

Stewart Cottage



My grandmother, Sue Howell Adams, bought the White House in 1924 for her children's grandchildren. As the families expanded, there was less and less time available at the White House, so my brother John Adams, and my sisters Rosalie Adams Avent (now Crispin) and Mary Adams Wiley, and I decided that we needed to build houses of our own, as our brother Alfred Adams had already done. Mary and I, by the way, have something special in common besides parents and family: we were both married in the chapel of the Methodist Assembly in Beersheba, I to Jack Stewart in 1948 (before Mary was born) and she to Andrew Wiley in 1978.

The four of us went together to purchase property at the end of the Backbone Road which had been owned by the Gus Brown family. We divided it into four lots plus a central area where we later built a tennis court and have space for gardening of vegetables, flowers, fruit trees, and berry bushes. Our house, on the east side of Backbone Road, was started in 1978

and completed two years later. The old, hand-hewn poplar logs came from a house in Laager, about 17 miles away. It was believed to have been built about 1820. These well-preserved logs were marked prior to disassembly, and some of the marks are still visible. The logs and the fireplace stones were moved to the Backbone site, where the house was reconstructed by all the Stewarts – Jack, Karin, Jean, John, and Alfred – with the help of several local craftsmen, in particular Elmo Whitman, Donald Boyd, and Ples King. This huge undertaking required many weekend trips from Birmingham, Nashville, and Lynchburg, Virginia, where members of the family were living at that time. My brother Ben Adams helped us design the house and brother Alfred Adams secured large timbers from the old Paramount Theater in Nashville that we used for our floor joists. The walnut railings and posts came from the McGavock building in Nashville. The building of this house was truly a family affair. The fact that both of my brothers had built their own log houses previously made their help especially valuable

to us in building ours.

There have been a number of additions to the house since we first moved in. A room was added to the kitchen, and the porches were enlarged and extended across the entire back of the house. Our view of the Collins valley and the Cumberland Plateau is extensive and looks up Savage Gulf. The porch is a wonderful gathering place. One of the especially fun times was when the Will Ralphs shared their guest, singer-songwriter Amy Grant, with us. To our delight she gave a spur of the moment concert on our back porch. We quickly gathered friends and neighbors to hear her play and sing.

It is fun to have brother John and Carol Adams

and sister Rosalie and John Crispin just across the street. It's almost like being back at the White House, only better.

Building this house together has been a wonderful experience for our family; lots of hard physical labor but so much satisfaction and pleasure. It is where we continue to gather in groups large and small to visit, eat, and sing – even some of the old songs sung by cousin Mort Howell and the All-World quartet back in the 1940s and '50s. Where else can you so pleasantly and casually be with brothers and sisters and cousins and your friends and their friends new and old?

Karin Adams Stewart



A winter view of the valley side of the Stewart cottage showing the long porches.