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Printed by McQuiddy Printing Company, Nashville, Tennessee

Foreword

Before the death of Adelia Acklen, she and the Belmont Mansion were becoming almost a legend in their own time. And throughout the years the legend has continued to grow. She and her home have fascinated Nashvillians up to the present day.

Although some scholarly work had already been done on the Acklen family and Belmont, the time had come for a thorough review of the source materials and to incorporate new materials which have come to light in the last decade. There was also a need for a booklet to publicize Belmont Mansion, an architectural treasure, and its restoration by the Historic Belmont Association.

In many respects, the booklet has been a cooperative endeavor. Mr. Bob Schatz in photography and Mrs. Charles R. Mott, Jr., in genealogical research have added significantly to the value of the work with their professional expertise. I am grateful to Mrs. James S. Ragsdale for her willingness to share her historical research and to provide guidance. Mrs. Amelia Edwards gave helpful counsel in the selection of photographs, architectural description, and the text. Miss Andrea Dunlap and Miss Lorenda McDONALD provided assistance in reading manuscript materials and providing historical data on request. Mrs. Jeannette Acklen Noel graciously, as always, gave invaluable historical information on the Acklen family and on furnishings in the mansion. I also greatly appreciated Mr. John W. Kiser, Mr. Mark E. Brown, Miss Margaret Warden, Dr. Hap Bryant, and my wife, Lucile P. Warden, for their valuable suggestions in respect to the text. I am in special debt to Mr. Michael Face and Mr. Bob Schatz for layout, to Miss Kathy Grenga for plotting the genealogical tables, and to Mrs. Evelyn Miller for sketching diagrams of Belmont Mansion and adjacent buildings. I was fortunate to be able to utilize the excellent materials preserved at the Tennessee State Library and Archives and to have the assistance of its trained staff. I also used the resources of other libraries both inside and outside of Nashville.

I wish to thank Dr. James Stamper, vice-president for academic affairs of Belmont College, and Dr. Roy Chamlee, head of the History Department, for approving a reduced teaching load while writing the text. I particularly appreciated the Historic Belmont Association for its approval of producing a booklet and the willingness of its officers, led by its treasurer, Dr. Ronald Underwood, to raise money to finance its publication. Mr. George A. West, III, provided valuable service in preparing the colored photographs for the booklet. Mrs. John C. Robinson, assisted by others, was very helpful in typing the manuscript.

I hope that the booklet will help to illuminate, at least in some small way, the rich historical and cultural heritage of Nashville. It is my desire that this work will not be the last word on Belmont Mansion and the Acklens, but it will foster further research. I would also hope it will encourage others to study the field of local and family history, making the past come alive for future generations.

Albert W. Warden, Jr.