

SEP

The West Ender

OCT 1981
Sept meeting

By and for the
West End Neighborhood

DEDICATION OF GRACE COURT

With great flourish and style the efforts of the association and particularly Barbara Smitherman to restore Grace Court were recognized in a program of dedication held on Sunday, September 20, 1981. The weather was perfect and standing there one could sense the importance and the truly remarkable nature of the occasion. The Board wishes to thank all of those who helped and gave their time, effort, and money towards this accomplishment, W. A. Armfield in dedicating the Gazebo in memory of his wife, Lucy Fallen Armfield, after commenting on the specialness of the occasion announced that Malcom McLean and the Armfield family would see that the execution of the entire plan for the restoration of Grace Court is completed. This will entail the construction of a brick wall along the entire length of the alley which marks the northern boundary of the park, and perhaps some resurfacing of the sidewalks which wind through the court.

The West End flag commissioned by Thorns and Perry Craven, and executed by Linda Dell, was flown for the first time at this ceremony. The turn-out for the dedication was large and it was difficult for those in attendance not to notice how important the history and development of the West End has been to the history and development of Winston-Salem itself. Recognizing that one can never go home again, or more precisely that communities can never forever remain the same, we think it important that those of us who live in the West End not forget the truly unique history of this neighborhood, and accordingly, we are publishing beginning with this issue of the West Ender, a multi-part history of the West End. This article was originally written by Bill East for the then Twin City Sentinel and published in that newspaper in its Monday evening edition on March 19, 1962.

GRACE COURT - JAZZ CONCERT

Jazz ensemble from the School of the Arts will perform in Grace Court on Sunday, October 18, at 5:30 p.m. - all West End residents and their friends are welcome, please make an effort to attend, as your participation and enjoyment of these performances is directly related to our ability to continue to schedule such events. Bring a picnic if you wish, but come - it ought to be a very exciting and enjoyable way to spend a Sunday Evening.

September Board Minutes

The September meeting was held at the home of Barbara and Rence Callahan on September 8, with seven of the twelve board members and all of the officers present.

Three of the candidates for the North West Wards Aldermen seat responded to President Bill Harper's invitation to present their views. Martha Wood, Jonathan Edwards, and Gerald Hopkins outlined their positions, responded to questions from the group, and heard the needs of the community.

The Board passed a motion, which provides for filling vacancies on the Board from the list of candidates at the last election. (The twelve seats are divided into two groups with six seats up for election each year. Vacancies will be filled by the candidate with the next highest number of votes in the last election.

Rence Callahan reported on zoning activities. The present law is vague at best and permits the politically astute to accomplish whatever they want as demonstrated by two recent cases in West End. In both cases it appears that the city issued building permits for changes which were not permitted under the law. When the violations were brought to the attention of the city, the property owners were permitted to re-deed the land with adjoining property so that requirements could be met. The fact that the adjoining property is in use which prevents it from contributing to the new permit is a loop-hole not covered in the present law. Other cities which have already passed through the transition from town to business community have found an advantage in two zoning classifications for residential areas. RIR permits residential use only. RIB permits limited business use. The West End Association will work with other civic groups toward this type revision of the zoning regulations.

Joyce Gravlee suggests that each of us try to contact the families who occupied our house in the past to try to get pictures and memory accounts of the community for the History of West End. We would be arming for a "gathering of friends" during the summer of 1982 when former residents could review pictures, renew old friendships, and probably restart an old feud or two.

The West End Association Post Office Box 161 Winston-Salem, N.C. 27102

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Winston-Salem, N.C.
Permit NO. 419



Bill & Doris Wise
1113 W. 4th Street
Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101

PART I

"THE HISTORY OF THE WEST END"

On the night of January 4, 1886, the large, red pressed brick residence of Mr. and Mrs. M. N. Williamson, located near the present site of Centenary Methodist Church, was brilliantly lighted. Up the driveway and under the overhanging trees came carriages bringing men and women to the most important social event of the season, the "Bal Masque."

