

Longview Nashville, Tennessee Heritage Development Plan



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Project Background

In August 2024, Lipscomb University faculty and staff asked Dr. Carroll Van West to visit Longview, a historic house that the university owns, and to share his ideas on how the university could maximize this invaluable heritage asset for its students, supporters, and the larger Nashville community. West is the Tennessee State Historian, the Director of the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, and the Director of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation. For the meeting Dr. West also invited staff from the Metro Nashville Historical Commission to join the meeting and examination of the property.

Everyone who attended that summer meeting came away with an appreciation of the wealth of opportunity Lipscomb University has at 811 Caldwell Lane. Longview is a stunning Beaux Arts-styled historic house with multiple possibilities for future use. This report, prepared by three MTSU public history graduate students, Jacob Jernigan, Nancy Prescott, John Sewell, and Dr. West, presents (1) a brief history of the property and the house; (2) preservation concerns; and (3) alternative options for consideration.

History of the Land

The Deep Past, c. 1200 to 1500

Longview sits on land watered by Brown's Creek and within an area of considerable interest to archaeologists since the late nineteenth centuries. Several scholars have examined this land's deep history through archaeological work of varying sensitivities. After working in Nashville as the first public health officer, Joseph Jones' "pathbreaking archaeological study based on his perception that Nashville had been built on an extensive Indian burial ground. In 1880 the Smithsonian Institution published his findings in *Exploration of the Aboriginal Remains of Tennessee*.¹ The Peabody Museum at Harvard next commissioned a work by head curator Frederick Ward Putnam on large earthen mounds and excavated stone box graves in the Nashville area.

Then came the findings at the Noel Cemetery. MTSU archaeology professor Kevin Smith notes, "Anyone with even a passing interest in Nashville's late prehistory has heard of "The Noel Cemetery," immortalized by the two editions (1890, 1897) of *The Antiquities of Tennessee* by Gates P. Thruston."² During the Civil War, Thruston was a U.S. officer billeted at Glen Leven, a historic house opposite the Longview property on the Franklin Turnpike. He knew of the wealth of archaeological remains in the Brown's Creek area better than most.

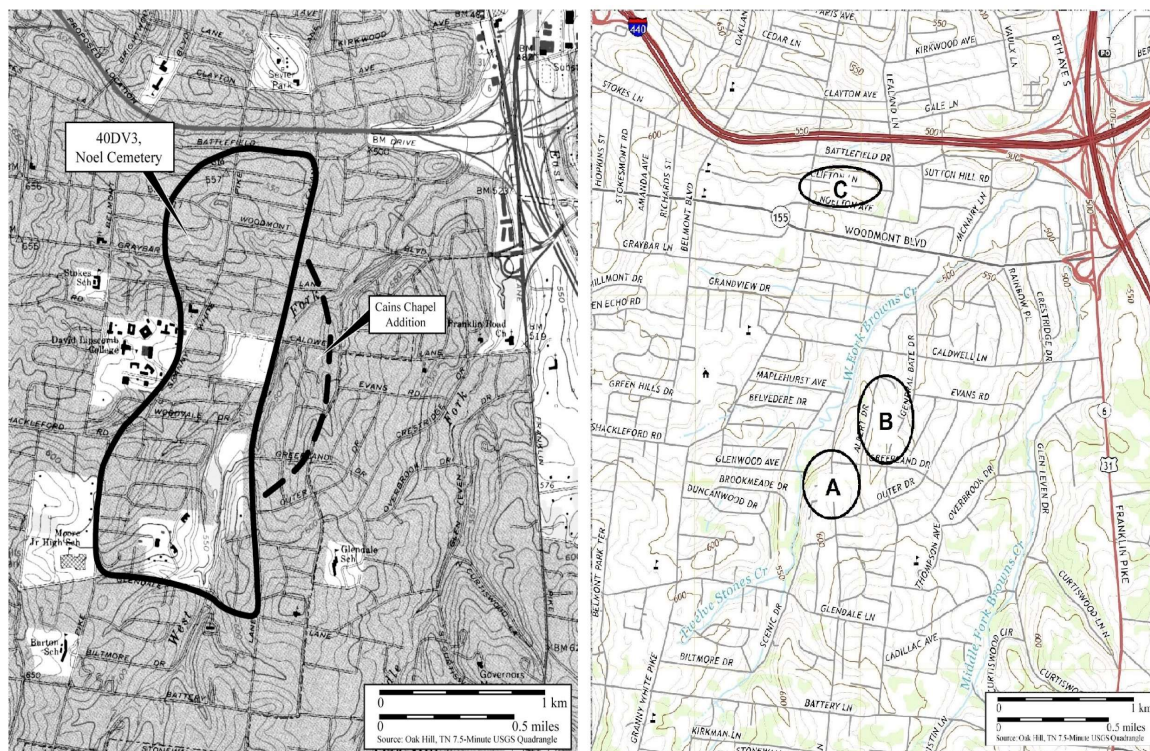
The Noel Cemetery was along the banks of Brown's Creek near the Longview property. Some of the first published sketches of the site appeared in the Putnam reports, and place a large complex of mounds and stone box graves between Franklin Pike and Granny White Pike. Building upon the further research and identifying landscape, Smith has compiled his knowledge of the Noel Farm grave sites (marked "A"), Cain's Chapel Mound Site (B), and "palisaded Mississippian village excavated by the Tennessee Division of Archaeology in 1973," which is marked "C".³ The continued interest in the Thruston collection today continues in part to the massive inventory of artifacts of the collection and its cohesion as a group.⁴

¹ James B. Jones, Jr., "Joseph Jones," Carroll Van West, et al., eds., *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, online edition.

² Kevin E. Smith, "Re-envisioning the Noel Stone-Grave Cemetery (40DV3)", Davidson County, TN. <https://tennesseearchaeologycouncil.wordpress.com/2019/09/02/re-envisioning-the-noel-stone-grave-cemetery-40dv3-davidson-county-tennessee/>; G. P. Thruston, *The antiquities of Tennessee and the adjacent states, and the state of aboriginal society in the scale of civilization represented by them: A series of historical and ethnological studies* (The R. Clarke Company, 1890).

³ Smith, "Re-envisioning the Noel Stone-Grave Cemetery (40DV3)."

⁴ Kevin E. Smith, "Gates P. Thruston Collection of Vanderbilt University," Carroll Van West, et. al., eds, *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, online edition.



However, ever since the discovery and widespread prominence of the collection both nationally and internationally, Nashville residents have maintained a fascination with the ‘Moundbuilder’ societies that preceded even the contemporaneous native cultures present at the first arrival of Europeans. Relevant to the research at Longview, in 1911 local historian Elizabeth “Lizzie” Porterfield Elliot published a textbook for Nashville school children. The granddaughter of Henry Norvell and Laura Jane Sevier Elliot, her personal understanding of the land shaped the book’s narrative: “There, on Brown’s Creek, the largest number of graves have been found. And there, we are glad to know, the Mound can still be seen. It is between the Franklin Pike and the Glendale car line, and can be seen from both. It is a short distance northwest from Longview.”⁵ Her description matches closely the work done by recent archaeological work.

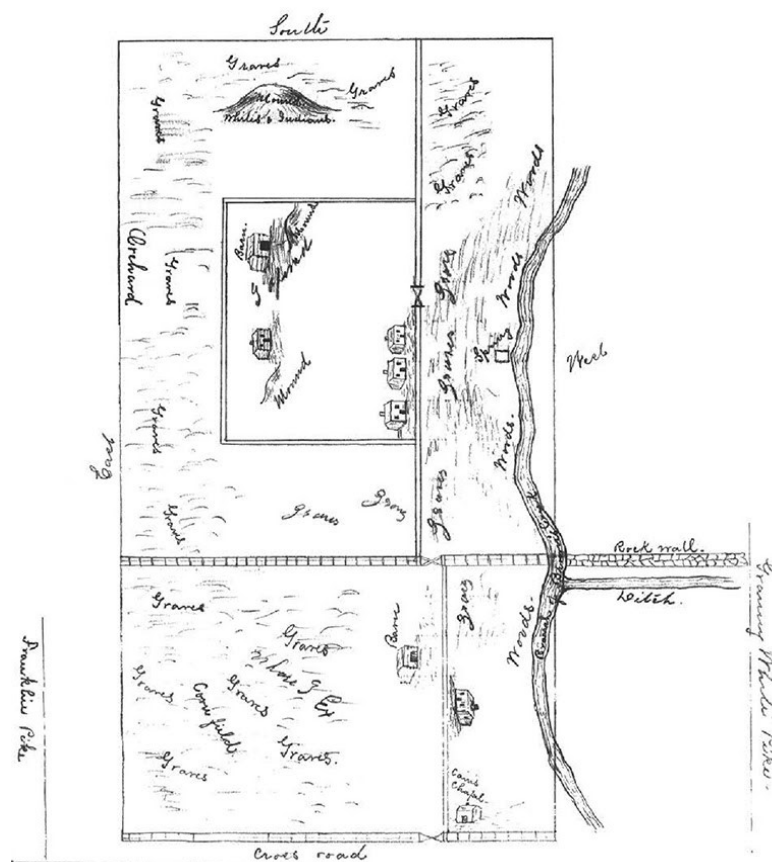
Despite the years of disturbance and development, residents may still encounter indigenous evidence related to palisaded limestone terraces and stone box graves in the South Nashville area.⁶ Newspaper articles have recorded citizens finding artifacts and graves on their suburban lots. In 2014, for instance, Metro Police arrived at a basement dig where workers “beneath a 1930’s home discovered bone fragments lying on the dirt floor of a confined crawl space.”⁷ Excavation work for a new roadway widening project in 1999 stumbled upon a dizzying amount of artifacts within the right-of-way right next to Hillsboro Road at the intersection with

⁵ Lizzie P. Elliot, *Early History of Nashville* (Nashville, The Board of Education, 1911), 38-39.

⁶ Hannah Guidry. “Revisiting the Noel Cemetery Site through Basement Archaeology,” 30 Days of Tennessee Archaeology 2015, Day 8. <https://tennesseearchaeologycouncil.wordpress.com/2015/09/08/30-days-of-tennessee-archaeology-2015-day-8>.

⁷ Ibid.

Old Hickory Boulevard.⁸ Now called “Aittafama” in the Forest Hills area, this village site represents how even in disturbed and active areas new discoveries continue.



Source: Curtiss sketch map, April 1878 (Putnam Letterbook IV-C 554; Peabody Museum Collections).

