

P11005707

# DATA SHEET

Form 10-300  
(Rev. 6-72)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Kentucky
COUNTY:	Scott
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	MAR 13 1975

### 1. NAME

COMMON: **\*\*** Cardome <sup>S.F.</sup> (Gov. Robinson House)

AND/OR HISTORIC: Governor James Fisher Robinson House

### 2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: U.S. 25 North, 1/2 mile north of north limits of Georgetown

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 6

STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021 COUNTY: Scott CODE: 209

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

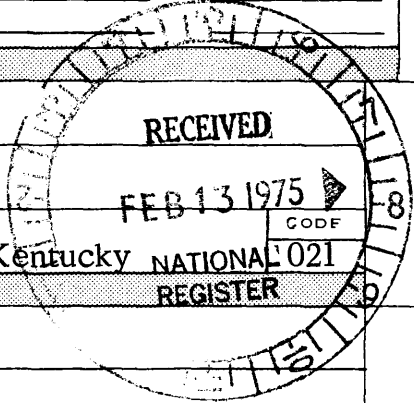
Agricultural  
 Educational  
 Entertainment  
 Government  
 Industrial  
 Military  
 Museum  
 Park  
 Private Residence  
 Religious  
 Scientific  
 Transportation  
 Comments  
 Other (Specify) Rest Home

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Sisters of the Visitation

STREET AND NUMBER: Route 3, Cincinnati Pike

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021



### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Scott County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER: East Main Street

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kentucky Heritage Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 401 Wapping Street

CITY OR TOWN: Frankfort STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE

COUNTY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
(Check One)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered
(Check One)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cardome is situated on a slight rise overlooking the meanders of North Elkhorn Creek and the former bed of the Frankfort and Cincinnati Railway line toward the county seat of Georgetown. It lies just to the north of town along the Cincinnati turnpike in extensive grounds that blend easily into the rich agricultural landscape.

The construction history of Cardome is a complex one. At the heart of the present institutional structures remaining essentially intact, is the antebellum residence built originally by the Chambers' in 1821 and considerably enlarged in several stages later. The original house seems to have been a plain two-story Flemish-bond brick block with central hall and a single room on either side on both floors (see photo 1). The frame of a fine Federal door with sidelights remains intact on the upper story although altered by a change in floor between the house and the corridor that connects it with the later building. Upstairs in the early rooms are plain but well-proportioned Federal mantels and chair railing.

It was probably James Robinson who, shortly after his purchase of the property in 1844, enlarged it toward the rear (west). An interior corridor was run across the back. This contains a handsome curved stairway and leads to the state dining room, a high-ceilinged chamber with austere but noble Greek Revival details. A pantry and kitchen were beyond. West of the south side of the house is another long frame ell, this one with a double gallery along its south side (see photo 2). It is said that Robinson's bedroom was upstairs in this wing and that he rode his horse up the bending flight of stairs that connects the lower with the upper floor of the gallery at the west end. Here, too, is plain Grecian woodwork. The woodwork in the front parlors seems also to have been altered to conform with that of the new wing at this time. Other later additions to the residence include an elegant Victorian Rococo Revival castiron mantelpiece in one lower room and pressed tin ceilings installed in the 1920s. (A frame third story was added over the main block of the house at a later date.)

The Sisters of the Visitation have added a number of fairly large wings, while respecting the fabric of the residence. They first erected a three-story rectangular wing to the north, with characteristic late Victorian machine-trimmed details.

The main addition, which constitutes the portion of the complex visible from the road and indeed from the town, was erected in two campaigns just before and after 1900. It is L-shaped, the earlier  
(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1821; ca. 1845; 1896; 1900; and later**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agriculture  | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cardome, since its construction in 1821, has been associated with individuals important in educational, cultural, and political fields. The distinction of "Cardome" is essentially twofold. The present institutional building surrounds a structure that was at one time the residence of James Fisher Robinson, prominent Kentucky lawyer and Governor of Kentucky for a period during the Civil War. Around the core of this several times enlarged antebellum dwelling have been erected the impressive wings that house the Roman Catholic community which has played so conspicuous a role in the religious and educational life of central Kentucky for several generations.

