



The clean, classical lines of the Kirk House are a departure from the ornate courthouses and other buildings designed by George Washburn.

THE HOUSE THAT GEORGE BUILT

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One of the last buildings designed by George Washburn, the grand, 22-room Kirk House in Garnett, is now a bed and breakfast inn featuring the vast art and antiques collections of its owners, Robert Cugno and Robert Logan.

There are at least a couple of ways to enjoy your weekend in a historic house turned bed and breakfast inn. You can pamper yourself with a relaxing, get-away-from-it-all time in one of the many unusual homes across the state. Or, you can steep yourself in Kansas history and live in a bygone era for the weekend.

At Kirk House in Garnett, you can do both. The pampering is included in the price of the room. From the fresh fruit and flowers and the gigantic bathtub to be filled with bubbles to the two sun-

rooms filled with plants and comfy places to rest, this is a place to retreat from the noise of the world.

Be prepared to meet the spirit of the original builder-owners of the house. They still inhabit the nooks and crannies of the 12,000-square foot neo-colonial near downtown Garnett.

Robert Cugno and Robert Logan, transplanted California art dealers, have planned the rehabilitation of the house to integrate the house spirits which seem to be congenial with the art that dominates throughout the house. It is an



The Carson Gladson room is one of five guest bedrooms at Kirk House. The hand stenciling on the walls was done by Robert Logan.

alliance that makes the history lesson all the more relaxing.

The Kirk House is one of the last buildings designed by George Washburn. Its clean, classical lines are a departure from the ornate courthouses in Anderson, Franklin, Atchison and Miami counties one associates with the well-known Ottawa architect. Cugno and Logan have painted the house yellow and trimmed it with aqua, giving it what Cugno calls "a birthday cake effect." Jan Wallace, A.I.A., Ottawa architect, has advised them during the project. Wallace, also a transplanted Californian, specializes in restorations.

The union of old and new is most apparent in the dining room where some of the original murals have survived. There, guests can settle down to one of the specialties of the house, minted fruit compote and bran muffins, followed by french toast with pecan syrup served with a side of spicy steamed vegetables. The murals are the work of Paul Nordstrom. Nordstrom, an itinerant artist, lived upstairs in the maid's room for months while he decorated all 22

rooms in the house. None of the stenciling, Nordstrom's specialty, was salvageable. The murals, however, are in excellent shape.

Here, too, are the ghosts of the Kirk family. Sennett Kirk, a local banker, and his wife, Bertha Mellen Kirk, were both Garnett natives. When the house was new, their three children were still living at home. The dining room was in use three times a day. There was no breakfast room. Garnett residents say Mrs. Kirk, once a teacher at the Olathe School for the Deaf, was a severe disciplinarian who demanded impeccable table manners in the straight-backed chairs at the formal table.

The comfortable chairs at the breakfast table now allow a little slouching, multiple cups of coffee and shared newspapers, but when Cugno recounts local stories from those who still remember Mrs. Kirk as "Aunt Bertha," spines just naturally straighten a bit.

Cugno and Logan's association with Kirk House — and with Garnett — was a case of love at first sight. They had been shopping in California for a new location for

their gallery. They were looking at properties on the coast which included bed and breakfast possibilities when Cugno saw Kirk House advertised in a national publication. They flew to Kansas City, visited Garnett, bought the house and within months were deep into its renovation. Cugno's mother, Angie Williams, came along to oversee the housekeeping.

Their close association with the visual arts in Garnett since their arrival in 1988 resulted in a 1994 Governor's Arts Award for Community Development. In addition to Kirk House, they have both been active in arts projects through the Walker Art Committee. Those projects have included, among other things, the founding of the Garnett Performing Arts Series and presentations of workshops for junior and senior high school students. Logan has been involved in the conservation of the Walker Art Collection of early 20th century American paintings which is housed next door to Kirk House at the Garnett Public Library.

Together they have curated an exhibition of contemporary American ceramics currently on national tour through Exhibits USA, a program of the Mid-America Arts Alliance.

If you breakfast in the study, instead of the dining room, you'll be surrounded by such ceramics. In addition, the windows look out over Logan's kitchen garden from which the herbs that provide that distinctive taste for your breakfast vegetables came. The room is unabashed Art Nouveau with its red walls and red furnishings. Mrs. Kirk probably wouldn't approve of the Siamese cats, Jaconade and Tzeitel, who will share your breakfast if you invite them and neither host is present to forbid it.

Cugno will also share his feeling for his adopted hometown. A stroll around the square gives the visitor a quick introduction to finding collectibles. Garnett's antique stores ring the square and are crammed full of 19th century furniture, bric-a-brac and all sorts of collectibles. Such collections as

the stacks of neatly folded flour sacks in one Kirk House bedroom began in those shops and were extended on trips to auctions and farm sales around the area.

In addition to the memorabilia in the shops, a walk of any length will also include a few minutes to appreciate the scope of the Prairie Spirit Trail, a projected linear park in the area for hikers and bicyclists. When it is finished, the 50-mile rail-to-trail conversion will follow the old Santa Fe Railroad tracks from Ottawa to Iola. Cugno and Logan are among the Garnett promoters of the trail which will pass through Garnett, connecting not only the local parks with each other, but with the scenery along the route.

A walk through historic Garnett is enough exercise to make one of the sitting rooms back at the Kirk House invite you back to yesterday. Anywhere you turn, from the cellar, where Virgil Asburn, now in his 90's and living only a few blocks away, helped to set the stones, to the suite in the attic where the walls are covered with fabric from Logan's loom, the house is both a reminder of the artisans who designed and built it and the artists who brought it back to life. 🍷



The Kirk House has five rooms which will accommodate 10 guests. A gourmet breakfast is included with an overnight stay. Lunch and dinner are available upon request. There are no accommodations for children or pets. Logan and Cugno will arrange tours of the house and the nearby Walker Art Collection at the Garnett Public Library. For further information or reservations, contact Kirk House, 145 West 4th Avenue, Garnett, KS, 66032, (913) 448-5813. Garnett is in Anderson County on Highways 59, 169 and 31 and 20 miles south of I-35.



A focal point of the large dining room, where the original owners ate all of their meals, is a mural which was painted on canvas in 1915 and illustrates scenes of a local brook.

RECIPES FROM ROBERT LOGAN'S KITCHEN

Ford's Famous Bran Muffins

1¼ cup butter or margarine
3 cups sugar
4 eggs, beaten
1 quart buttermilk
2 cups All-Bran
2 cups boiling water
5 cups flour
5 teaspoons soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups raisins
4 cups 40% bran flakes
2 tablespoons molasses

Cream together margarine or butter, sugar, eggs and buttermilk. Soak All-Bran in boiling water. Add to creamed mixture. Let stand one minute. Beat in flour, soda, salt, bran flakes and molasses. Stir in raisins. Mix thoroughly and never stir again. Store in refrigerator. Use only what you need for each baking. Bake in prepared muffin pans in a 400-degree, preheated oven for 20 minutes.

Inge's Apple Cake

1½ cup granulated sugar
4 cups flour
1½ cup brown sugar
1½ teaspoon soda
3 eggs
1½ teaspoon salt
2 cups oil
5 cups diced, unpeeled apples
1 cup chopped nuts
1 tablespoon vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9" x 13" pan. Mix both sugars, eggs, oil and vanilla. Sift dry ingredients and add to egg mixture. Fold in apples and nuts. Batter will be thick. Spread into the prepared pan. Bake 45-50 minutes or until it tests done.