

Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Historic Landmarks Commission



James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House

6501 Sardis Road

Charlotte, North Carolina 28270-6047

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission

Local Landmark Designation Report

Prepared by John Howard and Tommy Warlick

January 2024

HISTORIC NAMES OF PROPERTY

James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House; Akers Acres

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY

6501 Sardis Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28270-6047

PIN #

18915110

DEEDS BOOK & PAGE

Book 29310, Page 216

ZONING

N1-A

AMOUNT OF LAND/ACREAGE TO BE DESIGNATED

6.446 acres

AD VALOREM TAX APPRAISAL

The Commission is aware that designation would allow the owner to apply for an automatic deferral of up to 50% of the Ad Valorem taxes depending upon the portion(s) of the property designated as the “historic landmark.” As of January 2024, the total appraised value of the property is \$3,145,200.

RECOMMENDATION FOR DESIGNATION

The Commission recommends the exterior of the main house, the exterior of the garage, the exterior of the summer house, the exterior of the well house, associated stone walls and manmade features, and all of the property associated with the tax parcel for historic designation.

NAME/ADDRESS OF CURRENT PROPERTY OWNER

Susan T. Blanton Senn, individually
and as successor trustee of Emroy H. Blanton, Jr. Trust
6501 Sardis Road
Charlotte, North Carolina 28270-6047

DESIGNATION REPORT CONTENTS

This report includes maps and representative photographs of the property, a brief historical sketch and architectural description of the property, and documentation as to why and how the property meets the criteria for designation set forth in N.C.G.S. § 160D-945.

Source for cover image: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.

I. Abstract

Statement of Significance

The James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House has stood since 1937 as the singular defining element of the historic Sardis Road corridor, a stretch that consisted primarily of cotton fields and agricultural operations for much of the twentieth century. The house's setting – a park-like meadow on a slight rise within a nearly six and one-half acre parcel – distinguishes the homesite from its surroundings, as the lot is the largest single residence land parcel for at least a three-mile span of Sardis Road. The massive 8,684 square foot structure is Charlotte's largest known Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor style residence to be designed by native Charlottean Louis B. Asbury Sr., North Carolina's first native-born formally trained professional architect. Once the sole striking feature of an approximately 50 acre parcel of rural land, the Akers House has retained its character and Asbury's vision as an English countryside manor house – even in the face of a rapidly developing Sardis Road corridor – primarily due to the size of the parcel upon which it rests. That character is further bolstered by the masterful use of locally sourced fieldstone quarried in the adjacent Stonehaven neighborhood as the primary construction material, contributing a uniquely indigenous element to the traditional English styling of the house. The longevity of its presence on that well-traveled roadway invests Akers Acres (as the house and accompanying property is also known) with a familiarity that has made the structure a recognizable and cherished landmark of the local community for decades. The home was constructed originally for longtime insurance executive James Jones Akers and his wife Nancy Anderson Akers, both active participants in a range of civic and philanthropic work within the Charlotte community. Vernon and Julia Goode were the longest residents of Akers Acres, residing at the house from 1953 to 1989. The Goode Construction Company is credited with building many of Charlotte's most notable twentieth century buildings – including St. John's Baptist Church, the original Mercy Hospital, Myers Park Shopping Center, the Army Air Corps' Morris Field airbase, and the Law Building – as well as such notable structures outside of Charlotte as the Howard University chemistry building, the administrative buildings at eastern North Carolina's Sunny Point Army Terminal, the Pender County Courthouse, and most of the buildings at Camp Lejeune. The final residents of Akers Acres – Emroy and Marillyn Blanton – successfully launched Data Systems Machines, Inc., one of Charlotte's earliest locally-owned electronic business machine companies.

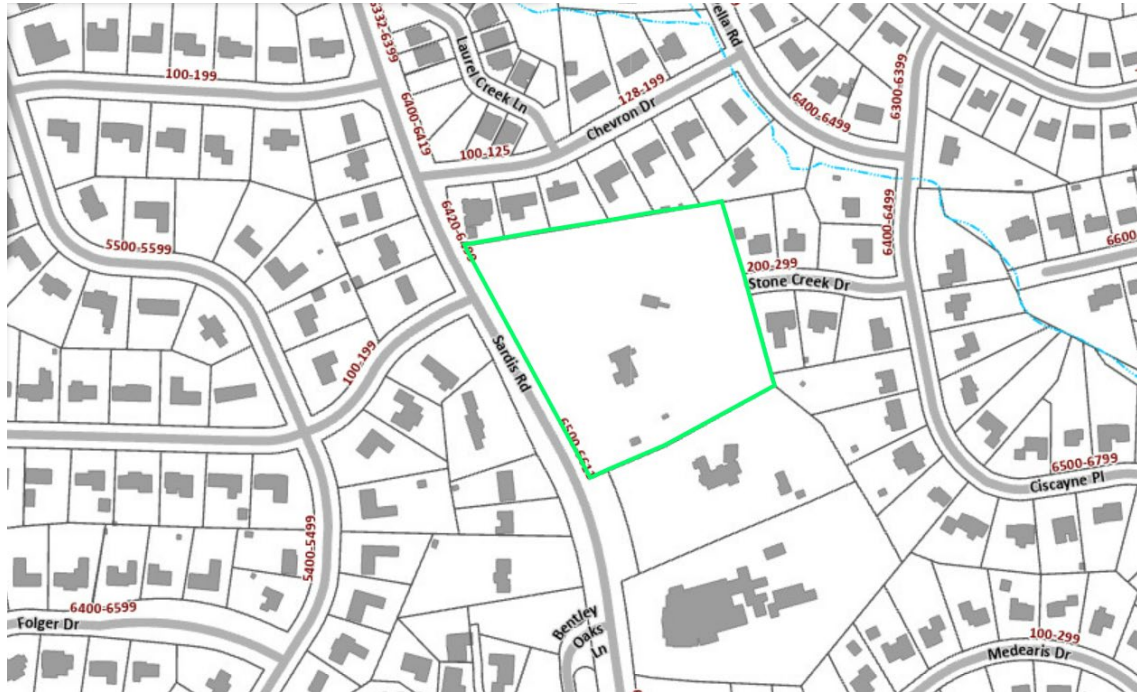
Integrity Statement

- **Location:** The extant Akers House remains at its original site of construction and thereby retains a high degree of integrity of location. It is believed that the extant associated garage, Summer House, and well house are likewise at their respective original sites of construction and thereby also retain high degrees of integrity of location.
- **Design:** As evidenced by Asbury's original plans, the Akers House's form, proportions, footprint, scale, structure, ornamentation, and overall design remain unchanged, thereby giving the house a high degree of integrity as to its original Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor style as envisioned by Asbury. Further investigation is warranted as to the associated outbuildings.

- **Setting:** The Akers House has stood prominently on a slight rise above Sardis Road since 1937. Once the singular striking feature on an approximately 50 acre parcel of rural land surrounded by farms and agricultural fields, the house remains a significant presence along the rapidly developing Sardis Road corridor, in large part because of the size of its land parcel, which has maintained its original park-like setting reminiscent of the community's once rural character. Accordingly, the Akers House and outbuildings retain a high degree of integrity of setting.
- **Materials:** The Akers House and associated outbuildings retain a high degree of integrity of materials, most readily evidenced by the prolific use of locally sourced fieldstone. Other original exterior materials include without limitation the slate roofs, timbering within the façade gables, leaded and bay windows, transom and full casement windows, stained glass windows, and cast stonework.
- **Workmanship:** Built nearly ninety years ago, the Akers House retains numerous elements of the Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor style of its original construction, including without limitation the paired asymmetrical front gables, half-timbering in the façade gables and the second level on the front and rear elevations, a prominent chimney on the front façade's right side decorated with chimney pots, a semi-hexagonal bay window on the front façade's left side, and the intricate stonework throughout the structure's exterior. Comparable elements are included in the associated outbuildings. The high level of design and materials called for by Asbury's detailed designs required skilled craftsmen to complete the work. Likewise, the durability of those elements after nearly nine decades demonstrates the skills of the builder(s) of the main house and the associated outbuildings.
- **Feeling:** Despite continued development along Sardis Road during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the massing, location, and setting of the Akers House provide a high degree of integrity as to feeling. Complemented by the Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor styling employed by Asbury and the similarly designed outbuildings, the Akers Acres structures retain the original rural character of an English manor house sought by the Akers family and conceived by Asbury for country living in what was originally Charlotte's undeveloped outskirts.
- **Association:** Akers Acres enjoys a high degree of integrity of association both with respect to its architect and its inhabitants. Charlotte native and highly regarded architect Louis Asbury used his skills to create in the Akers House Charlotte's largest known Asbury-designed Tudor style residence. The three families who have resided at Akers Acres represent three distinct aspects of Charlotte's burgeoning economy for much of the twentieth century: insurance and real estate (James Jones Akers and his wife Nancy Anderson Akers), construction and real estate development (Vernon Goode and his wife Julia), and technology (Emroy and Marillyn Blanton).

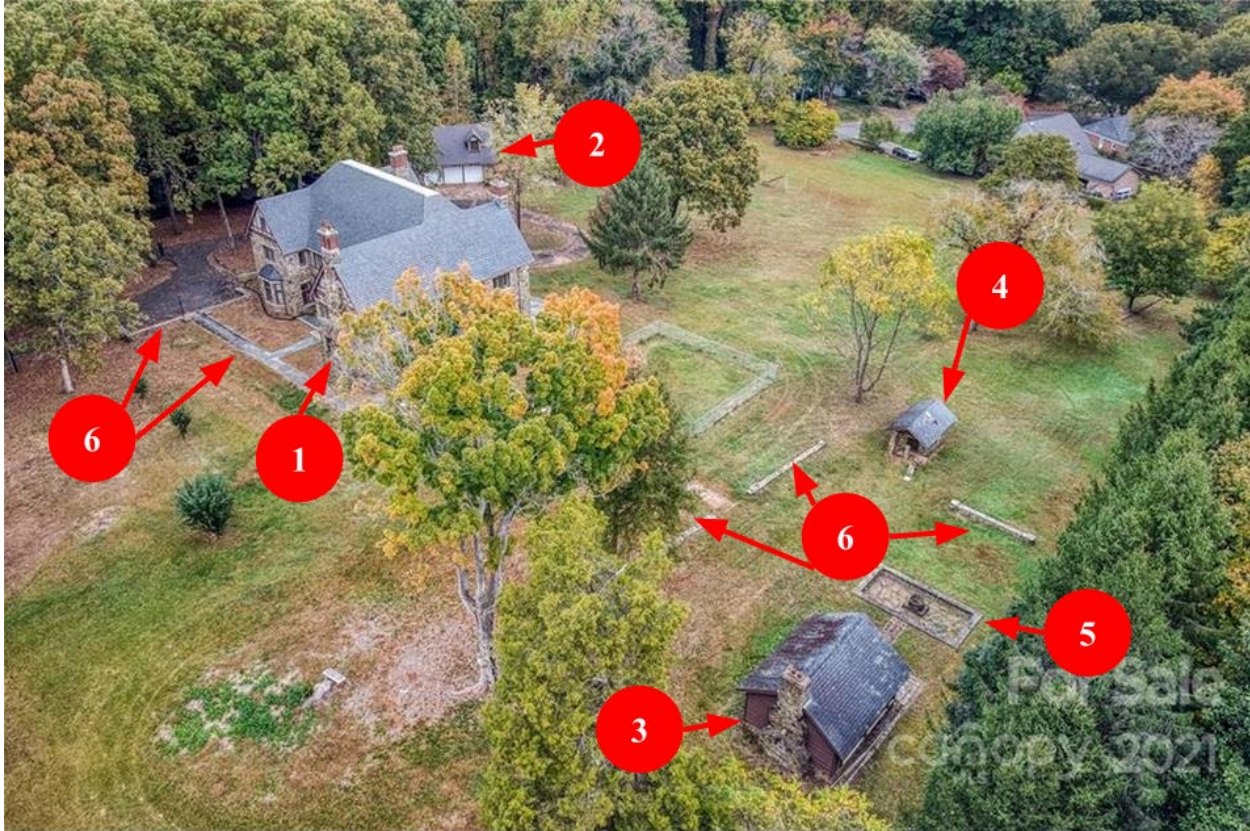
II. Maps and Chain of Title

Mecklenburg County Tax Maps



Source for above images: Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency, Polaris 3G database, <https://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/>.

