

# *Hotel Finial*

## *History*

The Hotel Finial was originally a home built in 1888 by Col. John McKleroy. McKleroy was a prominent developing member of Anniston. He owned The Anniston City Land Company and also worked as a Counselor-at-law, the state school board Superintendent, and a member of the State House. He chose this location to build his home because it was the highest point in Anniston. Today, the Finial has chosen its name for this same purpose. A finial is the ornamental piece that sits atop the home and also means “crowning point” as the home was the crowning point of early Anniston. The original structures which include the Main House, the Carriage House, and the Cottage remained as a personal home for 100 years.

In the 1800s, Quintard Avenue was lined with Victorian style mansions similar to the Finial. We proudly stand as the last remaining Victorian Mansion on Quintard Avenue.



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After his death in 1891, John's family remained in the house until it was sold at a public auction in 1920 to William Coleman Wilson.

After the Wilson family moved from the home, the Kirby family lived within the mansion. Frank and Robbie Kirby were the last residents to live within the home. Kirby was founder, president, and Chairman of the Board of the Anniston Electric Company. He also served on the boards of the directors of the Anniston Federal Savings and Loan and the Methodist Children's Home. He was an active leader on the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce, the Kiwanis Club, and the First Methodist Church. His wife, Robbie, was a leading musician in the community and active in Women's civic affairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Kirby opened their home to the city of Anniston. Mrs. Kirby hosted music and piano lessons for Anniston children. Each Christmas season, for many years, the property owners decorated the foothills of the property with wooden choir boys, and the tradition continues today. Also, in the topmost point of the Victorian turret tower, an illuminated Santa has, and continues to smile down on Anniston every Christmas season.

Mr. and Mrs. Kirby were childless; instead, they had cockatiels they loved and cared for. A carved wooden sign of a white cockatiel hangs within the Carriage House in honor of Mr.



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and Mrs. Kirby. Also, the doors to the Senator's room within the Main House are adorned with frosted glass and depictions of cockatiels. This beautiful piece of art was created by artist, Larry Martin! When the mansion was a home, the 3rd floor was the ballroom where visitors were entertained in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20th centuries. Now, this space is our Grand Ballroom Suite. This suite provides a grand luxurious sleeping space for up to four guests.

In the 1980s, the home was converted into the Victoria Inn. This conversion included the building of the pool and the two buildings for guest rooms. Earlon McWhorter, president of McWhorter and Co. commercial building company, purchased the home and spearheaded the construction project to renovate and prepare the property to open to the world. The McWhorter Family donated the property to Jacksonville State University in 2009. JSU listed the Victoria Inn for sale in 2012 and the City of Anniston purchased the property.

In 2015, the City of Anniston offered the property to an individual or company that was willing to completely renovate the property and provide it with the care it needed and deserved. State Senator Del and Ginger Marsh stepped up and chose to undertake this responsibility. Del Marsh, a business owner, politician, and family man along with his wife, Ginger, and a dedicated team went above and beyond what was asked of them in order to revive the property. In eight months, a full \$2.5 million



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renovated and rebranding was completed. The property was reopened to the public in March 2016.

The goal of the renovations was to bring life and a modern touch to the historic property while respecting and maintaining its remarkable history. Because of the care that was given to the property during its remodeling, the hotel now has 61 guest rooms which include five suites—four in the main house as well as the cottage located by the pool. In addition, Spencer's Bar is located in the Carriage House and is open to the public!

The Mansion at Hotel Finial is a stunning piece of history. Though it was built over 130 years ago, the property has been well maintained and stands beautifully atop the highest hill on Quintard. Though the renovation helped update the mansion and surrounding grounds, special care was taken to ensure that the history was preserved. Victorian homes are known for having ornate fireplaces in each room. You will find a unique fireplace in each room of the main house, including three of the four suites as well as two fireplaces in the Cottage.



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### *The Grand Ballroom Suite*

The Grand Ballroom Suite spans the entire 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Historic Mansion. This suite is a historic piece of the Victorian home as many Victorian style homes placed a grand ballroom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. This suite now acts as a sleeping room for the guests of Hotel Finial. Within the suite, you will find a master suite with a king bed and shower as well as a living area, Murphy bed, half bath, and the topmost point of the turret tower. Because this suite is on the top floor, guests have a full 360° view of the property and Anniston from the crowning point of the city.

This suite is a favorite of many guests; particularly our brides! The half bath houses an expansive counter and mirror where brides and bridesmaids enjoy having ample room to get ready together!



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### *The Wilson Suite*

The Wilson Suite is located within the Historic Mansion on the second floor. This suite houses one king size bed, one bath, a Victorian fireplace, and the middle portion of the turret tower. The curve of the tower creates a bay window area within the room that provides guests with a beautiful view of the mountains surrounding Anniston. The Wilson Suite is custom designed with a cool, frosty blue tone and modern furnishings. This suite is named after the home's second owners, Mr. and Mrs. William Coleman Wilson. Mr. Wilson, president of The Emory Foundry Company which produced cast-iron pipe, purchased the home in a 1920 auction.



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### *The Kirby Suite*

The Kirby Suite, named after the 3<sup>rd</sup> owners and last full-time residents of the home, sits within the Main House on the second floor. This suite is large, and custom designed with a *past-forward* approach. The suite has a Victorian fireplace and large, tall windows that provide a view of the front of the property and Quintard Avenue. The bathroom within the Kirby Suite has a large, walk-in shower.



### *The McKleroy Suite*



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The McKleroy Suite is named after the original owners of the home. This custom suite has one king size bed, one bath, and Victorian fireplace. The room is adorned with a beautiful golden, champagne design and furnishings. The cushioned headboard is embroidered with the Finial logo!



## *The Cottage Suite*





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The Cottage Suite is a very special piece of Hotel Finial history. This suite is part of the original property built in 1888. The Cottage Suite is a standalone cottage that sits poolside. Within the Cottage, guests will enjoy a master bedroom suite with a king size bed Victorian fireplace and full bathroom, a living area, dining area, an additional Victorian fireplace, and half bath. The full bathroom within this suite has a glass shower as well as a jetted tub. The hardwood floors within the Cottage are original to the structure which dates back to 1888.



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### *The Carriage House*

Hotel Finial is teeming with history. The space currently used as Spencer's Bar and Hotel Finial's check-in was originally the Carriage House of the home. This building is one of the original structures on the property built in 1888. The large window was once a spacious door by which the family's carriage, horses, and sleigh entered.

Within the Carriage House, you'll notice a large and beautiful wooden table. The table is made from a massive White Oak tree that stood on property for well over a century! During renovations, a storm, unfortunately, knocked the tree down, allowing us to make it into the table it is today. Saving pieces of the past and incorporating them into the present property has made Hotel Finial a unique hotel of its own and pleasure to all who visit.

The upper portion of a barn door was salvaged and used for the Spencer's bar sign you will see as you enter. Ginger Marsh, co-owner of the Hotel Finial, noticed the door had an "X" on it like the Alabama state flag and had it painted to look

like the flag. Del, Ginger's husband and co-owner, is also the State Pro Tem of the Alabama Senate, so having the flag in the bar was special to her. Spencer's Bar was also named after her father who loved airplanes dearly, hence the airplane logo.



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*The Carriage House*

