

B-45
Crimea
4921 Windsor Mill Road (Leaking Park)
Baltimore, MD 21207

SEE VERTICAL FILE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Subject: Crimea

Submitted: January 11, 1973

Researchers: Diane B. Kimbel, Linda A. Lieberman

"Crimea", located in the Windsor Hill Road area of west Baltimore's Leakin Park, was the exotic name ascribed the nineteenth century summer residence of the Winans family, also of this city. A mansion, a stable-carriage house, a chapel, a honeymoon cottage, a gazebo, and a caretaker's residence are among the structures still to be found on estate grounds.

The main building is an example of mid-century Victorian architecture, square in design and native stone with wood trim in construction. On the exterior, porches line the side and rear portions of the structure on the ground floor level, and an additional veranda-type porch juts from the rear of the second story. The front entrance is post and lintel with side light. The roof is marked by a hipped cupola observation post, and pendant-shaped cornices hang from the eaves. Second story windows are of ceiling to floor design, allowing for maximum summertime ventilation. The interior of the mansion is unrestored, its rooms serving in office and residential capacity to park employees. The honeymoon cottage, caretaker's residence, and stable are similarly of stone with wood trim, cornices likewise embellishing the latter structure. The cupola, in an advanced stage of decay, is of wood, as is the well-preserved redwood-stained chapel.

As indicated by various family records, "Crimea" was built in the late 1850's on land purchased by Thomas deKay Winans in 1855. The money for purchase and construction was reportedly gained as a result of the Winans' Russian railroad venture, in which members of the family were commissioned by Czar Nicholas I to construct the Moscow-St. Petersburg rail system.

Thomas deKay Winans was the son of the locally prominent rail magnate and state legislator Ross Winans. Together, they amassed a considerable fortune and dabbled in inventions, producing, at one point, the much-ridiculed "cigar boat", its hull design a forerunner of the one in use today.

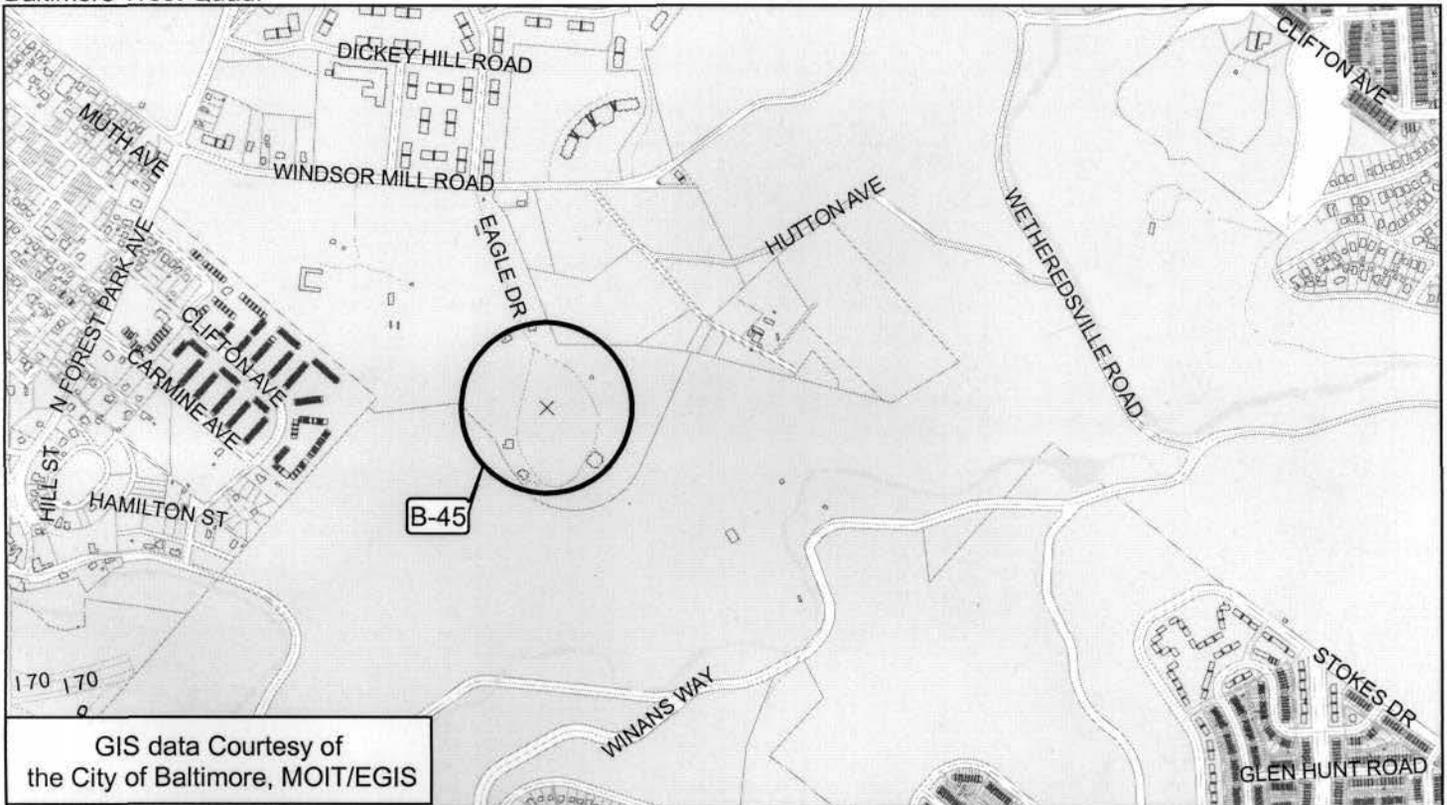
During the Civil War, the family was noted for its Southern sympathies, and Crimea

