



## The James B. Duke House ("Lynnwood", or "White Oaks")



*This report was written on January 5, 1977*

**1. Name and location of the Property:** The property known as Lynnwood or James B. Duke House (sometimes White Oaks) is located at 400 Hermitage Rd. in Charlotte, NC

**2. Name, address, and telephone number of the Present owner and occupant of the property:**

The present owner and occupant of the property is:  
Estate of Henry A. Lineberger & Wife Clayton

400 Hermitage Rd.  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: 372-2000

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** Representative photographs of the property are included in this report.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains a map depicting the location of the property.



**5. Current Deed Book Reference to the property:** The most recent reference to this property is found in Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1918 at page 545. The Parcel Number of the Property is 15504310.

**6. A brief historical sketch of the property:**

On November 28, 1911, Mr. Z. V. Taylor, an official of the Southern Utilities Co., joined with his wife, Irving Scales Taylor, in purchasing a lot in the prestigious suburb known as Myers Park, which was then being developed to the southeast of Charlotte, N.C. In July 1914 Mr. and Mrs. Taylor borrowed \$15,000 from the American Trust Co. for purposes of erecting a house on the lot which they had purchased three years earlier. Having enlarged the yard by acquiring additional property in January 1915, the Taylors occupied the structure as their residence later that year. In January 1917 Mr. and Mrs. Taylor acquired another parcel of property which adjoined their original holdings in Myers Park.

On March 8, 1919, James Buchanan Duke (1856-1925), noted industrialist and philanthropist, purchased the Taylor property "with the buildings and improvements thereon located." Indeed, Mr. Duke assembled twelve parcels of property to form an estate in excess of 15 acres. Between 1919 and 1922 he transformed the already substantial house which the Taylors had built into a majestic mansion of 45 rooms and 12 baths. This was the only house which Mr. Duke owned in North Carolina during the years of his greatest power and influence. He called it Lynnwood. Mr. Duke owned a house (Rough Point) in Newport, R. I., a townhouse on 5th Ave. in New York City, and maintained his legal residence on a 2600 acre estate in Somerset County, New Jersey.

Apparently, two considerations were uppermost in causing Mr. Duke to purchase the property in Charlotte. First, business activities compelled Mr. Duke to spend extended periods of time in the city. Second, he wanted to expose his one and only child, Doris Duke, to the ins and outs of Southern life.

In 1904 James B. Duke met Dr. W. Gill Wylie, a physician in New York City, who had joined with his brother in 1899 in launching the Catawba Power Co. of Fort Mill, S.C., the first hydroelectric production venture on the Catawba River. Mr. Duke suggested that he form a partnership with the Wylie Brothers so that capital for expansion could be committed to the enterprise. The financially-beleaguered Wylie Bros. readily accepted, thereby assuring the establishment of the Southern Power Co. Causing Mr. Duke to enter this field was his belief that the economy of North Carolina would achieve its potential only if sufficient power were available to sustain a textile manufacturing component. The early history of the Southern Power Co. proved that Mr. Duke was correct. The harnessing of the Catawba River allowed the textile industry to prosper in the Piedmont.

That Mr. Duke took considerable delight in his accomplishment seems certain. It is not unreasonable to assume that Mr. Duke regarded Lynnwood as a symbol of his success in the hydro-electrical business. In any case, the most memorable feature of the estate was an enormous fountain, which according to some sources propelled water to a height of 150 feet. A favorite weekend excursion for Charlotteans was to park nearby and watch the huge column of water spray into the air. Ben Dixon MacNeill, staff writer for the *Raleigh News and Observer*, once commented that Mr. Duke took "spontaneous pride" in 3 things -- his Rolls Royce, his daughter, and his fountain in Charlotte.

