

Sunday

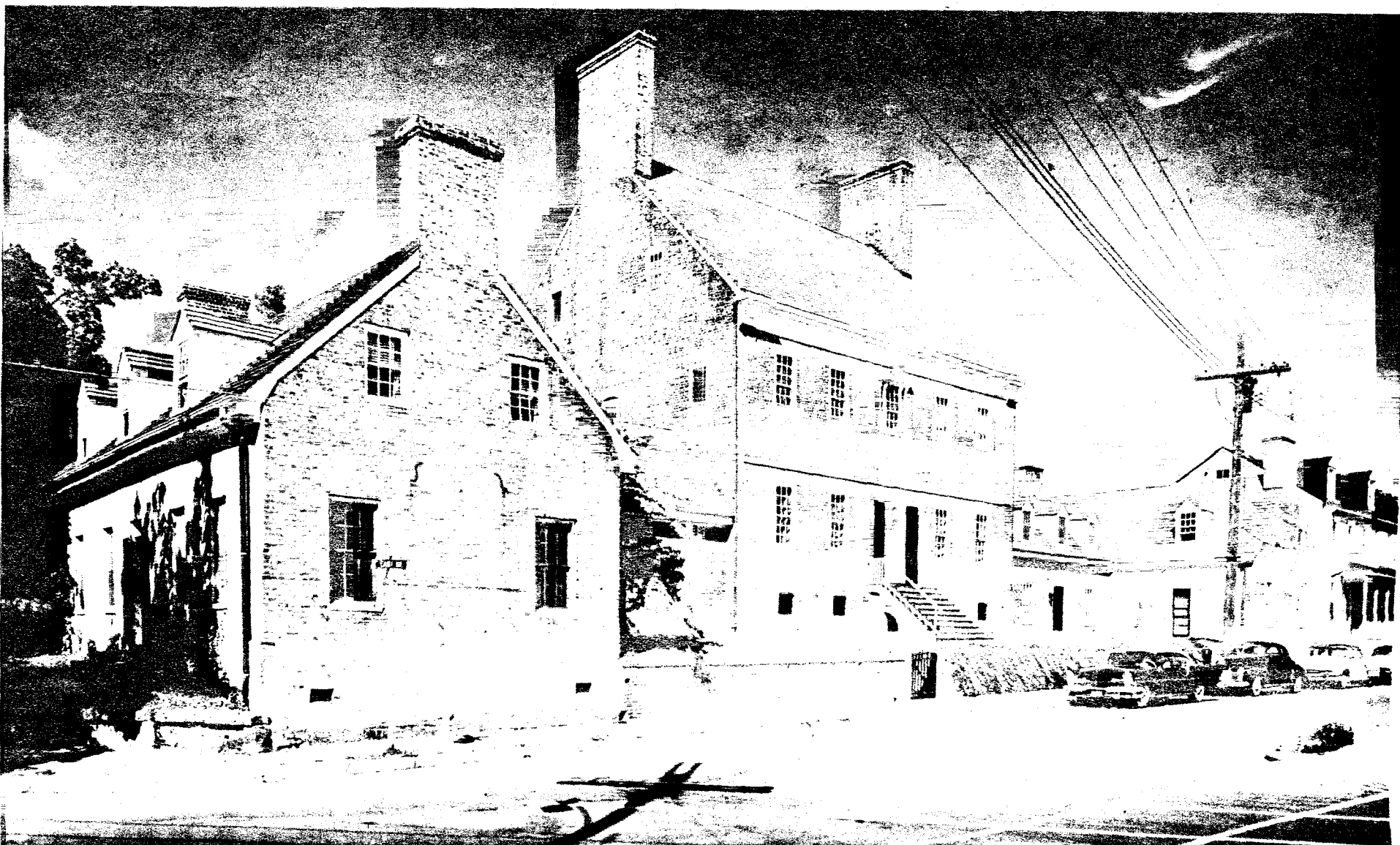
M A G A Z I N E

THE SUNDAY

BALTIMORE, MD.

