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C. W. Lewis' Rosemont To Be Included On Manassas Garden Club Tour May 25



"Rosemount," ancestral home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Lewis, will be the scene of a tea to be served to those making the tour of homes under the auspices of the Manassas Garden Club in May.

Although the original house built sometime soon after 1757, was destroyed by fire after the Civil War, the site of "Rosemount" is one of the few family home places in the county which is still owned and occupied by descendants of the man who first built there, in this case William Montgomery. The Lewis name descends to the present holders through his daughter, Anna, who married William Lewis and whose children were willed the property by their mother's brother, Francis Montgomery, who had no heirs of his own. The present owner represents the sixth generation to receive the property.

The present house was built upon the foundations of the original house of logs to face in the same direction as the first one away from Sudley Road. Later generations, however, found it more advantageous to reverse matters, and a typical front yard is now established in what was before the back.

This explains the presence of the sandstone millk house, which dates from the original building, in a corner of the front yard instead of the customary place in the rear.

Other original outbuildings include the old granary, now used for a tool shop, and the outdoor kitchen, a story and a half construction which played an important part in the family's history when it housed the large family during the time it took to rebuild their home after the fire. The flagstone path which leads to it is being preserved as well as the building itself. The basement, also original, was divided into dining room and indoor kitchen, probably used at first as a place to keep the food warm until time to serve. Within the memory of the present owner it was used for all cooking purposes, and the dining room below remained the scene of family meals until a more recent date when one of the large first floor rooms was converted to that use.

Visitors to "Rosemount" will be interested in the collection of heirlooms to be found in the formal parlor to the right of the entrance

hall. The old walnut desk with its inlaid designs of a lighter wood is said to have been brought over from England by William Montgomery. Here has always been kept the original copy in his own hand of Montgomery's will, dated 1803, with its quaint penmanship spelling and wordage. That of his son, Francis, which gave the property to his sister's children, is also kept there, among other family papers.

The mirrors, one finely executed table, and two pictures painted on glass also found in this room, were originally the property of the present owner's Grandmother Higgs. The story is that these articles were captured by the British in the War of 1812 while they were being brought to Mrs. Higgs' home, "Oak Hill," in Fairfax. It is said that Mrs. Higgs, full of righteous indignation, took herself to the officer who held them and in no uncertain terms demanded their return, with obviously successful results.

There are many interesting and romantic stories connected with the charming old place and the people who have lived in it. A fuller account of these and other data will be taken up in a later articles.