation, telling his slaves they were free. Jemison offered his slaves their freedom, but also another choice. They could leave and never return or stay and be paid for a percentage of their work. He basically instituted the beginnings of sharecropping. He owned the land and the materials, but the freed slaves grew the crops and kept a small percentage for themselves, while Jemison reaped the rest. That worked for a while on the main plantation. The Luxapilla mill was burned down in a riot. Toward the end of his life, Jemison was really getting into some hard times. As a token to his service as an Alabama State Senator, the Alabama -Ohio Railroad appointed him to the board and gave him a salary, which eased him for the rest of his days.

Questions:

- 1) When was the mansion built and what style of architecture is the mansion?
- 2) Who was the architect and what else did he build in Tuscaloosa?
- 3) How many children did the Senator have?
- 4) What is the full name of the mansion?
- 5) Who was the Father of Modern Physics?
- 6) What year is the mansion currently displayed as?
- 7) What did Jemison showcase in the mansion?
- 8) What is unique about the Zubar wallpaper?
- 9) How much did the wallpaper cost per square foot in 1991?
- 10) How much gas did Senator Jemison's gas plant produce?
- 11) Who first owned the pier mirror in the A. H. Bean Gallery?
- 12) What is unique about the bathtub?
- 13) Why is having an indoor toilet special?
- 14) What is the connection to Alabama football's first Rose Bowl team?
- 15) Who was Alabama's first football All American?