

# A Walking Tour Of Myers Park

*Dr. Dan L. Morrill  
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*The tour will take about two hours. It begins at the intersection of Harvard Place and Queens Road. Park your vehicle on Harvard Place and walk to the intersection of Queens Road. Please remain on the sidewalk to observe all sites on the tour.*

John Springs Myers had already carved off part of his farm to create the [Cherry](#) neighborhood in 1891. His new dream was to turn the rest of his large cotton farm into an elegant suburb. He must have spent many evenings discussing the plan with his family and especially with his son-in-law, George Stephens. Stephens, who came to Charlotte after graduating from the University of North Carolina, joined the insurance firm of Walter Brem in 1896.



*John Springs Myers*

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*George Stephens*

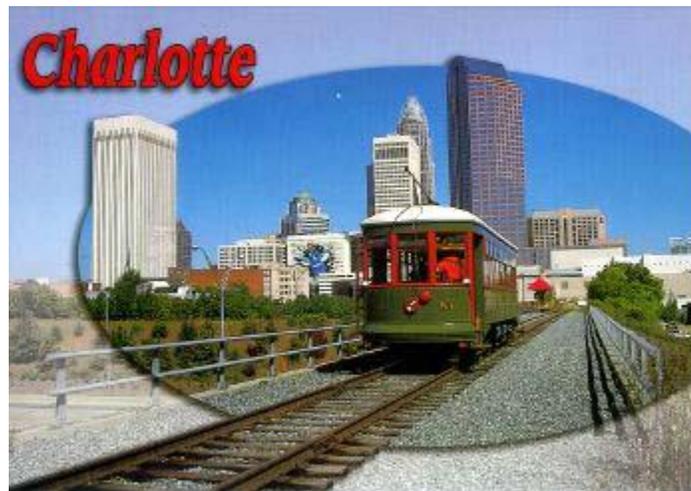
A talented businessman, Stephens was able to take advantage of the excellent opportunities that turn-of-the-century Charlotte provided, and he quickly became involved in several schemes. He and Brem joined realtor F.C. Abbott and textile banker B.D. Heath in developing part of [Elizabeth](#), and in 1901, Stephens, Abbott, and Word H. Wood set up the Southern States Trust Company (now NationsBank). In 1911, he founded the Stephens Company with Word Wood and A.J. Draper, and began to turn his father-in-law's dream into a reality. Moved by the same fashion consciousness as E.D. Latta, the company hired a city planner to make the plans. They chose John Nolen, whose design for Independence Park had impressed Stephens a great deal. It was a good choice, for Nolen later became one of the nation's top planners with over 400 projects to his name.

Nolen's vision for Myers Park was to use the natural curves, gentle hills, and creeks to create a secluded glen cut off from the city. A major boulevard would unite the whole and provide trolley service to homes scattered along winding side roads. The results earned Myers Park national acclaim as the "finest unified subdivision south of Baltimore." To the modern visitor, the New South Neighborhoods appear to have been constructed in the midst of a forest, but in fact this was not the case. It is hard to imagine those first years when it must have been plain to new residents that they were living on former cotton fields, and it was only hard work that changed the scenery. In Myers Park that work began in 1915, when Nolen hired the landscape architect Earle Sumner Draper to turn the almost treeless farmland into a suburban park. "Willow, oak, tulip poplar, and elm" were selected to grace the sidewalks and gardens. Early buyers even had their lots landscaped free of charge. Not a man to let nature take its own time, James B. Duke insisted that large trees be planted as well, and summoned one of his estate gardeners to oversee the task.

The oldest section of Myers Park is towards the northern area that you will enter first. For some years the suburb acted as a separate incorporated town. As houses were erected, wealthy Charlotteans were lured out of the center city. The first wave came from among the executives of the eight-year old Southern Public Utilities Company (now Duke Power), and included its legendary president, James Buchanan Duke. The next wave of residents included bank presidents and real estate magnates such as George Stephens himself. Then came the textile executives such as the famous Springs family. Civic and commercial leaders also chose to locate their family houses here, including members of the families that owned the Belk, Ivey, and Efir department stores, and "Good Roads" Governor Cameron Morrison.

