

Sandwiching in History
Matthews-Clauson-McCullough House
10226 Miller Road, Sherwood
February 6, 2015
By: Rachel Silva



Intro

Good afternoon, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the “Sandwiching in History” tour of the Matthews-Clauson-McCullough House! I’d like to thank Murray Clark and his mother, Nancy Clark, for allowing us to tour the house. Murray has worked very hard to get the house ready for this tour. And Nancy spent her teenage and young adult years living in this house. Her parents lived here from 1950 until their deaths, her mother’s in 1984 and father’s in 2006. I’d also like to thank Tom Eubanks, whose father, C. C. Eubanks, built houses for Justin Matthews for about 20 years and worked on the construction of this house. Tom also lives on Miller Road and was kind enough to let me interview him about this house. Finally, I want to thank Sherwood Mayor Virginia Hillman and Darrell Brown of the Sherwood History and Heritage Committee for their interest in the house.

This tour is worth one hour of HSW continuing education credit through the American Institute of Architects. See me after the tour if you’re interested.

The Matthews-Clauson-McCullough House was built about 1927 by well-known real estate developer Justin Matthews. The 5,000-square-foot home was designed using a combination of the Tudor Revival and Craftsman styles of architecture. It was built to be a “close-in country estate” in the Pope Place Addition of Sylvan Hills.

Sylvan Hills & Pope Place

Present-day Sherwood began as a rural community called Sylvan Hills. Real estate developer Justin Matthews, Sr., organized two firms in the 1920s to oversee development in Park Hill and Sylvan Hills. The Justin Matthews Company built houses, and Metropolitan Trust Company sold and financed them. Matthews built the Sylvan Hills Golf Course in 1927 to provide upscale recreational opportunities for the residents of Park Hill. He intended to build modest homes near the golf course in Sylvan Hills, as well as larger country estates farther to the north.

In 1926 Justin Matthews and his wife, Agnes Somers Matthews, platted a residential addition in Sylvan Hills to the east of the Batesville Cutoff Road (now Kellogg Acres Road). The addition was named Pope Place in honor of John Pope, the third territorial governor of Arkansas. According to the Bill of Assurance filed in the Pulaski Circuit/County Clerk’s office, Matthews admired John Pope because he was the first governor to actually move his family to Arkansas Territory, which had a reputation as a dangerous place. Pope worked diligently to encourage migration and rid Arkansas Territory of its bad reputation. Although Arkansas had not yet achieved statehood, in 1833 Governor Pope commissioned the design of a state capitol building at Little Rock, today known as the Old State House. Justin Matthews also designated land throughout the Pope Place Addition for use as a public park. Miller Park, as it was called, and Miller Road, the main road through Pope Place, were named for Major Charles H. Miller, “an engineer who did much [toward] the development...of Arkansas and who lost his life, with the sinking of the Government steamer ‘Norman’ which sank in the Mississippi River near Memphis on May 8, 1925.”

Pope Place contained 81 residential lots. However, the Justin Matthews Company only built two houses in Pope Place before the Great Depression stalled development. The houses today located at 10226 and 10013 Miller Road (this house and the Dutch Colonial up the road) were the only homes in the Pope Place Addition until at least the mid-1950s. The Metropolitan Trust Company re-platted Block 2 of the Pope Place Addition in 1955, and if you follow Miller Road to the east, you'll see some Ranch-style houses mixed in with new homes.

Sherwood was incorporated as a town on April 22, 1948. According to a special census taken in September 1948, Sherwood had an all-white population of 714. The City of Sherwood has grown significantly in area and population over the years. The Miller Road property was annexed by Sherwood in 1997.

Lot A, Block 1, Pope Place in Sylvan Hills

Mother/Mother-in-law story

An erroneous story has long been told about the construction of the houses at 10226 and 10013 Miller Road. According to this legend, the house at 10226 Miller Road was built by Justin Matthews for his mother, Anna Wilson Matthews, and the house at 10013 Miller Road was built for his mother-in-law, May Ida Pope Somers. The two women fought over whose house was nicer, and neither one moved to Miller Road. The houses sat vacant for several years and were later used as rental property. This story is false. Anna Wilson Matthews died in 1918, and May Ida Pope Somers died in 1915, long before Justin Matthews built the houses on Miller Road.

Maloney

In January 1928 Eloise Lenow ("Lee-know") Maloney financed the house on Lot A, Block 1, Pope Place Addition (this house) through Metropolitan Trust Company. Mrs. Maloney paid \$2,000 cash toward a total purchase price of \$7,500. However, John and Eloise Maloney did not use the Miller Road house as their primary

residence. According to Little Rock City Directories from the late 1920s, the Maloneys lived in the Abeles Apartments at 1409 Louisiana. More than likely, the Miller Road house was truly a country estate or weekend getaway for the Maloney family.

