

# WALKER-LAZURUS-HOWERTON HOUSE *history*

2011 Nashville Road | Bowling Green, Kentucky

Samuel A. (1847-1921) and Elizabeth V. (Smith) Walker (1845-1913) built this house in 1895. He worked for a number of years as an agent for the American Express Company in Denver, Colorado, before returning to Bowling Green, the city of his birth. He was considered one of Bowling Green's leading businessmen, serving as a director of the Bowling Green Trust Company from its incorporation in 1911 until his death. He also served as a deacon at the Presbyterian Church. When Elizabeth died in 1913, her husband had the Main Street limestone arch at Fountain Square Park erected. Samuel suffered a stroke when walking downtown one day. He and his wife are buried in Fairview Cemetery.



Those who have thoroughly examined the house believe that the parlor to the north was probably an addition. This conclusion is based on the difference in foundation material and the extremely unusual angle created at the juxtaposition of the two walls. The current kitchen wing was added by the Howertons, but an area adjacent to it (now the office area) was obviously a kitchen at one time. The house features masonry construction throughout, limestone sills and lintels, oversized windows on the front facade with lovely stained wood surrounds. Another unusual exterior feature is a large protruding bay with rounded corners on the south side. This protruding bay is reminiscent of architect Creedmore Fleenor's work, including some of the corners of the old First Baptist Church and Henry Hardin Cherry's College Street home (now razed). Fleenor was certainly designing buildings at the time Mr. Walker constructed his home. The porte cochere is original to the house. Exciting interior features include paneled

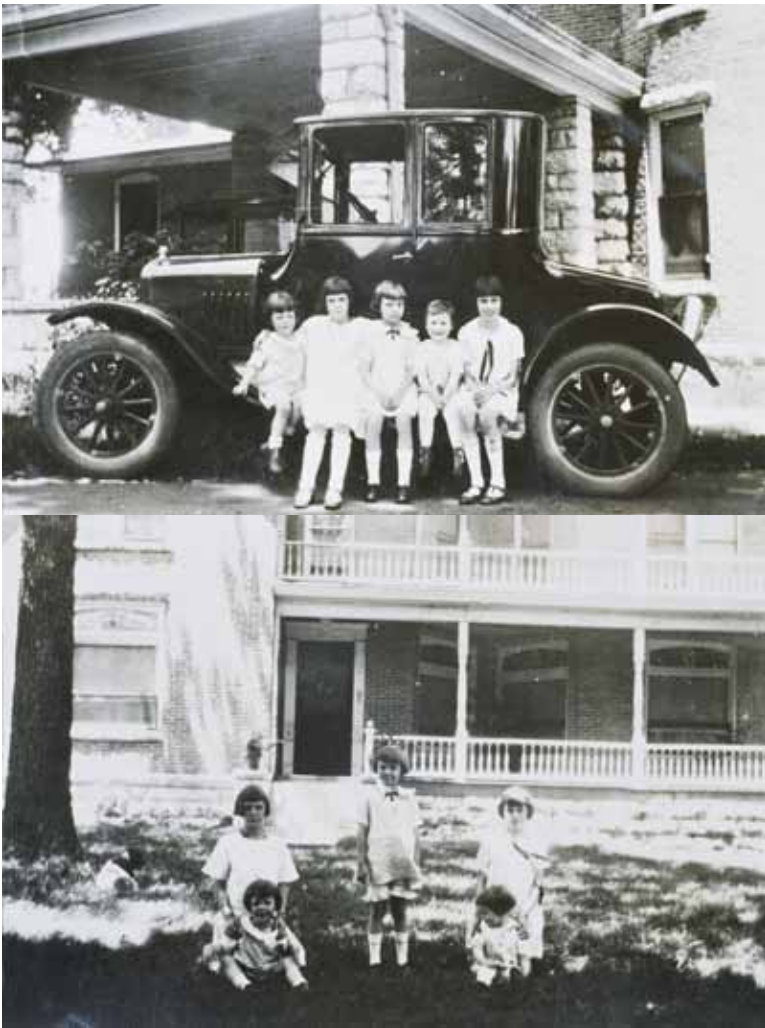
pocket doors, the stained glass transoms with jewel glass insets, a tin ceiling in the dining room and a pair of the most unusual newel posts to be found in southcentral Kentucky.

A Mr. M.A. Mayes owned the house briefly in 1903 before selling it to Pat L. (1872-1054) and Louise Patterson (1887-1933), who lived here until 1908. They eventually sold the house to Joseph L. (1869-1939) and Louelle McElwain (1872-1959) in 1916. Mr. McElwain, originally from Rockfield, owned the home until 1927, but he

CIRCA 1927

2012





BARBARA WALTON STEWART [SMALLEST CHILD]  
AND FRIENDS AT THE SIDE ENTRANCE AND  
FRONT YARD OF 2011 NASHVILLE ROAD CIRCA 1928

moved to Tampa in 1923 to participate in real estate transactions. From 1926 to 1928 Charles and Browning Walton stayed here when he came to Bowling Green on tobacco buying trips. They brought with them their preschool daughter, Barbara. She married Charles Stewart, and we know her today as the inimitable Barbara Stewart. The McElwains sold the house to Rhea G. (1879-1960) and Katherine (Cox) Price (1881-1969) in 1927. Mr. Price was a highway contractor from Auburn, Kentucky. He paved many of Bowling Green's streets in the 1920s and for several years was superintendent and vice-president of Kentucky Rock Asphalt Company. He later owned the Price Building (currently occupied by United Furniture at 1008 State Street) and the Cooke Building that once stood between the courthouse and the Presbyterian Church on Tenth Street. The Prices owned the home until 1935.

