



**Survey and Research Report  
On The  
Barnum A. Sustare House**

**June 30, 2018**



1. **Name And Location Of The Property.** The Barnum A. Sustare House is located at 110 West Matthews Street in in Matthews, N.C.
2. **Name And Address Of The Present Owner Of The Property.**

**Jagger Beats LLC  
3201 Dan Hood Road  
Matthews, N.C. 28105**

3. **Representative Photographs Of The Property.** The report contains representative photographs of the property.

**5. Current Deed Book Reference To The Property.** The current deed to the property is recorded in Deed Book 25861 at Page 525. The tax parcel number of the property is 19327114.

**7. A Brief Physical Description Of The Property.** The report contains a brief physical description of the property prepared 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 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the Barnum A. Sustare House possesses special significance in terms of the Town of Matthews. The Commission bases its judgment on the following considerations:

- 1) The Barnum A. Sustare House is among the most sophisticated and imposing examples of Craftsman style architecture in Matthews, North Carolina.
- 2) The Barnum A. Sustare House retains a high degree of physical integrity.
- 3) The Barnum A. Sustare House has special significance as an artifact that documents the evolution of a prosperous farm family from rural to small town life in Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

b. **Integrity Of Design, Setting, Workmanship, Materials, Feeling, And/Or Association.** The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission judges that the physical description of the Barnum A. Sustare House included in this report demonstrates that the Barnum A. Sustare House meets this criterion. *Note: the owner does not wish for the interior of the house to be considered for historic landmark designation. Hence, a description of the interior of the house is not included in this report.*

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 value of the Bynum A. Sustare House and 0.48 acres is \$191,100.

**Date Of The Preparation Of This Report:** June 30, 2018

**Prepared By:** Dr. Dan L. Morrill





## A Brief History Of The The Barnum A. Sustare House

Dr. Dan L. Morrill  
June 30, 2018



House From Southeast



House Stairway

**Statement of Special Significance.** The special significance of the Barnum A. Sustare House is best understood within the context of the architectural history of Matthews, N.C., and the town's place in the emergence of other outlying small towns along railroad lines in Mecklenburg County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Barnum A. Sustare was one of several residents in small towns in Mecklenburg County who expressed their aspirations for social status by building fashionable homes.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1900s, the Craftsman style became increasingly popular. Not surprisingly, Barnum Sustare chose Craftsman motifs for his Matthews residence. The Barnum A. Sustare House is among the most sophisticated examples of the Craftsman style in Matthews.

The Barnum A. Sustare House also has significance because it documents the evolution of a prosperous farm family from rural life to small town life in Mecklenburg County. Initially a cotton farmer, Barnum Sustare moved to Matthews about 1915, became a Town Commissioner, a member of the Board of Directors of the Bank of Matthews, and the operator of a regionally important recreational park.<sup>3</sup>



**Sustare Family History.** Barnum Adam Sustare (1862-1951), a native of Lancaster County, South



Carolina, traveled with his four siblings and his widowed mother, Holly Elizabeth Hemby Sustare (1837-1902), to North Carolina in 1876 and rented a farm in the New Harmony community on the border of Union County and Mecklenburg County. Impoverished by the battlefield



death of their father early in the Civil War, Barnum and his family had grown up in severe economic distress. The cemetery at Mount Harmony Baptist Church, which Barnum Sustare and his identical twin brother, James Ervin Sustare (1862-1931), played a major role in establishing, contains a monument to Holly Sustare. By erecting this monument, her children were expressing their gratitude for the hardships their mother had encountered and had overcome as the sole provider for her family in the years just after their father's death. The stories of what Holly had to endure to "keep her family together" are poignant. The harshness of Holly's facial expression in the one known photograph of her bears testimony to the difficulties she had to overcome. When Union troops marched through her neighborhood in 1865, Holly Sustare "went out to where the army horses had been fed and picked up about half a bushel of dirty corn and washed it and carried it to a mill some distance away and by night had bread for her children."<sup>4</sup>