Aerial Imagery



Aerial view of Akers House property.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.

- 1 – Akers House
- 2 – Detached Garage
- 3 – Summer House
- 4 – Well House
- 5 – Stone Water Feature
- 6 – Stone Walls and Landscape Features

The foregoing features are discussed further in the “Architectural Assessment” section below.

Chain of Title

Transaction Date	Grantor	Grantee	Book	Page(s)
July 10, 2014	Susan T. Blanton Senn, as successor trustee of Emroy H. Blanton, Jr. Revocable Trust	Susan T. Blanton Senn, as successor trustee of Emroy H. Blanton, Jr. Trust, & Susan T. Blanton Senn (7.148± acres)	29310	216
June 22, 1990	Julia M. Goode	Emroy H. Blanton Jr. & Marillyn T. Blanton (7.148± acres)	6299	494
November 24, 1953	J.J. Akers & Nancy A. Akers	Vernon D. Goode & Julia M. Goode (44.11± acres)	1639	283
October 23, 1930	A.B. Hood & Janie E. Hood	J.J. Akers & Nancy A. Akers (56.8± acres)	790	270

III. Historical Sketch

In 2013, a *Charlotte Observer* reporter may have best captured the local significance of the James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House to the surrounding Sardis Road neighborhoods and greater Charlotte community: “For more than 80 years, a Tudor-style mansion on 6 ½ acres has been a stately, solitary staple along Sardis Road that inspires awe and intrigue for hundreds of passersby each day.”¹ Since 1937, the massive residence has stood as a testament to the creative skills of one of North Carolina’s most prolific architects, the business acumen of three men engaged in a range of entrepreneurial activities, and the civic and philanthropic works of the families who resided therein. But it also has stood as a long-cherished landmark of southeast Charlotte and a reminder of the rural landscape that once dominated that now-bustling Sardis Road corridor.

Louis H. Asbury, Sr.



Louis H. Asbury, Sr. (c. 1915)

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission files.

¹ Reid Creager, “Sardis landmark on the market,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 31, 2013, 1Q.

Described as “a small man who left a big mark on modern Charlotte” – he stood a mere five feet, four inches tall and weighed 120 pounds – Louis Humbert Asbury, Sr. (1877-1975) is widely credited for his significant role in shaping the design of his hometown. Born in the Queen City on October 15, 1877, the son of Samuel Jennings (a local building contractor) and Martha Ann Lewis Asbury, Louis worked as a youth helping his father in his construction business, seemingly predestined to become an architect. The young Asbury also served as one of the first carriers of the *Charlotte Observer*, founded in 1886. Later eulogizing the respected architect shortly after his March 19, 1975, death, the newspaper wrote, “His vision and his devotion to the city were as large as his stature was small.”²

Following his 1900 graduation from Trinity College (now Duke University), Asbury returned to Charlotte where he prepared plans for twelve houses and a thirty-room hotel by the end of that year. Seeking additional training, Asbury began a two-year architecture course at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in October 1901, where he studied under nationally acclaimed Gothic Revivalist Ralph Adams Cram. He completed the program in May 1903 and went to work as a draftsman with the New York City firm of Rossiter and Wright. He then returned to Massachusetts to work for the Boston firm of Cram, Goodhue, and Ferguson (reuniting with his former mentor Ralph Cram) until 1908, before moving back to Charlotte with his new wife May Whitmore Crosby Asbury (1887-1951) to begin his own architectural firm.³

Asbury’s return to Charlotte accorded him the distinction of being North Carolina’s first native-born formally trained professional architect. Armed with the recommendations of his former employer Cram, the head of M.I.T.’s Architectural Department Francis W. Chandler, and Boston Architectural College president Louis C. Newhall, Asbury also became the state’s first member of the American Institute of Architects (“AIA”) in September 1908. In 1913, he was one of the five founding members of the North Carolina chapter of the AIA, serving as the inaugural vice president of that chapter from 1913 to 1916 with a subsequent term lasting 1917 through 1920. Asbury also served on the board of directors for the North Carolina Architectural Association. Following North Carolina’s 1915 passage of an architectural licensure act, Asbury received the fourth North Carolina Architectural Registration License issued by the newly formed North Carolina Board of Architecture.⁴

² “Louis Asbury: Builder of a City,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 24, 1975, 16A; “Louis H. Asbury, Sr., 97, Architect of Courthouse,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 20, 1975, 8A; William B. Bushong and Catherine W. Bishir, “Asbury, Louis H. (1877-1975),” *North Carolina Architects & Builders: A Biographical Dictionary*, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000449>; “Louis Humbert Asbury Sr.,” Ancestry.com, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/81042814/person/38521075550/facts>; “About Us,” *Charlotte Observer*, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/customer-service/about-us/article9403415.html>; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, “Designation Report for Advent Christian Church,” November 2, 1987, 6, accessed December 19, 2023, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Advent-Christian-Church-SR.pdf>.

³ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Henry Fletcher and Carrie Allison Long House, October 14, 2019, 30, accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.dncr.nc.gov/nr/id1857/download>; Bushong and Bishir, “Asbury, Louis H.”; “An Old Church,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 29, 1975, 14A; “Louis Humbert Asbury Sr.,” Ancestry.com.

⁴ Bushong and Bishir, “Asbury, Louis H.”; C. David Jackson and Charlotte V. Brown, *History of The North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects, 1913-1998: An Architectural Heritage* (Raleigh: North Carolina

With those distinctions, Asbury quickly became regionally recognized as a leading residential, commercial, and civic architect, despite the influx of other influential architects into Charlotte such as Charles Christian Hook, William Peeps, Oliver Wheeler, James M. McMichael, and Martin Boyer, all drawn to the city's growing affluence as a leading hub for textile manufacturing. One of Asbury's first commissions in Charlotte was the North Tryon Street residence of R. M. Miller Jr., a business associate of Daniel A. Tompkins who later opened the Elizabeth Cotton Mills in 1901. His other early commissions in Charlotte included the Bishop John C. Kilgo House (c. 1914), Ivey's Department Store (1914), Hawthorne Lane United Methodist Church (c. 1915), the Henry M. McAden House (c. 1917), Mount Carmel Baptist Church (1918), the E.R. Cannon House (c. 1919), and Advent Christian Church (c. 1919). Early North Carolina commissions outside of Charlotte included the multibuilding Stonewall Jackson Training School campus (1908-1940) and the J. Archibald Cannon House (1912) both in Concord, the Switzerland Inn (c. 1910) in Little Switzerland, and Salisbury's Yadkin Hotel (1913).⁵



R. M. Miller, Jr. House (no longer standing)

Source: Mary Boyer Collection. J. Murrey Atkins Library University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

As Asbury's practice grew, so too did the breadth and prestige of his burgeoning portfolio. He earned hundreds of commissions throughout North Carolina for a wide variety of residential, commercial, civic, and religious structures. His subsequent design work in Charlotte included the Parks Hutchison School (c. 1924), the Professional Building (1925), First National Bank building (c. 1926), the Mecklenburg County Courthouse (c. 1926), the Law Building (1926), the Greater

Chapter, American Institute of Architects, 1998), 11-13, 69, 178; Louis B. Asbury, "Memoirs of Louis B. Asbury," circa 1958, 8, files of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission.

⁵ Catherine W. Bishir and Michael T. Southern, *A Guide to the Historic Architecture of Piedmont North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 504; "Designation Report for Advent Christian Church," 7; Bushong and Bishir, "Asbury, Louis H.," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Charlotte Supply Company Building, November 16, 1983, 8, accessed December 21, 2023, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/MK0058.pdf>.

Bethel A.M.E. Zion Church (1928), the Mayfair Manor Hotel (1929), the Montaldo's women's clothing store (1930) and the Doctors Building (c. 1950). Beyond Charlotte, his work included such notable structures as the Cliffside School in Rutherford County (c. 1920), the Lutheran Chapel Church (1923) in Gastonia, Shelby's Central United Methodist Church (1924), the Rutherford County Courthouse (1926), Brevard's Saint Philips Church (c. 1926), Bethel Bear Creek Reformed Church in Stanly County (1928), Rutherfordton's Norris Public Library (1933), and the Hearne Swink House (also known as Eastover) in Salisbury (1934). His designs for the Mecklenburg County Courthouse and Saint Philips Church earned Asbury honor awards from the North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1929 and 1931, respectively.⁶

In the late 1920s, Asbury began investing in real estate. He purchased and rented out several properties, including houses on Fifth Street, a garage on Sixth Street, stores on McDowell Street, a building in Brevard Court, and a store on Tryon Street next to the Mayfair Manor Hotel that he had designed. He also owned and operated a large dairy farm near Huntersville. However, the onset of the Depression, leaving many of his tenants unable to pay rent, and other personal financial difficulties (including a costly failed investment in the J. H. Wearn Lumber Company) forced Asbury to declare bankruptcy and close his office in the mid-1930s. In November 1934, Asbury was named North Carolina's chief supervising architect for the Federal Housing Administration ("FHA") and tasked with reviewing all FHA loan and mortgage applications to determine the suitability of proposed projects (in terms of fitness, function, and durability) for federal financial assistance, as well as providing cost projections and valuations to lenders. During his FHA tenure, Asbury also designed a five-room bungalow style "future home" model for the FHA's first national housing show south of Baltimore, styled with modern equipment and furnishings in accordance with the first such model debuted earlier in New York City. In November 1936, Asbury resigned his position with the FHA to relaunch his private architectural practice in Charlotte. The Akers House commission, which Asbury secured on February 1, 1937, was the second commission for Asbury's newly reopened practice.⁷

Within two weeks of reopening his practice, Asbury was one of nine Charlotte architects named by the city's school board as approved architects to design new schools as part of a nearly 1.2 million dollar school building program. In 1939, following his graduation from North Carolina State University, Louis H. Asbury, Jr. joined his father's firm. With the exception of a three-year stint with the U.S. Navy Civil Engineering Corps during World War II, the junior Asbury remained with the firm for the remainder of his professional career. Shortages of building materials during the war resulted in a sharp decline of commissions, forcing Louis Sr. to close the firm a second time. Louis Sr. accepted a position with the Army Post Engineers in Greensboro until 1945, when

⁶ Bushong and Bishir, "Asbury, Louis H.,"; Jackson and Brown, "History of The North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects," 106-07; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, "Designation Report for the Bishop John C. Kilgo House," January 10, 2008, 5, accessed December 22, 2023, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Kilgo-House-SR.pdf>.

