

THE YOUNG-MORRISON HOUSE



This report was written on December 29, 1975

1. Name and location of the property: The property known as the Morrison House (we should probably refer to it as the Young-Morrison House, or the Young-Gamm House) is located at 224 or 226 W. Tenth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202. (The number on the house is 226, the number given at the Tax Office is 224.)

2. Name, addresses, and telephone numbers of the present owners and occupants of the property: The present owner of the property is:

Mr Edward Howard Gamm, and wife
Glenis Sofley Gamm
226 W. Tenth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Telephone: 334-9697

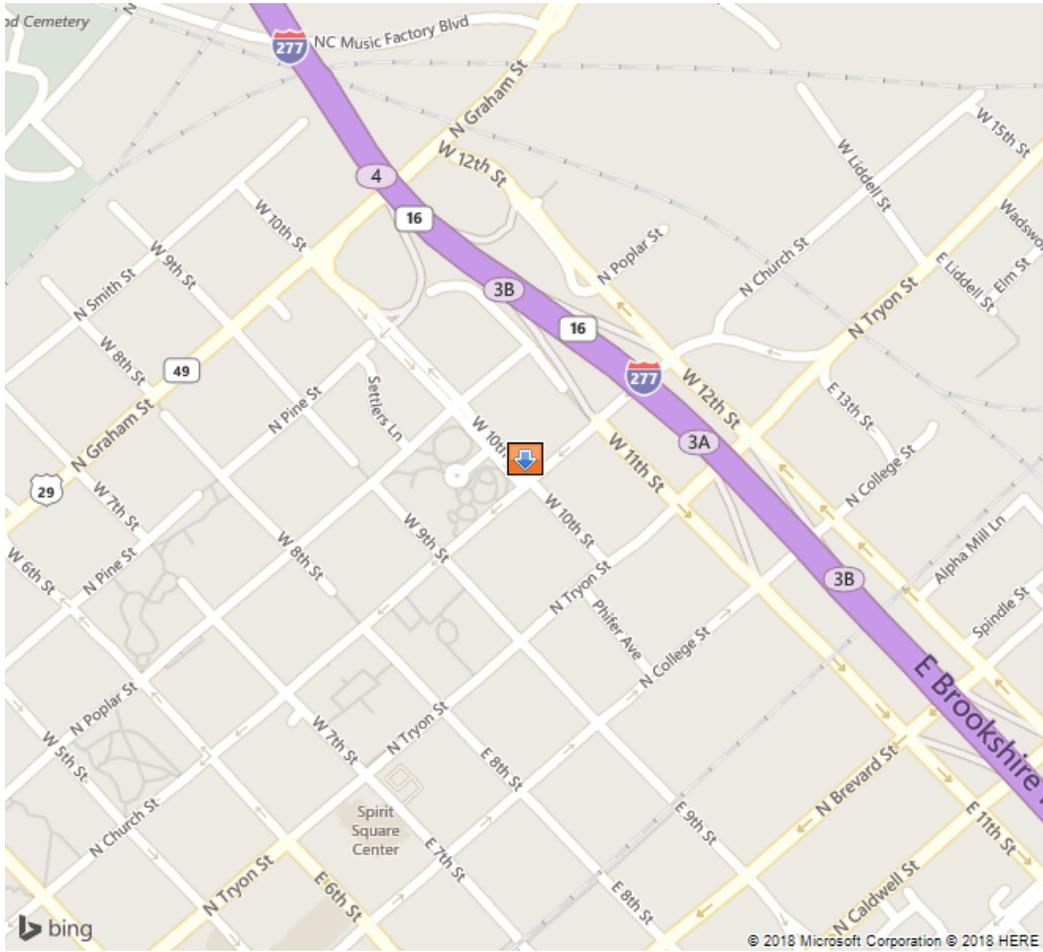
The present occupants of the property are:

Mr Edward Howard Gamm, and wife
Glenis Sofley Gamm
226 W. Tenth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202

Telephone: 334-9697

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: A map depicting the location of the property is included in this report.



