

rosettes and brackets decorate each cross beam. These were all imported. The bannisters are some three feet in height, perfectly proportioned, all hand-turned.

In the Rion family there was a daughter, Hannah. She was most gifted, being an artist, writer and composer. She illustrated the books her English husband wrote and there is a copy of one of her musical compositions, "Sabot Dance," on display in a down-town window.

Whatever there is in this sketch that may be a rumor, the fact remains Colonel Rion was certainly a man of parts and has left an indelible stamp on the community. The descendants of Colonel Rion have mementoes and papers bearing out the fact that he was the son of the Dauphin of France.

This home was noted for its hospitality and extensive entertainment. Such men as John C. Calhoun, William C. Preston, Generals Stuart and Chestnut are a few of the notables of the day. Dr. Baruch was first introduced to his future wife, Miss Wolfe, here. (Father and mother of Mr. Bernard M. Baruch.)

In 1908 Mr. William Rabb purchased this place and modernized it. He lived here with his family until his death.

The late Mr. J. W. Stephenson, husband of the present owner, bought the property from the Rabb Estate in 1931.

THE
J. W. STEPHENSON
HOME

OWNED BY
COLONEL JAMES H. RION
IN 1857

Winnsboro, South Carolina

May 2-3, 1969

The historic home of Mrs. J. W. Stephenson was first begun by Mr. Mancel Hall in 1855. A two-story four-room frame house was built at that time, with the red brick kitchens (still standing) in the yard. He in turn sold it to Colonel James H. Rion in 1857 who developed it to its present proportions.

There is much history, romance and mystery concerning Colonel Rion. The most plausible story with more factual background is that Colonel Rion was a son of the Dauphin of France, who had been secreted into Canada. The Dauphin married and to this union was born the man in question, Colonel James H. Rion. History is blank as to what became of the Dauphin.

Agents of the supporters of the French Monarchists visited John C. Calhoun, then Vice-President of the United States, and arranged for this young boy and his mother to go to his home in South Carolina. A Dr. John Buchanan of Montreal accompanied them by boat on their trip to Savannah, Georgia. From there mother and son were taken overland to the Calhoun home. Mrs. Rion acted as housekeeper and the little boy grew up there. His education was supervised by John C. Calhoun.

Colonel Rion became a very brilliant barrister. He married Miss Mary Kather-

ine Weir, born in Pennsylvania and reared in Columbia by Dr. William Preston. She was a musician and writer. They settled in Winnsboro and raised their family in what is now the Stephenson home.

Colonel Rion was a gentleman of culture and travel. He employed a French decorator who painted the house and supervised the massive mouldings and panelling and the exquisite carvings seen in the elaborate medallions in the center of the rooms, and the perfection of moulding, hand-turning and fitting of the lovely staircase made of solid mahogany. The French influence is in evidence throughout the house. The bed rooms with the alcoves for the beds, the lovely brackets that decorate the alcoves are all hand-turned and fitted with perfect precision. No nails! For convenience there was installed a system of speaking tubes.

The chandeliers are the original ones, massive and lovely with the genuine etched shades.

The floors are the original broad heart pine boards.

The porches are especially noteworthy. The front verandah with the open balcony upstairs extends the full width of the house. It is supported and decorated by six perfect Corinthian columns. The bases and caps are of wrought iron. Iron