⁷ Asbury, "Memoirs of Louis B. Asbury," 10; "Designation Report for the Bishop John C. Kilgo House," 6; "Louis Asbury Named Chief Architect FHA," *Charlotte Observer*, November 17, 1934, section 2, page 1; "Campaign For FHA Loans Is Given Impetus," *Charlotte News*, February 12, 1936, 13; "F.H.A. Chief Arranges For Display Here," *Charlotte Observer*, February 25, 1936, section 2, page 1; "National Home Show Is Given P.T. Backing," *Charlotte News*, February 26, 1936, 9; "Resigns FHA position," *Charlotte Observer*, November 14, 1936, section 1, page 13; Louis Asbury, Job Book 1908-1954, vol. 29, Louis Asbury Papers, MS 0145, box 6, Special Collections and University Archives, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

the Asbury father and son team reunited in Charlotte to form Louis H. Asbury and Son, which became Louis H. Asbury and Associates in 1956. Louis Sr. retired in 1957 and died in 1975. He was the last surviving member of the founders of the North Carolina Chapter of the AIA.⁸

Asbury's funeral was held at Charlotte's Myers Park Methodist Church, another of his numerous commissions. Donating his architectural services to the nascent congregation (which he helped co-found in 1925), Asbury received that assignment in 1927. The main building containing the sanctuary was completed in early 1930. Asbury's designs for the church earned him first prize honors for ecclesiastical design from both the North Carolina Society of Architects and the North Carolina chapter of the AIA, the latter of which was adjudged by the dean of architecture of Harvard University and the national AIA president. He later designed the other buildings comprising the church's campus including its Education Building.⁹



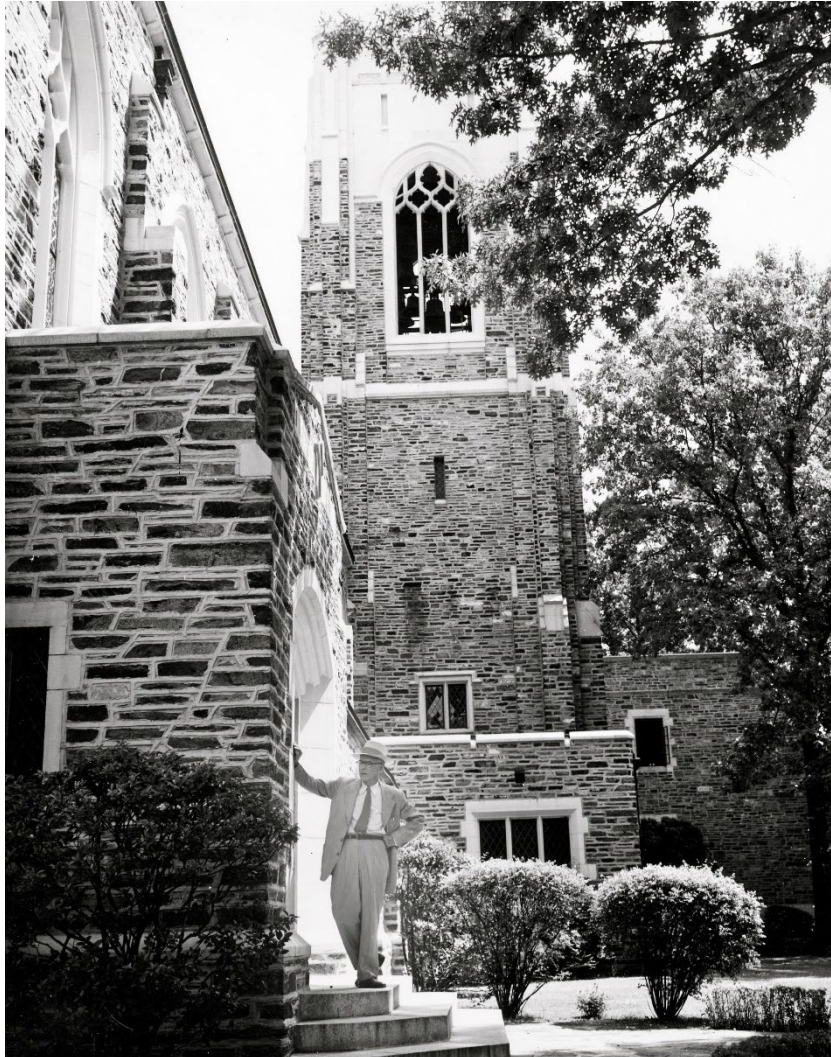
Myers Park Methodist Church.

Source: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission files.

⁸ "Nine To Plan City, County Construction" and "Hunter Thinks Fees Too High," *Charlotte Observer*, November 25, 1936, section 2, page 1; Jackson and Brown, *History of The North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects*, 173; "In Memory of Mr. Louis H. Asbury, Jr.," *Charlotte Observer*, March 31, 1991, 2G; Bushong and Bishir, "Asbury, Louis H.," National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Henry Fletcher and Carrie Allison Long House, 31.

⁹ LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockmann, *Hornets' Nest: The Story of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County* (Charlotte: McNally of Charlotte for Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, 1961), 203; "Progress With Plans For Methodist Church," *Charlotte News*, November 23, 1927, 14; "Drawing Plans For \$100,000 Edifice For Myers Park Methodist Congregation," *Charlotte News*, October 14, 1928, 4A; "N.C. Architects Choose Leaders," *Charlotte Observer*, January 25, 1930, 3; "Myers Park Methodist Will Open New Building," *Charlotte Observer*, March 5, 1930, 17; Jackson and Brown, "History of The North Carolina Chapter of The American Institute of Architects," 106; Asbury, "Memoirs of Louis B. Asbury," 10.

The Myers Park church commission may have also earned Asbury the commission for the James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House. In addition to being members of the initial committee that founded the new Myers Park Methodist Church, both Asbury and J. J. Akers were members of the congregation's first Board of Stewards (with Akers serving as the inaugural chairman of the Board) and Building Committee that oversaw construction of the church's new facilities.¹⁰



Louis Asbury, Sr. at Myers Park Methodist Church.
Source: *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission files.*

¹⁰ "Pastor To Be Named For Myers Park Methodist," *Charlotte Observer*, October 18, 1925, 8C; "Site Selected For New Church," *Charlotte Observer*, November 10, 1925, 16; "Myers Park Methodist Name Given To Church," *Charlotte Observer*, December 2, 1925, 6; "Cornerstone Of Myers Park Church To Be Laid Sunday," *Charlotte Observer*, June 8, 1929, 8.

James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers



J. J. Akers, circa 1929.

Source: Charlotte Observer, May 19, 1929, Section 5, page 2.



Nancy Anderson Akers, 1940.

Source: Charlotte News, May 10, 1940, 10A.

James Jones (“J. J.”) Akers (1878-1957) was born in Cobb County, Georgia, on January 22, 1878, the son of William Thomas and Laura Beecher Nichols Akers. William was connected with the milling firm of Akers and Brothers in Atlanta, Georgia, before becoming president of the Piedmont Lumber Company, also in Atlanta, Georgia. After working for several years as the chief clerk for the superintendent of Southern Railway’s Atlanta division, J. J. was promoted to the position of chief clerk for the general superintendent of Southern Railway, his uncle W. N. Foreacre. That promotion brought J. J. to Charlotte in 1907. He quickly became involved in the Charlotte community, joining the Southern Manufacturers’ Club and enrolling as a charter member of the new Charlotte Country Club.¹¹

Despite the move, J. J. maintained ties to Atlanta. In 1909, he joined with J. C. Branan and Robert P. Jones to launch the Atlanta-based Branan-Akers Company for the retail and wholesale sales of flour and grain. The business venture proved unsuccessful and filed for bankruptcy in 1912.¹²

Akers met Nancy Adeline Anderson (1891-1979) in the mid-1910s. The *Charlotte Observer* reported that the two spent the first weekend of July 1916 in Blowing Rock and Linville, North Carolina, with their mutual friends Mr. and Mrs. Thomas D. Mackay. The second daughter of David H. Anderson (a former vice president of Charlotte’s Commercial National Bank) and wife

¹¹ “James Jones Akers Sr.,” Ancestry.com, accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/75782639/person/48411410382/facts>; “William Thomas Akers Sr.,” Ancestry.com, accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/75782639/person/48411404797/facts>; “Mr. Akers’ Funeral Is Held Thursday,” *Atlanta Journal*, January 10, 1907, 4; “J. J. Akers Promoted To Charlotte Office,” *Atlanta Constitution*, November 15, 1907, 4; “New Chief Clerk Coming,” *Charlotte News*, November 16, 1907, 5; “Paralysis Stroke Endangers Life of Well Known Man,” *Atlanta Georgian*, January 7, 1907, 7; “Miss Anderson Becomes Bride of Mr. J. J. Akers,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 30, 1918, 18; “J. J. Akers,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 30, 1957, 15A.

¹² “Three Applications For Charters Filed,” *Atlanta Journal*, May 10, 1909, 4; *Fort-Mims & Haynes Co. v. Branan-Akers Co.*, 140 Ga. 131, 78 S.E. 721 (1913).