**James Ervin Sustare (Left) & Barnum Adam Sustare (Right)**

Barnum Sustare and his twin brother became prosperous cotton farmers in the New Harmony community by the turn of the last century. *The Monroe Journal* reported that they had “splendid farms – hundreds of acres – on which are two beautiful homes and the farms are dotted with neat, well-kept tenant houses, good barns and other outbuildings, and the land is in a high state of cultivation.” “They are splendid farmers and from poor boys have risen to be men of large activities,” said the newspaper.<sup>5</sup> Illustrative of their success was the fact that In November 1914 the Sustare brothers and a neighbor dispatched fourteen wagons laden with fifty-nine bales of cotton to Monroe, N.C.<sup>6</sup>



**B. A. Sustare Grave**





**Barnum Adam Sustare In Later Life**



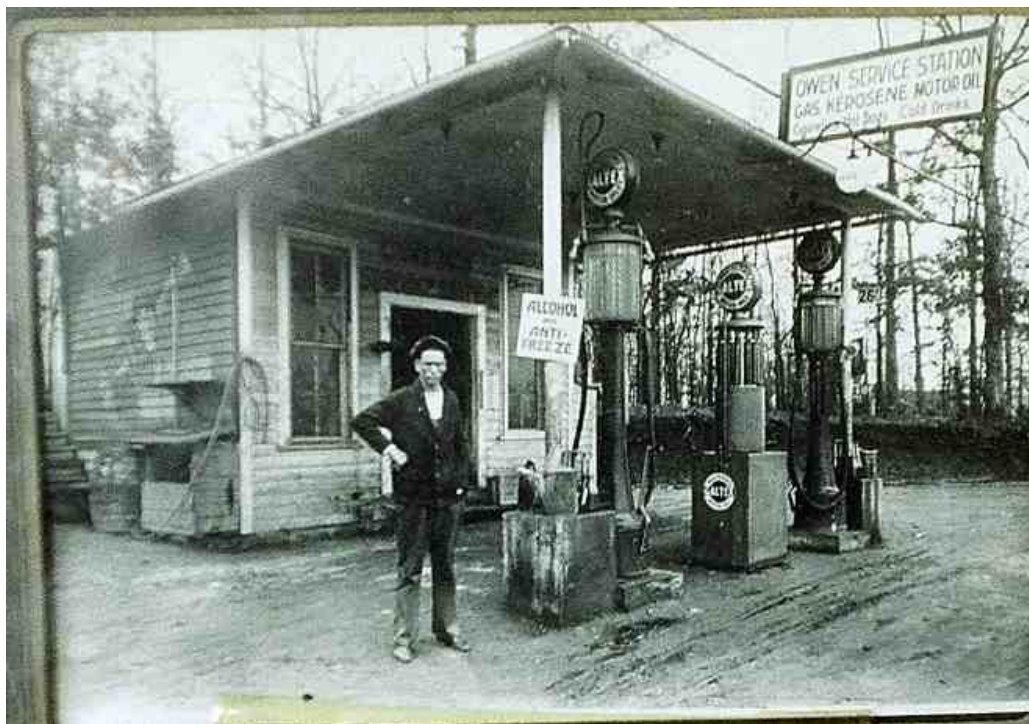
Barnum Sustare's Folk Victorian style farmhouse survives at 13700 Idlewild Road northeast of Matthews. The elaborate trim, form, and massing of the house echo the aesthetic standards of the late nineteenth century<sup>7</sup> In December 1914, Barnum Sustare purchased a lot on the northern edge of Matthews.<sup>8</sup> He bought a lot on Freemont Street in the town in September 1916, and in 1919 he built an imposing Craftsman style home on West Matthews Street.<sup>9</sup> Barnum Sustare and his wife, Sarah Amanda Ferguson Sustare (1867-1962), whom he had married on April 1889, became town dwellers and lived in their Matthews home until their deaths.<sup>10</sup> The last family members to live in the house were Bonnie Elizabeth Sustare Newell (1908-1999) and Augusta Lee Sustare (1905-2004), daughters of Barnum and Sarah Sustare.<sup>11</sup> The two sisters vacated the Barnum A. Sustare House in 1990. The present owner operates a hair salon in the house.<sup>12</sup>