The older portion of the building was constructed in 1821 by Colonel Benjamin S. Chambers and his wife Violetta. Violetta Chambers was the daughter of Fielding Bradford, the co-founder of the Kentucky Gazette, the first newspaper established west of the Alleghenies. An important member of his community, Chambers served two terms as county clerk and was appointed in 1823 notary public by Governor John Adair. He was also a veteran of the War of 1812, one of the six surviving members of "Forlorn Hope," the twenty-man force which drew first fire at the Battle of the Thames.

During the early 1830s the Chambers' deeded their estate, which they had named "Acacia Grove," to Ewell Pullen, who in turn sold the property to John C. Miller. In 1836 it was purchased by Samuel Worthington and two years later by James K. Burch, who sold it to his daughter Sarah and her husband Danford Thomas. James Fisher Robinson bought the house from Thomas in 1844, naming it "Cardome," from the Latin words cara domus, meaning "dear home."

Born in Scott County in 1800, Robinson was an extremely successful lawyer when elected to the State Senate in 1851. He was again elected to that body in 1861 and in September of the same year was made Speaker of the Senate. During Robinson's political career in the State Legislature the threat of war between the states was all pervasive and hung over Kentucky like a black cloud. No cabin in

(continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bevins, Ann B. "Cardome Historical Marker to Be Dedicated Wednesday." The Graphic (April 22, 1965).

\_\_\_\_\_ "Sisters of the Visitation" (November 22, 1974).

Edwards, Richard A. "Pioneer Catholics in Kentucky." The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, Vol. 68 (July, 1970), pp. 252-264.

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

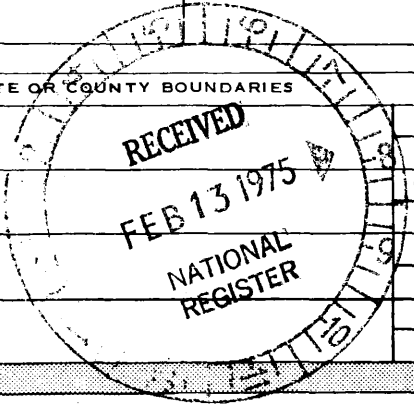
LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		38° 13' 21"	84° 34' 03"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

16/712950  
423.100  
C2



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: Ann Bolton Bevins, Scott County Representative GM/WEL

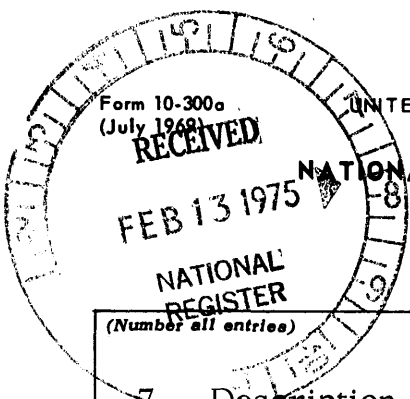
ORGANIZATION: Kentucky Heritage Commission DATE: Oct. 27, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER: Route 4, Lexington Pike

CITY OR TOWN: Georgetown STATE: Kentucky CODE: 021

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name <u>Cedric W. Milton</u></p> <p>Title <u>State Liaison Officer</u></p> <p>Date <u>2-10-75</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>A. R. Mortensen</u> Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date <u>3/13/75</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>W. H. Huntley</u> Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date <u>3-12-75</u></p>
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Form 10-300a  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

Cardome

7. Description (continued)

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wing north-south and linked to the house by a two-story corridor, and the later, front portion more or less facing south. A narrow courtyard around the old residence leaves it almost free-standing.

These institutional wings, designed by Samuel Hannaford and Sons of Cincinnati, are architecturally impressive in their own right. The four-story mass sits well on its hill-top with the taller belfry effectively climaxing the composition and providing a visual landmark from Georgetown (see photo 3). The overall flavor of the design is Italianate, or at least Mediterranean, with Roman brick walls, stone trim, and a red tile roof only recently (and reluctantly) replaced with composition. The detail, though sparse, is well-placed, finely conceived and executed. An indirect flight of steps with stone volutes and balustrades leads to the wide entrance with its Baroque swan-neck pediment and cartouche supported on engaged Ionic columns. The paneled double door is framed by a segmental arch with prominent voussoirs. Above the vestibule is the five-story tower with triple open arcade above the roofline of the main block. The first story is grooved horizontally and there are narrow courses of stone between stories and paired windows at lintel and impost level (the windows of the third floor are round-arched). The hipped roofs of the dormers echo those of the main planes of the roof.

