

This "history" is based on (a) my mother's reminiscences of her mother's, and her own, residence on this property, from ca. 1901 to 1946, written about 1944-46, but which, in the author's opinion, is sometimes seriously in error as to dates of additions and improvements, and (b) the author's own memories, based on residence in the house, 1914-1926, and regular visits there to almost every year 1926-1946, plus vaguer recollections of visits to it prior to 1914 when it was his grandmother's home. He has also supplemented his recollections at some points by reference to the memories of his aunt, the late Greta Porter Gosch, and to those of his three younger brothers, particularly Russell (1908- ).

My guess, which however is not based on actual research, is that this house is now "one of the oldest" residences in Sterling, whatever that may mean. My mother has told me that when she and her mother came to Sterling in 1895, in order that the daughter might attend Cooper Memorial College, this North Broadway residence was so far on the outskirts of the residential section that there were no other homes between it and Cooper Hall. Certainly its architecture is highly unusual. This two-story flat-roof construction, so far as I can remember, is found in only one other building in Sterling, and that is in a building on the southwest corner of the same block, probably the work of the same architect and/or builder; in my earliest memory this latter building was occupied by a rather elderly man whose name I cannot now recall, although I knew him well, and who was further distinguished by owning one of the earliest motor cars in Sterling--a Brush "runabout," I believe. In traveling about the country since 1926 I have kept my eyes open for similar architectural specimens but, if I have seen any at all, they must have been very few.

In either 1900 or 1901 (my mother's reminiscences give both dates), Mrs. Catharine Ann McCollum Wiggins (1836-1914), my mother's mother, bought this property. I have an early picture of it (xerox copy herewith), dated probably not long after its purchase, which shows Mrs. Wiggins on the porch in a chair, her daughter on the edge of the porch, and John E. Porter (1893-1965)--whom Mrs. Wiggins took care of for several years prior to her daughter's marriage to his father, Ellis K. Porter (1860-1936)--on a tricycle in the yard.

This photograph was undoubtedly the work of Mr. Porter, who was a professional photographer, probably about the time of his marriage to Catharine (Cassie) Emma Wiggins (1873-1952), which was solemnized in the room the bay-window of which is discernible in the photograph, on June 17, 1902. This photograph is the earliest known to me of the North Broadway residence and is particularly interesting for showing the then location of the little building later known as "the shop" or "the wash-house," the northwest corner of which was apparently joined to the southeast corner of the main building, or at least to that part of it which can be seen in the photograph. Whether at the time of this photograph there was a one-story extension of the two-story structure here shown, east of the main building, I do not know; the angle from which the photograph was taken and the then location of "the shop" would have prevented any such extension from being included in the picture.

The newly-weds resided in this house for about a month. Very independent, Mrs. Wiggins, for about nine years after her daughter's marriage, supported herself, although in her mid-sixties and early seventies, largely if not entirely by operating the building as a rooming-house and dining-club, principally for college students; it was popularly known as "The Cabbage Patch" from the similarity of its owner's name to that of the title character of Alice Hegan Rice's popular novel, Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch (1901). However,