When Barnard Sustare moved to Matthews c. 1915, the town had some 300 residents. But it was about to experience a transformation of its transportation infrastructure. Barnum Sustare was to take full advantage of that transformation. The first locomotive of the Carolina Central Railroad had arrived in Matthews in December 1874, and trains still provided the only effective means of travel, even to the nearest cities of Charlotte and Monroe, when Sustare settled in Matthews.<sup>13</sup> What roads existed were either dirt or macadamized and extended outward from town only a few miles. Their condition was lamentable. "While at this time all roads are bad," stated the *Charlotte Observer* in 1912, the hinterlands of Matthews "are not so well placed as some of their neighbors."<sup>14</sup> The newspaper reported that the roads were in a "soft and pliable condition and when run over with heavy wagons as many of them have been they are made almost impassable."<sup>15</sup>

It was the arrival of the automobile that made the construction of paved inter-city highways a priority. Before Henry Ford began manufacturing the affordable Model T in 1908, automobiles had been mainly the pleasure vehicles for the wealthy. Farmers embraced the Model T, because they understood that it would enable them to avoid paying the high freight rates charged by railroads. However, to become usable as a way to transport crops to market, automobiles and trucks had to have paved roads on which to operate. President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Aid Road Act on July 11, 1916, which provided Federal assistance to Counties and States for highway construction.<sup>16</sup> A paved road was completed between Charlotte and Matthews by 1921.<sup>17</sup> This was a momentous event in the town's history.







A Gasoline Station On The Charlotte-Matthews Road

Bernard Sustare was an adroit businessman. He understood that the opening of the Charlotte-Matthews Road, coupled with the availability of affordable automobiles, would allow throngs of people to come to what had heretofore been a virtually unreachable destination by car. As recently as 1917, the newspapers had said that the road between Charlotte and Matthews was in a “dangerous condition, as far as automobile traffic is concerned.”<sup>18</sup> Happily, that was no longer the case. In 1922, Barnum Sustare joined with a local resident in building in the bottomland he owned behind his house a recreational area featuring the then largest swimming pool in Mecklenburg County. For the next sixty-eight years, first as Sustare’s Pool and later as the Matthews County Club, this facility was a beehive of activity. The *Charlotte Observer* said in June 1955 that “thousands of persons including churches, civic clubs and individuals have enjoyed the several well equipped picnic and recreational areas over these many years.” Visitors enjoyed “lolling on the sand beaches.” “At Sustare’s ample free parking is available,” the press proclaimed.<sup>19</sup>



Swimmers At Sustare’s Pool



Sandy Beach Surrounded Sustare’s Pool

A particularly successful publicity event at Sustare's was the holding of an annual picnic for twins beginning in 1928.<sup>20</sup> B. A. Sustare and J. E. Sustare were an affable, gregarious pair. They purposely dressed to look alike. Both had full flowing beards. They invited twins from throughout the region to come to Matthews and picnic together.<sup>21</sup> Hundreds would arrive to participate in the fete.<sup>22</sup> Two special guests were Clarence and Faison Kuester, the identical-twin sons of the head of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce.<sup>23</sup>