### 1. Queens Road

Until 1938, [streetcars](#) ran down the median of the road. The *Charlotte Observer* tells an amusing story of schoolboys greasing the tracks where Queens Road dipped into the valley on this stretch. One Halloween night in the mid-1930's both tracks were greased and a little gunpowder was included in the mixture. "As the streetcar struggled vainly to get up the hill in either direction, anonymous groups lighted the gunpowder-grease mixture. The way those streaks of fire swooshed down the tracks, under the car, and up the other hill was something to behold. No damage, just a real great sight."



Queens Road was the backbone of the neighborhood. It was the streetcar that made Myers Park possible. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, Charlotte has been "penny wise and pound foolish." To make way for automobiles, Morehead St. was extended

from [Dilworth](#) and connected to Queens Road, which has transformed Nolen's majestic streetcar boulevard into a thoroughfare for automobiles.

*Walk north on Harvard Place and stop in front of the Stephens House at 522 Harvard Place.*

## 2. George Stephens House



George Stephens built this house for himself in 1915. His father-in-law's 1867 country home used to stand behind, and for a time it was used as a garage and servant's quarters. The house combines Colonial Revival and Bungalow influences. Its architect, L.L. Hunter, came from nearby Huntersville, and designed other buildings in the area, including the Carnegie Library on the Johnson C. Smith University campus. A later owner of the house was William States Lee, legendary engineer for Duke Power Company and the grandfather of the recently deceased Bill Lee. John Springs Myers's farmhouse stood on a hilltop immediately behind this home.

*Continue north on Harvard Place to Ardsley Road. Cross Ardsley Road and turn right and continue to the intersection of Hermitage Road. Turn left and observe Lynnwood on your left at 400 Hermitage Road.*

### 3. Lynnwood



Known variously as "Lynnwood," "White Oaks," or just "the big house," this large Colonial Revival mansion is where James Buchanan Duke and his family spent several months of each year between 1919 and his death in 1925. It was one of four family houses and provided Duke with a place from which to oversee his thriving utility empire. It also gave his only daughter, Doris, the opportunity to experience Southern life and society. Duke enlarged an earlier mansion built here in 1915 by one of his executives, Z. V. Taylor, so that it included 45 rooms and 12 bathrooms. He chose the architect C. C. Hook to design the additions and Earle Sumner Draper to landscape the 15-acre garden. Duke had 12 miles of pipeline laid to the Catawba River to provide a 150-foot fountain on the grounds--this in itself became known as a local wonder.

Duke was already a tobacco magnate when he acquired the fledgling Catawba Power Company of Fort Mill in 1904. Building dams to harness the power of the river, his Southern Utility Company facilitated the expansion of the cotton industry in early twentieth-century Charlotte. It was in this house, incidentally, that Duke set up the endowments which transformed Trinity College into Duke University and which benefited several other institutions including Johnson C. Smith University and Davidson College.

*Look across Hermitage Road to the Lambeth House at 435 Hermitage Road.*

#### 4. Charles E. Lambeth House



Charles E. Lambeth was a prominent real estate developer and a symbol of the profession's power in City government. He served as Charlotte's mayor from 1931 through 1933. Lambeth's wife was the only daughter of the founder of the Cannon Mills. Lambeth's white stucco mansion, facing J. S. Myers Park, which is owned by a private foundation, is in the French Renaissance style. It is also the work of Charles Barton Keen. Its distinctive green tile roof is a Keen trademark. It was built in 1927.

*Continue along Hermitage Road to the bottom of the hill and observe Edgehill Park on your left.*

#### 5. Edgehill Park



Edgehill Park was the centerpiece of Myers Park. Unlike most developers, who simply regarded a creek bed as a nuisance, Nolen seized upon it as an asset - a green space in the middle of the neighborhood. It still serves that function today and reinforces the curvilinear street pattern of the neighborhood.

*Continue along Hermitage Road and stop at the Cramer House at 200 Hermitage Road.*

### **6. S. W. Cramer, Jr. House**



Stuart W. Cramer, Jr. was heir to Stuart Cramer, Sr., pioneer inventor of mill machinery whose papers are now at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Stuart Cramer, Jr. ran the family's mills at Cramerton, N.C. in Gaston County for many years. Martin Boyer, one of Charlotte premier revivalist architects, designed this Tudor Revival style home. Note the "half timbering" on the upper story.

*Continue along Hermitage Road a short distance and turn right on to Hermitage Court. The Simmons House is the first house on your right.*

### **7. Frank Simmons House**



Frank M. Simmons was a major Charlotte contractor who developed Hermitage Court, which, like Myers Park, opened in 1912. This house was erected in 1913 and is one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood. Its Neoclassical dimensions and appointments are reminiscent of affluent turn-of-the-century Charlotte. Note its grand semi-circular portico with the two-story columns.

