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S.C. - Homes, Historic - York County

Williams Home In Ebenezer Once Klan Headquarters

Property Bought
By Dr. E. Avery
For \$300 In 1843

By ELIZABETH REED

One of the loveliest homes in Ebenezer is the Dr. Edward T. Avery home, now the residence of Mrs. John F. Williams and her two daughters, Misses Frances and Ruth Williams.

The main body of the home and the two-room kitchen standing in the yard are well over 100 years old. The property was bought by Dr. Edward T. Avery in 1843 from James M. Johnston for the sum of \$300. *

Dr. Avery was the brother of Miss Mary Avery, described as "the most beautiful lady in all the land." Her marriage to Dr. Hugo Toland and the bridal trip to California which ended in the death of the bride, has been described in a previous story. Dr. Avery accompanied his sister on the long trip west.

Dr. Avery's wife was Miss Mary Massey who was born January 9, 1834 and died August 11, 1911. The doctor was born January 6, 1828 and died May 7, 1892.

Dr. Avery was the leader of the Ku Klux Klan movement in this section. His daughter told many years later how she watched from the small upstairs balcony as white-hooded men rode silently into the night on their mission of rescuing the state from mis-rule. So highly organized was the clan that rubber horseshoes were made for the hoofs of the horses. Regalia was stored in the rooms upstairs.

When conditions here became critical for the good doctor, leader of the K.K.K., he was forced to flee on horseback to Texas and remain there for a while until things had quieted down a bit in the neighborhood of Ebenezer.

Long years after his death a beautiful desk was left to Sadler Love. In cleaning up the desk a secret drawer was found with all the important papers of the Klan. No one now knows where those papers are.

Dr. and Mrs. Avery were the parents of four sons and two daughters. Dr. Samuel Avery was a dentist. Waitzell Avery was nicknamed "Boss." Julian Avery married Miss Kate Cross of Chester; Edward R. Avery married Miss Lucy Ivy of Rock Hill. Miss Mecca Avery married Richard Laughlin

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Century Old Ebenezer Home



This stately, well-kept home had Colonial columns until the turn of the century. Few old houses in the county are in the excellent state of repair of the Williams home in Ebenezer. —Herald Staff Photo.

of Anderson and lived there until her death. Miss Ella Avery was never married. She spent much of her life in Rock Hill, going to Anderson in her later years. She died in July, 1948 at the Confederate Home in Columbia.

Mrs. Laughlin had two children, a son who is now dead and a daughter, Avery, who is now married and living in Baltimore, Md.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe H. Miller bought the property from the Avery family in 1897. They lived in the home until 1906 when they moved back to Rock Hill. In a year or two they built their present home on Oakland avenue.

The Miller family remodeled the home. Until their ownership the house had Colonial columns. When they were torn down, Uncle Jake, faithful servant of the Avery family, was heard to mourn "Dey's ruining Marse Edward's home."

Mrs. Miller still remembers using the old brick kitchen. She recalls, too, the morning that Aunt Dorcas came hurrying to the "big house" with the large breakfast tray, only to fall and scatter the contents of the tray.

Pretty soon the Miller family added a kitchen to the back of the house in order to be sure of breakfast.

Mrs. Miller was Rock Hill's first stenographer. Half a century ago she worked as secretary for the late W. J. Roddey.

She remembers that when they bought the property Dr. Edward Avery's store and office was near the road. In the store basement was a storage space for the wine that the Avery family made. Mr. Miller moved the store to the back of the home.

In 1906 Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Bass bought the house and lived in it until 1910. In 1910 Mr. and Mrs. W. Cloud Hicklin moved to the home from the Fishing Creek community. They lived in the stately old home until 1919 when Mr. and Mrs. John F. Williams bought the property.

The Williams family made a number of changes in 1944. They cut French doors, put hardwood floors downstairs, replastered one room and modernized the kitchen.

Interior

A more beautiful or a more neatly kept home would be hard to find in York County. The original mantels are all different, something unusual in an old home. The stair entrance has been changed to ascend from the hall and not from the living room. The large and modern kitchen would make a comfortable apartment for a cramped city family.

The dining room could seat 50 or 60 persons. Upstairs are the original wide pine floors, now polished and bright. True to the style of the times, the home was built without closets. The one built-in wardrobe at the end of the upstairs hall could tell a story of styles over the century if it could talk. Miss Ella Avery used to come back to Rock Hill, open the wardrobe door and sigh, "Oh, the glad rags this old wardrobe used to hold."

In an upstairs bedroom hangs the grant made by George Third of England to property near Clover to ancestors of Mrs. Williams. The deed is one of three made by George, Third, to James Campbell. This one is for 350 acres of land near Clover.

House Furnishings

No home could be more appro-

priately furnished for its proportions. Most of the polished old hand made pieces have come to the family through Mrs. Williams who was before her marriage Miss Sarah Campbell.

Many of the pieces are so massive that they could not be pushed through the door of the modern small house. However, the Avery home has such wide doors that no trouble was ever experienced in getting the furniture inside.

In the dining room a huge, hand-carved walnut sideboard adds beauty. Made by one of York County's early sheriffs, Sheriff Bryant, the hand-carved middle drawer opens out to form a desk. A large book case in the hall came to Mrs. Williams through her mother, Mrs. Frances Dulin Campbell.

The Kitchen

The two-room, handmolded brick kitchen with its narrow windows deserves a word of its own. Standing about 30 or 40 feet from the house and now used for storage the kitchen is graceful in design with chimneys at either end. It would make a livable home for a couple with the addition of a bathroom. The Williams family hopes

to make a guest house of it some day.

(Ed. Note: This is one of a series of articles on old homes in York County).

* Not correct -
House built
ca. 1847-1850
by Rev. John
Monroe Anderson,
who sold it
to Dr. Edward
T. Avery about
1857 - wrong.