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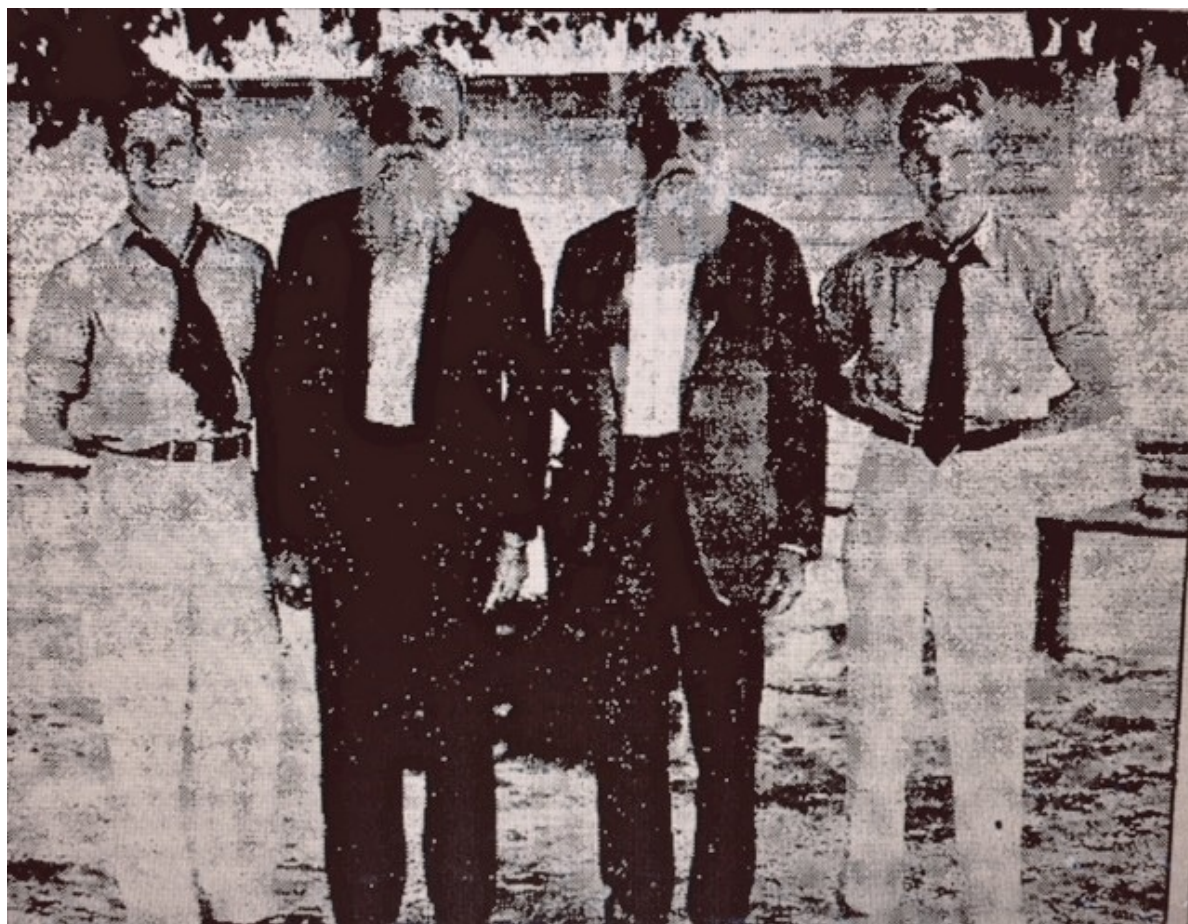