Sally, Nancy graduated from Charlotte High School in 1907 and then attended Elizabeth College in Charlotte and Hollins College in Roanoke, Virginia. She also pursued a special course of study at Columbia University and at the Y.W.C.A. training school in New York City, beginning her lifelong work with that prominent women's organization. Nancy had been working for the Y.W.C.A. in Wilmington, North Carolina, when she and J. J. married in a small ceremony on June 29, 1918, at her parents' Charlotte home on North Graham Street. Following their wedding, the couple briefly lived with Nancy's family – first in the East Avenue home of Nancy's aunt and uncle and then with Nancy's parents – and at the Guthery Apartments before moving to Queens Road West in the Myers Park neighborhood in June 1920.¹³

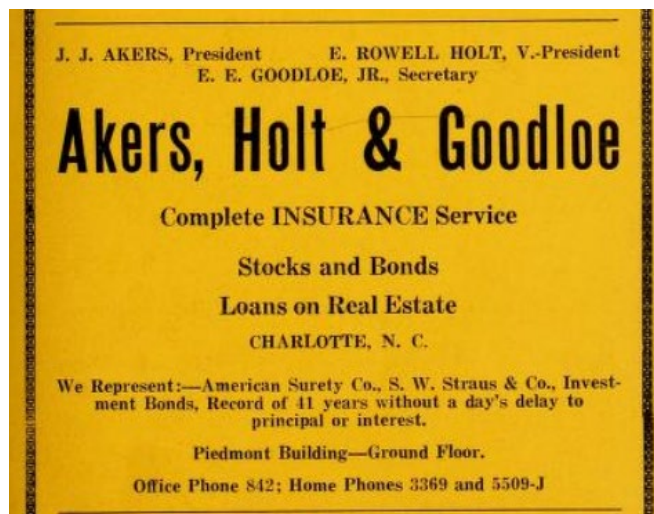
J. J. continued his work for Southern Railway, earning accolades for his performance. Meanwhile, Nancy remained active with the Y.W.C.A. serving in a variety of roles, including as a member of its local board of directors and of its executive committee responsible for the operation of the hostess house for enlistees at Camp Greene (Charlotte's World War I military training camp), and as chair of its religious education department. She also led the Y.W.C.A.'s local fundraising efforts to benefit war-related charity organizations and served as an officer of the Charlotte Methodist Board of Missions. The couple's first child, daughter Nancy, was born in August 1919; she was followed by two more siblings, one sister and one brother. Upon her graduation from Duke University, daughter Nancy returned home to live at Akers Acres while working as an inspector in U.S. Navy Shell plant in Charlotte during World War II.¹⁴

In 1923, after twenty-five years working for Southern Railway, J. J. left the company to become president of the newly formed insurance firm of Akers, Holt, and Goodloe with partners E. Rowell Holt, E. E. Goodloe Jr., and Clyde R. Middleton. In announcing the move, the *Charlotte Observer* described J. J. as “popular in commercial and social circles of Charlotte” and a successful professional who “has proved by his unflinching devotion to the interests of the Southern railway his efficiency as an executive of the system.” The new insurance firm occupied offices on the ground floor of the Piedmont Building, once described by noted Tar Heel journalist LeGette Blythe as

¹³ “Personal Notes,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 5, 1916, 7; “Charlotte High School Commencement,” *Charlotte News*, May 10, 1907, 5; “Miss Anderson Becomes Bride of Mr. Akers; Simple But Beautiful Ceremony Last Evening,” *Charlotte News*, June 30, 1918, 6; U.S. Census Record for David H. Anderson, U.S. Census Bureau, 1900 United States Federal Census, Schedule No. 1 – Population, Charlotte Ward 4, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, roll 1205, page 14, enumeration district 0049, prepared by Ancestry.com, accessed December 22, 2023, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/57449167:7602?tid=&pid=&queryId=7de70704-b621-451e-a425-78f1de9b7b70&phsrc=JpO186&phstart=successSource>; “Mr. and Mrs. Akers Back Tomorrow,” *Charlotte News*, July 15, 1918, 3; “Will Give Up Housekeeping,” *Charlotte Observer*, February 8, 1919, 8; Mr. and Mrs. Akers to Move,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 5, 1920, 7; “\$600,000 Being Put Into Homes,” *Charlotte News*, September 13, 1920, 15.

¹⁴ “Southern Names Its Medal List,” *Charlotte News*, November 12, 1920, 10; “Reception For Y.W.C.A. Secretaries Yesterday – Board of Directors Entertain at Home of Pres. Mrs. Abbott,” *Charlotte News*, March 5, 1919, 2; “Third And Possibly Last Hostess House Opened,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 20, 1919, 2; “Y.W.C.A. Board Holds Meeting,” *Charlotte News*, December 15, 1921, 12; “Campaign For War Charities,” *Charlotte News*, October 22, 1918, 9; “Methodist City Board of Missions Elects Officers and Heard City Missionary's Report,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 14, 1918, 4; “Mrs. Akers and Baby Leave Hospital,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 27, 1919, 8; “James Jones Akers Sr.,” Ancestry.com; “Nancy Akers Wallace,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 31, 2006, 10B.

“the finest office building in North Carolina.” J. J. also rented commercial space within the Piedmont Building to other companies.¹⁵



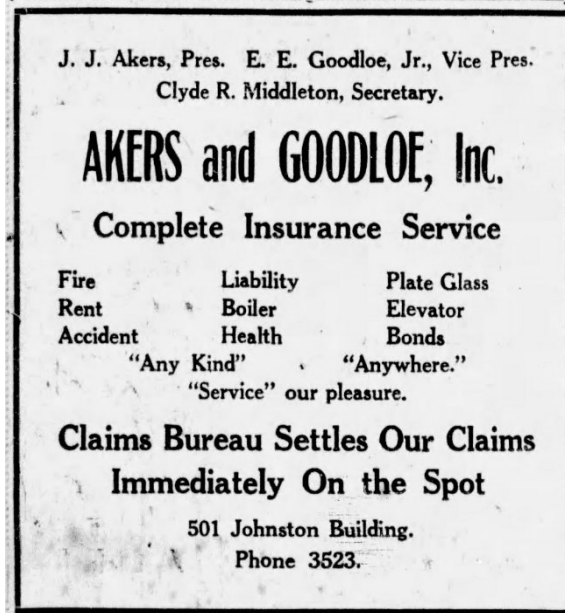
1924 Akers, Holt & Goodloe advertisement.

Source: Charlotte City Directory, 1923-1924 (Charlotte: Piedmont Directory Co., 1924), 25.

The insurance firm underwent early changes. Originally named vice president of the firm, Holt presumably left the firm in mid-1924, as suggested by the August 1924 renaming of the firm to Akers & Goodloe, Inc., and a promotion of Goodloe to Holt’s former vice president position. Meanwhile, J. J. further exhibited his entrepreneurial spirit in 1924 by becoming vice president of B. D. Heath Motor Company, a local distributor for Hudson and Essex automobiles. Within one year, the Heath Motor Company spun off the Charlotte Hudson Company as a separate retail dealership, naming J. J. as its president. By the early 1930s, J. J. was also working as a real estate agent.¹⁶

¹⁵ “J. J. Akers Resigns Southern Ry. Office,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 16, 1923, 16; “Announcement,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 17, 1923, 10D; “For Rent – Store, with basement, 22 W. Fifth Street,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 23, 1923, 6D; Blythe and Brockmann, *Hornets’ Nest*, 300.

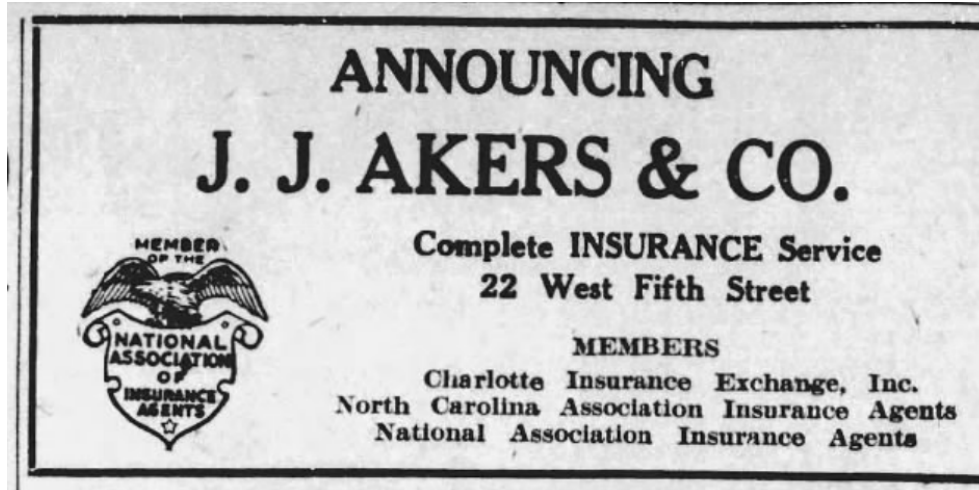
¹⁶ “Amendment Is Filed,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 22, 1924, 6; Advertisement for Akers and Goodloe, *Charlotte Observer*, June 30, 1925, 2; “Heath Motor Company Planning A Big Garage,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 7, 1924, 7; “Two Firms Here To Sell Hudson-Essex Machines,” *Charlotte Observer*, July 22, 1925, 7; “First Step In Purchase Of Bank Building,” *Charlotte News*, April 20, 1931, 2.



Source: Charlotte Observer, June 30, 1925, 2.

It is unclear when the insurance firm was re-christened J. J. Akers & Company. A July 1928 *Charlotte Observer* advertisement for the firm (see below) includes the text “Announcing J. J. Akers & Co.” suggesting reformation of the firm. By May 1929, however, J. J. Akers & Company had openly embraced its status as the successor firm of the original Akers, Holt & Goodloe firm, as a *Charlotte Observer* article reported the sixth anniversary of the “well known” firm’s May 1923 founding, during which time “they have established for themselves an enviable reputation in the insurance industry.” The firm offered fire and casualty insurance policies and, in May 1929, was in the process of preparing to provide workmen’s compensation coverage in time for the upcoming July 1929 effective date of North Carolina’s new workmen’s compensation laws. By then, M. B. Rose had replaced Goodloe as vice president. In 1930, the firm moved its offices to Latta Arcade, and later to the Wilder Building on South Tryon Street. In 1947, J. J. Akers, Jr. joined his father’s insurance firm following his military service with the U.S. Army Air Force in World War II and graduation from Duke University. In 1951, the junior Akers purchased from his father a portion of the Sardis Road property comprising Akers Acres and constructed a home for his young family at 6601 Sardis Road. That house is no longer standing.¹⁷

¹⁷ Advertisement for J. J. Akers & Company, *Charlotte Observer*, July 21, 1928, 16; “J. J. Akers And Company,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 19, 1929, section 5, page 6; “Move Offices,” *Charlotte News*, October 14, 1930, 10; Sponsored advertisement in *Charlotte Observer*, June 16, 1940, section 3, page 9; “J. J. Akers Jr. Joins Akers Insurance Firm,” *Charlotte News*, February 8, 1947, 12A; “People You Know,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 6, 1943, section 2, page 5; Mecklenburg County Deeds Book 1487, Page 1 (February 26, 1951); “Public Record – Building Permits,” *Charlotte News*, June 1, 1961, 6C; Mecklenburg County Property Record Card Property Search for 6601 Sardis Road, Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency, Polaris 3G database, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/>.



Source: Charlotte Observer, July 21, 1928, 16.