METROGRAVURE

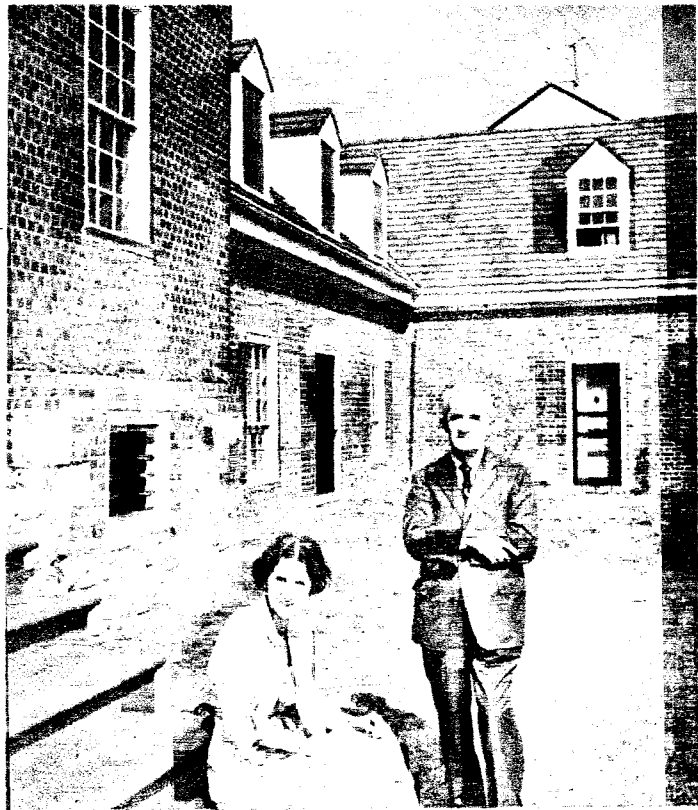
OCTOBER 17, 1937



Story on next page

The Brice House in Annapolis, dating to about 1766 and "unequaled in Colonial America," will be open to the public the week of October 17.

The Finest House in Colonial America



Mr. and Mrs. Stanley S. Wohl are the present owners of the house and Mrs. Wohl has supervised its restoration.

*An Annapolis Treasure,
the Brice House Will Be
Opened to the Public by
Its Owners During the
Week of October 12*

Story by Robert G. Breen

Photos by Richard Stacks

FOR the first time, the public is going to be able to see at close range the factors contributing to the statement that "the Brice House had no equal in Colonial America."

Beginning October 12, the Brice House will be opened to the public by the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley S. Wohl, in conjunction with the Heritage Week program of Historic Annapolis, Inc.

The house has been called "the most beautiful home in the United States" by no less an authority than William Graves Perry, chief architect of the Colonial Williamsburg and Tryon Palace restorations. It will be open to visitors on every day that week, from 10 A.M. to noon and for additional hours each afternoon.

Except for a few isolated instances, this is the first time, as far as is known, that the house has been so opened.

When built about 1766, the Brice House was the largest privately built Georgian town house in the colonies. A "five-part house," it had 35 rooms and was 186 feet long.

THE towering 90-foot chimneys of the main section flush with the gable ends, and the 44-degree pitch to the soaring roof give the house an air of imperious grandeur. Equally bold chimneys rise from the two wings at right angles to the chimneys of the main section.