At exactly 9 p.m., the music started in the ballroom, and the guests in costumes and masks, began to dance. Each tried to guess who the other was.

Two hours later, at a signal from the orchestra, the masks came off.

Mary Gorrell was Yum Yum from "Mikado." R. J. Reynolds was Peter Hunch. Henry Roan was Domino. Kate Bitting was a fortune teller. Flora Lott was dressed in a red, white and blue costume as Columbia.

Mrs. Mary Benton came as the Western Sentinel (predecessor to the Twin City Sentinel), wearing the newspaper's current edition printed on white cambric. H. Montague was Uncle Sam, Watt Martin was Robin Hood. And on and on.

After the music started again, a group of civic leaders gathered in one corner to discuss a question that had been gaining attention among Winston residents:

"If the West End section of town, of which the Williamson home with its air of southern luxury was representative, is so enjoyable to us, why would it not be enjoyable to others - especially those from out of town?"

Ideas Exchanged

When Veralla's Italian band played its final tune at 1:30 a.m. and the party broke up, the question had not been resolved, but a lot of ideas had been exchanged.

As the Winston social set said goodbye, some of the men paused momentarily to peer down dark, muddy Fifth Street toward "the summit" and wonder, if indeed, it had a future.

In the next four years, though, there was very little meditating about that future. Those who felt the West End section of town had a great potential moved rapidly with an organization.

The men who formed the West End Hotel and Land Company had this theory:

Winston's business district, laid out when the land was purchased from the moravians in 1849, was likely to develop in a north - south direction, with most of it going northward since Salem already was at the south limits of the town.

Since the railroad yards and the industry that went alongside them had been placed just east of the business district, this left only the west section of town for a prime residential area.

And the West End had something to offer the town that no other section had then - a high ridge extending from the present north end of Spruce Street all the way west and south to what is now Crafton Heights.

Winston's leaders didn't say so at first, but what was in the back of their minds was a long line of resort hotels - first one, then another and finally - "Winston - Resort Capital of the Piedmont."

They had all the elements they needed, the leaders reasoned... a high site overlooking a meadow with miles and miles of forests beyond... a mild climate with cool breezes in the summer...and a high cultural atmosphere furnished by the homes and leaders of the West End.

It was easy to believe in such a theory on paper, but when it came to putting down money, some of Winston's leaders balked, but they were few. The others said, "Let's try it."

On May 23, 1890, the hotel and land company was incorporated for \$300,000 with 3,000 shares of \$100 par value stock.

W. A. Whitaker, first president of the company, bought \$10,000 worth of stock. So did R. J. Reynolds, T. L. Vaughn, Dr. H. T. Bahnsen, Joseph A. Bitting, J. W. Fries and E. L. Hawks. The biggest purchase went to S. W. Jamison "and others" - \$30,000 worth.

After the financial phase of the campaign had been compelled successfully, the developers moved rapidly.

Hawks, a promoter from New York City, interested Frank J. Sprague of Sprague Motors in helping Winston build an electric street railway - a "must" for the development of West End.

J. L. Ludlow was hired as the civil engineer in charge of laying out West End. In trying to keep its boundaries encircled with a broad street, he laid out West End Boulevard - one of the most rambling streets in town.

The corporation bought 100 acres of land beyond the western boundary of Winston (then located about the present site of Summit Street) from Henry Fries of Salem for \$134,142.40.

Some enthusiastic supporters of West End gave their land to the corporation to be used if needed. Some of it was purchased. Other land later was turned back to the owners.

The corporation went to work on the largest resort hotel ever built in Piedmont North Carolina - a 300-foot-long, three-storied rustic structure. It was called Hotel Zinzendorf after the man who helped the Moravians obtain their land here.

The site selected was the crest of the hill in West End - just west of the present intersection of W. Fourth and Glade Streets behind the area now occupied by the Pilot Life Insurance Company building.

