

THE CARTER HOME 108 Auditorium Circle

The Carter House, built in 1893 by architect Alfred Giles for William Maverick, is considered one of the finest examples of Giles work, and has been restored by David and Emma Leigh Carter.

Our tour begins at the Taylor Street entrance, through a large double doorway with its original elaborate iron grilles. As you go through the house note the matching bronze hardware on all the windows and doors. The Entry Hall has some of the most beautiful wood and plaster details found in all Giles' work. Both the wainscot and the coffered ceiling have bird's-eye maple panels surrounded by straight-grain maple tiles and rails. The large plaster area between wainscot and ceiling is festooned with raised floral swags and ribbons at the cornice level. Composite capitals on fluted maple columns separate the Entry into sections, and the circular vestibule with its gilded harp once served as a cloak room and sometime "courting corner." The chandelier originally used both electricity and gas. The floors are elaborately bordered in a geometric pattern of oak, mahogany, and maple inlay. Note the Powder Room with a round window and the original marble and brass lavatory.

Access to the Chapel is through a small door in the right hall area. This was originally a library, and the vaulted ceiling and arched windows were added by Aline Carter. Ethel Harris made the chairs in her Mexican arts and crafts studio, one of the first of its kind. Weddings and baptisms have been performed before the carved altar. Exit the Chapel through the door at left into a conversation alcove and back Hall with stained glass panels installed, by Mrs. H. C. Carter in 1915. Also an elaborately carved Chinese table, part of a set of furniture brought from the Philippines at the turn of the century by Mrs. Carter's great-uncle, General Benjamin Roberts, whose father raised the American flag at the Battle of Chapultepec. Other pieces of the set are found elsewhere in the house. A brass and elm tansu chest is nearby. From the Hall, go up the stairs with the turned balusters and carved newel post. These stairs were used by St. Marks choir members who sang carols to the Protestant orphans each Christmas for over forty years, commencing in 1920. On the second floor on the right are the law offices of Carter and Van Steenberg containing a roll-top desk, captain's chair, and original legal bookcases from the law firm of Carter & Lewis. Mr. H.C. Carter, father of David Carter, was third president of the State Bar of Texas and he purchased the house after the turn of the century. The oriental desk and carved dragon chairs are other pieces of the set noted earlier.

To the right one enters the corner Bedroom with crisp white mouldings, panelled doors, and a cheerful fireplace. In this room are an an-

tique brass bed and furnishings belonging to Sarah Eagar, grandmother of Aline Carter. The dresser with mirror was the first of its type in San Antonio, brought here in 1839.

Pass through the Bathroom with its large arched window and original tub and lavatory into the North Bedroom. Here are a charming alcove with cupola and a Solarium with the original tan, grey, and red tile floor.

Other rooms open onto the Hall and the third floor Game Room can be reached by climbing the white painted stairway or the elevator. This spacious area with adjacent small bedrooms was used as servants' quarters, storage, and play area on rainy days. Note the gas light fixtures and hard yellow pine floors. For the adventurous, a small enclosed stair leads to the roof and observatory. One can see the original pink slate roof, which was completely restored, and a telescope which is accommodated by a movable dome. Mrs. Carter, who was a Poet Laureate of Texas, bought the telescope in 1918 and used it in connection with her astronomy and poetry classes.

Return to the first floor Hall, from which you will see the formal Sitting Room, Music Room, Dining Room, and Kitchen.

The formal Sitting Room is reached through large sliding doors with the original embroidered portiers. This room has the same plaster detailing found in the Entry and an original Victorian parlor set. A pair of pier glass mirrors with gilt frames are also original to the house. The piano dates from 1866.

The Music Room with its large corner fireplace faced by a painted mantle contains the original heavy oak parlor set with carved lion's paw feet. The small carved smoking table and the mahogany grandfather clock are original. The large Texana secretary along with original manuscripts and books belonged to Sarah Eagar, the first Anglo girl born in San Antonio.

The Music Room leads into a large Dining Room, where the bird's-eye maple wainscot and coffered ceiling match those in the Entry Hall. The floor has a unique pattern made with a variety of inlaid woods. The architectural accent here is the beautifully carved red sandstone mantle over which is a portrait of Sarah Elizabeth Eagar at age 102 years, done by artist Rolla Taylor. The wall sconces and dining set are original to the room.

Passing through the Butler's Pantry, one enters the Kitchen, where the original fireplace used for cooking has been uncovered and restored. Here is a collection of early household machinery, a washing machine, hot water heater with demand valve (an energy saving device), a wood-burning cookstove, and a kitchen safe. Note the built-in storage as you leave along a spacious columned back porch. Outside doors from the driveway lead to a large basement which is currently being remodeled.