The house eventually became the property of Harry R. Lazarus, Jr. (1899-1962) and Christine (Price) Lazarus (1903-1981), in the mid-1930s. Harry, a native of Horse Cave, was a tall, lanky

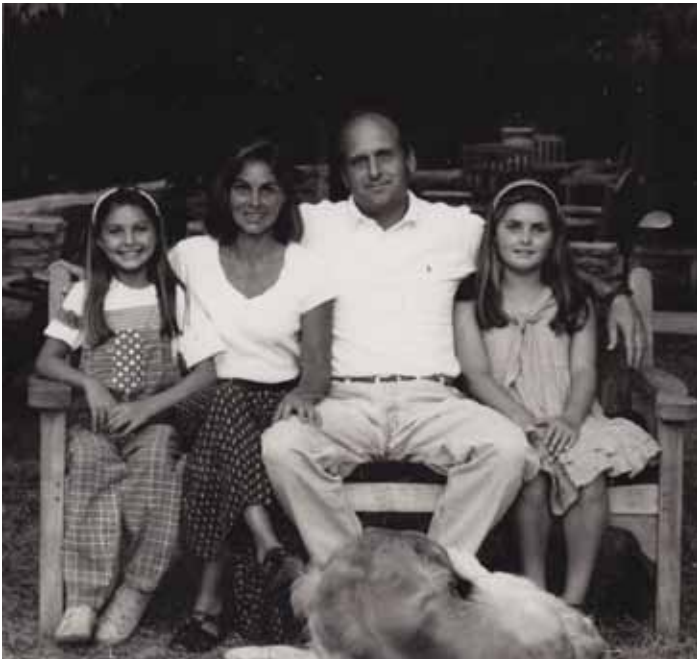
man who enjoyed hunting and baseball. He matriculated at Ogden College and eventually obtained his bachelor's degree from Yale University, where he played on the varsity baseball team. Upon his return to Bowling Green, Harry played semi-pro baseball and eventually farmed and ran a beer distributorship. His father, Harry, Sr., had been one of Warren County's most capable farmers, raising forage and grain crops, hogs, and some of the most prized mules in the United States. In 1962 a portion of the Lazarus farm on Scottsville Road sold for the unheard of price of \$1300 per acre. One of Harry Junior's claims to fame was the invention of an anti-aircraft gun mount that captured the attention of the military. The patent model was executed by local machinist J.F. Bewley based on Lazarus' concept. Harry's wife Christine was a celebrated cook and her iris garden, located in a sink hole in the front yard, was highly regarded. She undertook a major renovation of the house's interior in the late-1930s or early-1940s.

On August 19, 1927 Harry and Christine exchanged their wedding vows at an elaborate outdoor wedding. At least one paragraph from the lengthy wedding description bears repeating here: "The front lawn gave the impression of a fairyland with it's rows of electric lights with white rose petal shades stretched among

the trees. An aisle leading from the front steps of the house to an altar was formed by three standards on either side, filled with gladioli, connected with garlands of southern smilax, interspersed with lilies. The altar itself was banked with ferns, palms and other foliage plants and on either side of it stood tall graceful vases of lilies. The altar was lighted by a multitude of candles whose soft glow further carried out the fairy-like atmosphere.”

Harry and Christine had one son, Rhea Price Lazarus. Rhea attended College High, where he was a star basketball player. He received his bachelor’s degree from WKU in 1959 and did further graduate work at Peabody in Nashville. He served 18 months in the Department of Finance in Frankfort before accepting a job with the Bowling Green schools in 1957. After serving one year as principal of the Eleventh Street School he taught briefly in WKU’s School of Education. From 1962 to 1974 he served as the university’s registrar and then worked for five years as assistant to the president. He left the university in 1979 to pursue outside business interests. In the 1970s he served several terms on the Bowling Green City School Board. In the early 1960s Rhea built the rambling home at 2017 Nashville Road (next door) now occupied by Kathy and Fred Higgins.

HOWERTON FAMILY IN THE BACK YARD [1995]



GARDEN IMPROVEMENTS [2010]



Dr. Gary and Dianne Howerton purchased 2011 Nashville Road in 1988. They added the kitchen wing on the eastern side of the house using salvage from several downtown homes. They have also done extensive cosmetic work on the house’s interior without destroying its historic fabric. The addition of the hand-crimped standing seam copper roof on the house and outbuildings took place after the 1998 hailstorm. The couple has also tamed the overgrown yard, changed the configuration of the entrance drive and front walk, and have rebuilt the stone wall on the northern side of the property. The outbuildings include an original canning kitchen/shed, smoke house, a small barn-like structure, and an outdoor privy called “the Fred.” The garden has also been improved with a stone wall, privet hedge, metal edging and gravel paths.

Dr. Howerton has practiced Emergency Medicine in Bowling Green from 1982 until 2011, and has served as Medical Director for the Emergency Departments of the Medical Center at Bowling Green, Scottsville and Franklin.

Gary and Dianne established Urgentcare, an immediate medical care facility in 1984 and retained ownership until 1995. Dr. Howerton is currently in the process of opening a medical office to provide medical acupuncture services. Dianne has served two terms on the Bowling Green City Commission, the Bowling Green School Board and on the Board of Directors for several non-profit entities in the region. She currently works as a freelance graphic designer for print and web. Their daughters were raised in the home and now reside in Boulder, Colorado.

As all previous owners, the Howerton family has celebrated many special occasions at 2011 Nashville Road—Easter egg hunts, Great Pumpkin parties, team and school functions, birthday parties, holidays and even a wedding reception. This is a fabulous home and yard for entertaining which has been loved and cared for since having been built in 1895.



TRACEY HOWERTON | GREAT PUMPKIN PARTY 1993