



HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Myers Park is a residential suburb of Charlotte, North Carolina. It has been designated a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

The development of Myers Park came about through the vision of George Stephens with the help of his father-in-law John Springs Myers. George Stephens had the experience, his father-in-law owned the land.¹

"John Nolen, a Harvard-trained landscape architect and comprehensive planner..."² Designed the suburb. "The centerpiece of Nolen's plan was a grand boulevard, Queens Road, with a grassy median for the trolley tracks and a series of streetcar waiting stations..."³ Earle S. Draper, an associate of Nolen's "...gave Myers Park its marvelous canopy of trees."⁴ While the trolley tracks are no longer there, the beautiful trees remain today.

The property being discussed in this paper is at 1136 Queens Road in Myers Park. In 1911 the Stephens Company purchased the land that was to become Myers Park from J. S. Myers.⁵ April 15, 1915, John P. Little purchased the land that would be 1136 Queens Road from the Stephens

¹ "Myers Park. The New South Neighborhoods" (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission, February, 1985).

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 277, p. 640.

Company.⁶ On September 6, 1915, John P. Little "... in consideration of his natural love and affection for his said wife and one dollar..."⁷ deeded the property to his wife, Annie P. Little.

John P. Little (referred to in various documents as John Phillips Little and Jonathan P. Little) owned and ran John P. Little & Son, a construction firm.⁸ He was born January 7, 1859 in Richmond County and moved to Charlotte in 1912⁹. The house at 1136 Queens Road was built by John P. Little & Son.¹⁰ Tax records indicate, and Mr. Mills believes, that the house was built in 1912. After much searching of record to try to find a building permit (microfilm from 1912 - 1917), no record could be found to substantiate this date. The best indicator as to when the house was built is the fact that the water tap date is August 25, 1915.¹¹ Mr. Mills indicated that Little's company had built the house and that he had used lumber from Little's own farm in the construction.¹²

May 15, 1927 title to the property was passed from Annie E. Little and her husband John P. Little to "Mrs. Minnie Little Edgerton, divorced."¹³ Mrs. Edgerton was born in Anson County, North Carolina August 28, 1897. In

⁶ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 345, p. 177.

⁷ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 340, p. 580.

⁸ Interview of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Mills by Cathy Grybush, 4-25-92, hereafter cited as Mills; Charlotte Observer, November 28, 1931.

⁹ Charlotte Observer, November 28, 1931.

¹⁰ Mills.

¹¹ Charlotte Mecklenburg Water Department.

¹² Mills.

¹³ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 670, p. 191.

1915, the year the house was built, she would have been 18 years old. In her obituary, a granddaughter, Martha Graham (who I was unable to locate) was quoted as saying, "She had the first sports car in Charlotte. It was a green English sports car. The neighbors on Queens Road would look out the window and see her drive by in that thing. She really tore up the road."¹⁴ Graham also mentions that Mrs. Edgerton was "...a very independent woman for her time. She had the first divorce in the family."¹⁵ Mrs. Edgerton's mother Annie Little lived with Mrs. Edgerton until her death in 1938.¹⁶ Mrs. Edgerton was a silver buyer for Ivey's for 26 years. She died July 6, 1987.¹⁷

May 17, 1933, the Life Insurance Company of Virginia took title to the property.¹⁸ (I am assuming because it was still the depression, that Mr. Edgerton was unable to keep up with the mortgage payments and the insurance company took over the property. This is only an assumption on my part.) The Charlotte City Directories for the years 1934 and 1935 list Colonel Talbot Smith of Virginia, in charge of North Carolina recruiting headquarters, as being in residence at 1136 Queens Road.¹⁹ On September 22, 1936, "Miss Jennie Patterson, unmarried" purchased the property from

¹⁴ Charlotte Observer, July 8, 1987.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Charlotte Observer, April 18, 1938.

¹⁷ Charlotte Observer, July 8, 1987.

¹⁸ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 838, p. 142.

¹⁹ Charlotte City Directory, 1934 and 1935.

the Life Insurance Company of Virginia.²⁰ Miss Patterson, a teacher at Elizabeth School,²¹ lived in the house until her death January 17, 1949.²² Miss Patterson lived downstairs and rented out the upstairs.²³

August 2, 1949, L. L. Leach and his wife Mary E. Leach purchased the house from Junius G. Patterson and J. L. Choate, Jr., executors of the estate of Jennie Patterson, deceased.²⁴ On February 14, 1950, James Arthur Mills and his wife Mary Frances purchased the property.²⁵ They are the current owners of the house.

The Mills graciously allowed me to visit their home on Saturday, April 25, 1992. Mr and Mrs. Mills occupy the first floor of the house. Their philosophy is to help others and to that end they have taken in boarders since they have owned the house. At present they have two gentlemen who share the second floor, one gentleman in a small studio apartment on the first floor, and a fourth gentleman n who lives in the garage apartment.²⁶

The Little-Mills house is a two and one half story frame building with fourteen rooms, a partial basement and a fully floored attic with large walk-in cedar closet. Also original to the property are a gazebo and a garage with

²⁰ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 904, p. 123.

²¹ Charlotte City Directory, 1938.

²² Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Death Book, 1949.

²³ Mills.

²⁴ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 1385, p. 279.

²⁵ Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Deed Book 1405, p. 349.

²⁶ Mills.

an apartment on the side.²⁷ The architectural style of the house was tenuously identified as sort of Colonial revival with classical elements by a member of the School of Architecture at UNC Charlotte.²⁸ Mr. Mills describes the house as resembling those in the country in Virginia where he is from originally.²⁹

The house has two chimneys and six fireplaces. One chimney is for one downstairs and one upstairs bedroom. The other chimney serves back-to-back fireplaces in the living room and dining room downstairs and the two remaining bedrooms upstairs. The fireplaces were built to burn anthracite coal to heat the house. (The house is now heated by two gas units in the basement. There is no central air conditioning.)³⁰

On the first floor, which has eleven foot ceilings, there is a large foyer, living room, extra large dining room (15 feet by 20 feet) breakfast room, kitchen, one large bedroom and a small room that may have been a nursery or dressing room and one bath. The foyer, the living room and the dining room have elaborate cast plaster molding at the ceiling.³¹

Also on the first floor, part of the porch on one side was enclosed to make a small den. Part of the porch on the other side was enclosed to

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Lee Gray, UNCC, per Heather Barrett.

²⁹ Mills.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

make a small apartment for one of the boarders.³²

The second floor has a large sitting area at the top of the stairs. There are three large bedrooms, two baths (one not original, but added later) and a kitchen which was converted from a "sleeping porch."³³

The garage apartment has three rooms, a bedroom, living room and a kitchen. It also has a bathroom. This garage apartment was formerly the servant's quarters.³⁴

The whole property has been generally well cared for. There are difficulties in some areas inside the house, however. The problem is with cracking plaster which is a common problem in older homes with wood lath and plaster walls. One place in particular, the form wall on the staircase, is very disheartening. The plaster has buckled and cracked. That in itself could be repaired. As Mrs. Mills pointed out, it is impossible to replace or repair the damage to the wall paper. The paper was hung 42 years ago and after investigation, the Mills have found that the pattern (Hamilton) cannot be replaced or copied. The expense of removing and replacing such a treat expense of wall paper is extremely prohibitive.³⁵

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.