

# OLD WALDO MANSION TO GO AT AUCTION

House That Has Never Been Occupied Will Be Sold Under Foreclosure.

## LONG AN OBJECT OF WONDER

Strange Aversion on the Part of Mrs. Waldo to Letting It Go to Others.

Another chapter has been added to the singular history of the ornate Waldo house on the southwest corner of Madison Avenue and Seventy-second Street by the recent announcement that it will be sold at auction under foreclosure on Jan. 12, at the Vesey Street Salesroom.

For fourteen years this house, with that adjoining it in Seventy-second Street, built in the same style of Gothic architecture, has been one of the curiosities in real estate circles. They were built in 1805, and with the rich interior furnishings cost approximately \$1,000,000. Yet neither of the houses has ever been occupied.

They occupy 58.3 feet on Seventy-second Street, and 102.2 feet on Madison Avenue. The larger house, that fronting on the avenue, has been in a state of semi-dilapidation for many years. The once fine stone front is badly discolored, and the accumulated storms of a dozen years have damaged the interior fittings, the rain soaking through the great dome in the roof, and percolating through cracks and crevices, to an amount estimated at many thousands of dollars.

Mrs. Gertrude Rhinelander Waldo, mother of ex-Deputy Police Commissioner Rhinelander Waldo, is the owner of the house. It was built as a copy of a famous French chateau, which Mrs. Waldo admired while traveling in Europe with her husband, the late Francis Waldo.

Mr. and Mrs. Waldo were in Europe while the house was nearing completion, and it was believed they would occupy it on their return, but, to the surprise of their friends they never lived in it, and the great house in one of the most fashionable residential sections of Madison Avenue has remained to this day a public curiosity.

Mrs. Waldo purchased abroad thousands of dollars' worth of rare tapestries, carved mantels, bric-a-brac, and furniture for the house, but the larger part of it has remained unpacked in the lower rooms as it came from the steamer.

The Madison Avenue entrance leads into a large hall, which occupies about one-third of the 102 feet frontage of the house. The hall is lined and topped with rich mahogany. Facing the eastern wall is the grand staircase. The wall for the length of the staircase is lined with fine mosaic work. To the left of the stairs is a long gallery overlooking a spacious billiard room, which is richly fitted up in red mahogany. To the right is the library.

On the floor above are the dining rooms, and on the third floor the bed rooms. Besides the main dining room there are a breakfast room, large drawing and reception rooms, and two small salons, three kitchens, and six bathrooms, all luxuriously furnished.

The greater part of the fourth floor is taken up by a magnificent white ballroom. The house has an electric elevator and 2,200 lights, half of which are in the ballroom. One curious feature that has attracted comment from the few persons who have inspected the house is the lack of proper arrangement for servants' quarters. The entire house contains only two servants' bedrooms, and there is no room for a man servant, yet the proper running of a house of this character would require from ten to a dozen servants.

This fact is said to have militated against its sale. On several occasions in the last few years the house has been advertised for sale, and in May, 1908, a large "For Sale" sign hung from the front of the building for a few days. It is said that the large price asked has prevented its transfer to prospective purchasers.

Perhaps of more vital importance has been the disinclination of Mrs. Waldo to part with the house. The story is told that a few years ago a broker had practically effected a sale. Everything was ready for the signing of the papers, and Mrs. Waldo, with the new owner, was in the broker's office. As Mrs. Waldo glanced at the customer she hesitated, then said:

"I don't think I'll sell," and calmly walked out.

Almost opposite the untenanted mansion, at 31 East Seventy-second Street, lives Mrs. Waldö with her sister, Miss Laura V. Rhinelander. Near by, in the same street, are the homes of W. Bayard Cutting, William V. S. Thorne, Lewis Cass Ledyard, Oliver Gould Jennings, Louis Marshall, Henry Coster Emmet, Hugh J. Grant, and Newbold Morris.

The foreclosure proceedings against Mrs. Waldo have been instituted by Anna M. Schmitt-Baler, the amount of the judgment being \$10,000, with interest from Dec. 3 last. There are also unpaid taxes for \$9,221 and a prior mortgage of \$150,000. The auctioneer will be Joseph P. Day.