Early Settlement

Henry Norvell (1818-) first shaped the Longview property in the mid-19th century. He was the oldest child of Moses and Hannahretta West Norvell and born into a family that already had influenced Nashville history for two generations.

His father Moses Norvell (1786-1853) was the oldest son of Revolutionary war veteran Lipscomb Norvell, who is buried at City Cemetery. Moses was the editor of the *Nashville Whig* as early as 1812; he and his brother Joseph eventually bought the publication outright in 1816, only to sell it a year later.⁹ Moses Norvell was the City Recorder in 1817-1818; then Joseph held that office from 1819-1823. Moses was a trustee for the new University of Nashville, from 1826-1831.¹⁰ He and Joseph also were partners in a steamboat and warehousing company, Gordon &

⁸ “Aittafama’ is the Site of a 15th-Century Village,” <https://www.cityofforesthills.com/o/cfh/page/aittafama-is-the-site-of-a-15th-century-village>

⁹ “Death of Moses Norvell, Esq.,” *Nashville Republican Banner*, Apr 12, 1853; W. W. Clayton, *History of Davidson County, Tennessee* (Philadelphia, J. W. Lewis & Co., 1880), 199, 238.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 257.

Norvell Co., along with other commercial activities such as Moses Norvell serving as secretary for the Tennessee Marine and Fire Insurance company.¹¹

While Moses Norvell was a civic and commercial leader in early Nashville, his wife, Hannahretta West, also was prominent. She was the daughter of inventor Edward West¹² and the sister of artist William Edward West.¹³

In 1842 Henry Norvell married Laura Jane Sevier (1825-1895), who came from the prominent Sevier family of East Tennessee. Her father was George Washington Sevier, the oldest son of former Governor John Sevier and his second wife, Catherine “Bonny Kate” Sherrill. In 1840, just before the marriage, Laura lived in a large household of 25 persons, including 13 slaves and 11 free white people in Nashville. The portrait of Laura Sevier Norvell now in the collections of the Tennessee State Library and Archives was from, ironically, William Edward West, her husband’s uncle.¹⁴

By the 1850 census, Henry and Laura lived in the Edgefield area of Nashville with three children, Joseph Allen (b.1845), Cornelia (b.1847), and Aduella Bryant (b.1849), and Putnam Sevier, aged 23, a younger brother of Laura Jane. The 1850 slave schedule includes 3 enslaved people also living at the Edgefield residence.¹⁵ The family continued to grow in the 1850s, with Sarah Woods (b. 1851), Moselle (b. 1853), and Laurence Henry (b.1855). Ellen Norvell, the unmarried sister of Henry, also lived in the household.

In about 1859, Henry and Laura Norvell acquired the land on which Longview now sits. It was a private sale, handled legally by John V. Sevier, Laura Jane's younger brother. The property began with three parcels in the McNairy Estate Plan, south of Nashville on the Franklin Turnpike. The first lot appears in relation to a land purchase of a corner lot, Lot No. 9 as divided by the McNairy heirs in 1857. At 13 acres, this lot does not appear in 1860 agricultural records indicating it was likely unimproved and uninhabited.¹⁶ This subdivision also appeared in Book

¹¹ Nashville *Republican*, Sept. 1, 1836.

¹² George W. Ranck, *History of Lexington Kentucky: its early annals and recent progress* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1872), 183-187.

¹³ William Edward West made a name for himself as a painter of miniature portraits in his native Kentucky whilst still in his teens. A benefactor financed his studies in Thomas Sully's studio in Philadelphia. He visited Italy in 1819 and stayed in Europe for the next twenty years. In 1825 he moved to London but financial difficulties forced him to go back to America. Washington Irving, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Lord Byron were among his most celebrated sitters

¹⁴ Henry Norvell’s uncle and aunt, Caleb Cushing (C.C.) and Mary Norvell Walker, were also prominent in Nashville politics and business. Caleb’s first wife was Catharine Carroll, niece of six-time governor William Carroll. C.C. Norvell helped run a revived version of his brothers’ *Nashville Whig* in the 1830s and 1840s that previewed a long career in the newspaper industry. Around 1847 Caleb left for Philadelphia but soon left to work for the New York *Times*, where he wrote financial columns from 1851 to 1874. Aunt Mary Norvell Walker was the mother of William Walker, who gained international fame for his attempts to extend southern slavery into Central America in the 1850s.

¹⁵ Digitized as “Henry Nowell,” 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com. Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, National Archives.

¹⁶ National Archives at Washington, DC; Washington, DC; Nonpopulation Census Schedules for Tennessee, 1850-1880; NAID: 2791276; Record Group Number: 29; Record Group Title: Records of the Bureau of the Census

21 of the Davidson County Register of Deeds, a book now missing but an assembly of primary sources from undigitized Chancery Court documents provides the same plat.¹⁷

The sale of Lot No. 9 did not appear in Register of Deeds books. John V. Sevier handled the legal drafting and did not record the sale publicly until having it entered into the Chancery Court Minutes in April 1869. This report from the Chancery Court Clerk and Master reports on a sale from the November Term of 1858, with a listed transaction date of January 4th, 1859.¹⁸ The recording placed the land in the name of Henry Norvell but with use and profits attached to Laura Jane. Purchases in 1866¹⁹ and then 1868²⁰ by the Norvells from neighboring landowners also involved the services of John V. Sevier and brought the total holdings to 50 acres, the same amount later conveyed to James E. Caldwell in 1879.

Discrepancies about the history of the Norvell family period at the property required extensive research to unravel, due to repeated inconsistencies. Examining the chain of claims required patience to discern the path of source material. Starting in the 1980s, several newspaper

¹⁷ Davidson County Chancery Court Minute Book E, 1857, p.565 shows the original plat for the McNairy Plan between Franklin Pike and granny White Pike (previously Middle Franklin Pike)

¹⁸ Chancery Court book O, page 383. April Term 1869 5th day of April 1869.
Hershaw, Edwards + Co vs. W.H. McNairy, at all

This cause came on further to be heard on this fifth day of April 1869 before the Hon. B. [G?] A. Otis, Chancellor, upon the previous proceedings and decrees, and the report of the Clerk and Master, which is as follows:

To the Chancellor,

Heretofore, at the November Term, 1858, the Clerk + Master reported the sale of a tract of land ordered to be sold in this cause. Known as lot No. 9 of the division of the H.A. McNairy Homeplace, to John V. Sevier, for the benefit of Mrs. Laura J. Norvell. The sale was made privately, and the notes dated January 4th [9th?] 1859, and due in one, two and three years for the sum of Thirty six hundred dollars. The Clerk and Master stated that he was not advised as to how the parties desired the title to be made but that he would report it upon their application. The purchase money having been entirely paid, Mr. Sevier has applied to me to make the report as before stated. Herewith, for the letter of Mr Sevier for the inspection of the Court, from which I report as follows: The party's desire that the deed shall be made to Henry L Norvell as mister, upon the following uses and trusts: Henry L Norvell is to hold the legal title for the sole and separate use of his wife Laura J. Norvell, permitting her to use and enjoy the same, or to collect the rents and profits thereof, which are likewise to belong to her sole and separate use; and upon her written request the trustee is to sell or exchange the same, and the proceeds of the sale or exchange are to be reinvested upon her written directions, upon like trusts + conditions, but the purchaser will not be bound to see to the application of the proceeds.

If not disposed of in either of the above ways upon her death this trust is to end and the title to rest absolutely and without condition in her children to be divided among them equally. If any child of the said Laura J. Norvell shall have died in her lifetime, his or her lineal descendants shall represent their parent and be entitled to his or her portion of the land.

Respectfully submitted

M. B. Howell C+M

Which report being heard and fully understood by the Court, And now being accepted by the court in all things confirmed.

It is therefore ordered, a judged and decreed by the court that the clerk and master make and execute a deed to said lot No. 9, getting a full description of its boundaries from the plans and papers on file in this cause, conveying legal title to the said Henry L Norvell to be held upon the trusts conditions and limitation set forth in said report.

¹⁹ Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 39, p.647. 19 acres conveyed to the Norvells

²⁰ Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 37, p.191. 16 acres conveyed to the Norvells.

articles reference the construction of “Leafy Lot” in the 1840s, with the descriptions later including a reference to a 2000-acre estate gifted to Laura Jane Sevier upon her marriage to Henry Norvell. Many of these references seem to draw on a 1985 newspaper article in relation to the auction at Longview of an extensive collection of furniture and historical material belonging to then owner and steward, Sue Thompson. Written by noted local historian Louise Littleton Davis, the article states: “Laura [Sevier] married Henry Norvell in 1842, and some time before 1845 they had built the four-room brick cottage that became the nucleus of *Longview*.”²¹ Research into the papers of Louise Littleton Davis at the State Archives,²² finds her own research for the article based on a one-page memo, dated 1948, from noted local historian Mary French Caldwell. In this brief statement, Caldwell states: “Laura Sevier...married Henry Norvell in 1842. Soon afterwards, not later than 1845, they built the first home on the site of the present house at Longview. The office, the potato cellar and the spring house were built soon afterwards.”²³ The Davis article on the Longview auction seems to have informed a 1989 article. Under the ownership of Charles and Mary Jane Tharp, Longview hosted a fundraiser for Agape Family Services, and the press release states: “Longview was built around 1845 by Laura Sevier and her husband Henry Norvell.”²⁴ Similarly a 1999 article referencing the purchase by Lipscomb University claims “Longview was originally built as a four-room cottage in the early 1840s.”²⁵ The first mention of a 2000-acre estate seems to appear in a newspaper article in 2004 by local historian and journalist George Zepp.²⁶

In his historical work on the Norvells and the transition from Leafy lot to Longview, Descendent historian John Norvell drew upon some of these articles as secondary sources.²⁷ However, another secondary source from 1909²⁸ made no mention of the 1840s home or the 2000-acre estate. A lengthy and protracted search through primary source evidence does not support the 1840s periodization or the original 2000-acre estate claims.

Just as the history of the Norvell period unfolds relative to the later relationship with the Caldwells and Longview, so too does the investigation into the chain of titles that produced the estate. Where secondary sources seem to build upon each other, references to land transfer provided no indication of a vast 2000-acre estate passed from the Sevier family to Laura Jane Norvell. Necessarily consulting the primary sources required beginning with the final transfer from Laura Jane Sevier Norvell to the new owners James E. Caldwell, trustee for May Winston Caldwell, and working backward.²⁹

²¹ Louise Davis “Longview’ Belongings on Auction Block” *The Tennessean*, October 10, 1985, p.D1.

²² Papers of Louise Littleton Davis, Box 26, Folder 12. TSLA.

