

**SURVEY AND RESEARCH REPORT
ON
The McLaughlin-Bost House**



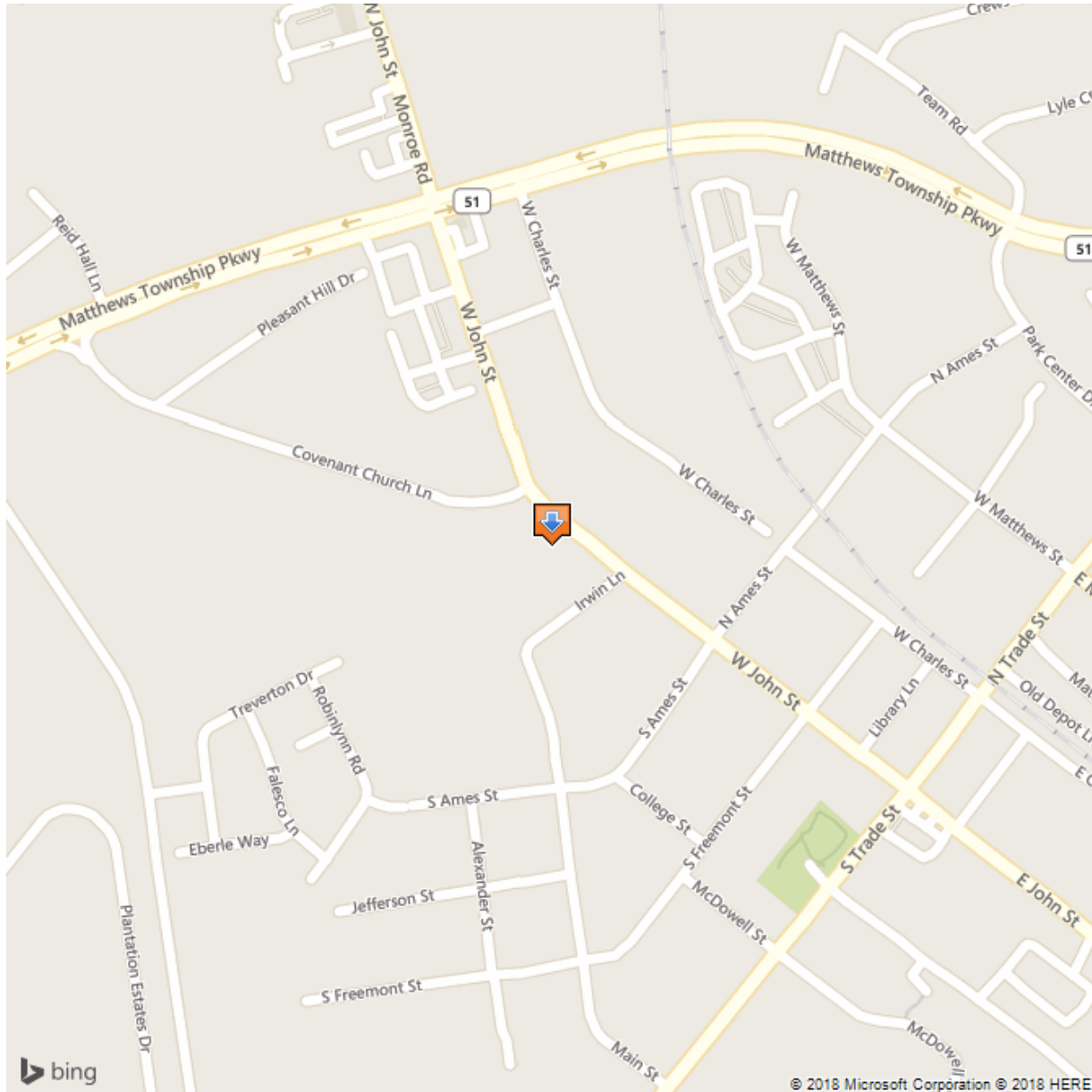
1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the McLaughlin-Bost House, located at 415 West John Street, Matthews, North Carolina.

2. Name and address of the present owner of the property:

Dixie Land Company LLC
PO Box 761
South Boston, VA 24592

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

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



5. UTM coordinate: 17 524848E 3886231N

6. Current deed book and tax parcel information for the property:

The Tax Parcel Number is of the property is 22702604. Deed book number: 10848-835 (10/22/1999)

7. A brief historical sketch of the property: This report contains a brief historical sketch of the property.

8. A brief architectural description of the property: This report contains a brief architectural description of the property.

