

Background History: 219 East Third Street, Washington, Beaufort Co., NC

Prepared by John P. Wood and Kristi Brantley, NC SHPO, 7-31-2017

The house at 219 East Third Street, Washington, Beaufort County, NC was constructed in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The house consisted of a two-story main block; a full-width, one-story rear section; and a one-story full-width porch on the front elevation. A one-story outbuilding was located behind the house. Between 1901 and 1904 the outbuilding was connected to the house by a one-story covered breezeway. Between 1934 and 1937 the outbuilding and breezeway were demolished and a two-story blacksmith/machine shop was constructed.

Late nineteenth century deed records indicate that the house was constructed by a mulatto woman names Martha Cogdell on land that was owned by T. H. B. Myers. This land consisted of the western half of Lot 5 in a portion of Washington called "Pungo town". Martha Cogdell was living in the house at the time of her death.¹ On July 6, 1892 T. H. B Myers and his wife conveyed the land to Martha's daughter Louisa Cogdell² and son-in-law Wesley Mitchell for \$100.00, with each having an equal share in the property (Beaufort County Deed Book 81, page 366).³

By a deed dated August 2, 1892, Wesley Sylvester Mitchell and his wife Martha E. Mitchell conveyed their one-half interest in the property to Goethe Wilkins for \$300.00 (Beaufort County Deed Book 86, page 84). On September 23, 1892 Goethe Wilkins conveyed this one-half interest to Louisa Cogdell for \$250.00 (Beaufort County Deed Book 86, page 83).

By deed dated September 23, 1892, Louisa Cogdell mortgaged the property to Frances A. Tuten to secure a bond for a \$250.00 debt (Beaufort County Deed Book 86, page 86). It appears that Louisa Cogdell defaulted in the mortgage as the property, by virtue of the power of sale contained in the mortgage deed, was put up for sale. Goethe Wilkins purchased the property at the sale and the property was transferred to him in a deed from Francis A. Tuten dated February 19, 1894 (Beaufort County Deed Book 87, page 248).

On June 19, 1894 Goethe Wilkins and his wife Hattie R. Wilkins conveyed the property to Sarah Jane Brown for \$350.00 (Beaufort County Deed Book 87, page 250). On August 12, 1919 Sarah Jane Brown Colbert conveyed the property to William A. Blount, Jr. (Beaufort County Deed Book 213, page 267).

On August 27, 1919 William A. Blount, Jr. conveyed a one-half share in the property to Benjamin Louis Susman for \$750.00 (Beaufort County Deed Book 213, page 274).

William A. Blount, Jr. and Benjamin Louis Susman were indebted to William Bragaw for a sum of \$1,500.00. On August 24, 1919, they and Susman's wife Bertha R. Susman entered a mortgage deed with Stephen Cambreleng Bragaw acting as trustee, using the property as collateral (Beaufort County Deed Book 198, page 218).⁴ The note was due to be paid on May

¹ Martha Cogdell died sometime between 1880 and 1892.

² The 1880 census lists Louisa Cogdell as mulatto.

³ Later deeds refer to a Sylvester Mitchell. Marriage records indicate Sylvester M. Mitchell was married to Martha Cogdell's daughter Sarah Cogdell. Later deed records indicate she was married to Martha E Cogdell. There is no indication that Martha Cogdell had a daughter that was also named Martha.

⁴ William Bragaw may have been Stephen Cambreleng Bragaw's brother.

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15, 1920. It appears that the mortgage was defaulted on and the mortgage was not cancelled. A stipulation contained in the deed prescribed that should the mortgage go into default, the property was to be sold at the Beaufort County courthouse door to the highest bidder. Despite being in default, the property was not exposed to public sale at the courthouse door until 1934.

In the early decades of 1900, until 1934, the house was used as rental property. In 1900 it appears that the house was occupied by Isaac C. Boyd, and African-American day laborer. Boyd shared the house with his wife Rachell and children Ida, Bessie, Sarah C., Henry, Catherine, and Arthur.