The arrangement of the interior is quite complex to allow for the separation of the convent, school, and other functions while providing circulation and communication when needed. The details are delicate but chaste and discriminatingly applied. The climax is the chapel at the southeast corner of the second story. Its shallow vaulting and classical (more Hepplewhite than Father Blakely's "Romanesque") trim defining edges has a light and cool effect. To one side of the sanctuary is a broad opening to the convent, with golden oak latticework filling in the lunette under the vault at the upper level; from here nuns could participate in the Mass without being seen from below. The cloister in the upper portion of the west wing was once connected by a narrow spiral stair in a corner turret with the rooms below, which include a spacious double parlor with both paneled and open latticework doors.

In recent years some alterations and additions have been made to the north wing, and a covered walkway with closed corridor above has been  
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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

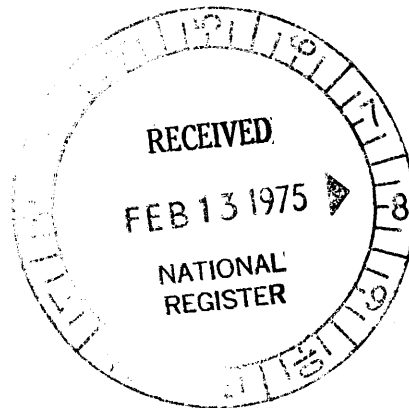
Cardome

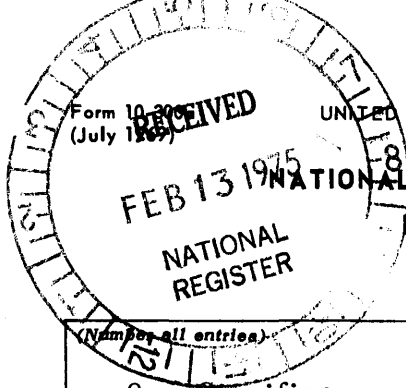
7. Description (continued)

Page 3

erected to connect the north and east wings. The main portion of the turn of-the-century building remains, however, very much intact.

There is a charming old octagonal gazebo on the grounds (see photo 5) and several unobtrusive outbuildings, some of them perhaps dating back to Robinson's ownership of the property (see photo 6).





Form 10-200  
(July 1965)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

Cardome

8. Significance (continued)

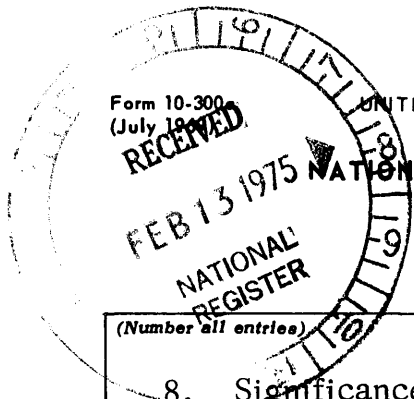
Kentucky was so remote in the wilderness that its occupants were not made aware of the crises and gave thought to it, stated Nathaniel Southgate Shaler (Clark, p. 335). Kentucky's position as a border state made her situation critical. The Confederate states believed that with Kentucky among their ranks and the Southern frontier extended to the Ohio River, they would be certain to prevail in their struggle against the North. Kentucky's failure to respond to the Confederate call was due to the leadership of the governor and the legislature and their decision to maintain the state's neutrality, a noble but wishful dream. Neither Confederate nor Union respected that neutrality and troops from both sides swarmed into southern and western Kentucky during the early days after the outbreak of the war.

Concluding that Kentucky's course was hopeless, Governor Beriah Magoffin, in 1862, one year before the completion of his term, decided to resign the governorship. Robinson had since resigned his position as speaker but was re-elected August 16, 1862, so that he might become Governor upon the resignation of Magoffin (the lieutenant-governor had died and Magoffin picked Robinson to be his successor). On August 18, 1862, Robinson became governor and served for one year until the next gubernatorial election. A Union Democrat, Governor Robinson was intensely loyal to the Union and his administration, although short, is celebrated for the courage with which he discharged every duty, regardless of the consequences.