In 1907 James B. Duke, his first marriage having ended in divorce, married Nanaline Holt Inman of Macon, Georgia, widow of Dr. William P. Inman. In 1912 Mr. Duke's only child, Doris, was born to this union. Mr. Duke wanted his daughter to experience

the region in which he had spent his boyhood and young adulthood. Consequently, he acquired and developed Lynnwood so that he could bring his family to Charlotte for extended visits, especially in the winter. Mrs. Duke, however, found Charlotte less than exciting and would usually return to New Jersey long before her husband and daughter. Doris attended private school while in Charlotte and sometimes entertained her classmates at Lynnwood.

The most significant event in Lynnwood's history occurred in December 1924. A series of meetings in the sun room in the west wing of the house culminated in the establishment of the Duke Endowment, a philanthropic enterprise of enormous importance to the people of North Carolina and South Carolina.

James Buchanan Duke died at his home in Somerville, N.J., on Oct. 10, 1925. In accordance with his will, Mrs. Duke came into possession of Lynnwood. On July 13, 1926, she sold the property to Mr. C. C. Coddington, who operated an automobile dealership in Charlotte. The conveyance also included "all of the furniture and other personal property now contained in the residence... (excepting the marked silver, marked table linen and marked sheets) also the motors, equipment and other contents of the pump house." A small portion of the land was sold separately. Mr. M. L. Cannon and Wife, O. B. Cannon, acquired the property from the Coddington Estate on February 16, 1929. On December 27, 1949, Mr. and Mrs. Cannon gave one-half interest in the house and 4.148 acres of land (present boundaries of property) to Myers Park Presbyterian Church. On January 6, 1950, they gave the remaining one-half interest in the property to Myers Park Presbyterian Church. Mr. and Mrs. Cannon continued to reside in the house. On April 29, 1957, Henry A. Lineberger & Wife, Clayton, purchased the house and 4.148 acres of land from Myers Park Presbyterian Church. The house suffered fire damage in the late 1960's. However, the house is now in excellent repair. The remainder of the estate, including the location of the huge fountain, has been divided and sold as individual lots.

**7. A brief architectural description of the property:** This report contains an architectural description prepared by Jack O. Boyte, A.I.A.

**8. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-399.4:**

**a. Historical and cultural significance:** Lynnwood is historically and culturally significant for two reasons. First, it is architecturally unique within the residential fabric of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. Second, it has strong associative ties with an individual and events of national historic significance.

**b. Suitability for preservation and restoration:** The structure is in good repair and certainly can be preserved in its current configuration.

**c. Educational value:** Unquestionably, Lynnwood has enormous educational value, primarily because of its association with the life of James Buchanan Duke.

**d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance or repair:** At present the Commission has no intention of purchasing this property. It assumes that all costs associated with renovating and maintaining the structure will be paid by the owner or subsequent owners of the property.

**e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property:** The property could be adapted to a variety of uses.

**f. Appraised value:** The current tax appraisal value of the structure is \$169,740. The current tax appraisal value of the land is \$110,000, The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for a deferral of 50% of the rate upon which the Ad Valorem taxes are calculated.

**g. The administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs:** As indicated earlier, at present the Commission has no intention of purchasing this property. Furthermore, the Commission assumes that all costs associated with the structure will be met by whatever party now owns or will subsequently own the property.

**9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places:** The Commission judges that the property known as Lynnwood does meet the criteria of the National Register of Historic Places. Basic to the Commission's judgment is its knowledge that the National Register of Historic Places expanded the Federal Government's recognition of historic properties to include properties of local and state historic significance Because of its association with the life of James B. Duke, Lynnwood has local, state, and national historic significance and is therefore eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

**10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County:** The property known as Lynnwood is historically significant to Charlotte for two reasons. First, it is architecturally important as an unrivaled example of opulent residential architecture in the Colonial Revival Style, Second, it has strong associative ties with James Buchanan Duke, a man of preeminent local and regional significance.