became the site of a horse fort, complete with breastworks and fake cannons, designed to ward off encroaching Yankee troops. Undeterred, however, the Northerners trespassed upon the sacrosanct property, and patriarch Ross was eventually to fall victim to an arrest warrant for his alleged secessionist tendencies.

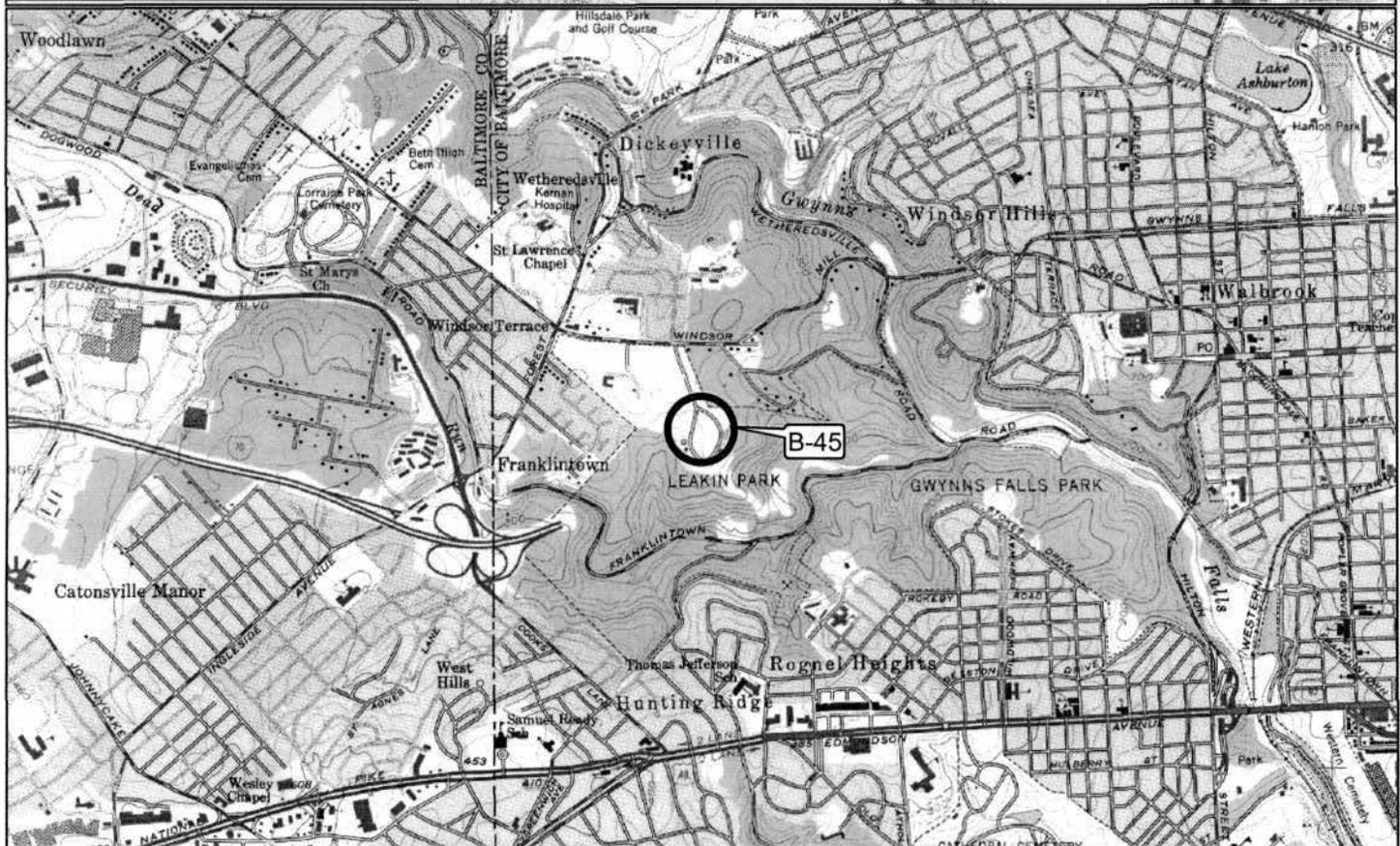
Ownership of the home changed name through marriage, with the inheritance of the estate by Celeste Minans Hutton at the death of her father, Thomas deWay. The home remained in Hutton hands until acquisition by the city in 1948.

Leakin Park is named after the Baltimore philanthropist J. Wilson Leakin, donator of the funds for park land purchase.

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Crimea
4921 Windsor Mill Road
Block 8434B Lots 001
Baltimore City
Baltimore West Quad.



GIS data Courtesy of
the City of Baltimore, MOIT/EGIS





CRIMEA

Leakin Park

c. 1855

Architect: Unknown

Crimea, in the Windsor Mill Road area of Leakin Park, was the summer estate of the Winans family. The estate was built by Thomas de Kay Winans, whose family was commissioned by Czar Nicholas I to construct the Moscow-St. Petersburg rail system. Crimea's namesake is a Russian peninsula.

Thomas Winans was the son of Ross Winans, a locally prominent rail magnate and State legislator. The family constructed and navigated the derisively named "Cigar Boat", a forerunner of the modern submarine.

The Crimea mansion was constructed of indigenous stone and embellished with a cupola and large eave pendants. Porches line the side and rear of the house.

The mansion is now an administration office of the Bureau of Parks and Recreation.

A stable and chapel are among the original estate structures remaining in the park.