Both the front and the back of the

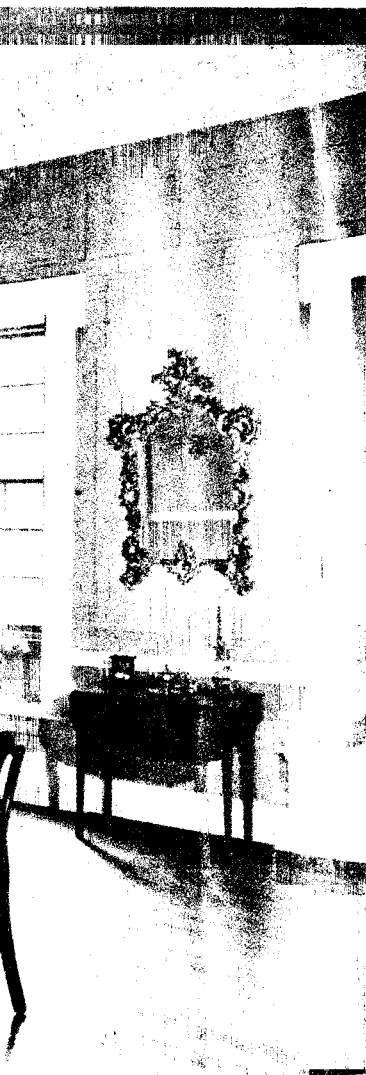
Continued on Next Page



A rear view of the house, which stands at Prince George and East streets. The chimneys tower 90 feet above the ground.



The Finest House in the Colonies



Continued from Page 19

main section are built entirely of oversized brick (4 inches by 9 inches). Nothing but header bricks were used.

The east side of the house is laid in Flemish bond, and the west side in English bond.

The work of restoring the Brice House has been the accomplishment of Mrs. Wohl, who single-handed set about the task in 1953, when the house was acquired from St. John's College. St. John's had used it as an apartment house for members of its teaching staff.

Mrs. Wohl, who has taken no liberties with the restoration, prefers to call it a "rejuvenation," since the house had never been mutilated. Her principal job was to remove the partitioned rooms and the old heating, electrical and gas systems and replace them with more discreet or invisible facilities.

IN removing the many layers of paint from the interior walls, Mrs. Wohl has come upon the original colors. In repainting the walls, she has had these colors especially mixed and matched.

Mrs. Wohl has repainted the plaster paneled walls (held to be the finest in the country) of the ballroom the palest blue. This sets off to fine advantage the great fireplace mantel and the molded plaster cornices.

The elaborate wood carving of the ballroom fireplace with its ornate lateral consoles and the ornamented frieze and eared overmantel panel, along with the plaster cornices of oak leaves, dentils and modillions, are held by many archi-

tectural experts to be the work of William Buckland, one of the most famous architects of the Colonial period. Giving substance to this claim is the stairway of Santo Domingo mahogany with carved scrolled step ends and a band of Greek fret ornament such as is seen in the Hammond-Harwood House.

An interesting feature of the family parlor, which is at the back of the house, is the fireplace mantel balanced with what appear to be two double-doored china closets. One concealed a large outside closet, complete with a small window. The other contains a secret staircase, used for a graceful exit when the family wished to be "not at home."

ALONG with the first floor of the Brice House and the herb garden, the basement will also be open for public viewing. Artifacts and memorabilia connected with the Brice House will be displayed there.

The basement is divided into five rooms, all of native stone, used as supports for the massive building. One wall runs clear from the cellar through the ballroom to the third story. Four massive stone arches almost 8 feet in height help give foundation support to the great chimneys.

The fondness of the builder for the arch is seen throughout the house, from basement to the top.

The vaulted arched ceiling of the second floor hallway is held to be the only one of its kind in an American Eighteenth Century home.

More Pictures on Next Page



The family parlor, left. The doors on either side of the fireplace, although they are of china-closet type, really give entrance to the secret stairway that is here partly visible, and to an outside storage room.



The ballroom, above. Its plaster paneled walls are called the finest of the kind in the country. The pale blue color sets off advantageously the fireplace mantel and the molded plaster cornices.

At the right, the dining room. The chandelier, believed to have been made about 1790, is of Waterford glass. It is 4½ feet deep and has a spread of nearly 4 feet, with sixteen arms in two tiers.



The stairway is Santo Domingo mahogany. Because the house had never been mutilated, Mrs. Wohl regards her work as "rejuvenation."