²³ Mary French Caldwell “Longview Mansion - A Nashville Landmark” March 18, 1948. Typescript in the Louise Littleton Davis Papers, 1890-199, Microfilm 1710, Box 26, Folder 12, TSLA..

She continues: “The spring house was not only the design of Henry Norvell, but he helped build it. It is of a beautiful Gothic style and is one of the most artistic structures of this type to be found.”

²⁴ “Evening at Longview’ benefits Agape program. *The Tennessean*, October 1, 1989, p. 4-H.

²⁵ Alan Bostick. “Lipscomb converts mansion for arts.” *The Tennessean*, August 21, 1999, p.B1.

²⁶ George Zepp. “4-room cottage became mansion named Longview.” *The Tennessean*, July 7, 2004, p.6B.

²⁷ John E. Norvell. “How Leafy Lot became Longview” *Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy & History*. Volume XXVII, Number 1, Summer 2013. p.3-7

²⁸ Octavia Zollicoffer Bond. “YESTER NASHVILLE NAMES: The Norvell Family.” in *The Nashville American* (1894-1910); Nov 7, 1909.

²⁹ Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 62, p.189. January 1879. 3 Lots.

The Norvells, their Farm, and the Civil War

Construction of the buildings at what the Norvells named as Leafy Lot happened before and during the Civil War. Between 1860 and 1864 an office outbuilding, spring house, smokehouse, and a four-room house were constructed. The grounds had orchards and a garden. The decimation of the land and buildings during the Battle of Nashville turned Leafy Lot into “Hood Waste,” as referenced in newspaper articles and even the 1893 will of Laura Jane Sevier.³⁰

Henry Norvell was a Unionist. Under federal occupation, President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 appointed him “to the position of United States Collector of Internal Revenue, for this Congressional District, in which he continued for six years,”³¹ under the Andrew Johnson administration. His oldest daughter, Cornelia, was Confederate. She “was expelled from the Nichol’s select school for flaunting a small Confederate flag from the school room window, in defiance of a passing troop of blue-coated soldiers.”³² This same 1909 newspaper article claimed that Henry Norvell sent his oldest son, Joseph, then aged 19, to the country estate to instruct one of the enslaved workers there, known as Jack Norvell and “Uncle Jack” to the family, to open the smokehouse for the starving Confederate troops camped at Leafy Lot.³³ The date of this publication, when rhetoric of the Lost Cause was perhaps at its height in Nashville, makes one question this account. If Confederate troops wanted access to the smokehouse, they would not have waited for the son to deliver a key to an enslaved worker to open the door. Jack Norvell, was listed, perhaps, in the 1860 census as a 70 year-old black male at the property.³⁴ The City Cemetery also records a burial for Jack Norvell, “colored aged 70” in 1867.³⁵

The story of Jack Norvell raises important questions about enslaved labor at Leafy Lot farm. The Henry and Laura Norvell family bible at the Tennessee State Library and Archives has a listing of ‘Births’ for the Norvell family, which includes a column of “Coloured People.” These are children of a woman named Celia, who only received mention in this Bible as a mother of family births listed. Primary source evidence for Celia may exist in the 1850 Slave Schedule for Henry Norvell who owned 3 individuals: two males aged 32 and 26, as well as female, listed as “mulatto, aged 26,”³⁶ which would place her birth year around 1823 or 1824 the same as the 37 year old female in the 1860 schedule. Her children appear as such:

Geo. Washington, Celia’s child born July 4, 1845 - Slave
John, Celia’s child was born May 9, 1849 - Slave

³⁰ Wills, Vol 33, 1895-1897, Probate Date 8 Feb 1893, Tennessee Wills and Probate Records, 1779-2008, Ancestry.com.

³¹ “Death of Henry L. Norvell” *Nashville Republican Banner*, Sept. 12, 1874.

³² Octavia Zollicoffer Bond. “YESTER NASHVILLE NAMES: The Norvell Family.” in *Nashville American*, Nov. 7, 1909.

³³ *Ibid.* Bond details the inventory of the smokehouse as “pounds upon pounds of bacon, lard, hams and shoulders, besides 500 pounds of stuffed link sausage.”

³⁴ Eighth Census of the United States 1860, Series Number: M653, Record Group Number 29, National Archives.

³⁵ “City Mortality in March,” *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 5, 1867.

³⁶ Incorrectly Digitized as “Henry Nowell” in 1850 U.S. Federal Census - Slave Schedules, Ancestry.com. Original data: Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, National Archives.

Nancy, Celia's child was born 1 Sept. 1850
 Harry, Celia's child was born Nov. 20, 1851
 Thomas, Celia's child born Friday 25 March 1853

The designation of slave was added at a later date, according to analysis from TSLA.³⁷ Future research may investigate the possibility of other unseen writing or crossed out words. For example, on this page of Births, the words "Colored People" differ in ink and size from the rest of the listings, being added later, and may obscure writing beneath.

Clues to the identity of Celia and her children appear in the 1860 Slave Schedule for Henry Norvell.³⁸ Registered to Henry Norvell, Slave Owner, appear 7 individuals: two males, aged 70 and 19, as well as a female, aged 37 (born 1823), with four children. These four children listed here have gender and ages in 1860 that correspond to birth years given in the family bible: male, aged 15 (George Wasington, born 1845), male aged 11 (John, born 1849), female aged 10 (Nancy, born 1850), and male aged 9 (Harry, born 1851). A corresponding listing for Thomas does not appear. Interestingly, the Slave Schedule is not from District 11, where the property was located, but from District 12 in the western part of Davidson County. Future research is needed about as where the enslaved people of Henry Norvell were, with whom, and doing what in 1860.

Between 1854 and 1861, 5 enslaved individuals associated with Henry Norvell received burial at the City Cemetery in the "Negro Lot 50" and "Lot 200". These names include two unnamed infants in 1861 and three named individuals: John, aged 41, buried in 1854, Patsy, Harry, aged 58, buried in 1861, and Fanney, aged 80, also buried in 1861.³⁹ The stories of these individuals only receive treatment upon death with little to no prior information. Further research may discover new connections and explain their absence from Slave Schedules. Existing evidence indicates they may not have been at the Leafy Lot property, which only occupied 13 acres, being unimproved in 1860, and not growing to the full 50 acres until after the Civil War.

The 1870 census does not list a Celia in the Norvell household at the Leafy Lot property in District 11. As the first census post-Emancipation, with obviously no separate Slave Schedules to consult, the 1870 lists all new individuals, including three presumably formerly

³⁷ John Norvell. "Henry Norvell and Laura Sevier Family Bible Records," *Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy & History*, 27(Summer 2013): 7-11.

³⁸ Eighth Census of the United States 1860; Series Number: M653; Record Group 29, National Archives.

³⁹ City Cemetery Record Books for all enslaved of Norvell, <https://thenashvillecitycemetery.org/interments>.
 4-1847 260 Aug 5, 1847 infant F B City Teething Poplar 50 slave to the estate of J. Norvell
 4-1847 282 Aug 17, 1847 infant M B City Not Known Poplar 50 slave of Mr. Norvell
 4-1847 318 Sep 12, 1847 Larkin 7 M B City Scarlett Fever Poplar 100 slave of J. Norvell, deceased (fees to be paid J. Walker)
 4-1854 6 Jan 5, 1854 John 41 M B Country Cold Negro Ground 400 slave to H. L. Norvell
 4-1858 208 Jul 6, 1858 Patsy 85 F B City Jaundice Negro lot tax slave to Alex Norvell
 5-1861 93 Mar 5, 1861 infant F B City Dropsy Negro lot 50p slave to Henry L. Norvell
 5-1861 125 Apr 3, 1861 Harry 58 M B City Dropsy Negro lot 200p slave to Henry Norvell
 5-1861 215 Jun 22, 1861 Fanney 80 F B City Old Age Negro lot 200p slave to Henry Norvell
 5-1861 221 Jul 2, 1861 infant F B City Spasms Negro lot 50p slave to Henry Norvell
 5-1862 509 Nov 13, 1862 infant F B City Infl of Bowels Negro lot 50p servant to George Norvell

As shown on page 58 as listed in Norvell, *Lt. Lipscomb Norvell*.

enslaved.⁴⁰ Edy Winbourn, Cook, aged 47, would have the birth year of 1823, coincidentally similar to the individual mentioned above. Blount Cox, a common laborer aged 60, and Shadrack Peek, male aged 25 (born 1845 coincidentally similar to Celia's oldest son) also appear. No further census records or newspaper articles have surfaced for Shadrack Peek, indicating the name could have changed. Edy Winbourn, however, does have further records, including a will registered to an Edy Winburn in Davidson County in 1874.⁴¹ That will mentions a son named Henry, a grandson named Andrew, a witness named John Patten, all under the executorship of local African American attorney Jefferson Lytton. Further research into the descendent communities of Celia and Edy may reveal new points of connection or provide further clarification on identity.

Regarding Celia and her offspring, speculative searches on census connections only provide scant clues. For instance, a Celia Rains appears with a son George Davidson, born 1845 (same as Celie's son, George Washington) in the 1880 census.⁴² Later appearing as a widow in the 1895 city directory, George appears as a stonemason in the Bass Street community at the foot of Fort Negley.⁴³ Further research into the descendant communities of Henry Norvell's enslaved and employed servants may clarify potential identities and provide new narratives.

History of Longview House

From the Norvells to the Caldwells, 1870-1879

By 1870,⁴⁴ the Norvells owned and cultivated 50 acres—the size of the property that the Caldwells would acquire by the end of the decade. In 1870 several Norvell children still lived at home: Addie Norvell (age unlisted, Aduela was born in 1849, being 20 or 21 years old), Sallie Norvell (18 years old), Mozetta Norvell [sic- should be Moselle] (16), Lawrence Norvell (14). Three members of the household are labelled as “Black” and represent hired staff: Edy Winbourn (47- Cook), Blount Cox (60 - “Com[mon] Laborer”), and Shadrack Peek (25- “Com[mon] Laborer”).⁴⁵ The farm produced horses, mules, 55 swine, as well as ‘Indian corn,’ and potatoes, both ‘irish’ and sweet. Mary French Caldwell years later reflected on how “there was considerable family discussion as to what proportion of the family funds should be spent for fruit trees and what for roses.”⁴⁶ According to Caldwell, the Norvell rose gardens became the basis for

⁴⁰ District 11, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: M593_1521; Page: 378A, 1870 Federal Census, Ancestry.com. Images reproduced by FamilySearch.