*Reverse your direction on Hermitage Road and take your first left on to Moravian Lane. Continue to the Church on your left.*

## 8. The Little Church On The Lane



Originally known as Myers Park Moravian Church, this is the oldest church in Myers Park, organized in the early 1920's. The main sanctuary was designed by William H. Peeps, an Englishman who came to Charlotte from Michigan soon after 1900. The Moravians, a Christian denomination which owes has modern roots in German Pietism, were so skeptical about the church succeeding in Charlotte that they designed the original building so it could be easily turned into an apartment house. Herbert Spaugh was the minister of this church for many years and served as Chairman of the Charlotte Board of Education. The land for the church was donated by the Wolhford family, whose house is now a funeral home.

*Continue on Moravian Lane and take a right at Providence Road. Continue on Providence Road until its intersection with Ardsley Road. The Thies House is behind the bushes to the right.*

## 9. Ocsar J. Thies House



The Thies family were German immigrants drawn to Charlotte by the opportunities in gold mining. They built this house outside of the city in 1898, and when Myers Park had grown up around it in the late 1910's, remodeled it to its present stuccoed Colonial Revival appearance. Oscar Thies was an active force in Charlotte real estate development. His Thies-Smith Realty Company built many of Myers Park's mansions.

*Continue along Providence Road, cross Hermitage Road and you will see the Jamison House on your right at 802 Providence Road.*

## 10. The John and Lucille Jamison House



This house was erected in Myers Park (1912) and was designed for hotel owners John and Lucille Jamison by Louis H. Asbury, Sr. It was built using North Carolina granite laid in a cobweb pattern. Sadly, before it was completed, Mr. Jamison was killed by a train in the Mecklenburg community of Newell while out on a country drive. Mrs. Jamison, however, completed the house and the family lived there for 63 years. Louis H. Asbury, Sr. (1877-1975) was the son of Martha Moody Asbury and S. J. Asbury of Charlotte. In addition to being one of the first carriers for the *Charlotte Observer*, the young Asbury assisted his father, who was a builder of houses in Charlotte in the 1890's. Asbury graduated from Trinity College, now Duke University, in 1900 and received his architectural training at M.I.T., where he probably met John Nolen. Asbury returned to Charlotte and established his architectural practice in 1908. He was the first North Carolina member of the American Institute of Architects.

*Continue along Providence Road, cross Queens Road, look across Queens Road to your left at Myers Park United Methodist Church.*

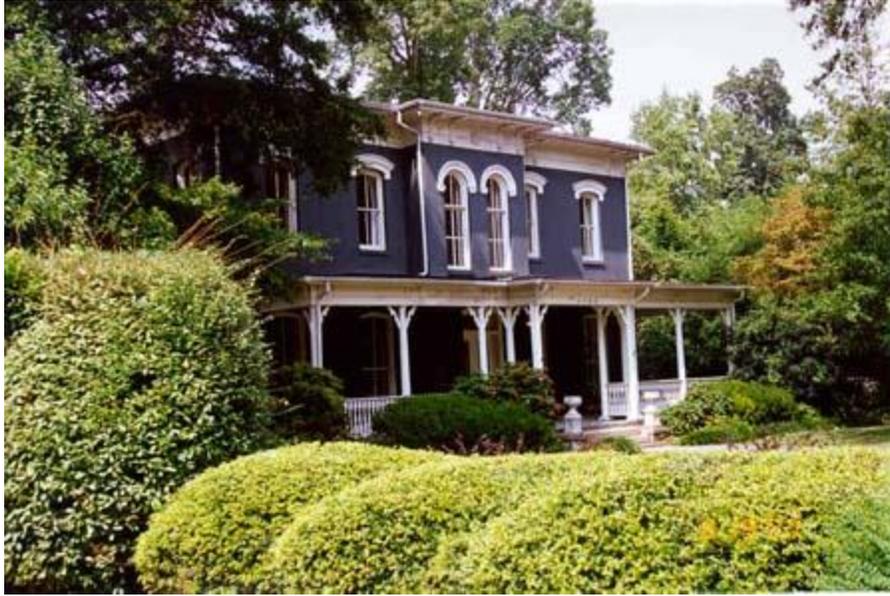
## **11. Myers Park United Methodist Church**



Louis Asbury, Sr. designed the Myers Park United Methodist Church that faces you across this intersection of Queens and Providence roads. Built in 1929, the building closely imitates medieval Gothic churches in its picturesque tower, stonework, wall buttressing, and pointed-arch clerestory windows. Although Asbury recognized the predilection of affluent Charlotteans for Neoclassical and Neo Colonial motifs, he personally preferred the Gothic Revival style. Consequently, it is not surprising that he selected this form for the design of Myers Park United Methodist Church, of which he was a member and where his funeral was held in March, 1975. This was originally the location of a Myers Park community store.