By 1910 the house was occupied by Hannah Bowen. Bowen was a widowed African-American woman and head of the household who worked as a laundress out of the house. Living in the house with her that year was her son Edward; daughters Elvia S. and Mary B.; grandchildren Lavinia Jones, Willie Jones, Margaret Saunders, and Helen Jones; a lodger named Annie Eskins; and a boarder named Ephraim Jones. The 1920 census shows her still residing in the house. Living in the house with her that year was her daughter Banner McRae who was also a laundress; her son-in-law Clarence L. McRae (a carpenter); her grandson William E. Jones, granddaughter Nellen J. Jones; and a boarder Edward Duggan who worked as a drayman.

By 1930 the house was rented to Leonard B. Price who worked as an auto mechanic. Price shared the house with his wife Della; sons Leonard Jr., William B., and Richard; and his mother-in-law Sarah Knox.

On March 6, 1934, Maude A. Bragaw, acting as executrix for the estate of her husband Stephen Cambreleng Bragaw (deceased)⁵ exposed the property for sale at the door of the Beaufort County courthouse. At the sale, John Walter Duke and his wife Lillian (Lillie) Evans Duke were the highest and last bidder and therefore purchased the property.⁶ The deed conveyance between Bragaw and Duke was made on March 19, 1934 (Beaufort County Deed Book 300, page 347).

Duke family tradition indicates that J. W. and Lillie Duke moved from 221 to 219 East Third Street at Lillie's insistence as she had lost six of the ten children that they had an early age and she wanted a house with no memories of her lost children.⁷ Duke shared the house with his wife Lillie Evans Duke and their children Cleveland, John, Golden, Mary Virginia, and Irma L.⁸ Some of the Duke's children continued to live at 221 East Third Street and in a house on the north side of East Third Street.⁹

⁵ Stephen Cambreleng Bragaw died on June 8, 1930.

⁶ The 1920 and 1930 census shows John W. Duke and his family living next door at 221 East Third Street. Duke purchased the 221 East Third Street property on November 6, 1919 (Beaufort County Deed Book 215, page 284).

⁷ Interview between Robert G. Sands and the grandchildren of J. W. and Lillie Duke, July 12, 2017, Washington, NC.

⁸ Some of these children were old enough to be living on their own and may not have occupied the house at 219 East Third Street. By 1940 only two of Duke's children John and Mary Virginia were living in the house with their parents.

⁹ Interview between Robert G. Sands and the grandchildren of J. W. and Lillie Duke, July 12, 2017, Washington, NC.

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Duke was a blacksmith who operated his business on the property. Shortly after purchasing the property, but before 1937, he constructed a two-story blacksmith/machine shop. By 1948 his son John was working with him in the business. Eventually one of Duke's other sons joined him in the business.¹⁰

Duke continued to operate his business out of the blacksmith/machine shop building on the site until it was destroyed by fire in 1961. Duke rebuilt the blacksmith/machine shop building in 1962 on the same site. John W. Duke died on August 13, 1965 due to acute coronary occlusion. Lille Duke continued to occupy the house until she moved to an assisted living facility.

On August 31, 1973 Lillian Evans Duke sold the property to her daughter Mary Virginia Duke Greene and her husband Otis Ralph Greene (Beaufort County Deed Book 702, page 142).

Between 1967 and 2016 the property changed hands five times: On August 18, 1976, Mary Virginia Duke Greene and Otis Ralph. Green sold the property to J. B. Hewett and his wife Grace P. Hewett (Beaufort County Deed Book 740, page 160). At some time after the Duke's sold the house it was moved southward on the lot and placed on a new foundation.

On July 7, 1981, J. B. Hewett and G. P. Hewett sold the property to Daniel G. Smith and his wife Judy C. Smith (Beaufort County Deed Book 804, page 508). On October 28, 1987, the Smiths sold the property to Muriel Moore, Jr. and ad his wife Catherine P. Moore (Beaufort County Deed Book 888, page 391). On July 12, 2010, Catherine P. Moore sold her interest in the property to Muriel Moore, Jr. (Beaufort County Deed Book 1724, page 401). On June 24, 2016 Moore sold the property to Bean Property, LLC (Beaufort County Deed Book 1903, page 647).

¹⁰ Ibid.