⁴¹ Wills, Vol 22-23, 1871-1874. Tennessee County Court (Davidson County); Probate Place: Davidson, Tennessee Source Information: Ancestry.com. Tennessee, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1779-2008 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015.

⁴² Year: 1880; Census Place: Nashville, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: 1249; Page: 113c; Enumeration District: 041.

⁴³ Ancestry.com. U.S., City Directories, 1822-1995 [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.

⁴⁴ National Archives at Washington, DC; Washington, DC; Nonpopulation Census Schedules for Tennessee, 1850-1880; NAID: 2791276; Record Group Number: 29; Record Group Title: Records of the Bureau of the Census

⁴⁵ Year: 1870; Census Place: District 11, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: M593_1521; Page: 378A

⁴⁶ Mary French Caldwell “Longview Mansion - A Nashville Landmark” March 18, 1948. Typescript in the Louise Littleton Davis Papers, 1890-199, Microfilm 1710, Box 26, Folder 12, TSLA..

May Winston Caldwell's rose garden years later.⁴⁷ Similarly, James E. Caldwell continued the agricultural traditions established by the Norvells.

Henry Norvell died in 1874. After his death, Laura Jane Sevier Norvell, widowed, spent the remainder of her years in Nashville, with a daughter whom she later names executrix of her estate and her sister Eliza M Sevier Donald, maintaining an active civic life. In 1875, the probate Court appointed an administrator for the Henry Norvell estate, with the final transfer of Leafy Lot to the Caldwells in 1879.

The Longview Houses, 1879-1912

In 1878 James Caldwell purchased the Norvell property on credit offering to pay the amount in full in 4 payments. A friend vouched for Caldwell's character and attested to his credit. Renaming the estate Longview, James and his wife Mary Winston, better known as May, moved into the house with two children in 1879 alongside James's mother Matilda and his brother Alex and his wife Margaret Winston Caldwell. A relative of May and Margaret Caldwell, Ellen Winston, also joined the household. She never married and stayed at Longview for the rest of her life.

When the Caldwells bought the property, it included a 4-room brick cottage, kitchen and pantry, a stone spring house, a stone office building and a large smokehouse.⁴⁸



This c. 1873 image shows the brick cottage, and the stone spring house. Longview Collections, Lipscomb University

As soon as the family moved in, work began to largely replace the earlier cottage with a two-story Victorian styled dwelling in the form that architectural historians identify as “gable front and wing.”

⁴⁷ Ibid: “One of the original roses, a delicate pink, whose name has been lost with the passing years, still grows beside the south veranda. It was nursed carefully through the years by May Winston Caldwell, who first came to the home as a young bride in 1879.”

⁴⁸ James Caldwell, *Recollections of a LifeTime*, (Baird-Ward Press, 1923), 114-117.

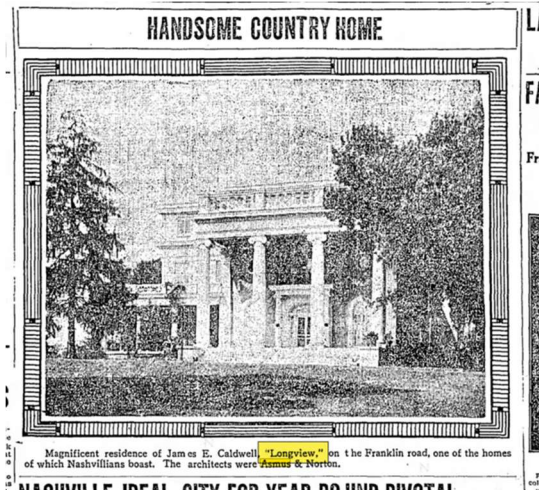


This c. 1980 image shows the Caldwell's new house, with perhaps parts of the earlier brick cottage incorporated into the house but more likely serving as a service wing not evident in this photograph. Longview Collections, Lipscomb University.



This undated image from the Longview Collections shows a large building either attached or immediately adjacent to the house and the building may be the Norvell cottage.

The Caldwell's moved in with two children but had more children every couple of years resulting in a large family of seven boys and three girls. The family grew as James Caldwell's career blossomed as a financier and banker. By 1910-1912, the Caldwell's were ready to proclaim their success by tottly remodeling the existing Longview into an imposing and impressive Classical Revival-styled mansion.



The architects were Asmus & Norton, a successor firm from the earlier Thompson, Asmus, and Norton, which dissolved in 1909. Christian Albert Asmus was one of the city's most prolific architects of the first half of the 20th century, with over 500 buildings attributed to him, whether in the partnership with George W. Thompson or his own partnership with George C. Norton. His major designs from 1910-1912 include the Catholic Cathedral of the Incarnation, the Tulane Hotel, the Davidson County Asylum, and residential designs for Edwin Warner, J. M. Dickinson, and Judge J.M. Anderson.

At Longview, Asmus gave the house a bold new façade, centered on the two-story portico supported by four massive fluted columns topped by an Ionic capital. The interior was just as stunning with a huge Colonial Revival-themed entrance hall, flanked by a formal dining room and music room.



Central entrance hall, Longview





Music Room/Ladies parlor



Dining room from central hall

Significant People Associated with Longview, 1880-1980

James Caldwell (1854-1944), Nashville banker and capitalist

James Erwin Caldwell was born in Memphis in 1854. His father, Alexander S. Caldwell, was a banker with the firm Woods, Yeatman & Company, an important Memphis private bank. He left Memphis soon after his son's birth, moving the family to a cotton plantation in Leflore County, Mississippi. After Alexander's death in 1858, his wife Matilda Watson Caldwell stayed in Mississippi, moving to Oxford in 1866 for James to attend a private school. A year later, she moved the family to Franklin, Tennessee. James Caldwell was accepted in the military academy at the University of Nashville, but he soon left school to enroll in the Bryant & Stratton Business College. In 1871, the First National Bank hired him as a bookkeeper. He soon left that job to enter into the wholesale grocery business and in 1874, at the age of twenty, he found success and profit when he was able to corner the Nashville market in millet seed. With a degree of success and stability in place, he married Annie May Winston (b. 1856) in October 1875. The following year, Caldwell entered into a partnership with W. C. Nelson and established the insurance firm of Nelson & Caldwell. The firm was successful and James Caldwell became a member of the Board of Directors of the 4th National Bank of Nashville, after which he purchased the Norvell property and moved his family there in 1879.⁴⁹

Caldwell remained an insurance man and bank officer for the first decade at Longview. But he also made this best investment—joining a group that established the Cumberland Telephone and Telegraph Company in 1883. It served parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana and Caldwell also served as company president. The investment soon made him a very wealthy man, especially after 1912 when he sold the company to American Telephone & Telegraph Company, and it became known as Southern Bell. Caldwell served as its first chairman of the board. With the wealth from the telephone company, Caldwell also invested in Nashville banks such as the 4th and 1st National Bank of Nashville and became a leading financier.

In the 1890s, the Caldwells became one of Nashville's pre-eminent families. James Caldwell used his success at Cumberland Telephone to become a leading financier and philanthropist. Historian Don H. Doyle described him: "James E. Caldwell, with his dark striped suit, white

⁴⁹ Don Doyle, *Nashville in the New South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 53.

vest, gold-headed ebony cane, and neatly trimmed beard, walked Union Street in gentlemanly splendor. For all his aristocratic bearing, Caldwell was in many ways the banking world's counterpart of the upwardly mobile 'new men' who shaped the city's commercial and industrial sectors."⁵⁰

For the city's social and cultural life, May Winston Caldwell became a prototypical "club woman" of the era, involved with civic, social and cultural groups then forming among the city's upper middle-class. She was part of the "new women" who shaped the city's social and cultural environments. She was a leader with the Daughters of the American Revolution, Ladies' Battlefield Memorial Association, League of Women Voters and the Ladies Hermitage Association. These groups most often met at Longview, where the house and its grounds were also the setting for many lavish parties and receptions that celebrated the "new class" of Nashville leaders while also celebrating values of the Old South.

An 1898 reception at Longview, for instance, featured the house, which "was thrown open for the reception and entertaining of the guests, while the broad verandas and sloping lawn, with its beautiful shade trees, flowers and rustic seats, formed a picture that was unusually attractive and typically Southern." Music also enhanced the event in a Jim Crow South way:

Out on the lawn was an Italian orchestra discoursing music which blended exquisitely with the beauty and charm of the scene. An enjoyable and unique feature of the afternoon was the singing of old plantation melodies by an old family servant, which fairly captivated the guests from a distance, many of them having never before listened to the genuine darky songs rendered in the true old way.⁵¹

May Winston Caldwell was among the first writers to celebrate Nashville's historic domestic architecture, especially that of the antebellum era. In 1911, she published *Historical and Beautiful Country Homes Near Nashville*, a volume that included photographs and brief histories of 58 properties, most of whom had connections or associations with Civil War era Nashville and the Battle of Nashville. The Nashville *Banner* gushed about the book: "She has brought to her task sympathetic insight, poetic understanding and a genuine love for the work."⁵²

May Winston Caldwell was best known for her decades-long effort to establish the Battle of Nashville Peace Monument and to preserve and interpret at least a part of the Confederate lines during the Battle of Nashville. In 1913-1914 she led the effort to organize of the Ladies' Battlefield Association, which initially served as a fund-raising arm for the Nashville Battlefield Association, a group of U.S. and Confederate veterans who wanted Congress to establish a Nashville Civil War park. When that initiative failed to gain support in Washington, D.C., the group turned to more local efforts and the support of Mrs. Caldwell.

In late 1913, the Nashville Battlefield Association and the Nashville Industrial Bureau [similar to a chamber of commerce] empowered Caldwell to create a committee to start the process of raising funds to build a monument and interpret a property located "on the crown of the hill on

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Nashville *Banner*, July 1, 1898.

⁵² "Book of Historic and Lovely Country Homes Near Nashville," Nashville *Banner*, May 6, 1911.

the edge of the battlefield, where [C.S. Gen.] Stephen D. Lee's forces crossed the Franklin Pike, going west to the Granny White Pike. The monument will overlook the battlefields for miles and the Harpeth hills beyond."⁵³ The Nashville *Tennessean* remarked: "Mrs. Caldwell's interest in a battlefield park is well known. For years she has made valuable suggestions concerning such a park" and with her new committee "it is not to be doubted that constant progress toward the desired end will be made."⁵⁴

The Ladies' Battlefield Association held its first fund-raiser at the Maxwell House Hotel in the spring of 1914, but found raising funds to be far more difficult than they first imagined. During World War I, Caldwell's son, Dandridge Caldwell, died in service in 1918, leaving behind a wife and two sons.⁵⁵ In the post-World War I era, when so many Americans sought unity and the divisions of the Civil War era seemed in the distant past, Caldwell and the Ladies' Battlefield Association began to assert that its planned monument would not be a Civil War interpretive object but a memorial that unified, one that celebrated the soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

The result, in working with Italian sculptor Guiseppe Moretti, was the Battle of Nashville Peace Memorial. It was still located along the Confederate battle line on the property acquired in 1913, but the message was different, with a single male youth flanked by galloping horses, with an



Indeed, this photo from the Caldwell scrapbook at TSLA shows that the earlier Nashville Battlefield Association interpretive plaque remained in place while the Peace Memorial was located a few yards to the south.