**Bonne Elizabeth Sustare Newell (1908-1999)**

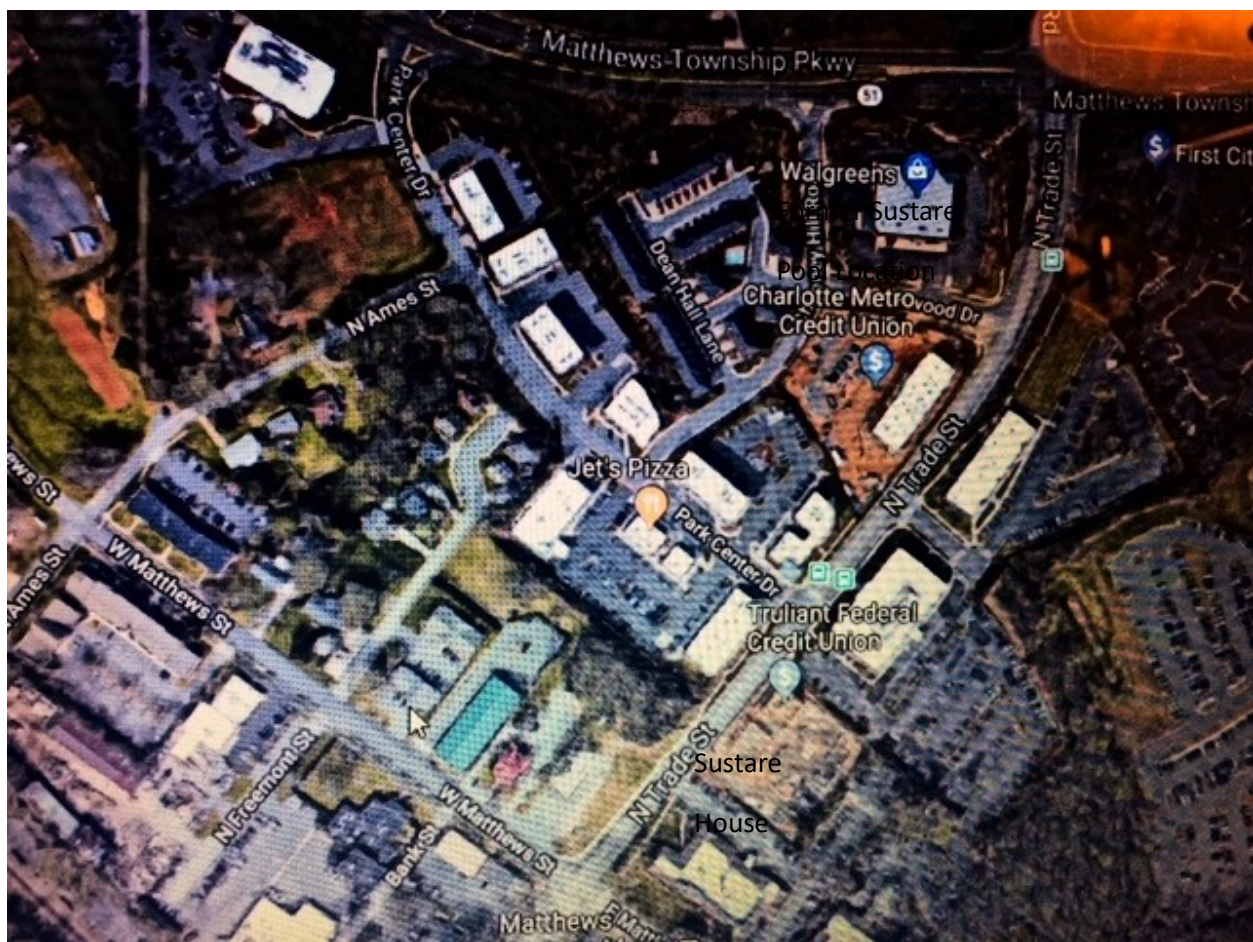


**Augusta Lee Sustare (1905-2004)**



**Left To Right: Faison Kuester, J. E. Sustare, B. A. Sustare, Clarence Kuester**









1993 Map



2004 Map. Last Map On Which The Sustare Pool Appears

**Architectural Significance Of Sustare House.** Historian Richard Mattson describes how between the 1880s and the Great Depression of the 1930s a group of “sleepy stagecoach stops or crossroad hamlets” in Mecklenburg County morphed into “centers of local trade with bustling main streets.” Pineville, Huntersville, Cornelius, and Matthews, says Mattson, followed “common patterns of development that engendered a distinctive small-town landscape.” One and two-story corbeled brick commercial buildings formed the main streets of these communities, which invariably intersected or were located next to the town’s principal railroad tracks. Radiating out from the central business district of each of Mecklenburg’s small towns was a collection of fashionable residences, commonly on the major thoroughfares, that illustrated the desire of prominent townspeople to fulfill their “urban ambitions.”<sup>24</sup>