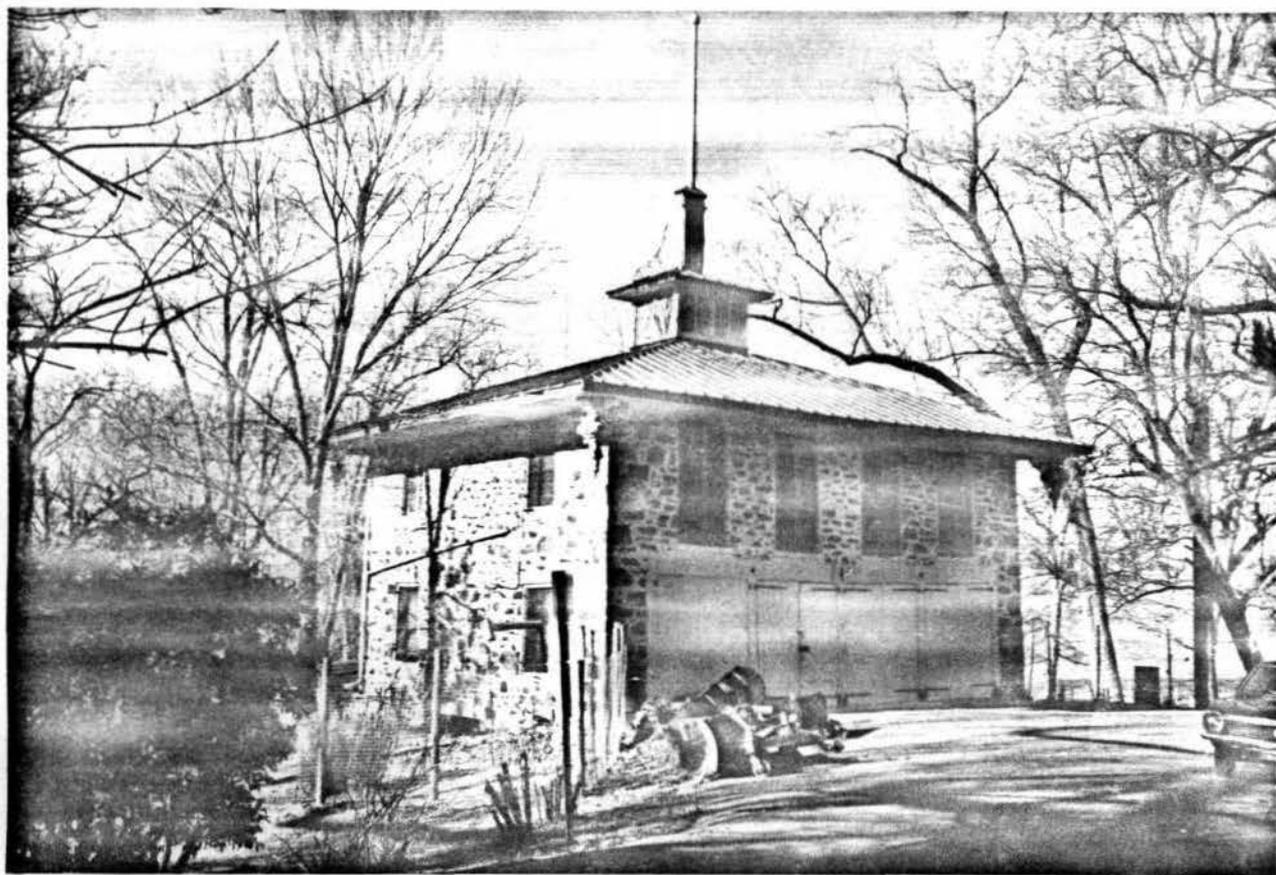
CRIMEA CHAPEL

Leakin Park

c. 1855

Architect: Unknown

The redwood stained chapel is the only ecclesiastical structure on the grounds of Crimea and one of the few examples of Carpenter Gothic architecture in the city. It is currently used for storage for park maintenance equipment.