⁵³ "Battlefield Park Association, " Nashville *Banner*, March 12, 1914.

⁵⁴ "Nashville Gets Battlefield Park," Nashville *Tennessean*, November 29, 1913; also see: "Favors Park Fort Negley," *ibid.*, June 17, 1913.

⁵⁵ John Caldwell, ed, "Dandridge Wentworth Caldwell (1894-1918) - Find a Grave Memorial," Find a Grave, accessed November 15, 2024.



This photo of the Peace Memorial also shows how the monument stood almost on the side of the road, and no parking was provided.

Angel poised on top, casting eyes downward. The dedication ceremony for the monument came on Armistice Day, November 11, 1927. City and state leaders galore spoke, including John Trotwood Moore, Sen. Luke Lea, and Governor Henry Horton. May Caldwell spoke for the Ladies' Battlefield Association, calling it "one of the happiest days of my life."⁵⁶ Rarely did she have a more public stage than that November day.



May Winston Caldwell speaks at Peace Memorial dedication, November 11, 1927. Note James E. Caldwell, seated lower right. Caldwell scrapbook, TSLA

Two of the Caldwell's children, Elsie (c. 1877) and Rogers (b. 1890), also had a lasting impact on Nashville. Their second child, Letitia "Elsie" Caldwell was born in 1877 and came to

⁵⁶ "Peace Shaft Is Dedicated," *Nashville Banner*, November 12, 1927.

Longview as an infant. By 20 years old, Elsie was “popular,” lauded for her fashions, and always seemed to be playing in a whist club.⁵⁷ Ahead of Valentines day in 1898, the *Tennessean* printed her portrait under the title, “Miss Elsie Caldwell, An Unrivaled Beauty of the Younger Set.” The picture shows a serious-faced young woman gazing off into some woefully boring distance. She looks well-trimmed and high-buttoned while balancing a massive plume of feathers atop her Gibson-style updo. Just below her and within frame, is a love poem called “His Valentine,” reproduced from the *Ladies Home Journal*: “I send my heart in rhyme to you, with love in every line. And should it come in time to you to be your Valentine.”⁵⁸ Elsie Caldwell with her friend Annie Dallas were often covered in the society pages of the local newspapers, where they were often found serving refreshments at receptions, playing card games, throwing parties, and attending dinners together.⁵⁹ Before their marriages (Elsie in 1901, and Annie in 1902) Elsie was captured in *The Tennessean* at a “very cosy little dinner party at the Country Club followed by a box party at the Vendome. Those in the party were Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Fogg, Guilford Dudley and Miss Elsie Caldwell...” An up and coming financier, Guilford Dudley would go on to marry Annie Dallas, and the Dudley and Caldwell families would remain friends throughout their lives.⁶⁰

Like her mother, Elsie was a member of the Tennessee Equal Suffrage Association. The Caldwells attended the first Tennessee Equal Suffrage convention ever held in Nashville.⁶¹ By 1914 Elsie and her husband Daniel Buntin were living in Chicago—albeit they may have only lived there part-time—so that could have stunted her involvement in the Tennessee suffrage movement.⁶² She and Daniel Buntin traveled throughout the country as he struck real estate deals and helped build railroads. In the early 1920s, the Buntins rented a house in Laramie, Wyoming but Daniel Buntin was growing ill.⁶³ It seems plausible that Daniel suffered from tuberculosis, and the Buntins may have traveled west for drier, more hospitable air. This illness would not be the only time this kind of tragedy touched the Caldwells; Margaret Caldwell’s husband died of tuberculosis in a Colorado sanitarium.⁶⁴ In late 1921-early 1922 the Buntins were back in Nashville, where Daniel Buntin died on January 19, 1922 of a self-inflicted gunshot.⁶⁵ Guilford Dudley the husband of Anne Dallas Dudley, was a pallbearer at her husband’s funeral, thus demonstrating their family’s inseverable ties.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ “Society,” *The Tennessean*, November 27, 1897.

⁵⁸ “Miss Elsie Caldwell, An Unrivaled Beauty of the Younger Set,” *The Tennessean*, February 6, 1898.

⁵⁹ “Frank King Clark,” *The Tennessean*, January 7, 1900, “Fortnightly Chafing Dish,” *The Tennessean*, January 7, 1900 “Kensington Circle Party” *The Tennessean*, May 26, 1901.

⁶⁰ “Dinner at the Country Club,” *The Tennessean*, January 10, 1900.

⁶¹ “Equal Suffragists of State Assemble Hermitage Today” *Nashville Tennessean*, January 10, 1912.

⁶² U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Nashville Ward 22, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T624_1496; Page: 4b; Enumeration District: 0075. U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 Supplemental Federal Census, Chicago Precinct 1, Illinois, Enumeration District 906.

⁶³ U. S. Census Bureau; 1920; Census Place: Laramie, Albany, Wyoming; Roll: T625_2025; Page: 7B; Enumeration District: 2.

⁶⁴ “The Following Resolutions—Were adopted by Board of Directors Of the Chamber of Commerce at a Meeting Held June 2,” *Nashville Banner*, June 3, 1905.

⁶⁵ “Bad Health Causes Tragic Death Here of Daniel Buntin: Affected with incurable malady, realtor seeks relief from sufferings” *The Tennessean*, January 19, 1922.

⁶⁶ “Funeral Today for Daniel C. Buntin” *The Tennessean*, Jan 21, 1922.

After her husband's death, Elsie Buntin became a fixture at Longview, and began to assume some of the social and cultural leadership roles once held by her mother.

Rogers Clark Caldwell, like his father, was a significant early 20th century Nashville financier. In 1908 he entered Vanderbilt University but left after two years to run an insurance business that his father owned since James E. Caldwell's attention was very much on the merger that created Southern Bell. Rogers Caldwell in 1917 established Caldwell and Company and specialized in surety bonds for county and municipal construction projects. At first his company struggled to compete with federal Liberty Bonds issued to support World War I, but after the war Caldwell and Company was well positioned to sell and service municipal bond offerings from southern cities and communities who were building new public infrastructure—highways, bridges, and schools--during the late Progressive era. In 1919, to help finance these investments, Caldwell established the Bank of Tennessee. For the 1920s his businesses appeared successful; Caldwell in 1927 even built his own country estate, modeled after the Hermitage so admired by his mother and aunt, called Brentwood Hall, designed by the up-and-coming Nashville architect Russell Hart. But Caldwell actually ran a financially loose ship, often operating with little to no cash reserves. When the stock market crashed in October 1929, his financial empire began to crumble. In November 1930 the Bank of Tennessee failed, taking not only the funds of Caldwell and his friends but also funds of the State of Tennessee. From that point on, state government attempted to recoup some of its losses by seizing various Caldwell properties. It eventually secured Brentwood Hall and transformed the country estate into the headquarters of the Tennessee Department of Agriculture in 1957-1958.⁶⁷

Margaret Winston Caldwell

Also strongly associated with Longview is Margaret "Maggie" Winston Caldwell (1862-1933). She was the wife of Alexander S. Caldwell (1857-1905), who was the brother of James E. Caldwell, and she was the sister of May Winston Caldwell. After Maggie and Alex's marriage they lived for a period in the first Longview house. In 1905 Alexander Caldwell, a loan agent at Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance, died of tuberculosis in a sanitarium in Denver, Colorado. He was remembered fondly in multiple obituaries which celebrated his life and character."⁶⁸ Maggie never remarried and often spend time with her sister May Winston Caldwell at Longview.

Though born into a life of privilege Margaret Winston Caldwell was a poet, a renowned gardener, author, activist, educator, magazine founder, and social leader. She was an organizing regent of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as holding important positions in the Review Club, and the Ladies Hermitage Association. She was was a leader in the National Society of Colonial Dames, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Polk Memorial Association, Ladies Heritage Association, and the Tennessee Conference of Social Workers. The meetings of the LHA, DAR, and Colonial Dames often took place at Longview.

⁶⁷ Fred Colvin, "Rogers Clark Caldwell," *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, online edition.

⁶⁸ "The Following Resolutions--Were adopted by Board of Directors Of the Chamber of Commerce at a Meeting Held June 2," *Nashville Banner*, June 3, 1905.

After her husband's death, Maggie Caldwell took on larger civic roles. In 1910-1911 she was president of the women's board of the Tennessee State Fair. She was a significant leader in the Tennessee Federation of Women's Clubs, beginning as chair for legislation from 1913-1917. She was president from 1917-1919.

She gained further recognition from her tireless public service during World War I. Three of her sons had managed the Nashville Buick Company franchise but all joined the armed forces. Maggie Winston then served as manager of the company for the duration of the war. She was believed to be the first woman automobile dealer in the nation. More importantly, she was the Tennessee president of the Women's Land Army, a national effort to place urban women into farm work and food production, along with serving as state chair of the food production committee of the Council of National Defense. She was assistant chair of home economics in the State Food Administration and chair of Nashville's War Savings and Thrift Stamps initiative.⁶⁹ After the war she was president of the Nashville Press & Authors Club in 1920-1921. But she took the most pride in her advocacy for the State Vocational School for Girls at Tullahoma.⁷⁰

Mary and Margaret were avid gardeners and kept up with trends in homes and gardens. In 1914, Margaret published an extensive book on gardening practice, titled *Your Garden and Mine*, which became a popular guide for home gardening in the early 20th century South. Longview's garden was the basis for this book and pictures of the garden are featured throughout. In 1915 Louise Shelton's *Beautiful Gardens in America* also featured the Longview gardens. Margaret Caldwell was also known for her poetry.⁷¹ She was one of the founders and a frequent contributor to *Southern Women's Magazine* and wrote poetry throughout her life. In a fitting tribute at Longview, her own poem "My Garden" was recited at her funeral.⁷²

"Let me tell you of my garden
 It is everything to me—
 In sun bright or moon light,
 Or snow on cedar tree.
 There are voices in my garden,
 I never walk alone;
 They whisper to me tenderly
 Of days forever flown.
 It is my understanding
 Of Life's great mystery,
 Like a tendril green and clinging
 It binds me to humanity.
 Through it my faith is strengthened
 For in it God's plan I see—
 Like, Death, the Resurrection,

⁶⁹ John T. Moore, "Mrs. Margaret Winston Caldwell," *Tennessee: The Volunteer State*, Vol. 4(1923): 830-831.