The largest concentration of stylish older homes in Matthews was located to the immediate west of the town’s commercial core, south of the railroad, and along West John Street. Such extant fashionable residences as the Nancy Reid House (1890) at 134 West John Street, the B. D. Funderburk House (1904) at 201 West Charles Street, and the McLaughlin Bost House (c. 1891) at 415 West John Street, attest to the range of designs made possible by sawn lumber and manufactured nails brought to Matthews by rail at the turn of the last century. Balloon framing made the construction of elaborately embellished houses much easier and faster. Houses bedecked with manufactured filigree were commonly found in small towns like Matthews in the late 1800s and early 1900s.



Nancy Reid House



B. D. Funderburk House



McLaughlin Bost House

The predilections regarding home styles of many of the people who settled in Matthews in the late nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century tended in a different direction. They



were demonstrably rural. These folks, says Mattson, preferred “traditional farmhouses” and lots large enough for “flourishing kitchen gardens, smokehouses, and other assorted outbuildings.”<sup>25</sup> It was not unusual for these town dwellers to have cows, chickens, and pigs. The Grier Furr House (c. 1878) at 500 West John Street exhibits the same form and massing as that found on many late nineteenth century and early twentieth century farmhouses in Mecklenburg County. Residences of this type were less pretentious and were devoid of elaborate ornamentation. “Uptown houses,” Mattson writes, “blended the traditional with the up-to-date.”<sup>26</sup>

In the early 1900s, aspiring residents of Matthews increasingly came to prefer the Craftsman style over the ornate Victorian themes of the late nineteenth century. Craftsman style architecture was part of a



larger Arts and Crafts movement that sought to resurrect craftmanship from what many regarded as the toxic impact of the industrial age. According to one art historian, It arose from an “emotional



### Twins Picnic At Sustare's Pool



unwillingness to accept and face the reality of our industrial world.”<sup>27</sup> The emphasis in Craftsman style bungalows was upon “humble materials,” and there was “an overwhelming sense of the handmade.” Ornamentation was restrained, and “construction joints were proudly displayed.”<sup>28</sup> Well suited for warm climates, bungalows had large front porches, usually supported by wooden posts resting on brick or stone piers, broad eaves, and clusters of windows to facilitate cross ventilation. Many designers looked upon the Craftsman bungalow as a cost-effective means to provide adequate housing for the working class.



**Barn At Barnum A. Sustare House (Destroyed)**



Matthews has several Craftsman bungalows of typical proportions and appointments.<sup>29</sup>



**201 Main Street**



**201 South Ames Street**



**408 West John Street**



**300 South Trade Street**



**509 West John Street**



**500 Matthews Mint Hill Road**

The two largest and most imposing Craftsman style homes in Matthews are the Barnum A. Sustare House at 110 West Matthews Street (1919) and the Renfrow Lemmond House (c. 1924) at 344 West John Street.<sup>30</sup> Both are two-story homes sheathed in red brick. Both have large porches with a pedimented gable marking the location of the front entrance. The overall massing of both houses is similar. Clearly, the Renfrow-Lemmond House, already a historic landmark, and the Barnum A. Sustare stand out from the more typical Craftsman style residences in the built environment of Matthews.



**Renfrow-Lemmond House 344 West John Street**



**Barnum A. Sustare House 110 West Matthews Street**

### A Brief Physical Description Of The Barnum A. Sustare House



The Barnum A. Sustare House is an especially imposing structure in the built environment of Matthews, North Carolina. The sophistication of its appointments and materials set the Sustare House apart from the majority of the homes constructed in the town in the early 1900s. Located at the northern edge of the town when the dwelling was built in 1919, the Barnum A. Sustare House attests to the economic standing its owner had achieved as a farmer and entrepreneur.

