

Col. John Williams House

2325 Dandridge Avenue

Knoxville

This two-story Federal style house was built in 1826 as a residence for Colonel John Williams. Williams, a prominent Knoxville politician, lived in the house until his death in 1837. His estate was sold in 1855, and, after passing through the hands of two different owners, the house was leased in 1883 to the state for use by the Negro Division of the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb. In 1885 the Tennessee legislature authorized purchase of the property and the adjoining 27 acres as a permanent home for the school. As the school grew, two additions and a new dormitory were built, and 55 acres were added to the original lot. With the desegregation of public institutions in the 1960s, the Negro Division moved to a new Tennessee School for the Deaf facility in Knoxville. Although a portion of the ceiling collapsed in the 1920s addition to the house, the original house remains intact as an architectural reminder of its function in the black community in an era of segregation. [CAB 12/3/80, 80003843]