Longtime members of Tryon Street Methodist Church – where both Akers and Louis Asbury Sr. served on the board of stewards – the Akers and Asbury families joined the mid-1920s organizational efforts for a new “suburban” Methodist congregation in Myers Park. Both J. J. and Louis Sr. were elected to the inaugural board of stewards for what became known as Myers Park Methodist Church, with J. J. becoming that board’s first chairman and the church’s district steward. Their service as stewards continued well into the mid-1930s. Over time, J. J. would serve several other functions for both Myers Park Methodist Church (including as its treasurer and a member of its board of trustees) and the Methodist Church’s North Carolina Conference. He also served on the Methodist City Board of Church Extension, a cross-congregational body charged with managing the expansion of the Methodist Church in the greater Charlotte region, during the late 1930s. His wife Nancy was also an active member of the Myers Park Methodist congregation, participating in a range of the church’s work including in its women’s Missionary Society circles, the children’s Sunday School department, and as chair of its parsonage committee.¹⁸

¹⁸ “Myers Park Methodists Want Church In Suburbs,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 24, 1925, 16; “New Methodist Church Formed,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 24, 1925, 7; “151 Charter Members of Myers Park Church,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 11, 1926, 5; “Officers Are Elected At Tryon St. Church,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 9, 1923, 2; “Church To Observe Fifth Anniversary,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 20, 1935, section 3, page 1; “J. J. Akers,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 30, 1957, 15A; “E. A. Cole Heads Methodist Group,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 15, 1937, section 2, page 1; “Myers Park Women Will Meet Monday,” *Charlotte News*, January 4, 1930, 8; “Sunday School To Have Party,” *Charlotte News*, November 22, 1930, 12; “Myers Park Methodist Society Picks Officers,” *Charlotte News*, November 17, 1928, 6.



PIONEERS Here are eight of the 10 laymen who in the fall of 1925 met to pioneer the organization of Myers Park Methodist church, the twenty-fifth anniversary of which will be celebrated from October 1 through November 5. In first row, left to right, are H. Connor Sherrill, Robert I. Dalton, George H. Moore, and Louis H. Asbury. In second row, beginning at left, are Fred Anderson, Dr. Robert T. Ferguson, J. J. Akers, and Dr. P. C. Hull. In the group of organizers 25 years ago also were W. Z. Stultz, who is ill and could not be present when picture was made, and the late D. D. Traywick.

J. J. Akers, Louis Asbury, Sr., and other members of the Myers Park Methodist Church organizing committee on the occasion of the congregation's 25th anniversary.
Source: Charlotte Observer, September 16, 1950, 10A.

In late 1930, J. J. and Nancy acquired the Sardis Road property upon which their new would be constructed. In a land swap with A. B. and Janie E. Hood, the Akers family received approximately 56.8 acres from Hood's larger Sardis Road land holdings in exchange for two lots on the Selwyn Avenue extension, a lot on Cottage Place, and an undisclosed "sizable cash consideration." The Akers' new property, valued at \$300 per acre, was situated on both sides of Sardis Road and "including the present homesite of Mr. Hood." J. J. reported his intention to build a "country home" (an oft-repeated description of the house and property during the local media's coverage of the house's construction) on the property "in the near future," while reselling a portion of the land for other residential development. The property was described as "a beautiful wooded tract with a stream running through it, with one grove of trees making it an ideal spot for a suburban residence."¹⁹

The Akers' Sardis Road property would retain that idyllic rural character for much of the mid twentieth century. The *Charlotte News* reported in 1942 how Nancy Akers recruited several

¹⁹ Mecklenburg County Deeds Book 790, Page 270 (October 23, 1930); "\$35,000 Realty Transaction Is Closed In City," *Charlotte Observer*, October 25, 1930, section 2, page 1.

Charlotte prominent women to aid a local cotton farmer who was too ill to pick his crops, and even put the Charlotte News reporter to work harvesting the crops. Akers Acres was situated “just across the Sardis Road from the cotton field.” Vernon and Julia Goode, subsequent residents of the Akers House, would later recall the areas surrounding Akers Acres consisted primarily of large stretches of farmland when they acquired the property in 1953.²⁰

In addition to the Hood homesite, the Akers Acres property contained other structures prior to the 1937 construction of the Tudor main house. A brief November 1935 *Charlotte News* account references two structures. The first – identified as “the J. J. Akers’ country place, ‘Akers Acres,’” and described as “rustic inside with a huge stone fireplace” – may have been the then-extant Hood homesite. The second structure is described as a “feature . . . the small screened-in house in the yard with one side inclosed [*sic*] where there’s a fireplace and the other three sides open except for screening which together with some huge trees makes it a cool place in summer.” That brief description seemingly references the property’s still-standing open-air structure known as the “Summer House.” That article also references the presence of “extensive vegetable and flower gardens.” In 1936, a swimming pool was added to the property. According to one published account, “the pool is down in the garden just in front of a huge grove of trees. The water splashes into the pool from the mouths of two fish that are held in the arms of two little marble boys. There are two white bath houses on the ‘shore,’ connected by a colonnade, and at each end of the pool is a large apple tree that will soon add a vivid touch of color. The most attractive feature of the whole scene is the row of green lights in the wall of the pool, under water.” It appears that neither the pool nor the bath houses remain. But according to the *Charlotte News*, even before the addition of the Asbury-designed main house, “the Akers estate . . . has long been one of Mecklenburg’s show places, both by reason of the beauty of the site and the improvements made upon it.”²¹

Prior to 1937, the Akers family used those structures frequently to entertain at the property. Period newspapers reference numerous tea-dances, bridge parties, picnics, luncheons, book club meetings, swimming parties, and other events in the years leading up to completion of the country estate. Those reports often reference the Sardis Road property as the Akers’ “home,” suggesting that the family may have lived on the property prior to and even during the 1937 construction of the Tudor house. Indeed, one August 1937 column makes a passing reference to a statement by Nancy Akers of the family’s intention to move into their new home “about the first of September” even though “they are living at ‘Akers Acres’ now but not yet in the massive stone house that is near completion.” Yet at least during the early stages of construction, the *Charlotte News* reported that the family continued to live “in town while their new country home at ‘Akers Acres’ is being built.” The *Charlotte Observer* offered a more specific account, giving the family’s address during construction as 809 Selwyn Avenue. Accounts of the construction project indicate that “a portion of the original house,” described as a “less pretentious house,” “is being used” to construct the new house and that the work included “tearing away the wood portion of the old house.” The new “beautiful country estate . . . is being reconstructed on a much larger scale than the original one, which was of the same stone material used in the new building.” If the viable living space on the

²⁰ Tom Fesperman, “Cotton Being Picked By Prominent Women,” *Charlotte News*, October 5, 1942, 1B; “Kids never hear ‘keep out’ in couple’s backyard,” *Charlotte News*, March 15, 1982, 3A.

²¹ Jane Morrison, “Chatterettes,” *Charlotte News*, November 13, 1935, 9; “Rosalind To Celia,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 7, 1936, section 2, page 4; “J. J. Akers To Build \$45,000 Country Home,” *Charlotte News*, April 11, 1937, 1.

property was in fact the one-time “homesite of Mr. Hood,” it seems unlikely that the Akers family would have lived in that residence during such extensive renovation and reconstruction of that structure.²² There have also been unsubstantiated reports that the Akers family may have lived onsite during construction in a small extant structure subsequently converted to a three-bay garage.

By mid-February 1937, Louis Asbury was at work designing the new Sardis Road residence, and J. J. had contracted with Little Building Company to build the house for \$40,000, with construction expected to commence within thirty days of the contract. Upon completion of the plans in April 1937, the estimated value for the “finished English type stone and timber structure” was “\$45,000 or more,” but use of the property’s existing structure within the new home made construction costs “considerably less.” According to Asbury, the 15-room house would be “one of the most complete homes in a community which these recent days has gone strong on building fine homes . . . including air conditioning, vapor heat, automatic electrical appliances, insulation and almost complete fire proofing.” Asbury promised that the entire house – including a prominent “double stairway leading to a landing lighted by an antique art glass window” – would “meet the standard of the dining room, which will be of mahogany paneling.” By early October 1937 the “very handsome” house was nearly completed.²³

It is unclear when the Akers family moved into their new home. The announcement of a January 1, 1938, “open house” for 250 guests at “the Sardis Road home of Miss [Nancy] Akers’ parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Akers” suggests that the family had taken full-time residence in the spacious country home by the start of 1938. Likewise, a January 23, 1938, announcement of a tea hosted at “the new Akers home at ‘Akers Acres’ on Sardis road” – describing the “tremendous field stone house, strictly English in the manor house style with casement windows, a strictly-English stained glass window on the stair landing, flag-stoned entrance hall, huge yule-loggish fireplaces, and mahogany-paneled living and dining rooms” – suggests a late 1937 completion date. It is unlikely that completion of the stately manor house at Akers Acres was feted with alcoholic libations, as Nancy was an active proponent of keeping Mecklenburg County “dry” after Prohibition. But shortly after moving into his new home, J. J. did maintain his promise of supporting further residential development as he began to sell “beautiful building lots” on “Sardis Road, opposite Akers’ Acres.”²⁴

²² “Miss Nancy Akers Is Hostess At Tea Dance,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 26, 1933, 8; “Mrs. Akers Gives Bridge Party For Bride-Elect,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 17, 1933, section 2, page 6; “Picnic Is Planned At Akers’ Acres Friday,” *Charlotte News*, September 4, 1934, 7; “Social Calendar,” *Charlotte Observer*, October 20, 1934, 6; “Book Club Holds Its Meeting At Akers Acres,” *Charlotte Observer*, May 25, 1935, 8; “Miss Asbury and Mr. Chaplin To Be Entertained,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 12, 1937, 11; “Rosalind To Celia,” *Charlotte Observer*, August 8, 1937, section 2, page 10; Jane Morrison Moore, “Chatterettes,” *Charlotte News*, March 24, 1937, 11; “Akers’ Staying on Selwyn,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 21, 1937, section 2, page 8; “J. J. Akers To Build \$45,000 Country Home”; “Looking Through The Keyhole,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 27, 1937, section 4, page 7.

²³ “To Build Residence,” *Charlotte Observer*, February 19, 1937, section 2, page 3; “Local Builders Are Awarded Contracts,” *Charlotte News*, February 19, 1937, 7; “J. J. Akers To Build \$45,000 Country Home”; Jane Morrison Moore, “Chatterettes,” *Charlotte News*, October 3, 1937, 3B.

²⁴ “‘Open House’ Is Held At Home Of Miss Akers,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 2, 1938, section 2, page 5; Jane Morrison Moore, “Chatterettes,” *Charlotte News*, January 23, 1938, 4B; “United Drys Holding Organizational Parley,” *Charlotte News*, April 19, 1937, 2; “Lots for Sale,” *Charlotte Observer*, February 13, 1938, section 4, page 18.