The Barnum A. Sustare House is a south-facing, two-story, three-bay-wide by three-bay-deep Craftsman style residence sheathed in wire cut dark red brick laid in running bond. The foundation is continuous. The house has a full basement. A projection at the right rear of the house has a sun room on the second story. The front of the dwelling is located approximately 25 feet from the right-of-way of West Matthews Street. It is the only extant structure in the block that originally functioned as a domicile; the others buildings in the block are exclusively commercial and were never residential. A two-lane gravel driveway extends northward from West Matthews Street along both edges of the property and encircles the rear of the house. The backyard has one tree to the left rear of the house. The backyard also has a large gravel parking lot, most likely constructed since 1990.

The front yard has a cement sidewalk leading from a gravel parking area to steps that rise to a full-width attached front porch, which is bordered by a wooden balustrade. A second cement sidewalk leads from the driveway on the eastern edge of the front yard to steps leading to a screened side porch. Finally, a walkway composed of spaced pavers extends from the front porch steps to the gravel driveway on the eastern edge of the front yard. The front yard has a large tree near the street. It is



just to the right of the sidewalk leading to the front steps. Bushes border the front façade of the Sustare House. The property contains a gable-roofed metal storage building near the left rear of the house, and a birdbath is located nearby. The property had a barn in earlier years, but it has been destroyed. The entire lot is essentially level.

The Barnum A. Sustare House has features commonly associated with the Craftsman style. The house has broad eaves with brackets. The windows, predominantly double-hung 8/1, are grouped to facilitate ventilation and to increase the amount of sunlight reaching into the interior. The largest window is to the right of the front door and is 12/1. The smallest window is on the rear of the house. It is 2/1. Four single-light windows, two on each side of the house, provide light to the full basement. The wall bordering the side porch has two 8/1 windows, and a door with 10 lights provides access from the porch into the house.

The Sustare House is surmounted by side gable roof with exposed rafter ends. It was originally covered with architectural shingles. It is now covered with tin, painted red. The same is true of the front porch shed roof, the gable roof atop the side porch on the east side of the house, and a low-pitched gable roof extending to the rear of the house above the sun porch.

The shed roof of the front porch has a pedimented gable at the center, and four masonry steps connect the front sidewalk to the wooden plank floor of the front porch. Brick cheek walls with masonry tops flank the front steps. Four brick columns support the front porch. Two columns with brick below and wooden columns above support the gable roof above the side porch, which also has exposed rafters. A partially exterior chimney penetrates the roof of the house on the west side, and a second chimney of similar configuration penetrates the roof near the east side of the house. Replacement bricks on the upper portion of the first chimney suggest that the chimney has been repaired. The Sustare House has a prominent two-bay wide, front projecting bay topped by a gable roof with brackets, broad eaves, and a louvered vent below the apex. There is also a vent near the top of each of the side facades of the house. The front door of the house has three rectangular lights in the upper half. The filigree decoration on the door leading to the side porch is antithetical to the Craftsman style. It might have been brought from the Sustare House on Idlewild Road.

The rear of the Sustare House has a large handicap ramp that provides access to both floors of the house. A new entryway has been constructed to allow entry into the upper floor. A window on the center rear of the house is now composed of glass brick to meet fire code requirements. An opening near the eastern rear of the house was most likely originally used as a coal shoot. A rear porch on the left rear of the Sustare House has been enclosed.









1 For a general history of Matthews, see Lester, Paula Hartill. 1999. *Discover Matthews From Cotton to Corporate*, Charlotte: Herff Jones Publishing Company for The Town of Matthews Tourism Council. Hereinafter cited as *Lester*.

2 <http://www.cmhpf.org/kids/neighborhoods/small-intro.html>, Hereinafter cited as *Mattson*.