CRIMEA STABLES

Leakin Park

c. 1855

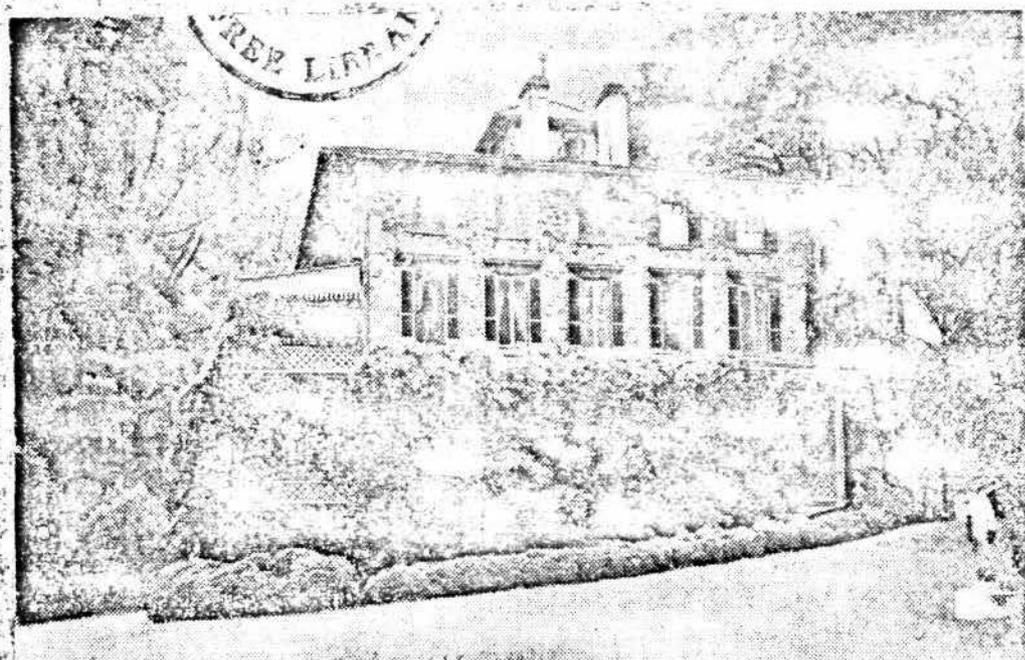
Architect: Unknown

The stable is one of the original structures of the Crimean estate. Like the mansion, it was built of stone and embellished with over-sized eave pendants.

Location: Md. Room, Enoch Hall

U. K. Miller

DO NOT CIRCULATE



The mansion on the old Crimea estate—money from the Czar's railroad helped build it

Crimea, The Mansion Rubles Built, Opens Doors To All Of Baltimore

Eve. Sun By Jacob Hay JUN 14 1948

Crimea, the country establishment which Thomas Winans built with the rubles he received for constructing a railroad from Moscow to St. Petersburg, is the latest old mansion of Baltimore to be incorporated in the city's park system.

What is now Leakin Park was originally all part of Crimea, but only recently were the last acres of the huge estate purchased by the city with funds provided by the late J. Wilson Leakin. Only in the past month has the newly acquired area been open to the public.

Crimea is a fabulous place. Legends of all kinds have grown about it. For years, Baltimore newspapermen delighted in exploding the theory that the old fortifications on the grounds had been built during the revolution. The fact is that Ross Winans, a strong southern sympathizer, in the Civil War simply didn't want a lot of Union soldiers tramping over his flower beds, and so constructed some mock earthworks, suitably rendered ominous by the addition of dummy cannon.

Disregarded Barriers

The Union troops passing the Winans estate paid no attention to the fortifications, chopped up the Winans's orchards for firewood and shortly thereafter clapped Ross Winans into Fort McHenry, feeling no doubt, that a man who would trouble to build a mock fort to hold off the Yankees would be much better out of temptation's way.

What Baltimoreans insisted was a dungeon on the grounds turned out to be a vegetable cellar and ice house.

Crimea, nevertheless, is a fascinating estate. In its halcyon days, a staff of eighteen was required to keep it in order. Today, two or three gardeners keep the weeds in check and the paint in trim.

Victorian architecture. Ivy-covered verandas stretch around three of its sides, and in their shade it would have been pleasant to sip a julep. The windows reach from floor to ceiling on two of its three floors. The front of the house is graced by an immense portecochere and two cast-iron lions of great age and tonnage.

The interior of the big house is largely empty, but well preserved. In the entrance hall, which is one and a half stories high, there is a huge landscape painting of the sort which only a house as large as Crimea could handle.

To the left is what was once the dining room, complete with a gilded chandelier of intricate design and great, gilded vases much embellished with scrolls, flowers and odd plants.

To the right of the drawing room, and at the end of the entrance hall is a tremendous enclosure, the width of the house and half its depth, which served the former owners as a living room. Here hang two large portraits which the city has purchased along with the house.