Robinson retired from public office after his term as governor and moved back to Cardome. He gave much attention to his 300-acre estate, but he also continued to practice law. He was a well-known and widely respected lawyer and was connected with many of the celebrated law cases of the state in his day. Robinson died at Cardome in 1882.

On September 7, 1896, Cardome was purchased by the Sisters of the Visitation from Robinson's heirs. This particular order was founded in 1610 by Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, and Sister Jane de Chantal, a former baroness. In America the Visitation nuns were established in 1799 with the founding of the Georgetown Visitation convent in Washington, D. C. On June 1, 1864, the House of the Visitation was opened at Maysville, Kentucky; and in 1875, the Superior Mother Mary Gonzaga was invited to open a convent in Scott County on the farm of St. Francis' church.

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Form 10-300  
(July 1973)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

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Cardome

8. Significance (continued)

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Roman Catholics were among the first settlers in Kentucky. The majority migrated from Maryland to communities in the Nelson, Washington, and Marion County region. It was in 1786 that a party on its way from Maryland to Nelson County stopped in Scott County and found the area so attractive they decided to stay. The first Catholic Church in Scott County, St. Francis (entered on the National Register August 11, 1973), was erected in 1794. It was to this church and the Mount Admirabilis Academy that the Sisters of the Visitation came in 1875.

During the following twenty years after their arrival at St. Francis, the Sisters were to witness the slow decline of the church and the school, located nine miles from the small town of White Sulphur. As enrollment at the school dropped, relocation was discussed and the decision made when the Robinson estate, which included the home, outbuildings, furnishings, and eighty-seven acres of land, became available in Georgetown.

Before the final move was made, the nuns had constructed a three-story dormitory and academy on the Robinson property. Also at about this time the Governor's law office was torn down and the bricks used to construct a chaplains' residence. Construction on the main building, the massive block which fronts U.S. 25, was begun in 1900. The well-known and prolific firm of Samuel Hannaford and Son, Cincinnati architects, was secured. "Of imposing proportions, excellent taste and remarkable solidity...a monument to the scientific and professional skill of the producers. The interior of the building," read an early account, "is occupied by a well-proportioned group of visiting parlors, classrooms, refectories and libraries. The center of the building secrets a charming little chapel in the Romanesque style of architecture." (Blakely, p. 23)

The building project amounted to one-half a million dollars, though at the start the sisters had in hand only about \$16. However they were committed to providing a school for those who desired a Christian education and were undeterred by lack of funds. As with former financial difficulties, the problems were somehow met and overcome.

The Sisters at Cardome never lacked for friends. Support came from the community and of course from their own Catholic family. Bishop Maes, the third Bishop of Covington, though interested in all church schools, had a special affection for Cardome. He would often visit (continued)



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Cardome

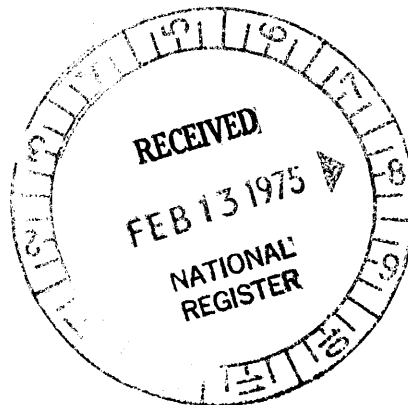
8. Significance (continued)

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there, ostensibly to rest, but in reality to confer with the Sisters, to encourage them, to talk with the pupils and to plan for the future of the school.

Between 1900 and 1969 at Cardome, 583 girls were graduated. Peak enrollment was recorded during World War II with 130 students. In 1969 the Sisters concluded the last academic session of Cardome Visitation Academy and chose to divert their program to a pre-school and elementary education project utilizing the famous Montessori method. A residence for senior citizens has also been established.

Although the facilities are at present under-utilized, the handsome main building with its conspicuous bell-tower and well-maintained grounds is one of the outstanding features of the landscape north of Georgetown. The institutions it has housed have long played a like role in the religious life of the community.



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(Number all entries)

Cardome

9. Major Bibliographical References (continued) Page 2

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Gaines, B. O. History of Scott County, Vol. II. Scott County: Published by the author, 1905, p. 351, 299; Vol. I, p. 159.

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