The workmen took pride in their construction. Their interest was heightened somewhat by the visit to the structure almost every day of some corporation stockholders.

The hotel was finished in record time for a structure of its size and was immediately placed in use. Guests began to arrive in Winston from throughout the eastern seaboard.

Formed Big Loop

The street railway had been extended to the hotel. The tracks formed a big loop in front of the building, accounting at least in part for the wide swing in Glade Street at this point today.

While some of the guests rode the new street railway to the hotel, others preferred the elegance of the hotel's own buggy which met every train at the depot at Third and Chestnut Streets.

The late Attorney Eugene E. Gray, a leader in the formation of the hotel corporation, recalled once in an interview:

"The building of the hotel...started what might be called a boom and attracted a great deal of attention to the town."

From the north veranda, there was a clear view of the Blue Ridge mountains. Across on the opposite hill, the guests could watch cadets drilling at Davis Military School, which formed the campus used today by the Children's Home.

Afternoons and evenings, a 12-piece orchestra furnished music. Two evenings a week, there were dances on the veranda. Mrs. J. E. Alexander, who today lives only a short distance from the site of the hotel, recalls that it was a "real thrill" to be invited to the dances.

The hotel stayed rather full all year. It was enjoying good business on Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 1892, when disaster struck after only 18 months of existence.

A shout of "fire" came from the laundry in the rear of the hotel about 11 a.m. Employees rushed to the scene, but the blaze already was out of control.

Guests were warned. They helped carry their own belongings and what hotel furniture they could lift into the area that is now Grace Court.

Andrew J. Peddycord, driving the Salem fire engine, came dashing up Cherry Street. Just as he was about to turn into Fourth, he spied the Winston streamer with W. F. Keith at the controls. It was being pulled by a street car.

"I'll go by 'em this time!" Peddycord shouted. Dropping the reins on his fine pair of black horses, he hollered, "Go!" and gave chase to the streetcar.

When Peddycord reached the Walker Tobacco Factory, now the Greystone Motor Hotel, he shouted, "Goodbye!" to the Winston firemen and rushed by their streetcar - pulled streamer.

When the gallant driver of Salem's "Rough and Ready" fire company reached the hotel, he laid out the hose line and coupled it to a new hydrant. He found there was no water.

All the heroic firemen of both towns could do was load their hose and watch the fire destroy the most magnificent hotel Piedmont North Carolina had ever seen.

Cadets Fought Fire

The fire was so intense that the heat was felt blocks away. Davis School cadets, who had seen the fire and rushed to the scene, and volunteer firemen were kept busy putting out fires on the roofs of adjacent buildings caught by sparks from the flying shingles.

In a little more than two hours, the hotel had burned to the ground. The Thanksgiving dinner, which had been saved by hotel employees, was taken to a grove of trees on the northwest side of the ruins and eaten picnic-style. Firemen and cadets joined the guests in the feast.

As if to add insult to injury, a month later three new homes in West End burned down on the same day.

"TO BE CONTINUED"

Leather Wood Silver Gold Plates Bowls Mugs Pots
Glass Vases Jewelry Metal Rugs Weaving Lace Tablecloths Napkins Hats Whistles Baskets Mirrors Tea pots Postcards Earrings Pendants Bracelets Candle sticks Clay Bakeware Casseroles Dinnerware Ballons Scarves Prints Photographs Furniture Belts Pocketbooks Chairs Tables Desks Boxes Glasses Lamps Stained Glass Ornaments Wrought Iron Teacozy Leather Wood Silver Gold Plates Bowls Mugs Pots Glass Vases Jewelry Metal Rugs Weaving Lace Tablecloths Napkins Hats Whistles Baskets Mirrors Teapots Postcards Earrings Pendants Bracelets Candlesticks

The Craft Shop
300 South Main Street
Winston-Salem, NC
723-4125