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## **Chain Of Title For Lynnwood**

1. Book 283 Page 339 (November 10, 1911) Grantor: The Stephens Co.  
Grantee: Z. V. Taylor & Wife, Irving Scales Taylor
2. Book 286, Page 652 (November 10, 1911) Grantor: Z. V. Taylor & Wife, Irving Scales Taylor Grantee: American Trust Co.
3. Book 336, Page 84 (July 1, 1914)  
Grantor: Z. V. Taylor & Wife, Irving Scales Taylor Grantee:  
American Trust Co.
4. Book 402, Page 85 (March 8, 1919)  
Grantor: Z. V. Taylor & Wife, Irving Scales Taylor  
Grantee: James B. Duke
5. Book 628, Page 230 (July 1, 1926)  
Grantor: Nanaline H. Duke (widow) Grantee:  
C. C. Coddington
6. Book 628, Page 220 (July 13, 1926)  
Grantor: R. S. Hutchinson, Commissioner Grantee:  
C.C. Coddington
7. Book 731, Page 468 (February 16, 1929)  
Grantor: Union National Bank, Trustee under the will of C. C. Coddington  
Grantee: M. L. Cannon & Wife, O. B. Cannon
8. Book 1413, Page 339 (December 27, 1949)

Grantor: M. L. Cannon & Wife, O. B. Cannon  
Grantee: Trustees of Myers Park Presbyterian Church

9. Book 1415, Page 97 (January 6, 1950)  
Grantor: M. L. Cannon & Wife, O. B. Cannon  
Grantee: Trustees of Myers Park Presbyterian Church

10. Book 1905, Page 109 (February 26, 1957)  
Grantor: O. B. Cannon (Widow) of M. L. Cannon  
Grantee: Trustees of Myers Park Presbyterian Church

11. Book 1918, Page 545 (April 29, 1957)  
Grantor: Trustees of Myers Park Presbyterian Church  
Grantee: Henry A. Lineberger & Wife, Clayton Sullivan Lineberger

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## **Bibliography**

*An Inventory of Buildings in Mecklenburg County and Charlotte for The Historic Properties Commission.*

"The Richest Man Who Ever Lived In Charlotte," *Charlotte Magazine* (January/February 1974) pp. 28-30, 39-42.

*Charlotte News* (April 14, 1962).

*Charlotte News* (December 12, 1974). Estate Records of Mecklenburg County. C.

H. Hamlin, *Ninety Bits Of North Carolina Biography* (1946), pp. 118-120.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Register of Deeds Office.

Records of the Mecklenburg County Tax Office.

*The Charlotte Observer* (October 24, 1925).

*The Charlotte Observer* (July 5, 1936).

*The Charlotte Observer* (April 26, 1937).

*The Charlotte Observer* (April 4, 1957).

*The Charlotte Observer* (August 22, 1971).

John K. Winkler, *Tobacco Tycoon, The Story of James Buchanan Duke* (1942), p. 285.

**Date of Preparation of this report:** January 5, 1977

**Prepared by:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill, Director  
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### ***Architectural Description***

Having seen the burgeoning residential neighborhoods on Trade and Tryon Streets during the Victorian age in Charlotte, in the late 1900's developers began looking to the country for room to build. Soon after the turn of the century local government became interested in better roads and began acquiring tools and skills for building new and better streets, which in turn encouraged suburban residential development. With the availability of new 'macadam' road surfacing, problems with periodic mud seas became less common. Interestingly, the city and county adopted the technique of paving only half of a new road bed with this new hard surface and retaining a hard clay bed on the other half, the clay being less jolting on vehicles and easier on horses' hooves. The macadam side being thus saved from wear was used primarily in the winter.

So, when the new residential section was opened in "Myers Park" there were adequate roads to the area. Southeast of Charlotte on State Highway 16, this new area was carefully designed to provide unspoiled country home sites. On the brow of a hill, in this new neighborhood, not far from the recently laid Queens Road trolley line and

facing south along Highway 16, (the road to Providence Church) Zebulon V. Taylor bought sixteen acres for a new house. Soon after 1910 Taylor commissioned two local architects, Hook and Rogers, to design his new home. It could be accurately assumed that the designers were asked to follow the most up-to-date architectural mode, a style which hearkened back to the earliest days of the republic.

