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Transition Years

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1975

August — Federal tax lien of over \$4,000 filed by IRS. Lane closes hotel, which now numbers 104 rooms. First Alabama Bank forecloses on mortgage of \$312,000 of July 30, 1973 and another of July 22, 1974. Monroe had previously sold his interest.

December — First Alabama Bank buys the hotel and its contents for \$300,000

1978

December — State Board of Corrections meets with Huntsville delegation to propose work-release center in the hotel. State board plans to send “letter of intent” to buy REH “assuming it meets fire and safety codes.” Huntsville Central City Association opposes the idea.

1979

March — First Alabama Bank sells the hotel to Dr. Tom Lawson, a local orthodontist, and H. Carey Walker, Jr., a Huntsville attorney. It’s not clear what the hotel will be used for.

May — Public sale of the hotel’s furnishings begins and continues for more than a month.

1982

July — Owners of Russel Erskine Ltd., Charles R. Smith, Harvey Morris, Thomas Lawson, Carey Walker, Clyde Roberts, and Memphis attorney Elwood Edwards, want to convert REH to apartment complex for elderly. Owners put up \$1.2 million for renovation and hope to get \$2.5 million in tax-exempt bonds through Huntsville Preservation Authority.

December — Building will contain sixty-nine apartments: fifty-seven one-bedroom units; ten two-bedroom units, and two rooms for handicapped residents.

1983

July — REH to reopen September 15 after \$3.6 million renovation. The remaining owners worked with the federal government’s Housing and Urban Development (HUD) agency to meet requirements. Rehab was financed by \$1.2 million investments from owners and \$2.45 million tax-free bonds through the Historic Preservation Authority. Residents will have to meet HUD income requirements.