The Akers family resided in Akers Acres for approximately sixteen years. In December 1953, after their three children had grown and moved out of the family home, J. J. and Nancy opted for smaller accommodations. They swapped houses with Vernon and Julia Goode. The Goodes moved into Akers Acres, while J. J. and Nancy moving into the Goode's Charlotte home on Churchill Road. At the time, the properties were valued at \$90,000 and \$50,000 respectively.²⁵

In addition to their active church participation, J.J. and Nancy participated in numerous organizations within the Charlotte community throughout their lives. At various times, J. J. served on the executive boards and several committees of the local Boy Scout Council, the Y.M.C.A., the Charlotte Insurance Exchange, and the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce. He was also a longtime member of Charlotte Masonic Club. Nancy continued her work with the Y.W.C.A., while also serving in a variety of capacities with the Charlotte Parent-Teacher Association, the League of Women Voters, the Bethlehem Center of Charlotte, Church Women United, Contact (a telephone counseling service in Charlotte), the Best Years Club, and Hollins College Alumnae Association of Charlotte. She also served at various times on the boards of directors for the local Red Cross chapter, Goodwill Industries, and Interdenominational Missionary Union.²⁶

Subsequent Residents of Akers Acres



Vernon D. Goode, 1957.

Source: *Southern Architect* 4, no. 12
(December 1957), 17.



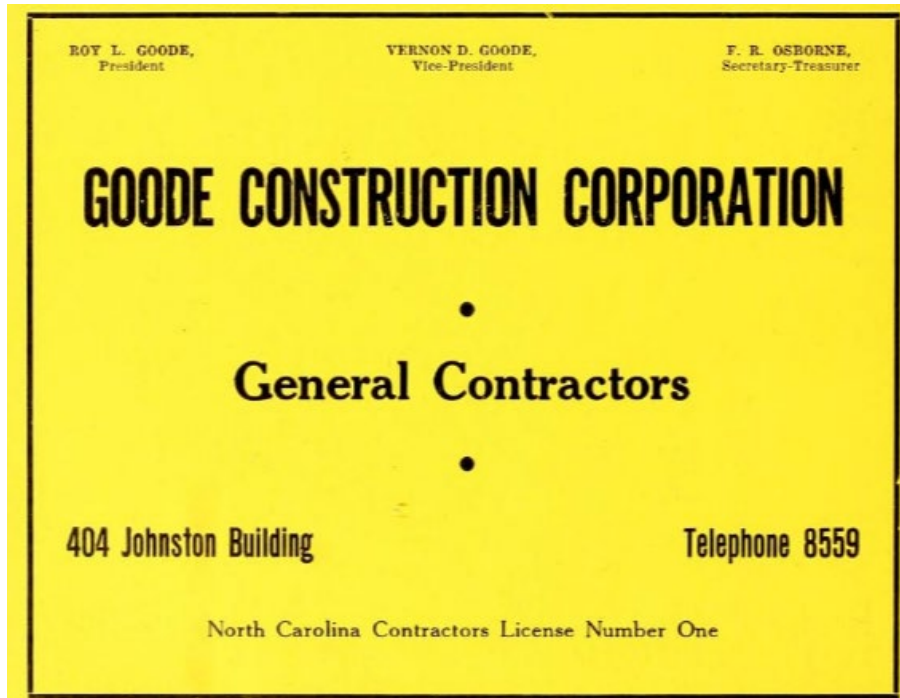
Julia Montgomery Goode, 1957.

Source: *Charlotte News*, January 29, 1957, 4B.

²⁵ Marie McK, Adams, "Chatter Box," *Charlotte News*, February 5, 1954, 14A; "Deeds in Mecklenburg," *Charlotte Observer*, December 13, 1953, 22C; Mecklenburg County Deeds Book 1639, Page 283 (1953).

²⁶ "5 Directors Elected For Scout Board," *Charlotte Observer*, December 27, 1927, section 2, page 1; "Y Committee Meets Monday," *Charlotte News*, November 29, 1941, section 2, page 1; "Insurance Heads Named," *Charlotte Observer*, April 19, 1928, section 2, page 1; "Move to Bring Industry Here," *Charlotte Observer*, January 11, 1938, section 1, page 13; "Masonic Club Holds Meeting," *Charlotte Observer*, June 12, 1937, section 2, page 2; "Wide Range of Work Shown In Annual Report of P.T.A.," *Charlotte Observer*, May 22, 1927, section 1, page 7; Sory Kuralt, "Newcomers Aided By League Women," *Charlotte News*, March 9, 1956, 2B; Grace Hamrick, "Methodist Women Honor Nancy Akers," *Charlotte Observer*, May 15, 1973, 6A; "Nancy A. Akers Leaves Legacy of Good Work," *Charlotte Observer*, April 14, 1979, 7A; "Hollins Grads Plan Campaign," March 1, 1927, 4; "Red Cross Told To Sell Itself," *Charlotte Observer*, June 18, 1953, 1B; "Rehabilitation Of Handicapped Persons Is Aim," *Charlotte Observer*, January 24, 1950, 12A; "Religious Body Names Leaders," *Charlotte Observer*, November 1, 1949, 15A.

Vernon Durham Goode (1920-1989) was born on March 9, 1920, the son of Royden Lee and Ethel Durham Goode. His father Roy founded the Goode Construction Company in Charlotte in 1910. In 1920, Goode Construction became the first construction company officially licensed by the state of North Carolina. Described as having “building in his blood,” Vernon began working for the family company as a boy, helping his father construct several structures including Charlotte historic landmark Morrocroft, the former home of North Carolina Governor Cameron Morrison. Vernon even grew up in a Charlotte historic landmark, spending the late 1930s living with his family in the C. C. Coddington House on East Morehead Street.²⁷



1948 Goode Construction Corporation advertisement.

Source: “Classified Buyers’ Guide of the City of Charlotte (North Carolina) 1948,” Hill’s Charlotte City Directory, 1948-1949 (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Co., 1948), 60.

After studying civil engineering at Duke University, Vernon joined his father’s firm fulltime in 1941 as labor foreman, later becoming vice president and general manager of the company. At the outbreak of World War II, Vernon enlisted as a private and served four years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, earning the rank of captain during a two-year tour of duty in the South Pacific. He returned to Charlotte following his military service to resume his position at Goode Construction. He also engaged in real estate leasing and development as president of Fidelity Realty & Insurance Corporation. In 1948, he married another Charlotte native, **Julia Allen**

²⁷ Ricki Morell, “Charlotte Native, Builder Vernon Goode Dies At 69,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 9, 1989, 6B; “Mecklenburg County Deaths,” *Charlotte Observer*, December 8, 1989, 6B; Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, “Designation Report for C. C. Coddington House,” March 6, 1985, 6, accessed December 26, 2023, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Coddington-House-SR.pdf>.

Montgomery (1925-2004). Julia was a graduate of Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri, Penn Hall Junior College in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and Charlotte's Queens College.²⁸

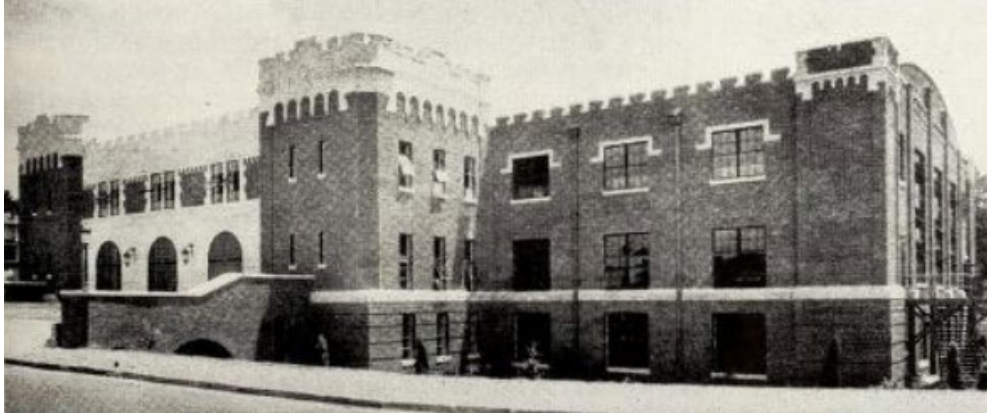
Over the years, Vernon remained actively engaged in the Charlotte community. He served on board of directors for the Charlotte Mint Museum of Art and was appointed to the city's Municipal Building Code Board of Appeals. A longstanding member, director, and officer of the Carolinas Chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America – the largest and long considered most effective of the national organization's 124 chapters and branches – Vernon also chaired the advisory committee of the industrial experimental program within the School of Engineering at North Carolina State College. In 1946, Vernon and his father formed Builders Building Inc. to own, manage, and construct an addition to the Builders Building, a local historic landmark on West Trade Street.²⁹

In their 1961 history of Charlotte, LeGette Blythe and Charles Raven Brockmann credited Goode Construction Company for building “some of Charlotte's most attractive residences as well as commercial and institutional buildings.” Those projects included the 1925 St. John's Baptist Church on Hawthorne Lane, the original Mercy Hospital, the 1929 Charlotte Armory at Kings Drive and Seventh Street (built in just seventy-three working days to accommodate an estimated 50-70,000 attendees of the thirty-ninth reunion of Confederate Army veterans), the 1929 Myers Park Shopping Center on Providence Road, the 1933 Southeastern Merchandising Market at East Fourth and South Myers Streets, the 1941 Army Air Corps' Morris Field airbase (the precursor to Charlotte-Douglas International Airport), the 1946 Good Samaritan Hospital nurses home, and the 1949 Sears Roebuck department store on North Tryon Street. By 1955, Goode Construction had completed construction contracts worth in excess of 150 million dollars.³⁰

²⁸ “Goode Construction Company, Charlotte, N.C.,” *Employment Security Commission (E.S.C.) Quarterly* 13, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1955): 100; “Miss Julia Montgomery Becomes Bride of Vernon Durham Goode.”

²⁹ “Bruce St. John Art Museum's New Director,” *Charlotte Observer*, September 21, 1951, 1B; “Contractors' Session Slated,” *Charlotte News*, October 22, 1958, 6B; “One Won't Join Building Board,” *Charlotte News*, August 23, 1957, 1B; “Goode Heads Advisers,” *Charlotte Observer*, March 29, 1957, 4A; “Pay-Fix Inquiry Is Asked,” *Charlotte Observer*, November 13, 1957, 1A; Robert Patten, “Carolina Branch, ACG, Largest Most Effective In This Country,” *E.S.C. Quarterly* 13, no. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1955): 87; “Builders Bldg. Incorporated,” *Charlotte News*, August 21, 1946, 5B.

³⁰ Blythe and Brockmann, *Hornets' Nest*, 281; Thomas Hanchett, “The Elizabeth Neighborhood: Change and Continuity in Charlotte's Second Streetcar Suburb,” 41, accessed January 3, 2024, <http://landmarkscommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/THE-ELIZABETH-NEIGHBORHOOD.pdf>; “Goode Construction Company, Charlotte, N.C.,” *E.S.C. Quarterly* 99-100; Mark Price, “1930s shops site in Myers Parks considered for historic status,” *Charlotte Observer*, January 17, 2018, 4A; “Let Contract For Building,” *Charlotte Observer*, June 16, 1933, 11; Thomas W. Hanchett, “Marsh, Marion R. (1893-1977),” North Carolina Architects & Builders: A Biographical Dictionary, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000535> and <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/buildings/B003173>; Dan L. Morrill, *Historic Charlotte: An Illustrated History of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County* (San Antonio, TX: Historical Publishing Network, 2001), 75; “Nurses Home To Be Built,” *Charlotte News*, December 21, 1946, 6A; “Permit For Sears Given,” *Charlotte News*, June 18, 1948, 1B.