5. Current Deed Book Reference of the property: The most recent reference to this property is found in Deed Book 1677, page 20, as filed in the Mecklenburg County Registry. The most recent Tax Book reference is in Book 78, page 46, lot 1.

6. A brief historical sketch of the property:

The property at 226 W. Tenth Street was bought by Mrs. Ida L. Young in January of 1885 from A. B. Springs and wife, Julia B. Springs, for \$550.00. (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 40, page 580) The Beers Map of 1877 does not show a structure on the lot so probably the present structure is the only one to have ever stood there. Mrs. Young undoubtedly had the house built soon after buying the property since the 1889-90 City Directory gives that location for the Young's residence. The City Directories give Mr. J. H. Young's occupations as ticket agent, bookkeeper, mail agent, and transfer clerk, Post Office, from 1889 to 1906 when the Youngs sold the property to Mrs. Jennie D. Morrison, Miss Mary G. Morrison, Miss Anna J. Morrison, Alston D. Morrison, R. Hall Morrison, and J. Graham Morrison for \$7,000.00. The house was mentioned in the deed (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 216, page 661.) Mrs. Jennie D. Morrison was the widow of Joseph Graham Morrison, second son of Dr. Robert Hall Morrison, founder of Davidson College. According to a story in Charlotte Remembers (Charlotte, 1972), Mrs. Morrison and her children apparently moved from Cottage Home, the Morrison ancestral home near Lincolnton, to 10th Street soon after Mr. J. G. Morrison's death.

From 1911 to 1949 the Morrisons owned the property, dividing their original lot into two, but not harming the house, and transferring those two lots back and forth among the family members several times. (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 283, page by ; Book 283, page 59; Book 290, page 399; Book 322, page 302; Book 349, page 234; Book 378, page 450; Book 388, page 334; and Book 1236, page 277.) In April 1949 Robert H. Morrison and wife Portia O., who after many family transactions owned the property on which the house stood, sold the property to Christina Harris Knudler who leased the property to Honelite Corporation for a short period of time. (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 1354, page 174, and Book 1368, page 171) In April of 1954 Edward H. Gamm, the present owner bought the property from the Knudlers. (Mecklenburg County Deed Book 167, page 20.)

Participants of the Fourth Ward Survey sponsored by the Commission in March 1975 describe the structure at 226 W. Tenth Street as "Queen Anne style with Italianate ornamentation in excellent condition and of excellent quality". They also considered this house as a potential National Register site.

7. A brief architectural description of the property: A brief architectural description of the property is included in this report.

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: As has been stated the property was owned and occupied by descendants of Dr. Robert Hall Morrison, founder and first president of Davidson College, and early pastor of the First Presbyterian and Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Churches. The property remained in the Morrison family for forty-three years.

b Suitability for preservation and restoration: The structure is very well kept and has been maintained through the years. Since it is located in an area that is being considered for an in-town residential neighborhood with a turn-of-the-century atmosphere it is well suited for preservation.

c. Educational value: Since this house has had little or no alteration it is a good example of the late Victorian eclectic styling prominent in turn-of-the-century Charlotte architecture.

d. Cost of acquisition, restoration, maintenance, or repair: The property is not for sale.

e. Possibilities for adaptive or alternative use of the property: The house is large enough for many possibilities, for example offices or a residence with a shop or office combined.

f. Appraised value: The 1974 assessed value is \$11,590.00.

g. Thee administrative and financial responsibility of any person or organization willing to underwrite all or a portion of such costs: This cannot be determined since the house is not for sale. The owners, however, plan to maintain the house as their residence indefinitely.