9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets 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 McLaughlin-Bost House does possess special significance in terms of Charlotte-Mecklenburg. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The McLaughlin-Bost House, built ca. 1891, exhibits a high degree of integrity, and is distinctive in design from the other historic home in the Town of Matthews.
- 2) Situated on East John Street, the McLaughlin-Bost House is a prominent component of the historic landscape of the Town of Matthews.
- 3) The McLaughlin-Bost House was built by Joseph McLaughlin, a prominent Mecklenburg County businessman who was formative in the shaping of Matthews in the late 19th century.

b. Integrity of design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling and/or association: The Commission contends that the physical and architectural description which is included in this report demonstrates that the McLaughlin-Bost House meets this criterion.

10. 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 which becomes a designated "historic landmark." The current total appraised value of the improvements is \$89,800. The current appraised value of the land is \$987,700. The current total value is \$1,077,500.

11. Portion of property recommended for designation: The exterior of the house and the property associated with the tax parcel are recommended for historic designation.

Date of preparation of this report: March 2005

Prepared by: Stewart Gray and Dr. Paula M. Stathakis

Historical Overview

McLaughlin-Bost House

The land on which the McLaughlin Bost House is located was once part of two parcels acquired by Charles Rhyon McLaughlin from T.A. Squires in the spring of 1891. These parcels, totaling 61 acres were purchased for \$1245.00^[1] Charles McLaughlin was the son of Joseph McLaughlin, a Charlotte businessman. Joseph McLaughlin was an early investor in Matthews' newly developing commercial row. In 1880, he and J.T. Barnett of Matthews became partners in the town's first General Store, McLaughlin and Barnett.^[2] Joseph McLaughlin built the house for his son, and also built a house of the same plan, the Carpenter House, for one of his daughters. The companion house was located on the current site of Matthews Elementary School and was moved to a site across the street sometime before 1935.^[3]

Matthews experienced significant growth in the late nineteenth century, all of it a result of the construction of a segment of the Central Carolina Railroad through the town. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, Matthews was a small crossroads community. The town was originally and informally known as Stumptown, because of the number of tree stumps left from its earliest construction projects. Stumptown acquired a Post Office in 1825 and the town named changed its name to Fullwood after the first postmaster John M. Fullwood. The area was settled by small farmers who raised cotton, corn and subsistence crops. Prior to the arrival of the railroad, Fullwood was also a stagecoach stop between Monroe and Charlotte.^[4]

The tenor of the town changed irrevocably in 1874 with the construction of a rail line and a stop for the Central Carolina Railroad, placing Fullwood on the line between Wilmington and Tennessee. Railroad officials decided to rename the stop in honor of Watson Matthews, director of the Central Carolina Railroad. The first train blasted through town on December 15, 1874. By the 1920s, thirteen trains passed through Matthews every day. The water tank for the locomotives was located in an area that came to be known as Tank Town. Now known as Crestdale, the area is historically home to the Matthews's African American population.^[5]

The railroad connected Matthews with the outside world and brought new employment opportunities to local citizens, both black and white. The railroad offered unique prospects to the local African American population who were traditionally relegated to field labor and domestic service. The railroad offered steady employment, cash wages, housing, and later, insurance benefits.^[6]

Railroads breathe new life into sleepy crossroads communities, and subsequent to the arrival of the Central Carolina, Matthews developed a with commercial purpose. Farmers had the means to send commodities to market and local entrepreneurs had the means to bring in merchandise and produce from other areas. A small commercial district developed near the railroad tracks by 1880. Within four years of the establishment of McLaughlin and Barrnette six other stores and a druggist joined them on commercial row. The 1889 Charlotte City Directory had an advertisement inviting investors to consider Matthews where land was cheap and prospects just beginning. By 1900, Captain T.J. Renfrow started his general merchandise business and in 1906, he built the town's cotton gin behind his store. Matthews grew to the extent that it received its town charter in March 1879. The 1880 census shows 91 residents in the new town of Matthews.^[7]