After nearly three quarters of a century of searching every period of the past and every corner of the globe for models, at the beginning of this century architects found only one principal source of inspiration remaining untouched - America's own colonial past. From leading architects of the early twentieth century came new work in the Neo-Adamesque and Neo-Colonial modes. This Georgian Revival architecture was the style which influenced the design of the Taylor house. As one of the earliest houses in Charlotte done in the Colonial Revival style, the Taylor place demonstrated a sensitive development of this emerging architecture. Zebulon Taylor was a well-todo official in the growing Charlotte Electric Company, and the details of the house demonstrate his affluence.

The original facade remains intact facing east toward Highway 16, now Providence Road. Originally six bays wide, the front has five light casement windows uniformly spaced across the second floor. Centered on the first floor is a wide twelve panel entrance door with a five light transom. There are fixed four light side windows. Flanking this Georgian door are delicate, fluted Doric pilasters supporting a heavy entablature with a wide denticular molded cornice. Above this, an arched pediment also has dentil molding in the archivolt. Sheltering this entrance is a wide portico roof which rests on four plain rounded Doric columns at the outside edge. Surrounding the flat roof is a carefully detailed railing with a balustrade of angular picket and rail patterns reminiscent of colonial decoration. Placed symmetrically at each side of the entrance portico are twin door openings in which each door is glazed with ten lights. Above each opening is a five light transom. Simple molded frames surround the openings, and beside the doors are full length blinds with solid top panels and fixed louvers in the lower halves. The second floor windows are also fitted with similar louvered blinds.

Rising from a low brick rowlock course at ground level, the exterior walls are square edge white clapboard through two stories to a wide molded frieze above the second floor windows. Resting on a broad bed mold the moderate overhang features a crown mold eave which conceals built-in gutters. Roof surfaces are covered with uniformly spaced square edge slate tile and rise on a steep slope to a continuous ridge running side to side to the gable peaks. Spaced equally on the roof are three gabled dormers. Trimmed with simple Doric pilasters at the sides and elaborate molded cornices, the

dormers have six light casement windows with arched fan lights above. The placement of massive brick chimneys at each gabled end is consistent with the colonial symmetry of the original house.

The Taylor family lived in this fine two story classical house until 1919, when it was purchased by James B. Duke. With obvious admiration and respect for the architecture of the house, Duke launched a building program which within a two year period transformed what had been a fine house of substantial proportions to a classical mansion of heroic proportions.

Retaining the original two story rectangular house as one wing at the east, Duke's architects built an identical two story wing some distance to the west and joined the wings with an ornate two story connector, which included an elaborate pedimented entrance. Other modifications were two level porch wings at the gabled ends of the original house and matching wings on the new west section.

Facing to the north, the main entrance is centered between soaring gabled wings with studied symmetry. Doubled entrance doors rising some eight feet and each glazed with ten rectangular lights occur in an arched order frame. Over the doors is an arched transom with fan lights. Flanking the doors are delicate Doric pilasters supporting a wide entablature with a broken pediment above.

The entrance facade presents a wide center section of three equally spaced bays. On the first floor the center doors are flanked at each side by matching doors cased with molded arched frames and again with matching fan light transoms. On the second floor three windows form a triple bay facade, each bay with twin six light casement sash. This three bay section is further defined by pilasters rising two stories between the windows and doors and paired at each side of the main entrance. These pilasters reflect Roman Doric precedent consistent with other ornamentation on the exterior.

At each side of the center section the gable wings extend to surround the entrance patio. Four massive round Doric columns rise two stories to a wide molded frieze at the front of each wing and create three bays on each floor.

At the second floor in each wing there are skillfully executed wood railings. The angular pattern of the posts and rails in these balustrades reflect strong Georgian influences, and closely resemble elements found in the work of Thomas Jefferson.