9. Documentation of why and in what ways the property meets the criteria established for inclusion on the National Register:

a. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history: This house is associated with a family, the Morrisons, who figured prominently in the Civil War. Five of Dr. Robert Hall Morrison's sons-in-law were Confederate officers and two sons served as aides to two of those officers.

b. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past: Descendants of Dr. Robert Hall Morrison, a man who figured prominently in Charlotte-Mecklenburg history, owned and lived in this house. The husband and father, Joseph Graham Morrison, of the family who lived there was the son of Dr. Morrison; he served on Gen. Stonewall Jackson's staff during the Civil War and was with Jackson when the latter was fatally wounded. General Jackson was married to Joseph Graham Morrison's sister Anna, the third Morrison daughter. The Morrison clan included either by birth or marriage Lieutenant General Daniel Harvey Hill, hero of the Civil War, and later President of the University of Arkansas; James P. Irwin, wealthy owner of much downtown Charlotte property; Civil War General Stonewall Jackson; Colonel Alphonso Avery, Colonel in the Civil War and Justice of the N. C. Supreme Court; Dr. Paul Brandon Barringer, founder of the Medical School of the University of Virginia; and D. H. Hill, Jr., president of N. C. State College. That is only a partial listing of the contribution of the Morrison family to the patterns of our history.

c. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction: As is the case in so many late Victorian houses, the style of this structure is in the

eye of the beholder. It seems to be a blend of styles making it truly "eclectic". It has been suggested as a potential National Register Site.

d. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history: This house's connection to the prominent Morrison family is significant. Undoubtedly Mrs. Stonewall Jackson who lived on Trade Street in the same area and who was known as the "arbiter of Charlotte society" visited in the house as probably did other cousins and kin who were prominent in their own right.

10. Documentation of why and in what ways the property is of historical importance to Charlotte and/or Mecklenburg County: Need we say more about the Morrison family and its contribution to Charlotte-Mecklenburg history? Emphasis on this family, however, is not intended to overshadow the importance of the Young family and others who have occupied or do occupy the house now. This researcher still believes the history of any place is the history of the average citizen and his contribution to the daily life of a community.

Researcher's Note: It was made known to this researcher after the report was written that Mr. Jack Boyte, a well-known local architect who has been active in preservation and restoration in North Carolina, was born in the Young-Morrison House. Mr. Boyte stated that his grandparents were living in the house at the time and that he was born in the upstairs bedroom that had no fireplace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Charlotte, Charlotte City Directory - 1889-1909.

Lore, Adelaide and Eugenia, and Lt. Col. Robert Hall Morrison. *The Morrison Family of the Rocky River Settlement of North Carolina*. Charlotte 1950.

Reynolds, D. R., ed, *Charlotte Remembers*. Charlotte, 1972.

Others

Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission Preliminary Survey of Fourth Ward, March 1975

Records, Wills, and Deeds on file at the Mecklenburg County Deeds Office and Court House.

Date of preparation of this report: December 29, 1975

Prepared by: Mrs. Patsy B. Kinsey
Charlotte Mecklenburg Historic Properties Commission
Telephone: 332-2726

Architectural Description

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward H. Gamm is a delightful example of late nineteenth century 'stick style' architecture which was influenced by A. J. Downing's cottage bracketed and Charles Eastlake's heavily ornamented designs. This style is an indigenous American wooden architecture in which the frame construction is expressed in the character of the exterior without the use of historic precedents. Such freedom from past styles opened the way for wide experimentation and is present in the Gamm house in the irregular plan, picturesque brackets emphasizing window bay spacing under varying width roof overhangs, decorative gable frames with pendants, prominent front window bay, chamfered porch columns with intricate sub-brackets, molded porch rail with turned wooden balusters, and a covered side balcony with carefully crafted roof supports and platform railing which opens from the parlor.

In the 1880's the Fourth Ward area was vigorously developed as the foremost residential neighborhood in Charlotte. Tenth Street with its wide, median divided road was a beautiful place to live. Consequently, the street was lined with this exciting new architectural style. Using millwork produced in the newly developed steam operated planing mills of Asbury & Finger, Newcomb Bros., and F. W. Adrens, local builders hastened to follow the popular trend.