⁷⁰ "Correction Academy Part of city's history," *Tullahoma News*, September 17, 2017.

⁷¹ "Free Verse And Exponents Discussed: Press and Authors Study Sandburg and His Coming," *The Tennessean*, March 10, 1921.

⁷² "Tires Today for Mrs. Alex Caldwell: Operation Fatal to Prominent Leader in Civic, Social, and Literary Circles," *Nashville Banner*, June 26, 1933.

And Immortality.⁷³

Domestic Servants at Longview

After James E. Caldwell amassed his fortune, he could afford hired help and the new 1910 mansion at Longview with its third floor bedrooms and servant staircases was designed for a large number of house servants. During the decades at Longview, the Caldwells employed a revolving door of domestic servants, many of whom are nearly impossible to find in the historic record, and if they do appear they, or their families, have yet to show up in the historic record before the Civil War. Luckily, we do have some of their names and a few details about their lives.

In 1880, two domestic servants were recorded at Longview. A mixed race 50-year-old woman named Louisia Obie and 71-year-old Hannibale Gale, a black farm laborer. Hannibale Gale was born in Tennessee, but scrawled under “Birthplace of Father” and “Birthplace of Mother” is the word “Africa.” If Mr. Gale was born around 1809, that means he was born just after the 1808 “Act Prohibiting the Importation of Slaves.” We cannot be sure if his parents were some of the last legally trafficked enslaved people to the United States, but we can be almost certain that he and his parents were once enslaved. It brings up questions of just how culturally similar to the antebellum period the South was, and what Mr. Gale’s life might have been like.⁷⁴

By the year 1900, fourteen people lived on the property, including two live-in domestic servants. These two women were named Martha Thomas and Maggie Dabney. Martha Thomas was a twenty-five-year old black woman. Her occupation was listed as “House Girl.” She was married, which makes uncovering her maiden name (and her past) extremely difficult. The census also tells us that she could read and write and that she had one child.⁷⁵ By 1920 Ms. Thomas had been widowed, she had moved away from Longview and was operating independently as a laundress out of her home on Edgehill Avenue in Nashville. At the time of the 1920 census, she lived with her three daughters and three grandchildren.⁷⁶

Maggie Dabney was a cook. Like Martha, she could read, write, and she was married. At 30 years old she was working for the Caldwells, but by 1910 she was working as a laundress out of her own home where she lived with her husband, elevator operator John Dabney.⁷⁷ By 1920, however, Mrs. Maggie Dabney was back to working with a private family, but living with her husband on Thirteenth Avenue in Nashville.⁷⁸

⁷³ “Poem Written By Mrs. Alex Caldwell,” *The Tennessean*, July 2, 1933, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/167847743/?match=1&terms=Mrs.%20Alex%20Caldwell>.

⁷⁴ “The Slave Trade.” National Archives and Records Administration. Accessed November 21, 2024.

⁷⁵ U.S. Census Bureau; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Civil District 10, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: 1566; Page: 9; Enumeration District: 0125.

⁷⁶ U.S. Census Bureau; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Nashville Ward 22, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T625_1735; Page: 4B; Enumeration District: 85.

⁷⁷ U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Nashville Ward 22, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T624_1496; Page: 4b; Enumeration District: 0075.

⁷⁸ U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Nashville Ward 22, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T625_1735; Page: 5A; Enumeration District: 85; Enumeration District: 0075.

As the expanded Longview Mansion was under construction, the Caldwells had eight non-family members living on the property in 1910. Each of these people either worked at Longview, or they were related to somebody who worked there. There were three “servants” living at Longview in 1910. Thirty-year-old Gertrude Terry was born around 1880; she was black and could both read and write. She and her parents were all born in Tennessee and she was married, making any additional genealogy quite difficult. Brownlow William was born around 1886, making him approximately 24 years old at the time of the census. Like Terry, he was black, could read and write, and was married and he and his family were born in Tennessee. Interestingly enough, his occupation is further explained as being a “driver” for the Caldwells.⁷⁹ It is likely that his father was Shannon Williams, married to Ella Williams. Mr. and Mrs. Williams were two African American people who could not read nor write. Shannon was a Farm Laborer who rented a property. He does not show up in any census records prior to 1870. Since we know he was born in the United States before the Civil War, it is also likely Shannon was once enslaved.⁸⁰ Louisa Philip was a cook for the Caldwells. She was 42-year-old single woman from Tennessee.

A man whose name may be Robert Cupose also worked on the property. He was a single 21-year-old black man who could read and write, and he and his family were born in Tennessee. There was one white worker in the 1910 census: 56-year-old Swiss gardener named Samuel Fehrig. He lived on the property with his wife Elsie, who has no listed occupation, and their two children 16-year-old Otto and 8-year-old Christian. Elsie immigrated to the United States in 1890 and Samuel right behind her in 1892. Both of their immigration statuses list them as “alien,” and their children were born in Tennessee.⁸¹

The 1920 census illuminates Longview’s shift from lush garden oasis to working farm. After the death of Dandridge Caldwell in World War I, his wife Elizabeth and their children moved to Longview. Also living on the property was the Holford family, headed by Oscar Holford, a black 30-year-old farm laborer married to 27-year-old Elizabeth. They had one child, Oscar Jr. A 55-year old black man named Gerry Perry was also on the property, as was the Caruthers family. Robert Caruthers, another farm laborer, lived on premises with his wife Mary and their sons George, Henry, Samuel and daughter Sarah.⁸²

One particularly notable figure that appears around this time is Ora Taylor, the cook at Longview for approximately fifty years. Ora Taylor was at Longview in city directories as early as 1915.⁸³ Notably, in the 1920 census a woman named Ora Hailey appeared on site. Ora Hailey was 45 years old, single, and born in Tennessee. It could be a coincidence, there may have been

⁷⁹ U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Civil District 7, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T624_1496; Page: 16b; Enumeration District: 0075.

⁸⁰ U.S. Census Bureau; 1900 U.S. Federal Census, Civil District 11, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: 1566; Page: 3; Enumeration District: 0126.

⁸¹ U.S. Census Bureau; 1910 U.S. Federal Census, Civil District 7, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T624_1496; Page: 16b; Enumeration District: 0075.

⁸² U.S. Census Bureau; 1920 U.S. Federal Census, Civil District 7, Davidson, Tennessee; Roll: T624_1496; Page: 16b; Enumeration District: 0075.

⁸³ *Marshall-Bruce-Polk Company’s Nashville City Directory*, (Nashville, TN: Ambrose Printing Company, 1922), p. 800.

two Oras at Longview at the time, or it could be an error.⁸⁴ When Ora Taylor does appear in the historic record, her age and marital status are inconsistent. If Ora Taylor and Ora Hailey were the same person, she would have aged only two years between 1920 and 1930.⁸⁵ However, Ora Taylor, who shows up as 58 years old in 1940 differs from the Ora Taylor in the 1930 census in that she is uniquely listed as a widow. In 1930 she was single, though her name did not change. Again, any of these instances could be errors in the record.⁸⁶

We know for certain that Ora Taylor was a black domestic who worked for the Caldwell's from at least 1915 to her retirement in 1950. James Caldwell's grandson Wentworth Caldwell wrote in 1986 that his grandfather was "very particular about his meals...[Ora Taylor] lived on the place and she fed him three meals a day, seven days a week." Ms. Taylor's work must have been considerable, as Caldwell, "only [ate] daily products from his own cows—pasteurization of commercial milk did something harmful to it...and all the meat and most of the vegetables he ate were produced on the farm. He wouldn't eat anything out of a can."⁸⁷ Ms. Taylor was so significant in their lives and the lives of their friends that her retirement announcement made the society column.⁸⁸ "She's one of the most remarkable women I've ever known," remarked Charley Caldwell, "And whatta cook." He then recalled that when Henry Ford and Thomas Edison visited Nashville after World War I they had dinner at Longview. "When [the] meal was finished, Ford [and] Edison walked into kitchen [and] complimented Ora Taylor: 'Never before have we been served with such a deliciously prepared dinner.'"⁸⁹

Longview After the Caldwell's

May Winston Caldwell passed away at Longview in 1939. After May's death, the household included James Caldwell as head of household, with his son Charles, Charles' daughter Edith, and Anne Nichols Caldwell (widow of James E. Caldwell, Jr. and mother of Wentworth Caldwell quoted above), all of whom had been living at Longview since the 1920s. James Caldwell passed away, aged 90 in September of 1944, at his residence after a final active phase when he "spent some time daily at the James E. Caldwell and Company offices and devoted considerable attention to the management of his large farm on Franklin Pike."⁹⁰ Otherwise, the final years of James Caldwell consisted of a quiet bucolic life nourished by the agricultural output from the farm at Longview. Wentworth Caldwell⁹¹ remembered at Longview, his grandfather, patriarch James Caldwell "always ate all of his meals at home. He would only eat dairy products from his own cows...and all the meat and most of the vegetables he ate were produced on the farm."⁹²

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ U.S. Census Bureau; 1930 U.S. Federal Census, District 7, Davidson, Tennessee; Page: 18A; Enumeration District.

⁸⁶ U.S. Census Bureau; 1940 U.S. Federal Census, *Davidson, Tennessee*; Roll: *m-t0627-03885*; Page: 33B; Enumeration District: 19-26B.

⁸⁷ John Edgerton, "Wentworth Caldwell's Life of Regularity Worked," *The Tennessean*, October 19th, 1986, 134.

⁸⁸ "Top O The Mornin'," *The Tennessean*, February 17, 1950, 11.

⁸⁹ "Top O The Mornin'," *The Tennessean*, January 26, 1950, 11.

⁹⁰ "Caldwell Rites This Afternoon." *The Tennessean*, September 27, 1944, 1.

⁹¹ James Wentworth was the son of James E. Caldwell Jr and his widowed mother Anne Nichols, who became a longtime Longview resident until the passing of James Caldwell.

⁹² John Egerton. "Wentworth's life of regularity worked." *The Tennessean*, Sunday, October 19, 1986, 134.

