

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE IVEY-ELLINGTON HOUSE

WHY IS IT CALLED THE IVEY-ELLINGTON HOUSE?

Historic homes are often referred to by the names of their early owners or occupants. In this case, the Ivey-Ellington name is derived from the earliest known owners, Thaddeus and Mary Esther Downes Ivey, who owned the house from 1893 until 1898, and J. Harrison Ellington, who was its owner from 1918 until 1946. It is sometimes referred to as the Ivey-Ellington-Waddell house, honoring the ownership by H. H. Waddell and his wife, from 1946 until 1972.

WHEN WAS THE IVEY-ELLINGTON BUILT?

It is believed that the Ivey-Ellington was built in the early 1870s by Alonzo Crocker, at a cost of about \$300.⁵ The National Register Registration Form pegs the likely construction year as 1874.¹

WHO WERE THE EARLY RESIDENTS?

Little is known about who might have lived in the Ivey-Ellington in its earliest years. Thaddeus Ivey, his wife Mary Esther Downes Ivey, and their family are the first known residents of the house and took ownership in 1893.¹

Thaddeus Ivey was working for the railroad in Georgia, in 1882, when he met Miss Mary Esther Downes, who was teaching at his father's school; they married several months later. The couple and their children moved first to Wake Forest around 1889, where Thaddeus attended school, and then to Raleigh around 1891, before settling in Cary shortly thereafter. They lived in the Ivey-Ellington until 1898. During this time, Thaddeus worked as an assistant to the State Treasurer in Raleigh, taking the train into the city on Monday mornings and returning on Saturday evenings.¹

WHO OWNED THE IVEY-ELLINGTON?

1893 – 1898	Thaddeus and Mary Esther Downes Ivey ¹
1898 – 1918	C. R. Scott ¹
1918	Joseph A. Smith ¹
1918 – 1946	J. Harrison Ellington ¹
1946 – 1972	H. H. Waddell and Nannie W. Waddell ¹ H. H. Waddell was appointed as Cary's first Fire Chief in 1923 and served as Cary's Mayor, 1929 – 1933 ¹
1972 – 1984	Eva Waddell Sugg and Melba Waddell Collins, daughters of H. H. Waddell ¹
1984 – 1990s	Eva Waddell Sugg and Jefferson Sugg, her husband ¹ Jefferson Sugg, one of the first land developers in Cary, was a veteran of WWII, serving on a LCI 410 as a First Class Boatman's Mate; he participated in the Invasion of Normandy. ⁴
2010 - 2011	Jefferson Sugg Revocable Trust (after his death)
2011 – Present	Town of Cary

WHAT ROLE DID THE PROPERTY PLAY IN DAILY LIFE IN CARY?

Most documents state as rumor that the front yard of the Ivey-Ellington served as a rest stop for cattle drives on the way from Chatham County to Raleigh. However, in an oral history interview in 1985², Esther Ivey, daughter of Thaddeus Ivey, shared her recollection:

Chatham Street and Academy Streets were still dirt roads. There was a cattle drive down Chatham Street, passing through Cary. And there was a little dwarf always helping to drive the cattle. They parked out there in front of our house on Chatham Street. They would bring their cattle in to water at our well. From Chatham County, they gathered up all the cattle that they wanted to sell at the Market in Raleigh. They would spend one night parked on Chatham Street. Sometimes they would drive turkeys along with the cattle and the turkeys would take to the trees.

IS THE STRUCTURE WE SEE TODAY THE SAME AS THE ONE ORIGINALLY BUILT?

The Gothic style cottage remains in much of its original form, except for a room over the entrance that was destroyed by Hurricane Hazel in 1954. Jefferson Sugg restored the house for use as a commercial rental space, adding a small room and modern bathroom.¹ The original porch, also destroyed in the hurricane, was reconstructed in 2000 by Mr. Sugg. According to his recollection, the new porch was only slightly smaller than the original. Its railing would not have been found on the original porch, but was added to conform to modern building codes.¹

WHERE CAN I READ THE ENTIRE NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATION FOR THE IVEY-ELLINGTON?

The nomination of a property for recognition on the National Register of Historic Places involves a great deal of research to provide a detailed description of the property and its place in history. To learn more about the historic context of the Ivey-Ellington, as well as details of the house's interior and other fascinating facts, read the National Register Registration Form for the Ivey-Ellington House here:

<https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WA0892.pdf>

Sources:

¹National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the Ivey-Ellington House, <https://files.nc.gov/ncdcr/nr/WA0892.pdf>

²Oral history interview with Esther Ivey, 2/21/85, FOPW Oral History Project, https://docs.google.com/document/d/0B44fyBEvfs_LQzBHQTBYmpqbW8/edit

³"Ivey-Ellington Roof Undergoes Stabilization, Re-Painting to Original Colors," CaryCitizen, 10/25/18, <https://archive.carycitizen.com/2018/10/25/ivey-ellington-roof-undergoes-stabilization-re-painting-to-original-colors/>

⁴Obituary of Jefferson Lloyd Sugg, August 11, 1924 – August 8, 2010, <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/cary-nc/jefferson-sugg-4341346>

⁵"If These Walls Could Talk," Cary Magazine, 9/11/16, <https://www.carymagazine.com/features/if-these-walls-could-talk/>