Dr. Robert C. Sample House

1125 Highland Ave.

Hendersonville, NC 28792

The Dr. Robert C. Sample House is a circa 1926 structure built for Dr. Sample and his wife, Laura. The large Colonial Revival was one of several homes built to house the physicians of Patton Hospital (c. 1913). The hospital is located next to the property across Waynesville Street. Today Patton Hospital is a multi-unit residential dwelling.

**About the home:** The Sample House is a well-preserved Colonial Revival built in the Georgian style. The resurge in popularity of the Colonial design happened during the late 1800’s through the early 1900’s and is attributed to the 1876 Centennial celebration. Reportedly built by then local builder John Forrest, the home is a brick structure currently painted colonial grey and trimmed in white. Originally, however, the brick was left unpainted. The wooden shutters, with their unique topiary tree cutouts, are original to the home and were believed to be painted white in 1926. Giving a perfect nod to colonial-era Georgian design, the entrance is adorned with an arched portico, decorative pilasters and embellished moldings. The front door is a classic solid, eight-paneled, oak door flanked by sidelights and topped with an elliptical fanlight. True to both Colonial and Georgian design, the tall center portion of the house is symmetrically balanced by a sunroom to the left and an open terrace supported by grand white columns to the right. The home’s interior is equally influenced by early Georgian architecture, containing a wide, center hall with a formally-defined dining room to the right and living room to the left. Another large center hall, four bedrooms, and two bathrooms occupy the second level. The third level is a stand-up attic accessible by a pull-down ladder. Much of the home’s original plaster is still in place, as are the original oak floors, staircase, and most of the single glazed windows. Almost all of the original structure is still heated by early 20th century radiators, which keeps the home quite warm in the winter months.

Along the right portion of the home, there is a wing extension added during the late 1980’s, which connected the home to the formally detached carriage house. As part of this renovation, the kitchen was updated, the basement was given an interior entrance, and a large family room was added to the living space. Later, in 2013, the current owners converted the old carriage house and a full bath into a main floor master suite.

**About Dr. Sample:** Robert Cannon Sample was born on February 19, 1887 in Franklin, N.C. to the Rev. Elam Augustus and Anna Sample. His father’s family were native to Mecklenburg County, but his profession as a Presbyterian minister brought the family to Hendersonville around 1890. The Sample family lived in a large home south of the Presbyterian Church between North Main and King Street. Unfortunately, the Sample’s home is no longer standing. Recorded in the 1900 U.S. Census, then thirteen year old Robert’s mother was listed as a school matron and his two eldest sisters as teachers, which probably greatly attributed to young Robert’s early education. Robert Sample was a 1911 graduate of Davidson College, Davidson, NC. He studied pre-med at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and received his M.D. at the Medical College of the University of Pennsylvania. When the First World War broke out, Dr. Sample was living and practicing at the Methodist Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He entered the Navy and served as chief surgeon aboard the U.S.S. *President Grant* where he made several wartime crossings of the Atlantic.

After the war, Dr. Sample returned to Hendersonville, North Carolina and opened a general practice. He later married Miss Laura Chandler and built the large colonial on Highland Avenue. They moved into the home the same year their son was born. Dr. and Mrs. Sample also had a daughter, Joan Sample, who holds the distinction of being the first Apple [Blossom] Festival queen in 1947. During Dr. Sample’s career, he was Henderson County’s Medical Dean and received recognition from the state medical society for 50 years of active practice. He was affectionately known throughout the county as “Dr. Bob.” In 1946 Laura Sample died in the home at the tender age of 42. Several years later, Dr. Sample remarried Frances Lyle. Together they lived in the home on Highland Avenue until sometime after 1950. Dr. Sample kept a practice on 414 N. Church Street until late into the 1950’s. He died on November 3, 1965 and is buried at the Oakdale Cemetery\* on 6th Street in Hendersonville, NC.

The Sample House remained the home of physicians for several more decades. Currently the home is owned by Douglas and Cynthia Hensley. Like Dr. Sample, both Doug and Cynthia are native to North Carolina.

**A sneak peek into Dr. Sample’s life as a physician:** From the memoires of Joseph Edgar Singletary (1901-1992) - During the 1918-19 flu epidemic, better known as the Great Pandemic, young Edgar Singletary contracted the flu while a student a Blue Ridge School for Boys. Mr. Singletary was brought to Patton Hospital on Highland Avenue and attended by Dr. Robert Sample. Dr. Sample kept young Edgar out of school for more than a month and summoned the parents to Hendersonville. Under the care of Dr. Sample, Edgar Singletary recuperated at the Old Kentucky Home, which he remembered as having exquisite meals. It was Dr. Sample’s recommendation that Edgar Singletary remain in the “fresh mountain air for the summer” — which Edgar did.

\*Oakdale Cemetery is noted for the famous Wolfe Angel of Thomas Wolfe’s novel *Look Homeward Angel*.

Sources: Orr, Tom “Memorial in the Blue Ridge Mall” *Times-News*, Hendersonville, 27 October 2013, pgs E1, E7, [www.Ancestery.com](http://www.Ancestery.com), [www.Wikipedia.com](http://www.Wikipedia.com), Davidson University, Davidson, NC, Hendersonville Historic Preservation Commission, [www.hendersonvillehpc.org](http://www.hendersonvillehpc.org).