Charles Rhyon McLaughlin was a business and civic leader in Matthews. He married Mary Belle Grier, the youngest child of Eli Clinton Grier and Lydia Reid Grier. Eli Clinton Grier was a prominent farmer and entrepreneur in the Providence Township. His substantial property holdings were dedicated largely to the production of cotton. He is credited with the construction of the first spinning mill in Mecklenburg County. This enterprise, begun in 1874, had 350 spindles and operated for eighteen months.^[8]

Charles and Mary Belle McLaughlin had three children, Charles Joseph [1891-1946], Mattie Grier [b. 1893], and Edmonia Martin [b. 1900]. Charles Joseph, or "Charlie Joe" as he was known about town, married Valeria Rippey Webster and they had no children. Mattie and Edmonia never married. Edmonia, Miss Monie, worked in the Mecklenburg County Deeds Office under John Renfrow who was the Register of Deeds.^[9]

According to lifelong Matthews residents, sisters Margaret and Mary Louise Phillips, Charles McLaughlin's daughter Mattie claimed she was born in the house. The date of her birth is 1893, and this ties the house, generally assumed to have been built in 1891, more concretely to a date in the early 1890s.^[10]

During his lifetime, Charles R. McLaughlin was a prominent Matthews citizen. He was a merchant, the mayor of Matthews, and a tax lister for the Morningstar Township. He also donated land for the original site of the Matthews United Methodist Church, approximately 7/8 of an acre, on the corner of Charles and Ames Streets.^[11] He and his wife also sold an acre of land to the Morningstar Township Public School Committee for one dollar.^[12]

The McLaughlin family owned the house for a few years. Charles McLaughlin sold the house and 61 acres in 1900 to W.W. Alexander.^[13] In 1912 Alexander deeded 27

½ acres, the tract with the house, to his son-in-law, W.J. Bost. Bost was married to Alexander's daughter Maggie and in the following year she acquired "the house and lot in Matthews" in his will.^[14] The 1900 census describes Bost as a farmer.^[15]

The property subsequently occupied by Ernest Harold Bost and his wife Sallie Q. Bost.^[16] Harold Bost was employed by Southern Engineering. Sallie Bost, originally from South Carolina, taught second grade at Matthews Elementary School. Even during Harold and Sallie Bost's tenure in the house, the town maintained a rural character. Like many of their neighbors, the Bosts had a large garden and they kept a cow in the rear yard.^[17] Harold and Sallie Bost had no children. After Harold's death, Sallie Bost had a lifetime interest in the house. The property passed from brothers Lloyd and Cliff Bost to Lloyd C. Bost Jr. who is the current owner of the property.^[18]

Architectural Description



The ca. 1891 McLaughlin-Bost House faces roughly north and sits approximately 50' from the busy West John Street, four blocks west of historic center of the town of Matthews. The one-story house was built upon tall, closely spaced brick piers, and is protected by a low-pitched hipped roof. The principle section of the house is three bays wide, and two bays deep, and appears to be rigidly symmetrical. A low-pitched hipped-roof porch, covered with metal roof panels, spans nearly the entire width of the façade. The porch roof is supported by four substantial chamfered posts, and two chamfered pilasters. The posts and pilasters are connected by guardrails that feature diagonal pickets. Dilapidated wooden steps lead up to the porch. The porch shelters double front doors that are centered between tall window openings containing paired narrow double-hung four-over-four windows. The front windows feature side-hinged screened shutters. The most notable architectural feature of the McLaughlin-Bost House is the front doorway, which contains paired panel-doors with round-arched upper panels. The door panels display notable relief and are framed with deep

moulded trim. The doors are topped with a transom featuring two horizontal oval lights. The doorway also features double screen doors with sawn-work corner braces. In contrast to the typical weather-board siding that covers most of the house, the wall sections sheltered by the front porch are clad by tongue-and-grooved boards, moulded with a corrugated pattern.



Detail of Front Porch



Side Porch

The McLaughlin-Bost House features a water table topped with a drip-cap, corner boards, and a wide freeze board below a boxed soffit. The only element that breaks with the strict symmetry of the principal section of the house is the interior corbelled chimney which pierces the roof to the west of the roof's peak.



East Elevation



West Elevation

The side elevations of the principle section of the McLaughlin-Bost House appear to be identical. The front-most bays of the east and west elevations each feature a small hipped-roof porch sheltering a single door topped with a transom. The side porches are supported by chamfered posts like those found on the front porch, and feature the same corrugated siding attached to the façade. Each of the side porches is supported

by a pair of brick piers. No steps lead to the side porches. The rear bays of the side elevations contain double-hung windows.