1929 Charlotte Armory, Goode Construction Company.

Source: Employment Security Commission Quarterly 13, nos. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1955): 99.

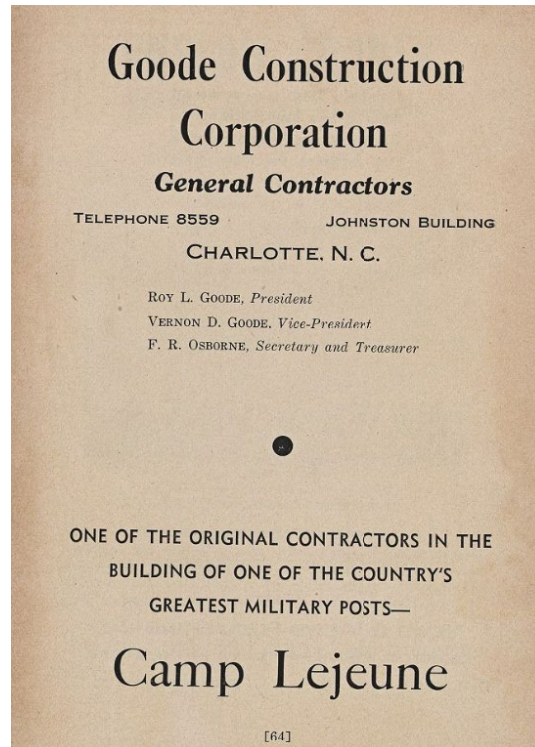
Although headquartered in Charlotte, Goode Construction Company undertook projects throughout North Carolina and Virginia, as well as South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. In April 1941, the company received one of its largest commissions ever when the U.S. Navy Department awarded the firm – along with Charlotte’s Blythe Brothers Company and Harrison-Wright Company – the construction contract for the new \$14,575,000 Marine base in North Carolina’s Onslow County. The ultimate contract price for what came to be known as Camp Lejeune exceeded fifty million dollars. Goode Construction erected the majority of the base’s buildings while Blythe Brothers handled infrastructure and Harrison-Wright performed the electrical work. The three companies remained as the primary contractors on the base until August 1943 but continued to receive nearly eighty percent of the remaining associated construction contracts. Their collaborative work earned the Army-Navy “E” pennant for “Excellence in the Performance of War Production.”³¹



STEEL FRAMES FOR FIRST BARRACKS IN OCTOBER, 1941

—Carraway

³¹ “Goode Construction Company, Charlotte, N.C.,” *E.S.C. Quarterly* 99; Gertrude S. Carraway, *Camp Lejeune Leathernecks* (New Bern, NC: Owen G. Dunn Company, 1946), 18, 26.



Source (for both images above): Gertrude S. Carraway, Camp Lejeune Leathernecks (New Bern, NC: Owen G. Dunn Company, 1946), 20, 64.

Other notable Goode Construction projects outside of Charlotte included the chemistry building at Howard University in Washington DC, the administrative buildings and a cafeteria at the Sunny Point Army Terminal (located between Wilmington and Southport, North Carolina), the Pender County Courthouse in Burgaw, North Carolina, several hospitals (including in Petersburg and Abington, Virginia, and Kingsport, Tennessee), and a high school in Lynchburg, Virginia, that included an impressive seven and one-half acres of under-roof floor space.³²

Interestingly, the first construction contract received by Goode Construction Company was a Louis Asbury Sr. designed project: the 1911 Charlotte Steam Laundry Company building at South College and East Second Streets, for decades one of the city's largest commercial buildings. Over the years, Goode Construction built several Asbury-designed projects, including the T. W. Wade building on West Trade Street, the Law Building on East Trade Street, the Central Market Corporation building on South Tryon Street, a twelve-unit apartment complex in the Wesley Heights neighborhood, a two-story annex to Good Samaritan Hospital, the Purcell's women's apparel store at 206 North Tryon Street, the Tryon Terrace Motor Court at Tryon and Twelfth Streets, Albemarle's Hotel Albemarle, and the Winston-Salem home of William Marvin Hanes, head of Hanes knitting mill system. Goode Construction even retained Asbury to prepare designs for its own corporate offices. That familiarity with Louis Asbury's work may have prompted Vernon and Julia's interest in swapping their Churchill Road home for Akers Acres in December 1953. The Goodes raised three sons and two daughters in the Akers House and continued to live

³² "Sub-Contract Bids Are Called," *Charlotte News*, April 21, 1933, 22; "Sunny Point Large Defense Construction Project in State," *E.S.C. Quarterly* 14, nos. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1956): 53-54; "Pender County," American Courthouses, accessed January 3, 2024, <http://www.courthouses.co/us-states/n/north-carolina/pender-county/>; "Goode Construction Company, Charlotte, N.C.," *E.S.C. Quarterly* 99.

there until Vernon's death in 1989, making the Goode family the longest residents of the Asbury-designed Sardis Road estate. Julia sold the property in 1990 to **Emroy Hill Blanton Jr.** (1920-2013) and his wife **Marillyn Elizabeth Taylor Blanton** (1924-2011).³³



*Emroy Hill Jr. and Marillyn Taylor Blanton, 1948.
Source: Charlotte News, February 18, 1948, 4B.*

Emroy Blanton Jr. was born at St. Peter's Hospital in Charlotte on November 6, 1920, the son of Emroy Hill Sr., a World War I veteran and longtime engineer with Southern Railway, and Eunice June Putnam Blanton. Upon graduation from Central High School, Emroy enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps just thirteen days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He served as a crew chief and flight engineer aboard C-47, C-46 and B-17 planes, participating in several combat missions. As a member of the 56th Squadron, 375 Group of the 5th Air Force, Emroy served for over two years in the South Pacific, including six campaigns from New Guinea to the Philippines, and received the Air Medal for Heroism.³⁴

³³ "Contract Let For Laundry Building," *Charlotte News*, February 1, 1911, 7; "Goode Construction Company, Charlotte, N.C.," 99; "Handsome New Building Planned," *Evening Chronicle*, April 3, 1911, 3; "Goode Construction Co. Gets Law Building Contract On \$229,739 Bid," *Charlotte Observer*, January 7, 1927, 2; "Rapid Progress Made On Market Project," *Charlotte News*, July 2, 1933, section 2, page 1; "Announce Plan For Apartment," *Charlotte Observer*, April 22, 1928, section 4, page 15; "Negro Hospital To Build \$50,000 Annex," *Charlotte Observer*, April 5, 1937, section 2, page 2; "Purcell's Store Leases New Building," *Charlotte Observer*, September 30, 1937, section 2, page 1; "Goode Will Build Midtown Motel," *Charlotte News*, November 8, 1957, section 2, page 1; "Steel Is On Way For New Hotel," *Charlotte Observer*, October 30, 1922, 7; "Asbury Architect For Palatial Winston-Salem Home," *Charlotte News*, August 27, 1922, 3; "Goode Construction Office Building (Charlotte, N.C.)," Projects 1908-1986, Louis Asbury Papers, MS 0145, Map Case 3.8, Folder 2, Special Collections and University Archives, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte; "Mecklenburg County Deaths"; Mecklenburg County Deeds Book 6299, Page 494 (1990).

³⁴ "Emroy Hill Blanton Jr.," Ancestry.com, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/75621585/person/192064358499/story>; "Emroy H. Blanton," *Charlotte Observer*, February 27, 1972, 3J; Obituary of Emroy Hill Blanton Jr., Dignity Memorial, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/charlotte-nc/emroy-blanton-5723404>.

Emroy returned to Charlotte after his military service, going to work for the Friden Calculating Machine Company, a business machine company that leveraged its initial success with desktop mechanical rotary calculators to pioneer electronic calculators and an early rudimentary word processor system. In 1948, he married Marillyn Taylor who, as a child, relocated with her family from Camden, New Jersey, to Charlotte. A graduate of Harding High School, Marillyn worked in the accounting department of Southern Bell Telephone Company.³⁵

After several years working for the Friden company, Emroy left to form his electronic business machine company, Data Systems Machines, Inc. It is unclear when his business began. Emroy's obituary reports that he left Friden after six years of employment to start his company. It was not until mid-1963 when Data Systems Machines ran a series of "help wanted" ads in local newspapers for service technicians. And yet, according to the North Carolina Secretary of State's Business Registration online database, Emroy did not incorporate the entity until 1967. By 1970, however, the company sought to hire a variety of positions in its locations in Charlotte and Raleigh, as well as Greenville, South Carolina. Although the company apparently engaged in only limited commercial advertising for its products and services prior to 1973, the business venture proved successful. According to the *Charlotte Observer*, Blanton "made his millions locally in office machines, computers and real estate." Marillyn also participated in the family business, serving for several years as the company's secretary and treasurer. After 1981, according to a search of the *Newspapers.com* database, Data Systems Machines inexplicably ran no further advertisements for its products and services or "help wanted" ads in Charlotte's local newspapers. In late 1991, almost eighteen months after Emroy and Marillyn acquired Akers Acres, the North Carolina Secretary of State dissolved Data Systems Machines pursuant to a filing of articles of dissolution.³⁶

³⁵ Obituary of Emroy Hill Blanton Jr.; "Friden Electronic Calculators – Overview," DoPECC, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://dopecc.net/calculators/friden/>; "Friden Model C 10 Calculating Machine," Smithsonian Institution, National Museum of Natural History, Behring Center, accessed January 3, 2024, https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/nmah_692275; "The Friden Calculating Machine Company," John Wolff's Web Museum, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.johnwolff.id.au/calculators/Friden/Friden.htm>; Obituary of Marillyn Taylor Blanton, Dignity Memorial, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/charlotte-nc/marilyn-blanton-4577232>; "Blanton-Taylor Vows Are Spoken In Church Rites," *Charlotte Observer*, February 15, 1948, 8C.

³⁶ Obituary of Emroy Hill Blanton Jr.; "Service Technician," *Charlotte News*, June 22, 1963, 9B; "Service Technician," *Charlotte Observer*, June 23, 1963, 8C; North Carolina Secretary of State Business Registration search engine, accessed January 4, 2024, https://www.sosnc.gov/online_services/search/by_title/Business_Registration; "Service Technician," *Charlotte Observer*, March 15, 1970, 13C; "Secretary Receptionist," *Charlotte Observer*, October 2, 1971, 10C; "Business Machines Salesman," *Charlotte Observer*, September 26, 1971, 11B; Creager, "Sardis landmark on the market," 1Q; Obituary of Marillyn Taylor Blanton.

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The Blantons remained in the Akers House until 2011 when Marilyn passed away. Emroy put the house on the market shortly thereafter. When he passed away in 2013, the house had not been sold. The Akers House has remained largely unoccupied since passing to Emroy's heirs. To date, the property has not been sold.

