

### **Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House**



*This report was written on June 14, 1999*

**1. Name and location of the property:** The property known as the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House is located at 7314 Mt. Holly-Huntersville Road in the Long Creek Community of Mecklenburg County.

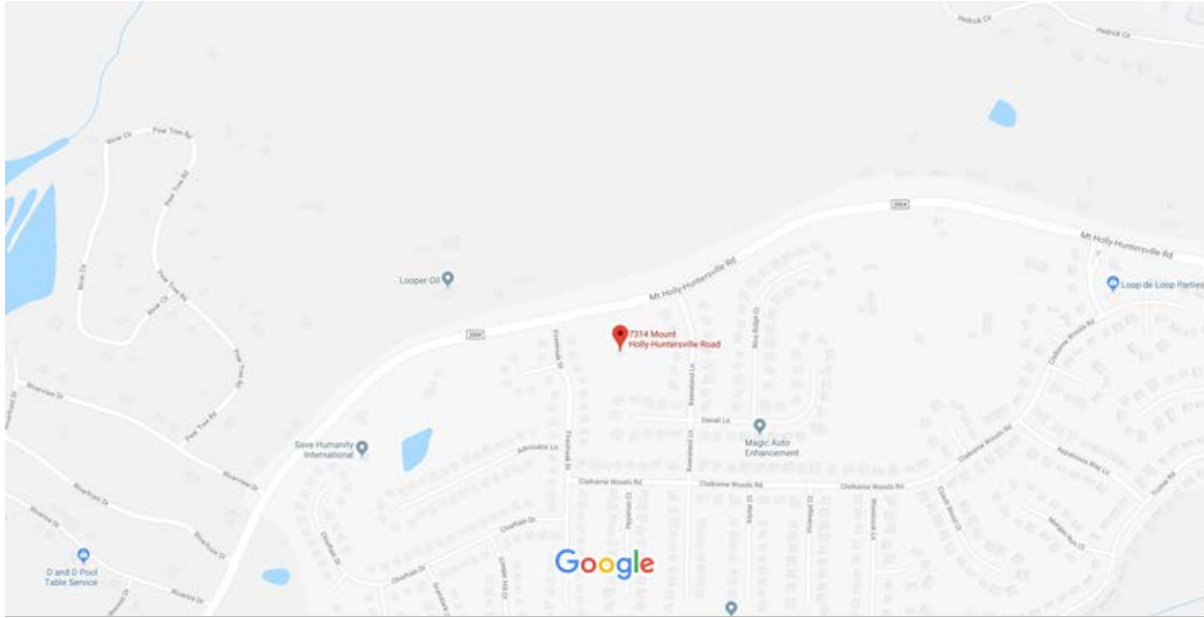
**2. Name, address, and telephone number of the present owner of the property:**  
The present owner of the property is:

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
2100 Randolph Road  
Charlotte, N.C. 28207

Telephone: (704) 376-9115

**3. Representative photographs of the property:** This report contains representative photographs of the property.

**4. A map depicting the location of the property:** This report contains maps that depict the location of the property.



5. **Current Deed Book Reference to the Property:** The most recent deed to Tax Parcel Number **03314598** is found in Deed Book 10151, page 145.
6. **A brief historical sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property by Marilyn Croteau and Dr. Dan L. Morrill.
7. **A brief architectural sketch of the property:** This report contains a brief architectural sketch of the property by Dr. Dan L. Morrill.
8. **Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. 160A-400.5:**
  - a. **Special significance in terms of its history, architecture, and/or cultural importance:** The Commission judges that the property known as the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations: 1) the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House (c. 1865) is representative of the two-story frame farmhouses built in rural Mecklenburg County in the post- bellum or New South era and is reflective of the robust cotton economy that characterized Mecklenburg County during those years, and 2) Thomas Gluyas, the initial owner, was a prominent figure in the public affairs of Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to superintending his farm, Gluyas served as a captain in a local militia company during the Civil War, was a founding member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and was elected to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and the North Carolina Legislature.

**b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association:** The Commission contends that the attached architectural description by Dr. Dan L.

Morrill demonstrates that the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House meets this criterion.

**9. Ad Valorem Tax Appraisal:** The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes on all or any portion of the property that becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current appraised tax value of the improvements on the property is \$116,350. The current appraised tax value of the 2.15 acres of land is \$44,100. The total appraised tax value of the property is \$160,450. The property is zoned R4.