Following the death of James Caldwell in 1944, his daughter Elsie became head of household and resided there until 1950 when she sold the property. The 1950 census shows the widowed Elsie Buntin (72 years old) as head, with her brother Charles W. Caldwell (70) continuing to live there, along with her niece Edith Caldwell (36, never married, Charles' daughter), and a 'hired hand' Charles Darden (28) living on site.⁹³

By 1950 the future of Longview seemed uncertain, with ongoing legal matters creating financial pressure, and mounting maintenance needs. The first mention of a religious and academic connection occurred in 1949 as a potential site for a new campus for Free Will Baptist college: "L.C. Johnson, president of the college...said last night the three-story white stucco building and its 50 acres of ground are among places under consideration."⁹⁴ However, the next meeting of their trustees decided against the purchase, with the school president Johnson providing some ambiguousness to the process: "Longview, now owned by Mrs. Dan Buntin, 'was considered, but no offer was made, and I suppose that we will not buy it.'"⁹⁵

That same year saw the sale of other James Caldwell-associated estate properties including some lands previously belonging to the Longview farm. For instance, in June, businessman John Cheek purchased some downtown property around the Arcade from the Caldwell estate.⁹⁶ Meanwhile, the estate continued to sell off some of the original acreage of the Longview bequest to daughter Elsie. A legal announcement in September of 1949 references a Chancery Court opinion to allow "the sale of 15 acres of land which is a part of the James E. Caldwell estate on Franklin Road"⁹⁷ while also referencing a previous authorization of the sale of 22 acres to the same company. That company, Homesites, Inc, owned by Marvin K. Barry then developed the areas around the mansion into the Pleasant Valley Estates subdivision, off Franklin Rd between Woodmont Blvd and Caldwell Lane. The sale of Longview itself occurred in early 1950 "for the establishment of a new Church of Christ congregation,"⁹⁸ and referenced that the sale included three of the final six acres of land related to the previous farm site, with an option for the remaining three, occurring later. As such, the house itself became a church, with downstairs used as an auditorium and the upstairs for Sunday schools and offices. The combination of several previous congregations, the new Franklin Road Church of Christ named Harris J. Dark as minister. Dark, "a professor of mathematics at David Lipscomb College"⁹⁹ had been connected to the academic institution since 1942 and was still serving as minister when they erected the

Wentworth also remarks that "There was a cook named Ora Taylor who lived on the place and she fed him three meals a day, seven days a week."

⁹³ 1950 Census, United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Seventeenth Census of the United States, 1950. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1950.

⁹⁴ "Historic Caldwell Home May Become Bible College," *The Tennessean*, March 20, 1949, 12-A.

⁹⁵ "College Decides Not to Buy Home" *The Tennessean* June 3, 1949.

⁹⁶ "John Cheek to Buy City Business Block" *The Tennessean* June 29, 1949.

⁹⁷ "Sale Approval Asked for Caldwell Acres" *The Tennessean* September 24, 1949, 2.

⁹⁸ "Church of Christ Group Buys Historic Caldwell Home" *The Tennessean* February 7, 1950, 1.

The new congregation was composed of membership from three other churches: Lischey Avenue Church of Christ, run by A.F. McDonald, Hillsboro Church of Christ, run by W.L. Robertson, and Lawrence Avenue Church of Christ, run by Claude Dunn Jr.

⁹⁹ "Harris Dark heads Franklin Rd. Church" *The Tennessean* June 27, 1950, 12.

new church closer to Franklin Road on the site.¹⁰⁰

Afterwards, the church conveyed the property to N.C. Dunn, Jr and his wife Ruth, who then subdivided the land further for redevelopment into Pleasant Valley Estates.¹⁰¹ In 1958, the Dunns sold Lots No. 2, 3, and 4 on the Plan of Pleasant Valley estates to Nicholas DePalma and his wife, Ruth Arlene DePalma.¹⁰² Nicholas DePalma died in 1976.

In 1979, the widowed Ruth Alrene DePalma conveyed a portion of the previous property to the preservation-minded John Luttrell Thompson and his wife Sue Thompson, who performed as Suza Belle. They moved into Longview in 1981 and Johnny Thompson died just a few years later, leaving Sue unable to maintain the property. She held a public auction in 1985, which revived interest in the historic house. A newspaper article by local historian Louise Littleton Davis in the daily paper detailed the auction items from furniture to portraits.¹⁰³ In the article Sue Thompson expressed her desire to see the house restored:

I am selling 80% of all the antiques I own - things I have traveled the country to collect for a quarter century- because the house is seriously in need of repair, and I hope to make enough money from the sale to restore it as a place of historic and cultural value to this whole area.

In 1986, Williamson County Bank became the owner, and then within a month conveyed the property to Charles Tharp and his wife Mary Jane. In 1989, they held a fundraiser for Agape Family Services at the house, receiving press attention, which noted “[Longview] is presently owned by Charles and Mary Jane Tharp, who have recently restored the mansion.”¹⁰⁴

In 1994, Cofer’s Free Will Baptist Church was listed as the owners of the property. Then in 1997, GMAC became the owner, as a result of a defaulted mortgage on a conventional loan connected to Charles Tharp. Within a few months, Woodmont Hills Church of Christ purchased the property from GMAC and then conveyed it in 1998 to David Lipscomb University,¹⁰⁵ who has now maintained the property for over two decades. Lipscomb is now the second-longest running owner of the property after the Caldwells.

¹⁰⁰ “Architect’s Sketch of New Church: Church Plans \$225,000 Plant” *The Tennessean* February 29, 1956, 11. “Construction is expected to be completed by the spring of 1957.”

¹⁰¹ Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 2743, page 565

¹⁰² Davidson County Register of Deeds, Book 2747, page 381

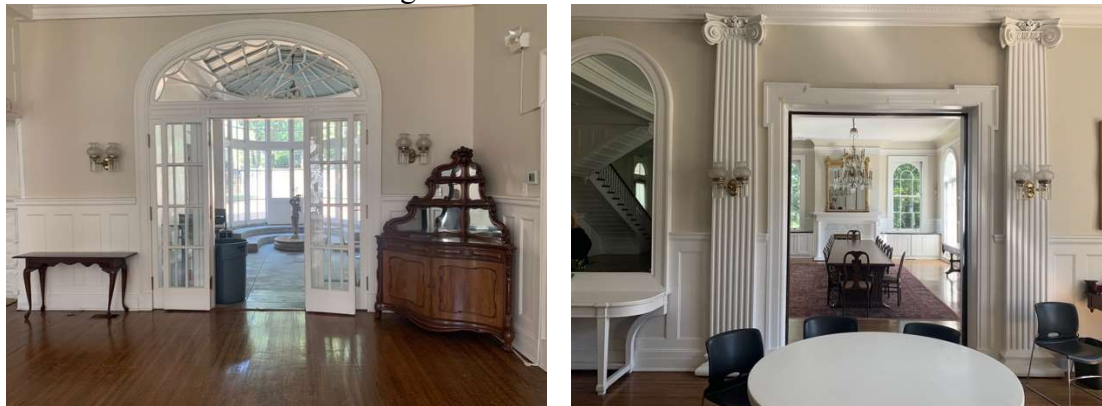
¹⁰³ Louise Davis. “‘Longview’ Belongings on Auction Block,” *The Tennessean*, Thursday, October 10, 1985

¹⁰⁴ “‘Evening at Longview’ benefits Agape program,” *The Tennessean*, Sunday Oct 1 1989, p. 4-H.

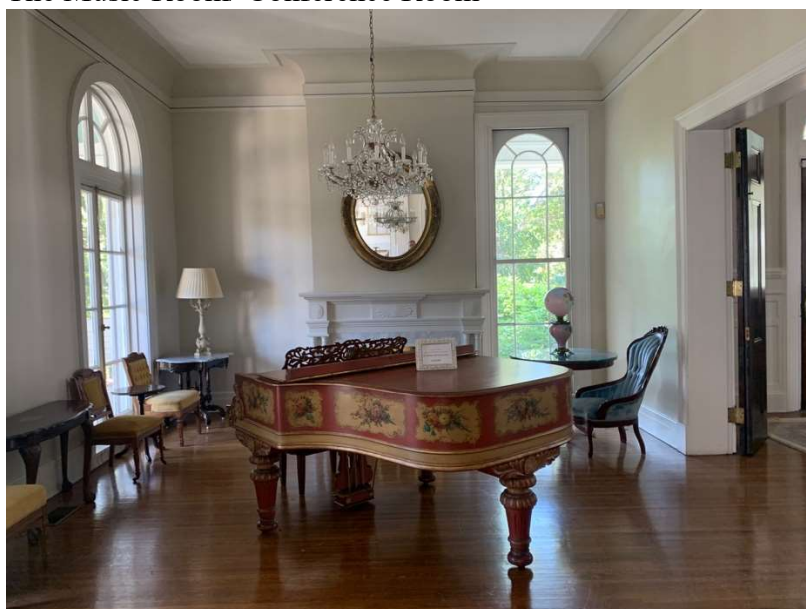
¹⁰⁵ Alan Bostick. “Lipscomb converts mansion for arts.” *The Tennessean*, Aug 21, 1999, p. B1.

The Great Hall is suitable as a reception area and primary interpretive area, especially with the extension of the hallway into the solarium, the dining room, and the music room, now identified as a conference room.

Solarium and entrance to dining room from the Great Hall



The Music Room/ Conference Room



All three rooms are interconnected and were used as the setting for the many receptions and meetings held at Longview during the Caldwells' residency. The Music/Conference Room is a smaller space that provides an extension to the Great Hall. The Dining Room is also perfectly sized for use as a seminar room or small meeting area.

The library is now arranged as a seminar room for 10-12 participants. It is connected to the solarium and a hallway is between the library and dining room. If Lipscomb wanted to devote one room to telling the story of Longview, this space is perhaps the best for a combination of exhibit cases and either wall-mounted or pop-up exhibit panels that would convey the history of the property to visitors and students no matter the event or use of the Great Hall and Dining

Room. It already has an important portrait of Caldwell and key pieces of furniture important to the family history or with a decorative arts significance could be placed in this room.



Library, now a seminar room



Currently the office space on the first floor, with access to the exterior and access to both the library and solarium, is used as space for the building's program administrator. It is an excellent space to keep for administrative/ non-public use.

The recently renovated kitchen area allows for caterers or university food services to prepare food for various gatherings on the property. Doors allow for this working space of the house to be separated from public gatherings in the Great Hall, Dining Room, Music Room, and Library.