John S. Maloney served as Pulaski County Chancery Clerk, 1909-1915; Pulaski County Circuit Clerk, 1916-1917; and State Insurance Commissioner, 1927-1928. He was also president of Maloney & Solmson Insurance Company. John Maloney died in 1929. Eloise Maloney then moved in with her brother, Harrell Lenow, who lived at 2322 Beechwood in Little Rock (right on the Country Club of LR golf course). Eloise later married James L. Murphy and became a well-known interior decorator/designer. The Murphys lived in the Archibald McHenry/Stagecoach House/Ten Mile House on Stagecoach Road, and by 1940, they operated a tea room out of the house.

Eloise Maloney Murphy likely lost the Miller Road house after her first husband's death in 1929. That event, coupled with the onset of the Great Depression, undoubtedly caused financial problems. Because she financed the Miller Road house through Metropolitan Trust, her arrangement was different than a traditional mortgage. She gave Metropolitan Trust the deed to the property, and the company would hold it until she paid in full. If she failed to pay in full, the company simply kept the deed. There was not another record of the property going back to Metropolitan Trust. They just kept it.

Fuller

Whatever the case, the next deed record for this house dates to August 1932. Metropolitan Trust Company sold four pieces of property, including this house and the Dutch Colonial down the street, to O. J. Fuller for one dollar. More than likely, this was some sort of trade in exchange for work. Otis J. Fuller was a foreman for a concrete construction company. He may have done some paving projects or other concrete work for Justin Matthews and received the real estate as payment. Regardless, the Fullers didn't hang on to the property very long

(about 7 months). Mr. Fuller and his wife returned the property to Metropolitan Trust Company in March 1933 for one dollar (and the Fullers later moved to Oklahoma).

Rental property & Moonshine

Metropolitan Trust Company couldn't find a buyer for the house during the 1930s, so it was used as rental property. According to Tom Eubanks, whose father, Cleetus Clinton "C. C." Eubanks, built houses for Justin Matthews and lived nearby at the corner of Hwy. 5 (now Hwy. 107) and Woodruff Avenue, one of the renters had an illegal moonshine operation in the attic of the house. Revenue agents found out about it and raided the house. C. C. Eubanks followed the revenuers to Miller Road and watched as they poured barrels of liquor out into the yard through the windows on the western side of the house. The moonshiners kept hogs in pens to the northwest of the house to eat the corn mash after it was used in the liquor-making process. After the moonshiners were arrested, authorities released the hogs. The pigs got drunk off the swill that had been poured out and went staggering down the hill toward the old Kellogg Mine.

[Side note: I can neither confirm nor deny this story. And I don't know exactly when it took place. It could have been in the late 1920s or very early '30s between the Maloneys and Fullers, thus taking place before 1933, when the 21st Amendment ended Prohibition. Or it could have happened later in the 1930s, and they still would have gotten in trouble for making illegal whiskey (not taxed).]

Clauson

In December 1944 the home was purchased by Donald B. Clauson and his wife, Evelyn, for \$5,500. Donald Clauson was a coach at West Side Junior High in Little Rock, and his wife, Evelyn, was a teacher at Pulaski Heights Junior High. According to the 1940 Census, the Clauson household consisted of two sons, Donald B. Clauson, Jr., and Norman S. Clauson; Evelyn Clauson's parents, Oscar and O'Fallon Staley; and a lodger named Lloyd Mabrey. This may explain their move to Sylvan

Hills—they needed more space. Interestingly, Donald and Evelyn Clauson continued to work in downtown Little Rock even after they moved to Sylvan Hills. By the late 1940s, Donald was the principal at Parham Elementary, 15th & Vance streets in Little Rock (demolished to make way for I-630). The Clauson boys' initials are stamped in the concrete steps on the west side of the house.

McCullough

The Clauson family remained at 10226 Miller Road until December 1950, when they sold the house to Murray and Martha McCullough. The McCullough family moved to Little Rock in 1938 from South Bend, Indiana. They first lived in a house at 2711 S. Tyler in Little Rock. By 1950, the McCullough family had grown to include seven children, and they needed more space. Murray McCullough also loved to ride horses, and a home in the country was ideal for horseback riding.

The McCullough family has owned this property since 1950. Murray Grey McCullough was born on August 15, 1908, at Plymouth, Indiana, to Russell McCullough and Maude Rupert McCullough. He grew up at Garrett, Indiana, and was a talented violinist and athlete. His grandfather, John Rupert, raised Morgan horses and was a close friend of the Studebaker family, owners of the Studebaker Buggy Works. Later generations of the Studebaker family manufactured Studebaker automobiles.

During his high school and college years, Murray played violin in a dance band. They performed in the summertime at resorts on Lake Wawasee in Indiana to make a little spending money. Murray began his college career at Manchester College in Manchester, Indiana, and later transferred to the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. He studied medicine but dropped out of college after his junior year to take a job with a pharmaceutical company. You see, it was about 1930, during the Depression, and he couldn't pass up the job offer. While attending the University of Illinois, Murray met a fellow student named Martha May Hatch, and the two later married.

