

LOCAL HISTORIC LANDMARK PROGRAM

Forsyth County Historic Resources Commission

Col. William Allen Blair House

Local Historic Landmark #85

210 S. Cherry St., Winston-Salem

Construction Date: 1901

Landmark Designation Date: 10/19/92

William Allen Blair was born in 1859 near High Point in Guilford County. Blair, a Quaker, began his formal education at home and attended the New Garden Preparatory School (later Guilford College). He went on to Haverford College in Pennsylvania where he received an A.B. degree in 1881. Blair then went to Harvard University for another year of study to prepare him for a career in education; in 1882, he earned another A.B. degree from Harvard.

The same year, Blair returned to High Point to become the principal of High Point High School. In 1887, Blair came to Winston to be the superintendent of the State Normal School (today's Winston-Salem State University). In addition to his duties at the State Normal School, Blair was Winston's superintendent of schools in 1888, as well as president of the North Carolina Association of City Superintendents, and was the first president of the Winston Y.M.C.A.

In addition to Blair's outstanding educational abilities, he possessed a keen business ability. In 1890, Blair accepted the presidency of the People's National Bank in Winston. He soon thereafter decided to study law and was admitted to the North Carolina Bar in 1894.



William Allen Blair House, c. 1900-1920
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens



In 1895, at the age of 36, Blair married Mary Eleanor Fries, the youngest child of John W. and Agnes de Schweinitz Fries. For the first five years of their marriage, the Blairs lived with Mary's parents at Hylehurst (Local Historic Landmark #64). However, in 1901, the Blairs constructed their own house, immediately north of Hylehurst where the tennis court and gardens for Hylehurst had been located.

The Col. William Allen Blair House was designed by George Barber, an architect from Knoxville, Tennessee, who was primarily known for his mail order houses. It was constructed by Fogle Brothers, a prominent contracting firm that built numerous houses in Winston and Salem.

The Blair House is one of the finest two-story frame Colonial Revival style residences remaining in Winston-Salem. It is one of four surviving high-style, turn-of-the-20th-century residences along S. Cherry Street, formerly the finest residential boulevard in Salem and Winston. The house features Colonial Revival details such as a symmetrical façade that emphasizes the central bay, a Palladian window, and gabled dormers.

Blair received numerous honors and awards during his lifetime in fields ranging from business to education to civic and religious life. Blair received the honorary title of "Colonel" in 1905 from President Theodore Roosevelt after assisting him on his inaugural committee. During his lifetime, Blair was a director of Chatham Manufacturing

Company and the Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company, and a trustee for Salem Academy and College.

In 1948, Blair died at his home on S. Cherry Street. His widow, Mary Fries Blair, continued to live in the house until her death in 1966. Their son, John Fries Blair, lived in his childhood home until 1983, when he moved into Hylehurst with his sister, Margaret Blair McCuiston. John Fries Blair's life and career rivaled that of his father in variety and contributions to the community. The younger Blair established his own printing company in 1954. John F. Blair, Publisher, continued until recent years as a thriving publishing house.

Today the John Fries Blair House has been sensitively rehabilitated into office space.



Colonel William Allen Blair House at 210 South Cherry Street, 1905
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library
Photograph Collection



Colonel William Allen Blair House at 210 South Cherry Street, 1924
Courtesy of Forsyth County Public Library
Photograph Collection



William Allen Blair (1859-1948), seen in this photograph second from the left, c. 1910-1930
Courtesy of Old Salem Museums and Gardens

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

William Allen Blair House National Register Nomination
<http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FY1416.pdf>

<http://www.ci.winston-salem.nc.us/Home/Departments/Planning/HistoricResourcesCommission/PreservationMonth/Articles/HeritageAwardsNominees-AdaptiveReuse>



This information is also available
at the Forsyth County
Historic Resources Commission's web site:
<http://www.ForsythCountyHRC.org>