The porches created by these wings are variously open or enclosed and create expansive outside areas for adjoining interior rooms, areas used for dining, for lounging, or on the second floor for sleeping, and reflect the obvious need for fresh

cool air in the days before mechanical air conditioning. The house design placed great emphasis on this condition with its "H" shape plan and the astonishing total of eight such porch areas, occurring in each instance in the legs of the "H".

At the western facade there are seven casement windows spaced equally across the second floor with five lights in each leaf. At each window are louvered blinds similar to those on the east side. On the first floor there are three double doors with ten lights in each leaf, and each door with a five light transom. These doors are cased with simple molded frames which duplicate those in the original east facade. Other details on the western facade including dormers and chimneys are similar to those of the original Taylor house.

On the south facade the wide center section joins lofty Doric columned porch wings which reflect the north side detailing. Centered in the connecting section is an arched entrance frame with double doors flanked by side lights having horizontal architraves. This Palladian element is not repeated elsewhere in the house. The south facade is three bays wide and includes equally spaced casement windows flanked by louvered blinds on the second floor. First floor double doors are all arched and with fan light transoms.

The interior of the house as developed by James Duke is said to contain 52 rooms. As one tours the vast array of corridors and halls along whose molded and paneled walls parade rows of single and double elaborately detailed doors, this number seems most appropriate. From an expansive cellar where one may view such sixty year old equipment as a block ice storage room, a massive scrolled door, security vault door, original laundry equipment and numerous carriage parking spaces to the elegant family quarters on two floors above and staff quarters on the third floor, the house obviously includes every conceivable facility for gracious living in the twenties.

With delicate finishes on all surfaces, the ground floor exhibits extremely fine detailing. Floors at the wide entrance colonial vestibule and along the lofty gallery which runs the length of the interior are black and white marble squares laid in a diamond pattern. Plaster walls have elaborate wide chair rails on all walls. At the outside and inside corners of connecting spaces fluted Doric pilasters define the wall surfaces in delicate proportion. Walls above the chair rails have repeated Georgian molded panels. Often these panels provide spaces for hanging treasured paintings. In several important rooms the oak parquetry flooring is patterned to duplicate the arrangement of brick pavers on various exterior terraces.

The main gallery is rigidly symmetrical from the entrance foyer to the high double doors at each end. To the west along this corridor one moves through double doors

into a massive parlor, again with highly elaborate plaster Neo-Georgian molded panels, pilasters and cornices. At the opposite end of the gallery there are matching high doubled doors centered in the corridor and installed here for visual symmetry only - the doors are false. Along the south wall of the gallery are three pairs of ten light doors opening to an outside brick patio overlooking one of the three large Duke fountains. Adjacent to the westerly parlor a broad stair rises in two runs to the second floor corridor. Detailed in typical colonial fashion, the stair features fine scrolled brackets at each tread and includes a fine molded iron balustrade with brass finials. At the east end of the gallery is an enclosed service stair rising from the cellar to the garret. At the top level this stair is floored by natural light from an original skylight in the roof. The four massive chimneys are placed in the end wings in such a manner to serve the sun rooms, parlor, dining room, master bedroom and the several smaller sitting rooms and a study. In these rooms is a variety of classical mantels, several with strong Georgian influence. In the dining room and parlor are delicately detailed Adamesque units. Marble is used for fireplace surrounds and hearths in a number of instances. Bath room fixtures are examples of early ceramic castings, and include elaborate brass fixtures of rare design. Lighting in many instances reflect early colonial candle or oil fixtures. In the dining room is a particularly fine huge crystal chandelier.

The landscaping work done under James Duke's commission included three large fountain pools, that on the north is centered in a round garden inside a circular entrance drive. Another was located in the south garden on an axis with the main entrance and north pool. Then to the west in an expansive landscaped green of generous acreage, Duke built a spectacular spout which lofted Catawba river water 150 feet above astonished Charlotteans.

This extraordinary house occupies a unique place in the architectural history of Charlotte, and quite likely in North Carolina. The faithful discipline of the colonial detailing exhibited throughout the structure presents to the community one of the finest examples of an evolving style which had a lasting influence on twentieth century architecture.