The Gamm house was built for Joseph Young, the Airline Railroad Ticket Agent, in the mid 1880's. Other citizens such as Dr. J. S. M. Davidson, Capt. V. O. Johnson, Eli S. Steele, P. O. Walker, W. Thomas Whisnant, and T. B. Wilson, built similar late Victorian wooden houses on tenth street during the 80's and 90's. There was one Architect in town at the time, Jonas Rusdill, whose office was at 302 North College Street. One must wonder how much of his work is represented in the remaining structures in First and Fourth Wards, and whether he visited the New England area to see first hand the work of Henry Richardson, Stanford White, William Mead and other leading architects of the period.

The house rests on a solid brick foundation wall and beginning with a wide sill board and wooden drip, the exterior is covered with white painted square edged narrow clap boards. All windows and the front and rear entrance doors are surrounded with wide carved wood trim terminating in shoulders at the head and sill and intermediate 'quoin' blocks at meeting rail

heights. The exterior wood trim is especially noteworthy since it is typical of many of its contemporary houses in Charlotte (few of which remain). At 326 West Eighth Street there are windows trimmed with identical shoulders and 'quoins' and at 508 North Graham Street are overhang brackets of similar design. The unusually high double hung, weight balanced windows which start near the floor have two large vertical lights in each sash divided by a full length muntin.

This window style is typical of late nineteenth century construction and reflects improved American glass manufacturing techniques as well as the desire on the part of builders to simulate the lines of more sophisticated casement windows.

The front entrance features double nine foot high doors with elaborate wood frames. The jamb pilasters are reeded and terminate in carved plinths with stylized rose motifs, and elongated carved leaf elaboration in the lower faces.

Extending from first floor room of a two story gabled wing at the front is a precisely detailed bay with twin front windows and balancing side windows. This bay has a low tin covered roof with bracketed overhang. Recessed molded panels with veed vertical siding finish the exterior wall over and under the bay windows.

Across the long front is a high ceiling veranda or 'front porch' with a tin covered roof and a moderate bracketed overhang. The porch columns are solid square posts with intermediate chamfered edges. Post brackets are simplified 'Eastlake' style carved from heavy material.

The gable above the two story wing at the front has an attic window and ventilator featuring a unique diamond head set in a lower rectangular frame, creating a pointed architectural element. This detail is repeated at the center of the long horizontal roof above the elongated house wing, and in the side gable at the end of the long wing. This gable feature, which is one of the most pronounced architectural elements, contributes much to the charm of this fine old turn-of-the-century house.

The roof surfaces are square edge slate laid in a regular straight line pattern with no 'fish scale' or diamond interruption as might be found in some houses of the period.

From the high double front doors, a large central hall extends to the rear. Prominent pilasters define the entrance foyer in the front of the hall with a delicate turned wood suspended open grille above.

A single run stair with massive dark stained balustrade rises some twelve feet to the second floor at the rear of the hall. Two large rooms open from each side of the hall on the first floor. In each room is an interior fireplace with tiled hearth, wide molded mantel shelf and massive bracketed pilasters. Connecting to the rear, east side dining room is a kitchen-pantry wing obviously designed for servants since a small bedroom is included at the rear of the kitchen.

In the parlor at the front of the dining room, the window bay extends to the front and is emphasized with a suspended delicate wooden grille arch set on turned half round pilasters.

On the second floor an 'ell' shape plan includes three bedrooms opening from the stair hall. Two of these rooms have fireplaces and the third is heated through a floor grille allowing warm air to rise from the first floor drawing room below.

During its history this house has had owners who cared, and it is remarkably well preserved with little or no alteration in the original work. The revitalization of Fourth Ward will be greatly enhanced with the continued preservation of this fine historic residence.