IV. Architectural Assessment



*Akers House, front and right elevations (above) and front entrance (below), no date.
Source: Louis Asbury Papers, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.*





*Akers House, front elevation (above) and left and front entrance (below), no date.
Source: Louis Asbury Papers, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.*



The James Jones and Nancy Anderson Akers House is located in the Stonehaven neighborhood in southeast Charlotte. The countryside manor house and accessory buildings were constructed prior to the establishment of the Stonehaven neighborhood in the 1950s and are surrounded by houses from the mid-20th century era to the present. The large 6+ acre property contains four buildings – the primary single family structure known as the Akers House, a garage that potentially served as a temporary residence for the Akers family during the 1937 construction of the main house, the Summer House, and a well house. The property is relatively flat with mature oak and other tree species surrounding the main house. The front yard is approximately 150 feet along Sardis Road giving the 8,000+ square foot house a grand view from the street. Situated on a slight rise, the house sits prominently on the largest single residential lot along a span of at least three miles on Sardis Road. The scale and openness of the Akers Acres property reinforce the now-lost rural nature of the surrounding Sardis Road corridor.

Completed in 1937, the main house is a fine example of the Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor style. Charlotte historian Dan Morrill considers the Akers House “an extraordinary piece of architecture for Charlotte, designed by an architect of note.” Although architect Louis Asbury Sr. often used the Tudor style in his work, the Akers House is particularly significant in that it is his largest known Asbury-designed Tudor style residence in Charlotte. At 8,684 square feet, the house dwarfs Charlotte’s similarly styled residences by the renowned architect, including the circa 1919 E. R. Cannon House at 1107 Queens Road (6,895 square feet on 0.776 acre) and the circa 1920s F. W. Bradshaw House at 2200 Selwyn Avenue (5,929 square feet on 0.784 acre), as well as the circa 1937 George D. Moody House at 2205 Selwyn Avenue (6,966 square feet on 0.805 acre) that has been attributed to Asbury. The Akers House is also unique among those four Asbury houses as it is the only one constructed primarily of fieldstone; the others are primarily brick.³⁷

Traditional design elements of the Tudor Revival/Tudor Manor style incorporated within the Akers House include paired asymmetrical front gables, half-timbering in the façade gables and the second level on the front and rear elevations, a prominent chimney on the front façade’s right side decorated with chimney pots, and a semi-hexagonal bay window on the front façade’s left side. The front entrance is recessed with an arched doorway trimmed in cast stone. The windows are a mix of transom and full casement windows. Distinctive exterior materials include a slate roof and locally sourced fieldstone reportedly quarried from the adjacent Stonehaven neighborhood and transported to the homesite via mule carts. Though the interior of the Akers House will not be considered for designation the previous owners retained many of the original interior features including a grand central staircase to the second floor, stained glass windows visible from the exterior, mahogany paneling, pigmented structural glass tile, and many other design details. The stained glass windows centrally located on the rear façade were crafted by the Emil Frei studio –

³⁷ National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for Myers Park Historic District, March 6, 1987, 14, accessed December 26, 2023, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/MK0090.pdf>; Kerry M. King, “Preserving History,” *Wake Forest Magazine*, February 24, 2022, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://magazine.wfu.edu/2022/02/24/preserving-charlottes-history/>; Mecklenburg County Land Use and Environmental Services Agency, Polaris 3G database, <https://polaris3g.mecklenburgcountync.gov/>.

founded in 1898 in Saint Louis, Missouri – and feature detailed images of religious figures. The exterior of the house has remained stylistically unchanged.³⁸



Akers House, front elevation drawing. Louis Asbury, Sr. – Architect, 1937.

Source: Louis Asbury Papers, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



Akers House, front elevation.

Source: Dr. Timothy Brown.

³⁸ “The James Jones Akers and Nancy Anderson Akers House,” Preserve Mecklenburg, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://wepreservemecklenburg.org/acres-acres-data> and <https://wepreservemecklenburg.org/research-page-akers-acres>; Creager, “Sardis landmark on the market,” 9Q.

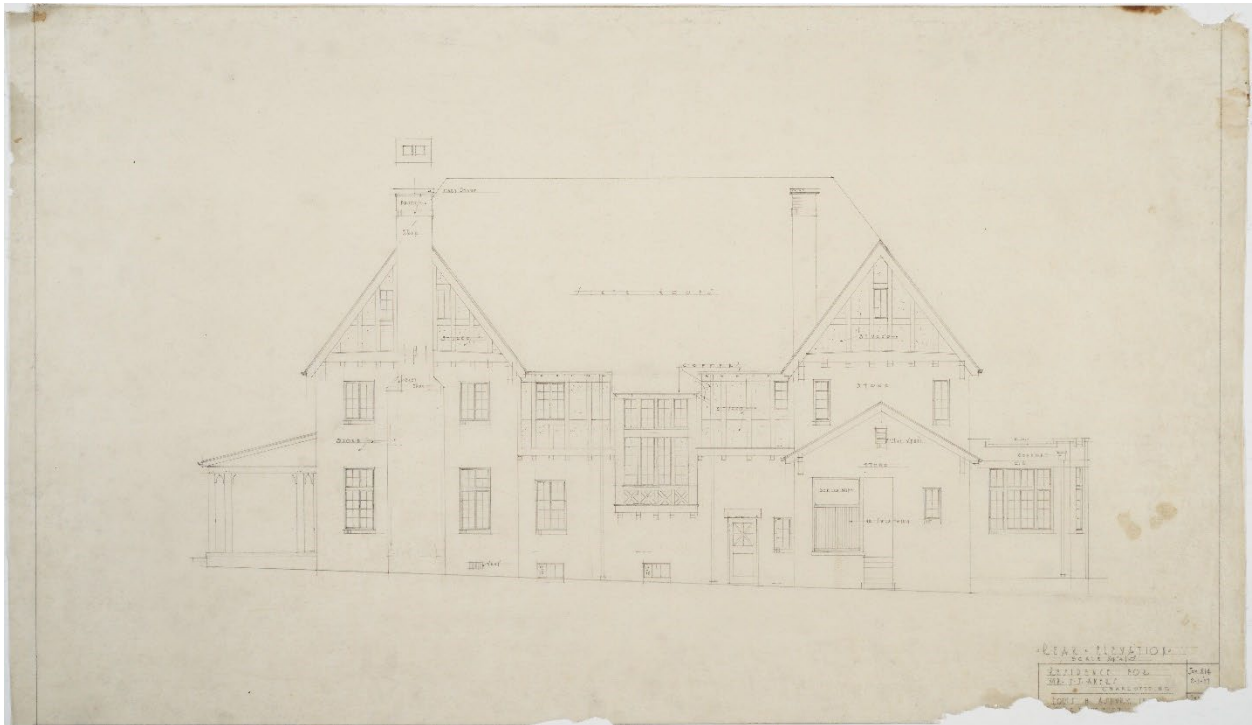


Akers House, left and right elevation drawings. Louis Asbury, Sr. – Architect, 1937.
Source: Louis Asbury Papers, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

Pictured below, the chimney on the right elevation is identical to the front chimney. The porch canopy features the stucco and half-timber detail in the roof.



Akers House, front and right elevations.
Source: Dr. Timothy Brown.



Akers House, rear elevation drawing. Louis Asbury, Sr. – Architect, 1937.

Source: Louis Asbury Papers, J. Murray Atkins Library, University of North Carolina at Charlotte.



Akers House, right and rear elevations.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.



Akers House, rear and left elevations.

Stained glass windows created by the Emil Frei studio of Saint Louis, Missouri, comprise the rear elevation's central array of 4-over-4 windows.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.



Akers House, aerial view from Sardis Road.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.



Akers House, aerial view of rear elevation.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.



Akers House (rear elevation) and garage (on right).

Starting in the foreground are vestiges of a road used to transport quarried fieldstone via mule carts from the adjacent Stonehaven neighborhood to the original construction site, according to former Akers House owner Emroy Blanton.

Sources: Roger Ball; Roger Ball, email to Tommy Warlick, December 13, 2023.

Garage

The J.J. Akers property has three additional structures in the rear yard, all appearing to be of comparable vintage to the main house. The first – a two-story structure constructed in part of the same fieldstone as used in the main house – features a stone chimney of fieldstone over brick, leaded windows, and two gabled dormers. Consistent with its use as a garage, the front elevation consists primarily of three garage doors. This is the structure that, as noted above, may have been used by the Akers family as a dwelling during construction of the main house. If those as-yet unsubstantiated reports are accurate, it is likely that the front elevation of this structure was altered after completion of the Akers House to accommodate the three-bay entry.



Garage at Akers Acres.

Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.



Garage at Akers Acres.

Source: Dr. Timothy Brown.

Summer House

The second accessory structure is known as the “Summer House.” A November 1935 *Charlotte News* article described the structure as a “small screened-in house in the yard with one side inclosed [sic] where there’s a fireplace and the other three sides open except for screening which together with some huge trees makes it a cool place in summer.”³⁹ Given the timing of that article – approximately one year after Asbury closed his architectural practice to go to work for the FHA – it is unlikely that he designed the Summer House. It is unclear whether he may have been involved with either of the other structures. Like the Akers House, the Summer House (including its foundation and fireplace) is constructed of fieldstone in a Tudor Revival style, but with subdued Art Deco details such as the exterior stonework on the chimney. Both the Summer House and the well house feature slate roofs reminiscent of the main house.



*Front elevation of Summer House and stone water feature at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*



*Summer House at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*

³⁹ Jane Morrison, “Chatterettes,” *Charlotte News*, November 13, 1935, 9.



*Interior view of Summer House at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*



*Rear elevation of Summer House at Akers Acres.
Source: Dr. Timothy Brown.*



*Exterior chimney details of Summer House at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*



*Slate roof of Summer House at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*

Well House

The third accessory structure is a well house clad in the same stone material as the other structures. The front gable has unique timber framing supported by a single squared stone column; a second such column has fallen to the side. At the front door is a stone fountain, circular in shape. Further study is required as it is not clear when the well house was constructed.



*Well House at Akers Acres.
Source: Roger Ball.*



*Detail of water fountain at front elevation of Akers Acre well house.
Source: Roger Ball.*

Assorted Stone Walls and Landscape Features of Akers Acres

A variety of stonework features populate the grounds of Akers Acres, including a stone water feature believed to be a fish pond with a central water fountain. Other stone features include walls and walkways, as well as a stylized apparently precast concrete birdbath. Although these features are primarily constructed of the same type of fieldstone as the property's more substantial structures, further study is required to determine when those features were constructed.



*Stone water feature in the foreground of Summer House at Akers Acres.
Believed to be a fish pond, the central structure appears to be a water fountain (detailed image below).
Source for both images: Roger Ball.*





*Stone walls at Akers Acres (above and below).
Source for both images: Roger Ball.*





*Stone wall detail and birdbath at Akers Acres.
Source for both images: Roger Ball.*





*Fieldstone walkways at Akers Acres.
Source: Redfin.com, listing for 6501 Sardis Road, accessed January 4, 2024.*

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