3 *Charlotte Observer*, December 30, 1915; *Hickory sqRecord*, January 22, 1916; *Charlotte Observer*, March 14, 1951.

4 *Monroe Journal*, January 17, 1922; *Charlotte Observer*, March 14, 1951; [http://www.carolsutton.net/sustare/sustare\\_twins\\_j\\_b.html](http://www.carolsutton.net/sustare/sustare_twins_j_b.html)) It is noteworthy that the monument to Hollie Sustare spells her married name "Sustar." The spelling of the family name is inconsistent in the documentary record. It is spelled variously as Sustar, Sustare, and Sustaire. For purposes of consistency, this writer has used the spelling "Sustare" throughout this paper.

5 *Monroe Journal*, February 19, 1907.

6 *Monroe Journal*, November 12, 1914.

7 *Monroe Journal*, January 17, 1922; <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Sustare-House-SR.pdf>

8 Mecklenburg County Deed Book 352, Page 146.

9 *Charlotte News*, September 9, 1916; Interview of Jane Ridinger by Dr. Dan L. Morrill (June 15, 2018).

10 *Charlotte Observer*, March 14, 1951; *Charlotte Observer*, June 15, 1862.

11 *Charlotte Observer*, December 22, 1999; Augusta Lee Sustar's grave marker in the Mt. Harmony Baptist Church Cemetery. Bonnie Sustare Newell's husband, Robert L. Newell, died in 1957. He was the Matthews Chief of Police (*Charlotte Observer*, February 1, 1957. Augusta Lee Sustare was granted a divorce from Thomas Thornton, Jr. in June 1951 (*Charlotte Observer*, June 20, 1951.

12 Interview of Jane Ridinger by Dr. Dan L. Morrill, June 15, 2018.

13 *Lester*, 55.

14 *Charlotte Observer*, January 19, 1912.

15 *Charlotte Observer*, January 1, 1915.

16 For an overview of the process of road building in the South, see Tammy Ingram, *Dixie Highway. Road Building and the Making of the Modern South, 1900-1930* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).



17 *Charlotte Observer*, October 4, 1921,

18 *Charlotte Observer*, August 14, 1917.

19 *Charlotte Observer*, June 15, 1955.

20 *Oakland Tribune*, July 29, 1929.

21 *Monroe Journal*, January 17, 1922.

22 Eighty-seven pairs of twins attended the event in 1929 (*Oakland Tribune*, July 29, 1929).

23 This writer's personal knowledge.

24 *Mattson*.

25 *Mattson*.

26 *Mattson*.

27 Herwin Schaefer, "The Metamorphosis of the Craftsman," *College Art Journal* 17, no. 3 (Spring 1958): 266.

28 William Morgan, *The Abrams Guide to American Styles* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, Inc., 2004), 258-259.

29 A reconnaissance survey of the built environment of Matthews conducted by this writer identified 16 Craftsman style bungalows in Matthews. Main Street has three – at 201 Main Street, 341 Main Street, and 525 Main Street. Three are extant on South Trade Street – at 224 South Trade Street, 300 South Trade Street, and 308 South Trade Street. Five Craftsman style residences are on West John Street – 226 West John Street, 344 West John Street, 408 West John Street, 509 West John Street, and 510 West John Street. There is a Craftsman style residence at 500 Matthews-Mint Hill Road and another at 110 West Matthews Street. A Craftsman style bungalow survives at 301 West Charles Street and at 304 Covenant Church Lane. The William Henry Freeman House is at 201 South Ames Street. This writer was not able to determine if the Barnum A. Sustare House was architect designed. It might well have been built from a published house plan. They were widely distributed. The builder might have been William Henry Freeman (1869-1947), a resident of Matthews who according to the local press was an "architect and contractor," see <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Freeman-House-SR.pdf>.

30 For the Historic Landmarks Commission's Survey and Research Report on the Renfrow Lemmond House, see <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/RenfrowLemmond.pdf>