Telling the Stories of Longview

We recommend that Longview's public interpretation be focused on the exterior grounds, with interpretive markers, and in the public first floor spaces of the mansion. By placing interpretation both outside and inside the house, visitors and students would have an opportunity to learn about the property and its past residents.

Interpretive Themes for Exterior Markers

1. Native American associations with the property and prehistory
2. The Norvell family and its association to the property
3. The enslaved at the Norvell property, c. 1850-1865
4. Civil War associations and Battle of Nashville



An example of a National Park Service exterior interpretive marker in relation to a historic house at Pea Ridge National Battlefield in Arkansas.

The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, based at the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation, provides 50/50 funding for interpretive markers related to the Civil War era, thus it could provide funding for themes 2,3, and 4.

Interpretive themes for interior exhibit panels

Museum-quality interpretive panels on the first floor could address eight themes, and the panels may be either wall mounted or on pop-up exhibit stands:

1. Architecture of Longview and its architect, C.A. Asmus

Longview is an important statement of Classical Revival style in Nashville's domestic architecture. C.A. Asmus is one of the city's most important 20th century architects.

2. Historical Roots: From Prehistory to the Civil War

The deeper history of the land and Indigenous occupation will be compelling to many visitors and students as well the history of the Norvells and their association with Nashville's Civil War stories

3. The Caldwell: James E. Caldwell
One of the city's most important Gilded Age financiers
4. The Caldwell: May Winston Caldwell
A significant leader of heritage and historic preservation efforts. The story of the Battle of Nashville Peace Memorial
5. The Caldwell: Maggie Winston Caldwell
One of the most prominent Tennessee women of the World War I era and a public service model
6. The Caldwell Children: Elsie Caldwell Buntin and Rogers Caldwell
One brought the Caldwell financial empire to ruin; the other kept the property together until the 1950s
7. The many families of Longview: domestic labor, 1879-1950
8. Longview, from Home to University, 1950-1998



Rutherford County Visitor Center



Townsend Cultural Center, Winchester

Wall panels can be large and colorful while pop-up panels can be placed and moved with ease. These four examples were produced by MTSU Center for Historic Preservation.

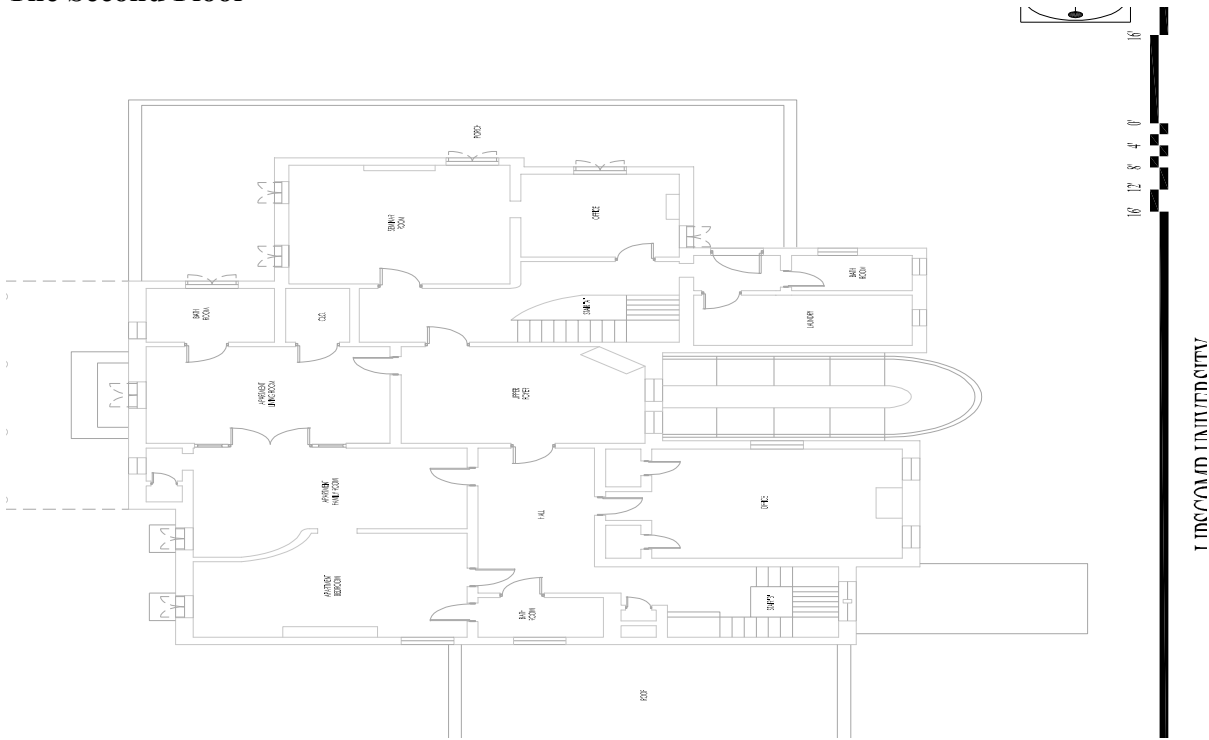


Pop-Up Panels for Nashville Steam Engine Exhibit

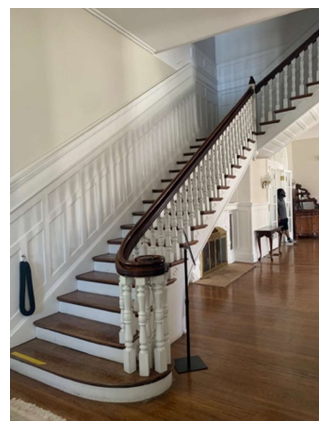
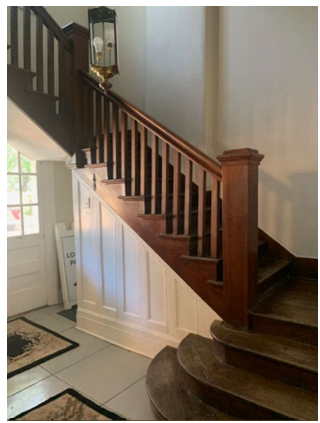


Wall panels and exhibit cases, Hiwassee River Center

The Second Floor



As the floor plan notes, these spaces recently have been used as resident spaces and for offices, but the lack of ADA-compliant access to the second and third floors limits their future uses. There is an early 20th century elevator in place at Longview, located in what was the kitchen and servant’s area of the first floor, adjacent to the c. 1910 staircase for servants to access the second and third floors. On the opposite site of the building is a staircase from the Victorian period, c. 1880, that was for family and guest use and has remained in use as the primary way to access the second floor.



Existing access to the second and third floors is limited. The small elevator only reaches the second floor. Classroom and offices could be established on that level if the elevator can be used by a wheelchair.

Several rooms on the second floor need repair due to water damage to the exterior of the building as a result of clogged and damaged drains and needed roof repairs.



Water seeping into the walls and roofs due to damaged drainage system has caused issues on the interior.



Additional examples of water damage to the exterior. The drainage system needs to be checked and broken/missing pipes replaced. Consideration also should be given to installing “French drains” that will carry water away from the house rather than just dumping it on a hard, typically concrete surface that is adjacent to the foundation.

The second floor has been used in recent years as apartment spaces, as noted in the floor plan, but also as meeting rooms and offices. Moving forward, conversion of the spaces into faculty and staff offices, along with retaining the existing seminar room as noted in the floor plan, would provide appropriate space for a liberal arts or community outreach program.



Existing second floor seminar room



Possible meeting space in former apt. living room



Current office/ meeting space



Upper foyer

The second floor has several attractive spaces that could be converted into offices and instructional spaces. The really limitation is the lack of an ADA accessible elevator.

Third Floor

The third floor is a large open space surrounded on one side by small bedrooms, designed initially for live-in domestic labor. Due to a lack of access outside of a staircase, the space today is best suited for storage; indeed, it is being used for that purpose now. The installation of an elevator, however, would allow for the open area to become a large meeting room, the largest such space in the building.



Small bedroom on third floor. Future use is made difficult due to a step down from the main floor of this level into the room. Perhaps best suited for historic object and/or furnishing storage.



Unfinished attic space on third floor now holds seasonal decorations but artwork and artifacts that are historically significant. Recommend using the attic space for seasonal storage and for non-historic objects and to use the small bedrooms as a historic object storage area.

Other considerations for new uses

Education/Meeting Spaces: Longview could be used for various community-focused initiatives, and adult education offerings.

Symposiums on Nashville's Civil War era, its Gilded Age, and Women's History could be hosted at Longview, given its significant associations with these themes. Consider partnering with local groups such as Metro Nashville Historical Commission, the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area, Historic Nashville, Inc., and local/regional universities.

Library Programming could involve students, faculty and community members, with the environment at Longview enhancing curiosity and engagement on the topic and the property.

Grant Opportunities

Federal Historic Preservation Funding through the Tennessee Historical Commission

Each year, the Tennessee Historical Commission distributes *matching* federal historic preservation funding to applicants who own properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places and meet other criteria. This grant may reimburse up to 60% of approved costs of projects that have a public benefit. The remaining 40% must be provided by the grantee. Selection focuses on projects with public benefits and public use. For more information, follow this link: <https://www.tn.gov/historicalcommission/federal-programs/preservation-grants.html>.

Partnership with the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area

The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (a program of the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University) provides staff and student expertise to support interpretive and educational initiatives across the state. Through our Professional Services and Outreach program, the TCWNHA provides trained staff/student assistance at no cost to property owners and organizations to develop Civil War and Reconstruction-era heritage programs and projects. This program provided a portion of the support for staff field visits to the Longview Mansion in 2024-2025, as well as this Heritage Development Report.

Additional partnership opportunities can be pursued in the future. For example, Lipscomb University could apply for a matching grant through the Collaborative Partnerships program to develop interpretive projects such as exhibits, educational materials/programming and site interpretation. All funds received from the Heritage Area must be matched dollar for dollar with non-federal money.

The Land Trust for Tennessee has received Heritage Area support for various projects at Glen Leven Mansion, a neighbor of Longview. Lipscomb University might want to contact the Land Trust about the ways the Heritage Area has helped Glen Leven over the past 15 years.

Humanities Tennessee Opportunity Grant- Opportunity grants provide financial support to nonprofit partners for special, focused public humanities projects. It is designed to encourage nonprofits to use humanities projects – those that engage the audience’s skills of inquiry, analysis, and reflection, and provide the historical and social contexts with which to do so – to strengthen work in their communities. <https://www.humanitiestennessee.org/programs-grants/our-grants/opportunity-grants/>