

Northern Kentucky Views Presents

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**Tour of  
Mount St. Martin**

(formerly the Jones Mansion)

Placed on the National Register of Historical Places,  
January 17, 1976

**Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1976**  
**1 – 4 p.m.**

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Newport, Ky

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# TOUR OF Mount St. Martin

Sunday, April 4th, 1976  
1 to 4 P. M.



CAMPBELL COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
NEWPORT BRANCH

MOUNT ST. MARTIN  
(FORMERLY THE JONES MANSION)

15th and Monmouth Sts., Newport, Ky.

This twin-turreted Castle was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, January 17, 1976

A Bicentennial Celebration



JUL 80

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# M O U N T   S T.   M A R T I N

## HISTORY AND HISTORIC FEATURES OF THIS FORMER MANSION

Mount St. Martin (formerly the JONES MANSION) was built in 1851 by Mary Keturah Taylor Jones and her husband, Thomas Laurens Jones. Her father, Colonel James Taylor, son of the founder of Newport offered her a choice of acreage from his vast holdings and she selected this picturesque spot as her wedding present from her father. The plans for the mansion, a variant of the Italian villa style, were modeled after a castle the newlyweds had seen while touring England on their honeymoon.

Mary Keturah Taylor, born in 1831 in Newport, was the daughter of Colonel James Taylor and Susan Berry and the granddaughter of General James Taylor.

Thomas Laurens Jones, who was born in Rutherford County, N.C. on January 21, 1819, met Mary Keturah Taylor at a Congressional Ball in the nation's Capitol. They were married September 12, 1848, and had four children. She was regarded as the most beautiful and accomplished woman in Kentucky, a scholar and writer of history and poetry...Their elegant home contained priceless works of art and was the scene of lavish entertainment for important personages.

Thomas Laurens Jones died July 20, 1887 and the castle lost its allure for its mistress. In 1889 she sold it to Bishop Camillus Maes of the Covington Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, for the purpose of establishing an American motherhouse for the Sisters of Divine Providence. While abroad in the autumn of 1888 Bishop Maes visited the Rev. Mother Superior General, at the General Motherhouse, Saint-Jean-de-Bassel, Moselle, France, to make arrangements for the first American colony of Sisters. Three Sisters arrived in Covington, August 23, 1889.

On September 7, 1889, the historic old mansion, then known as the Jones Mansion, located on approximately 11 acres was purchased as the site of the first foundation of the Sisters of Divine Providence...When it was converted into a Convent a clapboarded wing and a larger chapel covered in asbestos shingle and linked to the stairhall by an enclosed gallery were added to the rear (northeast).

## EXTERIOR

In circa 1851 Thomas Laurens Jones and James Taylor entered into an agreement with Robert A Love, Architect of Cincinnati, who estimated the total cost of the house as designed would be \$3,500. At the same time, Jones and Taylor hired Thomas Wescott of Campbell County to do the carpentry work estimated at \$1,600. During the construction of the house many alterations were made, supposedly at little increase in cost. The final bill, however, amounted to over \$7,552. Charles Stricker was the bricklayer and George Pagan was the Painter and Glazier. This 22 room building was completed circa 1853.

It is primarily the site itself, evoking rather the medieval castles on the Rhine, that warrants the tradition of the villa's inspiration in an English castle. The house is a highly picturesque variant of the characteristic mid-19th century "Italian villa." In keeping with the steep drop-off of ground on every side, however, the silhouette is particularly broken up, virtually every interior unit on each floor being reflected in a separate block or tower on the exterior. The blocks recede backward from a tall, narrow tower on the right corner, with the main stairhall marked by another, still taller turret at the opposite left end facade that faces U.S. 27. This four-story shaft has stone quoins and a square monitor above. Behind the righthand tower, a series of wooden galleries on several levels angles back connecting the blocks and facing the southern hills. At the main entrance (facing U.S. 27) limestone terraces with some handsome cast-iron railings follow the setbacks of the walls.

The two-story central block has four triple windows set in arched recessed panels, perhaps suggesting an arcaded gallery. The long windows have plain projecting lintels supported by shallow brackets. The relatively plain wall-surfaces are subordinated to the most striking feature of the design, the closely-spaced, almost obsessively repeated brackets of the cornice. Actually they are light and delicately curved open brackets set at about a 45-degree angle against the deep shadows of the cornice.

There is a charming coach-house off the drive that curves around the villa.

## INTERIOR OF BUILDING

### Main Floor

The plan of the house is complex, but ordered. The stairhall in the northwest tower with its handsome spiral staircase of seventy steps, is the fulcrum leading from the main floor (itself raised high on a pedestal-like foundation) up to the belvedere. The stairhall and corridor have brown and beige geometric floor tiles, and two of the transoms in the stairhall still retain the original brilliant red Bohemian glass panels with sharply etched designs.

Off the stairhall is the long parlor facing U.S. 27, with a small library beyond in the southwest corner tower. The parlor ceiling is rather bold, with egg-and-dart moldings defining the evenly spaced panels of the ceiling. There is an original brass chandelier here, and a brown marbleized iron mid-Victorian mantel.

In the dining room and another formal chamber off the stairhall magnificent original decorations survive. The handsome woodwork is rather restrained with low pediments over the full-length openings. The cornices, chandelier, medallions, and mantels, however, are very elaborate, in a transitional style between Greek Revival and the freer Italianate vein.

A room that was probably another dining room with a bay has a plaster frieze of baskets of flowers; the large stylized Grecian leaves at the center of the ceiling medallion are extended by naturalistic miniature pear trees in high relief.

### Second & Third floors

On the second floor there are several unusually fine Rococo Revival cast-iron mantels. The stair tower is topped by a small windowless room with a balustrated circular opening in the ceiling. A narrow stair to one side leads to the belvedere, which may originally have been shuttered between the brackets which here are widely spaced; now filled in with glass...A splendid over-scaled ceiling medallion only a few feet above the opening to the room below suggests that a chandelier originally hung down through it, perhaps over a round dining table on the penultimate level. Certainly the effect is highly aesthetic, if not Sybaritic.

(This brochure has been compiled through the combined efforts of Mrs. Richard L. Roberts, Ft. Thomas and Lenora Bacon, Newport, Kentucky).