Murray and Martha McCullough moved to South Bend, Indiana, where they started a trucking company called The Overnight Express. They owned a fleet of trucks and transported a lot of produce. But winters were harsh in South Bend, and Murray got tired of dealing with bad driving conditions and vehicle maintenance issues caused by the cold weather. So he bid on a job in a warmer place—Little Rock, Arkansas. In 1938 he was hired to serve as the “screen wagon mail contractor” for the U.S. Postal Service in Little Rock. The McCullough family brought their fleet of trucks to Little Rock, and Murray hired about 12 men to drive for him. The trucks transported mail from the main post office to train stations, bus stations, other area post offices, and the airport, and vice versa. The drivers were NOT traditional mail carriers with a mail route. While the McCulloughs lived at 2711 S. Tyler, they were instrumental in the construction of the current Oak Forest United Methodist Church building on Fair Park Boulevard.

During World War II, Murray worked as a chemist at the Maumelle Ordnance Works. After the war, he returned to his mail contracting job full-time. About 1950, Murray took a job with Winthrop Laboratories as a pharmaceutical sales representative. He was a natural salesman and was very interested in medicine, as he had studied it in college. Nancy McCullough Clark remembered neighbors coming over to the house to have their ailments diagnosed by her father. Murray McCullough worked for Winthrop for thirty years and was consistently among the top three in sales nationally. Even after he retired, he was invited to speak at a national conference, where he told young salesmen how to sell.

Martha May Hatch McCullough was born on March 14, 1908, at Hammond, Indiana, to Walter Raymond Hatch and May Drury Lawrence Hatch. Martha attended the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana and worked as the society editor for the *Champaign-Urbana News*. She was an environmentalist and was active in many civic and volunteer projects—a trait she passed along to her daughter, Nancy, who has been involved with environmental advocacy efforts in Pulaski County.

Murray and Martha McCullough had seven children, four born in South Bend and three born in Little Rock:

Nancy Drury McCullough (Clark)

Murray Bruce McCullough

George Kent McCullough

Andrew Wilfred McCullough (deceased)

Charlotte Ellen McCullough (Penn)

John McKenzie McCullough (deceased)

Marcia May "May Apple" McCullough (deceased)

Murray McCullough's love for horses began when he was a child at his grandfather's farm and lasted his entire lifetime. He and his children went horseback riding several times each week.

When I asked Tom Eubanks about Murray and Martha McCullough, he said, "They danced together beautifully. They looked so graceful and nice as a couple. Murray was a gentleman and just a very nice person. He loved to ride horses."

Martha died on April 11, 1984, at the age of 76. Murray remained in the home with his son, John, who was his caretaker, until his death on November 20, 2006, at age 98.

Murray left the house to his son, John. John had a small business supplying cured hickory wood to local barbecue restaurants. He loved to be outdoors and often took his dogs, Pal and Sammy, for long walks. John McCullough died on May 29, 2014, at age 70.

John McCullough left the property to his nephews, Murray Clark, Brett Clark, and Mark Rushing. It is currently for sale.

Architecture

Like many houses built by the Justin Matthews Company during the 1920s, the Matthews-Clauson-McCullough House was designed in the Tudor Revival style of architecture. The Tudor Revival style was loosely based on a variety of early English building traditions. The style also incorporated details from America's contemporaneous Craftsman houses. Although this house lacks the trademark steeply-pitched, front-facing gable and large chimney on the front façade, it leans toward the Tudor Revival style. Characteristics of the style on this house include the front-facing cross gable with false half-timbering, the use of stone around the front door, a front door set in a Tudor arch, a prominent chimney on the east side of the house, banks of casement windows, and a grouping of leaded-glass windows with diamond-shaped panes. However, the mixture of materials, half-timbering, and casement windows are also Craftsman details.

On the interior, be sure to note the grand staircase, three sets of French doors, and the brick mantle.

And if you haven't already noticed, the rock wall on the property looks just like the rock walls throughout Park Hill. It, too, was built by the Justin Matthews Company.

Details

The McCullough family moved to Sylvan Hills when Nancy was a junior in high school. She and her brother, Bruce, drove to Little Rock to attend high school at Little Rock High (later known as LR Central High). They dropped off their younger siblings along the way.

When I asked Nancy what she remembered most about growing up in this house, she talked about how much she enjoyed living in the country. She loved the woods, and the sounds of the owls at night, and the whippoorwills in the

springtime. She also had fond memories of taking walks on the road and watching the fireplace at night.

- House is about 5,000 square feet
- Has a floored attic and full basement with 2-car garage (access is on north side of house)
- The back porch is not original to the house
- 5 bedrooms/3 bathrooms, plus living, dining, kitchen, breakfast room, and office
- When you walk upstairs, the bedrooms on the east side were the girls' rooms, the bedroom with the north-facing window was Murray & Martha's room, and the rooms on the west side were the boys' rooms.
- The two bedrooms at the top of the stairs (east side) are not original. The ceiling of the living room originally went all the way up to the second floor. When you look in those upstairs rooms, you'll see the exposed beams and woodwork that was once visible from the first floor. These bedrooms had been added by the time the McCulloughs purchased the house in 1950.
- Most of the antique furniture in the house was from Martha McCullough's family. Her grandfather owned two furniture stores, one in Champaign-Urbana and another in Wisconsin.

Next tour is March 6 at the Old U.S. Post Office & Courthouse, 300 W. 2nd Street, Little Rock.