

ART GALLERY PROJECT

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Mallett-Rogers House gets new lease on life

By Sue Kimball

Exterior restoration of the Florence Rogers House is nearly complete and work will begin soon on the interior. The renovated structure will serve as an art gallery.

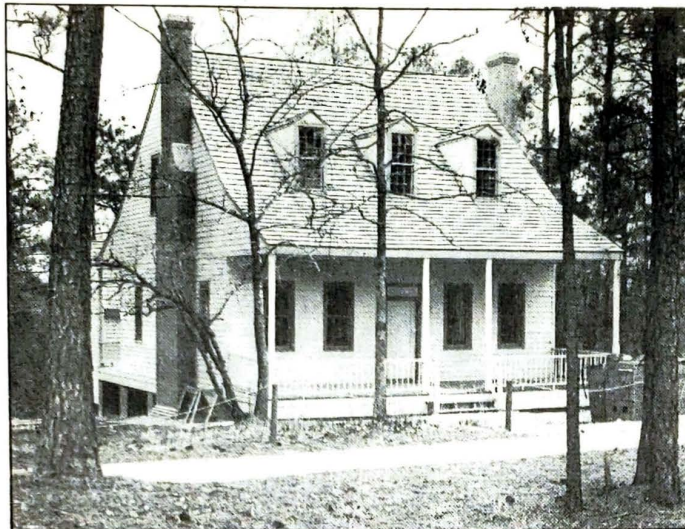
The college's involvement with the historic Mallett-Rogers House began on September 9, 1985. Joann Barnett, Administrator of Grants for the Florence Rogers Charitable Trust, had been trying for six months to give away the house. Nolan Clark, a co-trustee for the Trust (along with J.O. Talley) said that he knew that the house could be made into a restaurant, but he wanted a non-profit organization to have it.

The house was patented in 1735 and deeded by James Council to Daniel Mallett in 1778 and from Daniel to his brother Peter Mallett in 1778. The brothers had lived in Wilmington until the purchase of the property. While the Malletts occupied the house, it was known as Council Hall. It stood near Campbellton until Charles Peter Mallett, the textile pioneer moved it to Eutaw Springs in 1830, his reason being that a "miasma" (a vaporous exhalation formerly believed to cause disease) had risen on Mallett's Pond nearby.

Charles Beatty Mallett, the son of Charles Peter, sold the house to James Marley Smith, who lived in it until 1919, when he sold it to Dr. J. Vance McGougan, who used it as a summer home. It was a favorite place for outdoor parties, and many distinguished personages were entertained in the house, among them General John Pershing and General A.B. Bowley.

Dr. McGougan sold the house in 1923 to Mrs. Florence Rogers, who lived in it until her death. It then became the property of the Florence Rogers Foundation. Mrs. Rogers said that she tried to keep the lines of the house intact so that the additions could be removed and the house would be as originally constructed. Such is now the case. Methodist College acquired the house in 1986.

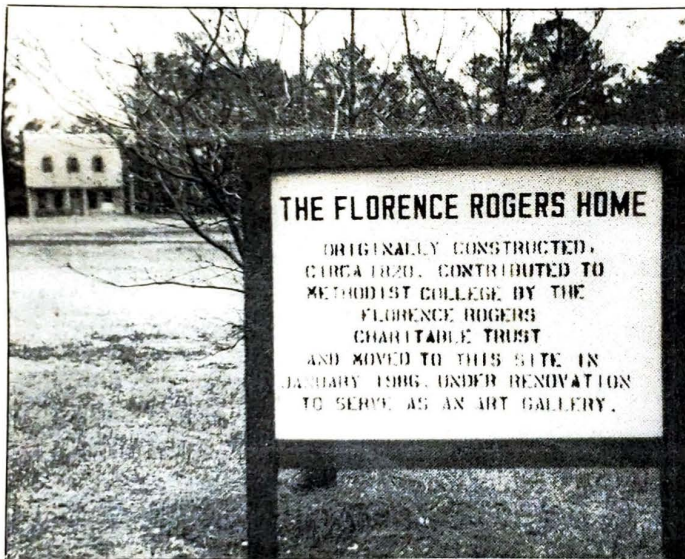
The one and one-half story house is of pure Colonial architecture, with gabled roof framing, dormer windows, and a beautiful early period chimney. The flooring is of wide pine and the original mantel has hand



carved medallions. The mahogany staircase is also hand carved. The house is the only Fayetteville residence to have porches on both front and rear. The unique front door

transom bears a pierced ellipsis.

Other distinctive features noted by two historians from the N.C. Dept. of Archives and History are hand-made screws with flat points, leather



washers on the hinges, handplaned lap siding, wooden locks and handplaned doors. The architectural historians suspect, although they have not verified the fact, that the architect may have been William Nichols, who came from Bath, England to New Bern. The famous Nichols was renovating the Old North Carolina State House when it burned. He designed the State Bank Building in Fayetteville and the old Capitol Building and Governor's Mansion in Jackson, Mississippi the latter has the same molding as is found in our house. The late E.W. Reinecke recognized the house as a masterpiece and copied it in Cottonade.

Because the Mallett-Rogers house was put on the National Historic Register in 1983, the college must adhere to certain standards of renovation. It will be furnished tastefully, with antiques and suitable reproductions.

The state historians can give the approximate age of every nail and every coat of paint. One of their interesting discoveries was that each beam had been numbered -- Roman numerals were cut into the wood, the instrument some kind of plane that would not make curved lines. This was done, they thought, the first time the house was moved, to be sure that it was reassembled properly. They were correct in their assumption about the reason for the numbers. Mrs. Alice Mallett Thomas Hale, youngest daughter of Charles Beatty Mallett, wrote, "Every shingle and weatherboard were removed from the house and numbered. The frame was then put on logs and rolled (using mules to pull and poles to guide) through the town and then the woods. Trees had to be cut on each side of the road to allow the house to pass through and when it reached its destination, it was put together just as before the move.

When one considers the terrain and the lack of modern equipment, it was indeed a most extraordinary accomplishment." Another observation made by an expert from Archives was that the man who built the original house was quite wealthy; the extras, such as hand carvings, were evidence of this.