**Date of Preparation of this Report:** June 14, 1999

**Prepared by:** Marilyn Croteau and Dr. Dan L. Morrill  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission 2100  
Randolph Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28207

Telephone: (704) 376-9115

### *Architectural Description*

**Site Description** The Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House is located on approximately 2.6 acres of land on the south side of Mount Holly - Huntersville Road in the Long Creek community of Mecklenburg County. The house faces the road and sits atop a slight rise. The front yard is mostly wooded, and the rear yard is essentially an open lawn. A dirt driveway of recent origin extends from the road to the side yard immediately west of the house. Just to the west of the driveway is a frame, gable-roofed garage, most likely dating from the first half of the twentieth century. A stone sidewalk leads from the original driveway (now replaced) to the front of the house. A new residential subdivision surrounds the site and occupies the land once devoted to farming.

### **Building Descriptions**

The Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House is a three-bay-wide by two-bay-deep frame building with a gable roof of asphalt shingles and single-shouldered end chimneys in brick with stone foundations and simple corbelled caps. A large, one-story, gable-roofed addition, dating from c. 1900, projects from the rear of the house. Ashed-roofed porch

supported by chamfered wooden posts resting upon granite blocks extends across the north elevation of the house. A shed-roofed porch of recent origin extends across the south elevation of the rear addition, and a small stoop of no historical significance is located near the rear of the west elevation of the rear addition. Two brick chimneys with arched tops protrude through the asphalt-shingled roof of the rear addition. None of the original windows of the house survives, and the only distinctive door leading to the outside is the front door. It has a single light above and three raised wooden panels below. The entire house is covered with asbestos shingles, most likely added in the midtwentieth century.

The interior of the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House is uncomplicated in format and design. The predominant wall and ceiling covering is flush board. A wide center hall with hardwood floors and wooden pegs for hanging clothes extends from the front to the rear of the house. A stairway rises in a straight run from the hallway to the second floor. It has simple wooden newels, unadorned rectangular pickets, and a rustic, wooden handrail. The second story has two bedrooms and a center hall with wide board flooring -- older than the hardwood floors found on the first floor. The house contains five fireplaces. All have a single attached shelf and restrained fireplace surrounds. Parts of the original rear porch on the addition have been enclosed for a modern bathroom and a modern kitchen. On balance, the Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House was built to meet the functional needs of a farming family. There is nothing pretentious or fancy about it. It is, however, an important part of the rural heritage of the Long Creek community, which is experiencing rapid and largely insensitive suburban development.

### **Summary Statement of Significance**

The Thomas and Latitia Gluyas House possesses local historic significance in the areas of Agriculture and Public Affairs. Built c. 1865 in the Long Creek Community, the Gluyas House is a manifestation of the flourishing cotton economy of Mecklenburg County during the so-called New South era of the late nineteenth century. With the establishment of the Charlotte Cotton Mills in 1881, Charlotte and Mecklenburg County began to experience rapid industrial growth, especially in textiles. Mecklenburg farmers found ready markets for cotton, both locally and regionally; and those like Thomas Gluyas, who had the ability and the resources to take advantage of this expanding economic opportunity, prospered. Thomas Gluyas was a prominent figure in the public affairs of Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In addition to superintending his farm, Gluyas served as a captain in a local militia regiment during the Civil War, was a founding member of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and was elected to the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners and the North Carolina Legislature.

## *Historical Overview*

The Captain Thomas Gluyas House was built c. 1865 in the Long Creek Community of Mecklenburg County. Thomas Gluyas (1826-1912), was its initial owner. The second son of John Gluyas (1796-1858), an experienced mining engineer from Cornwall, England, and Mary Bennetts Gluyas (1801-1876), Thomas Gluyas had accompanied his mother and father to the United States in 1837, when he was only eleven years old. In 1838 the family moved to Mecklenburg County, where John Gluyas became an official of the Mecklenburg Gold Mining Company and oversaw the steam-powered machinery at the Capp's Hill Gold Mine off Beatties Ford Road. <sup>1</sup>

In the 1840's Thomas Gluyas went to Jamestown, N.C. (near Greensboro) and became an apprentice to a gunsmith. <sup>2</sup> It was there that he met and married Latitia Beeson Gluyas (1831-1909). <sup>3</sup> Thomas and his young wife returned to Mecklenburg County about 1850 and established their residence on his father's farm. In May, 1860, Thomas purchased a moderate size tract of land consisting of 220 acres on what is now the Mount Holly Huntersville Road and set about having his own home erected. <sup>4</sup> In subsequent years he bought adjoining land, bringing the size of his farm to 440 acres at the time of his death. <sup>5</sup>