*Continue along Queens Road to the McManaway House on your right at 1700 Queens Road.*

## **12. Rintels-McManaway House**



Like "Victoria" on The Plaza in [Plaza-Midwood](#), the Rintels-McManaway House, was moved to the suburbs from the center city. It was constructed on West Trade St. near Graham St. in 1874 as the elegant home of Jacob Rintels, a Jewish merchant. The house was moved to Myers Park in 1916 and became the home of Dr. Charles McManaway, a prominent physician. The house is a rare surviving example of the Victorian Italianate style, with its bracketed cornice, tall arched windows with decorative crowns, and a shallow roof.

The house has a sad history: the first two owners died when they were relatively young and at the height of their careers. The first was a Jewish immigrant and merchant, Jacob Rintels, who was a partner of Samuel Wittkowsky's in a successful Uptown wholesale and retail business. Dr. Charles McManaway died two years after the house was moved. The *Charlotte Observer* commented as follows in 1918 on Dr. McManaway's demise.

Brave man and able physician that he was, he faced the inevitable with heroic courage, knowing only too well the physical agony that must be his before the end would come. Days and nights of excruciating suffering followed. His fellow physicians ministered unto him with heart and skill. Two weeks ago his condition became desperate, and from that he literally died daily.

***Continue along Queens Road to the Cameron Morrison House at 1830 Queens Road.***

### 13. Cameron Morrison House



When this Colonial Revival style residence was constructed in 1919, Cameron Morrison (1869-1953) was president of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. A native of Richmond County, North Carolina, Morrison was an adroit and flamboyant politician. His initial forays into the public arena occurred in the 1890's, when as a young attorney, he headed the Red Shirt movement in Richmond County, a collection of citizens dedicated to the principles of white supremacy.

Morrison moved his law practice to Charlotte in 1905 and prospered. His first wife, May Tomlison Morrison of Durham, N.C., died soon after the family moved into their Myers Park home. In 1920, Morrison defeated O. Max Gardner in the Democratic primary for Governor and was elected. He was known as the "Good Roads Governor." He pushed a program of paved highways that made North Carolina a leader in transportation in the South. Nor surprisingly, a good number of the newly paved roads led to Charlotte, aiding the city's growth as a major distribution center. In 1924, Morrison married Sara Ecker Watts, millionairess and widow of George W. Watts of Durham. Soon thereafter, he and his wealthy new wife began the construction of Morrocroft, to which they moved in 1927.

*Continue along Queens Road, cross Radcliffe Ave. and walk on to the Queens College Campus.*

#### 14. Queens College



George Stephens was no doubt copying W.S. Alexander's enterprising idea (remember Elizabeth College?) when he decided to attract Presbyterian College for Women from its Uptown location to a 50-acre lot of its choice in Myers Park. He was not, however, the only suitor that Presbyterian College for Women had. Three others, including E.D. Latta, made their own offers and forced Stephens to increase his offer. Eventually he won out, and the college moved here in 1914. John Nolen laid out the plan for the college, renamed Queens College, and subsequently used the same ideas in other campus designs, including the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. C. C. Hook designed the first five buildings: Administration, Science and Art, the Conservatory of Music, and North and South dormitories.

*Cross Selwyn Ave. and Queens Road to your left and look at the Snyder House, now part of a condominium project, at 1901 Queens Road.*

#### 15. J. Luther Snyder House



This magnificent Colonial Revival style home, now part of a condominium project, was built in 1920 as the home of J. Luther Snyder. In April, 1902, Snyder, a Virginia native, moved here from Atlanta, where he had worked for the Coca-Cola Company for two years, and established the first Coca-Cola bottling plant in Charlotte. "When I came to Charlotte, the city had 17,000 people, eighteen saloons, two breweries . . . and I had a terrible time selling soft drinks with that kind of competition," Snyder remembered many years later. Happily for Snyder, the temperance movement was sweeping the South, and it would soon sound the death knell for the breweries and the saloons. Charlotte was becoming a major textile center; and the industrial workers, forced to labor for long hours in the stifling heat. They needed something to drink, and when they could no longer buy "hard" liquor, they turned to Snyder's Coca-Cola. The house was designed by Martin Boyer, one of Charlotte's leading Revivalist architects.