On the second floor are four awesome bedrooms, and on the third floor, where the ceilings are of normal height, a master's study, storage rooms and the circular wooden stairway which leads to the cupola.

The cellar of the mansion houses the kitchen and laundry and furnace rooms.

Traces Of The Past

As with all deserted houses, there still linger traces of the great old days. Much of the furnishings of Crimea were auctioned when the house was sold to the city, but there remain one or two giant, cracked ewers, left from the days when hot and cold running water had not enriched the nation's

the cover of the box is one of the prints from Godey's "Ladies Book." The dumb-waiter, made by James Bates, of Baltimore, still works smoothly in its shaft from kitchen to butler's pantry. In the king-size living room a tarnished and tasseled bell-pull still rings a bell below stairs.

The present caretaker of Crimea is Stanley Kirk, who was born on the estate 42 years ago. Kirk took over the job of keeping Crimea in shape from his father, who entered the employ of the Hutton family in 1900. Mr. Kirk, who knows the grounds perhaps better than did most of the inhabitants of the big house, will stay on under the city's management, a prospect which gratifies him very much.

Cases Of Destruction

Just as any private estate manager might feel, Mr. Kirk is concerned deeply over public treatment of the land on which he has lived for so long. There have already been instances of wanton destruction, especially on one of the estate's most charming buildings.

This is the miniature of the mansion, built as a playhouse for the Hutton children many years ago. Delightful little building, its ceilings are just high enough for a child, and in its interior layout it follows almost exactly the interior plan of the great house.

Already most of its windows have been shattered by some of the less considerate of the park's visitors.

"It's a shame that they just can't keep these big old places going anymore," Mr. Kirk remarked about Crimea, "but if people will only take care of it, this will be the prettiest park in Baltimore."

Although Crimea has been open to the public for little over a month, there are other evidences of

Across the beautifully landscaped lawn from the mansion stands Honeymoon House, a stone building like the mansion but on a smaller scale, where one of the newly wedded Hutton children lived, and not far away are the stables. Honeymoon House, according to R. Brooke Maxwell, of the Department of Recreation and Parks, will become the residence of the superintendent of the Carroll District of the park system.

One building has posed something of a problem to the park authorities. That is the chapel, a wooden building of American Gothic design, and possibly the only chapel the city has owned in some years. No plans for it have yet been made, but the chances are that it will be left intact.

Crimea itself will join the city's other mansions in Clifton and Druid Hill parks as a center of park activities. If the demand is sufficient, a food concession may be installed.

Plans are already under way to lay out baseball diamonds and to equip the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the mansion with the athletic gear usual in public parks.

It is a far, and possibly a trifle absurd cry from the days when the Czar of Russia slapped a rule across a map and ordered a railroad built, no matter how many bogs or lakes were in the way; when Thomas DeKay Winans returned from Russia loaded with honors and a million dollars to build the now-vanished Alexandroffsky on West Baltimore street, and Crimea on the Windsor Mill road.

All that remains of Alexandroffsky today are the two iron lions that guard the front door of Crimea—they were moved there when the former house was re-



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The Crimea

Baltimore, Maryland

photo: Ric Presky February 1987

neg loc: Presky, Dept. of Rec.
City of Baltimore

View of the entry drive and the Gothic
Revival Chapel from the south

3/40



B-45

The Crimea

Baltimore, Maryland

photo: Ric Presky February 1987

neg loc: Presky, Dept. of Rec.

City of Baltimore

Inside the Gothic Revival Chapel looking
at the altar with the transept door to
the right side of photo

6/40



B-45

The Crimea

Baltimore, Maryland

photo: Ric Presky February 1987

neg loc: Presky, Dept. of Rec.

City of Baltimore

Carriage House/Stable from the SE

7/40



B-45

The Crimea

Baltimore, Maryland

photo: Lisa Jensen June 1987

Neg loc: Preservation Consulting

811 Hollins Street

Baltimore, MD 21201

View of the Mansion from the NE

14/40