The Gluyas Farm prospered during the years following the Civil War and continued to be active agriculturally well into the early part of the twentieth century. The principal cash crops were corn and cotton. Thomas Gluyas participated and prospered in the expanding cotton economy of Mecklenburg County during the so-called New South era of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Historian Thomas W. Hanchett notes that after the Civil War "the Southern attitude toward industry changed radically." "The end of slavery crippled plantation agriculture," he explains, "and the region's investors began to work toward a 'New South' based instead on industrial development." <sup>6</sup> The expansion of the textile economy of Mecklenburg County was nothing short of spectacular. "Cotton was not an easy crop to grow in Mecklenburg County," writes preservation consultant Sherry Joines. "In fact, only 6,112 bales were ginned in 1860. However, after the discovery of the fertilizer, Peruvian guano, the production rapidly increased to 19,129 bales in 1880. The production of cotton peaked in 1910 with 27, 466 bales." "Thus, between 1860 and 1880," says Joines, "the image, economy, and lifestyle of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County changed dramatically." <sup>7</sup> An additional stimulus to the local cotton economy was provided by the establishment of a substantial number of textile mills in Mecklenburg County during the New South years. <sup>8</sup>

Clearly, these developments brought new challenges and opportunities to local farmers. Among them was the rapid growth of the city of Charlotte, which placed greater pressure on farmers to supply the more diversified needs of Charlotte's increasing populace and burgeoning textile industry. Successful farmers like Thomas Gluyas learned that they had to specialize in order to maintain a profit. In addition, the growing

demand for products meant that expensive machinery replaced beasts of burden; and as land also grew more costly, losses were felt more intensely. Many farmers in Mecklenburg County could not keep up with these new financial and technological demands. Those like Gluyas who could, saw their incomes increase substantially.

In addition to members of the family, African American tenants lived and worked on the Gluyas farm. The farm contained the Thomas Gluyas House, tenant houses, a log outbuilding, a log kitchen house, a log smokehouse, barns for hay and animals, and a cotton gin. Across the road stood a gunsmith shop. The shop was used to craft rifles and repair them. Long rifles are now recognized as an early American art form that had reached the height of artistic form and function between 1776 and 1830. The only buildings that survive are the Thomas Gluyas House, one tenant house on adjacent land currently being developed, and the log smokehouse, which was moved in 1998 to nearby property owned by John O. Gluyas III.

Thomas Gluyas was active in public affairs and was recognized by local citizens as a leader in his community. During and after the Civil War, he was known locally as "Captain Thomas Gluyas." He remained on his farm during the Civil War, but like most men who stayed behind he served in a local militia group. He was a Captain in the 86th Regiment North Carolina Militia, under Colonel B. G. Brown.<sup>9</sup> He had the unenviable job of arresting persons liable to Conscription Law and all soldiers absent from their regiments without leave. Thomas Gluyas was one of the founders of St. Mark's Episcopal Church. In 1883, he joined with a group of Long Creek residents who were attending Hopewell Presbyterian Church. Dissatisfied with strict Calvinism, the disgruntled Presbyterians wanted to start an Episcopal Church Mission in the Long Creek community. Although Thomas Gluyas had no formal religious affiliations, he was attracted to the Episcopal Church because of his English ancestry. On October 25, 1884, the day the Church was formally organized, he was appointed, Treasurer.<sup>10</sup> St. Mark's Church was built on Mt. Holly Huntersville Road not far from the Gluyas Farm. Thomas & Latitia Gluyas are buried in the church cemetery along with many descendents of their family.<sup>11</sup>

In 1874, Thomas Gluyas was elected to serve a four year term on the Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners, under the chairmanship of T. L. Vail. In 1890, he was approached by T. L. Vail to run for the State Senate representing the Prohibition Party. He declined.<sup>12</sup> However, he was elected in 1903, at the age of 77, to the North Carolina Legislature, and served one term representing Mecklenburg County.<sup>13</sup>

Thomas and Latitia Gluyas had five children -- four daughters and one son. Two daughters, Mary (1850-1919) and Nancy Alice (1853-1925) were both born before Thomas and Latitia Gluyas established their residence on Mt. Holly Huntersville Road. Martha Addie May (1858-1903) was the first of Thomas's children to be born on the Gluyas Farm. According to family papers Martha was born in the "old log house by the spring on this place". In 1863, John Oliver, the fourth child, was born "in the old log kitchen house in the yard here". First indication that Thomas built or moved his family

into a farmhouse was the birth of Lelia, (1868-1960). Family notes indicate "Aunt Lelia was born in this house". <sup>14</sup>