*Reverse your direction on Queens Road and continue to the Draper House at 1621 Queens Road.*

## **16. Earle Sumner Draper House**



Almost opposite the Italianate McManaway house, at 1621 Queens, is Earle Sumner Draper's own Tudor Revival residence. From his beginning as on-site supervisor for John Nolen in 1915, Draper became the leading planner in the southeastern U.S. In 1933, he left Charlotte to become the chief of planning for the Tennessee Valley Authority and later acted as a director of the Federal Housing Administration. Between 1923 and 1933 he lived here with his wife, Norma, and five children. They enjoyed a typical upper middle class life-style, employing a cook, a maid, a chauffeur, and a gardener. Look for the family crest on the chimney face. After they left, local children thought that the house was haunted. Draper died in 1994 in Florida.

*Continue along Queens Road to its intersection with Providence Road at the Myers Park United Methodist Church. Cross Queens Road to your left. Cross Queens Road at the light. Turn left along Queens Road and continue to its intersection with Granville Drive. Turn right on Granville Drive and look at the Moody House, which is the first house on the right just past the apartment project.*

## **17. Charles Moody House**



This home, designed by Louis H. Asbury Sr. and erected in 1913, was the residence of Charles Moody, the City's leading grain and feed merchant at the turn of the century. The grain elevators of his Interstate Milling Company still tower over Fourth Ward in uptown Charlotte. The house originally stood on Providence Road, was turned around, and moved to this location in the early 1980's. Note how the placement of the house reinforces the curve of the street.

*Continue along Granville Drive to the Lambeth-Gosset House at 923 Granville Drive, next door to the Moody House.*

## **18. Lambeth-Gossett House**



Real estate speculator A. D. Glascock, an active early Myers Park developer, had this house built for resale in 1916. The first owner-occupant was another real estate man, Charles Lambeth, who later served as Charlotte Mayor. In 1921, Benjamin B. Gossett, a textile and banking leader, purchased the mansion.

*Look across the street to the McAden House at 920 Granville Drive.*

### **19. H. M. McAden House**



Henry McAden was president of Charlotte's First National Bank. Later owners included members of the Belk and Ivey department stores families. The present owner is David McConnell, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Social and

Economic Council. The imposing design is by Louis H. Asbury, Sr. It features Neoclassical columns on the exterior, while inside there are massive carved stone mantels and a sweeping Colonial Revival grand stair. The Italian gardens to the rear are well preserved, one of Earle Sumner Draper's best early designs. The house is one of the most significant in the neighborhood. It most approximates what might be called the "original Myers Park look." Henry McAden, by the way, was a man of his word. His bank failed in the Great Depression, and he had to move to a much more modest home elsewhere in Myers Park. He eventually paid all the money he owed, and he celebrated this event by calling in his neighbors and serving them lemonade and banana sandwiches.

*Continue along Granville Drive to its intersection with Hermitage Road. Turn left on Hermitage Road and look at the first house on your left, the Wade House at 530 Hermitage Road.*

## **20. H. M. Wade House**



Howard Madison Wade was a leading Charlotte manufacturer whose factory on Graham Street produced custom woodwork and store fixtures for the region. He built his first house on the site in 1912 but demolished it in 1928 to erect this grander one. The Colonial Revival style design was devised by noted Philadelphia architect, Charles Barton Keen. Keen is also known for his design of the Reynolda House in Winston-Salem. The magnificent landscape plan was fashioned by Earle Sumner Draper.

*Continue along Hermitage Road to the Marshall House at 500 Hermitage Road.*

## 21. E. C. Marshall House



E. C. Marshall was president of the Southern Power Company, later Duke Power, when he had this house built in 1915. The Marshall Power Plant is named in his honor. The architect was Franklin Gordon. It is the earliest known example of the Tudor Revival style in the City.

*Turn left at Ardsley Road, continue to Harvard Place and turn left and return to your vehicle.*