A hipped-roof wing, built on tall brick piers, extends from the rear of the principal section of the house. The rear wing is not centered on the rear elevation of the principal section. Although it is set back slightly, the narrow rear wing is aligned with the west elevation of the principal section. The rear wing is two bays deep and features a tall corbelled chimney. The west elevation of the rear wing features two double-hung windows.



Deterioration appears to be limited to the front porch.

Several outbuildings survive on the property.

The house suffers from some obvious wood deterioration that may be limited to the front porch steps and boxing. Unlike the vast majority of Mecklenburg County's historic houses that were built on piers, the McLaughlin-Bost House has never been underpinned. The only major alteration to have affected the house is a block-construction bathroom attached to the rear of the south-east corner of the principal section of the house. Several early 20th century outbuildings survive, although their original usage is difficult to determine. A large gabled shed sits to the west of the house. A gabled building in poor condition sits directly to the rear of the house.



Carpenter House



**Grier-Furr House - 500 W. John Street,
Matthews**



Reid House - 134 W. John Street, Matthews

In terms of the built historic environment of the town of Matthews, the McLaughlin-Bost House holds an important position. The massed, square plan of the house is at odds with the more traditional single-pile, or one-room-deep, houses that dominated Mecklenburg County's landscape until the 1890's. The nearby ca. 1880 Grier-Furr House is an example of the single-pile design built in a T-plan, one of the last incarnations of the single-pile design. In form, the McLaughlin-Bost House is more similar to the one-story, massed-plan Reid House. But where the Reid house features a prominent corner tower and a wealth of decorative sawn-work details, the McLaughlin-Bost House exhibits distinctive but restrained decoration and symmetrical design. Built by the same family, the Carpenter House appears to follow the same plan as the McLaughlin-Bost House. The spacing of the fenestration and the roof design of the two houses are nearly identical. However, having been moved and featuring a later Craftsman Style front porch, the Carpenter House does not exhibit the same high degree of integrity found in the McLaughlin-Bost House.

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- ^[1] Mecklenburg County Courthouse, Deeds 77-298 (March 2, 1891) and 77-286 (February 24, 1891). Deed 77-298 conveyed the land on which the house is located.
- ^[2] Paula Hartill Lester, *Discover Matthews. From Cotton to Corporate*, (Town of Matthews Tourism Council: Herff Jones Publishers, 1999), p 9.
- ^[3] Interview with Margaret and Mary Louise Phillips, March 4, 2005.
- ^[4] *Ibid*, pp. 5-7.
- ^[5] *Ibid*, pp, 7, 55-56.
- ^[6] Survey of African American Billings and Sites in Mecklenburg County, Contextual Essay, Paula Stathakis and Stewart Gray, 2002.
- ^[7] *Ibid*, pp. 7, 9-13.
- ^[8] Survey and Research Report, The Sidney and Ethel Grier House.
- ^[9] Hood, *The Tunis Hood Family*, p. 345; Interview with Talita Morgan, Historian for United Methodist Church of Matthews, March 2005.
- ^[10] Interview with Margaret and Mary Louise Phillips; Dellman O. Hood, *The Tunis Hood Family: Its Lineage and Traditions* [Portland, Oregon: Metropolitan Press, 1960], p.345.
- ^[11] *Charlotte Observer*, February 11, 1952, p. 8-A, “Charles McLaughlin, Matthews Pioneer Succumbs at 83;” Lester, *Discover Matthews*, p. 66
- ^[12] Deed 129-306, April 9, 1898. This conveyance was valid as long as the land was used as a site for a public school.
- ^[13] Deed 152-166, November 8, 1900.
- ^[14] Deed 303-76, November 19, 1912; Will Book Q, p. 437. March 17, 1913, Will of W.W. Alexander.
- ^[15] U.S. Census of the Population, 1900.
- ^[16] Ernest Harold Bost was a son of W.J. and Maggie Bost.
- ^[17] Interview, Margaret and Mary Louise Phillips.
- ^[18] Deed 4496-624, December 28, 1981. Deed 10848-835, October 22, 1999 transfers the property into Dixie Land Company, LLC.