Three generations of the Gluyas family lived in the Thomas Gluyas House until 1995. The 400 plus acres of land owned by Thomas in 1912 were subdivided into five tracts. His wife Latitia Beeson Gluyas had preceded him in death in 1909. The estate was therefore inherited by his four surviving children, Mary McCoy, Nancy Parks, John Oliver Gluyas, Lelia Gresham, and the heirs of his daughter Addie May (Craven), who had also preceded him in death.. His son, John Oliver Gluyas (1863-1912), died unexpectedly just 10 days after his father of complications from an emergency appendectomy, at age 49. <sup>15</sup> His wife Sallie (Whitely) Gluyas and eight of their dependent children inherited the "home tract" of 85 acres including the Thomas Gluyas House. <sup>16</sup>



*The Gluyas Family*

Sallie Gluyas never remarried. She oversaw the operation of the farm until her death in 1944, at age 83. Sallie and John Gluyas had ten children, all of whom were reared on the Gluyas Farm. Four of the six daughters never married. After completing their education and working outside of the home, three daughters returned to Long Creek to live in the Thomas Gluyas House. Lucy, (1888-1974) after attending Normal School in Greensboro (now the University of North Carolina ñGreensboro) taught in Florida for a

brief period and then worked for many years for the Mecklenburg County Board of Education. Julia (1901-1973), a registered nurse, studied in Chicago, worked at Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, as well as Wayne County Memorial in Goldsboro, North Carolina. Alice Josephine (1903- 1995) attended Art School in Philadelphia and worked as a salesperson at Iveys Department Store in Charlotte. Lelia Gluyas Gresham (1868-1960), youngest daughter of Thomas and an aunt to Lucy, Julia and Josephine, returned to live at the family homestead from Richmond, Virginia after the death of her husband. She was cared for by her nieces until her death in 1960. Alice Josephine lived alone with the aid of outside help for more than twenty years on the property, until her death in 1995. She relied on her nephew, John Oliver Gluyas III, who lived across the street to assist with the upkeep of the property.<sup>17</sup> In 1998, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission purchased the Thomas Gluyas House and approximately 2 acres of land. The property is now being offered for sale.

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- <sup>1</sup> Gluyas Family Papers, unpublished, "Reminiscences of Captain Thomas Gluyas" as dictated to his granddaughter Lucy Gluyas in 1911.
  - <sup>2</sup> Whisker, James, *Gunsmiths of the Carolinas, 1660-1870* .
  - <sup>3</sup> Guilford County Marriage Bond 55670, February 18, 1847.
  - <sup>4</sup> Mecklenburg County Deed Book 6, page 186.
  - <sup>5</sup> Mecklenburg County Will Book AEG 1A, page 250.
  - <sup>6</sup> Thomas W. Hanchett, "Charlotte's Textile Heritage: An Introduction (1984). Charlotte- Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.
  - <sup>7</sup> Sherry L. Joines and Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "Historic Rural Resources in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina(1997). Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.
  - <sup>8</sup> For a description of the textile mills established in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey of Cotton Mills In Charlotte And Mecklenburg County For The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission (1997).
  - <sup>9</sup> Gluyas Family papers, unpublished order per Governor Vance, Oct 2, 1962.
  - <sup>10</sup> Cheshire, Jos. Blount, *St. Mark's Church, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Its Beginnings: 1884-1886*.



- <sup>11</sup> For a description and history of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, see Dr. Dan L. Morrill, "A Survey and Research Report on the St. Mark's Episcopal Church (March 1, 1983).
- <sup>12</sup> Gluyas Family Papers, unpublished letter to T. L. Vail to T. Gluyas, dated August 6, 1890.
- <sup>13</sup> Cheney, John L., Jr., *North Carolina Government 1585-1974*.
- <sup>14</sup> Gluyas Family Papers, unpublished.
- <sup>15</sup> Gluyas Family Papers, *Charlotte Observer & News*, Obituary, John Gluyas. November 1912.
- <sup>16</sup> Mecklenburg County Book of Wills, AEG-1A p. 250, will of Thomas Gluyas
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with John Oliver Gluyas III, November 23 and 30, 1998. Conducted by Marilyn Croteau.