State of North Carolina  
Division of Archives and History

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY FORM FOR  
Tredell County

X MULTIPLE RESOURCE  OR  THEMATIC NOMINATION

1 | NAME  
HISTORIC  
Col. Silas Alexander Sharpe House  
AND/OR COMMON

2 | LOCATION  
STREET & NUMBER  
402 S. Center Street  
CITY, TOWN Statesville

3 | CLASSIFICATION  
CATEGORY DISTRICT  
_ x BUILDING(S)  
_ STRUCTURE  
_ SITE  
_ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP PUBLIC  
PRIVATE  
_ BOTH

STATUS  
_ OCCUPIED  
_ UNOCCUPIED  
_ WORK IN PROGRESS  
ACCESSIBLE  
_ YES RESTRICTED  
_ YES UNRESTRICTED  
_ NO

PRESENT USE  
_ AGRICULTURE  
_ COMMERCIAL  
_ PARK  
_ EDUCATIONAL  
_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
_ ENTERTAINMENT  
_ RELIGIOUS  
_ GOVERNMENT  
_ SCIENTIFIC  
_ INDUSTRIAL  
_ TRANSPORTATION  
_ MILITARY  
_ OTHER

4 | OWNER OF PROPERTY  
NAME Mr. and Mrs. John H. Gray, Jr.

STREET & NUMBER  
402 S. Center Street  
CITY, TOWN Statesville

5 | LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN  
STATE North Carolina 23677

6 | FORM PREPARED BY  
NAME / TITLE  
Laura A. W. Phillips (Winston-Salem)

ORGANIZATION  
Consultant for

STREET & NUMBER  
Survey and Planning Branch

CITY OR TOWN  
Archives and History  
STATE North Carolina

DATE  
February 4, 1980

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STATE North Carolina
The Col. Silas Alexander Sharpe House, located at the southwest corner of S. Center and Sharpe streets near the commercial core of Statesville, is for its region an unusually sophisticated example of the mid-nineteenth century Classical Revival style. Begun around 1860, it was not completed until after the Civil War.

The two-story frame, three-bay wide house boasts an elegant two-story portico with many interesting features. Unusual slender clustered columns rise full-height from floor to roofline. The second-story balcony with turned balustrade is bolted by cast-iron bracket to the columns for support. The simplified entablature and unusually wide roof overhang of the portico is repeated on the main body of the house. The boldly designed main entrance features a double-leaf door with three raised panels per leaf, sidelights and transom, all of which is enframed by clustered, or reeded, pilasters supporting a broad architrave. The balcony entrance is nearly identical to the main entrance, but lacks the transom. Glazed French doors (replacements of original windows) with bold crossetted and peaked surrounds flank the center bay entrances of both stories. Unlike the weatherboarded main body of the house, the wall und the porch is covered with flush sheathing, which further accentuates its decorative detailing. The corners of the portico at both levels are accented by clustered, or reeded, pilasters which match those of the main and balcony entrances.

Other exterior features of note include flat-paneled corner pilasters, four exterior single-shoulder brick chimneys, a brick pier foundation, 6/6 sash windows with louvered shutters, a rear entrance with sidelights and transom, and a very low hipped roof. The left rear of the house has several small additions.

The interior of the Sharpe House consists of a center hall plan with two rooms on either side. Around 1937 the current owners, under the supervision of architect J. Don Jordan, greatly remodelled the interior in the Adamesque Revival style. However, original interior fabric which remains intact includes a downstairs mantel with reeded colonettes and slightly arched frieze (reminiscent of the portico detailing), highly molded baseboards and cornices, and second-story doors with three flat panels.

The heavily shaded corner lot has been somewhat reduced through the years from its original size.
The Col. Silas Alexander Sharpe House, built during the 1860s, is one of the oldest houses remaining in Statesville and serves as a highly sophisticated example of the Classical Revival style. Col. Sharpe, longtime owner of the house, was a prominent industrialist and political leader in Statesville throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.

B. The Sharpe House is associated with the productive life of Col. Silas Alexander Sharpe, who played a significant role in the industrial and political life of Statesville during the second half of the nineteenth century. Sharpe, colonel of the Home Guard during the Civil War, served as frequent mayor of Statesville during the post Civil War years, built a tobacco warehouse in 1872, and for half a century operated a tannery which stood near his home.

C. The Sharpe House embodies characteristics typical of the popular mid-nineteenth century Classical Revival style, while at the same time its special design features—centered around its two-story portico with clustered columns, reeded pilasters, monumental doorways and full-length, crosseted window surrounds—make it one of the most highly sophisticated and imaginative houses built in Iredell County during that period. Although the interior has been largely remodelled, the quality of the exterior design is such that would warrant the inclusion of this house in the National Register.
Silas Alexander Sharpe (5 March 1830-8 December 1903) was born on his father's plantation north of Statesville. As a youth he went to Iredell County, South Carolina, where he learned the tanning trade. Soon after his return to Iredell County (about 1853) and with the backing of his uncle, Quincy Sharpe, he purchased a tanyard south of the commercial area of Statesville. This purchase was made from Sarah Ramsour, whose deceased husband, Eli Ramsour, along with H. Mohran, had operated a tannery on the site from at least the 1830s. Local tradition indicates that by the outbreak of the Civil War Sharpe had commenced construction on his imposing Greek Revival house near the tanyard, at the southwest corner of South Center and Sharpe streets. However, even if begun this early, it does not appear that the structure was completed and occupied until after the close of the war. Sharpe's first two children were born at his wife's (Sarah Jane McKee) homeplace in 1856 and 1864, while his remaining two children (1866 and 1868) were born at the new house. During the conflict Sharpe served as lieutenant colonel of the 5th Regiment, North Carolina Home Guard, and was responsible for arresting deserters and reluctant conscripts.

Until after 1900 Sharpe continued to operate his tannery where he also manufactured leather into harness and saddle goods. Not content with this single enterprise, however, Sharpe became active in another area of Statesville industry, building a tobacco warehouse which he called the "Farmer's Warehouse" in 1872.

Sharpe, who served as Statesville's first mayor in the 1870s, began his political career as a Democrat, later became an independent, and still later joined the Republican party. In addition to serving several terms as mayor, he was also postmaster on occasion.

Colonel Sharpe died intestate, and upon the death of his widow in 1923 the estate was divided among the children. The homesite at 402 South Center Street became the property of John McKee Sharpe, the eldest son. In 1924 John M. Sharpe and wife, Carrie, entered into a deed of trust with the Virginia Trust Company. Consequently, the house and lot was sold by default to the Investors Security Corporation in 1936. The following year the property was purchased by Elizabeth Natress Gray.

Elizabeth Gray and her husband, John H. Gray, Jr., presently occupy the house. When the Grays purchased the house they remodeled most of the interior in the Adamesque Revival style, but the exterior has remained intact and well preserved through the years. Mr. Gray, a prominent Statesville businessman, was for many years associated with Gray's Hotel and Cafe (Statesville Business District M.R.N.).

Major Bibliographical References


2. Ibid.

Geographical Data

All of Tract 1, Block A, Map 7A-5, Statesville Township, consisting of a four-sided city lot measuring 100' x 180'.

The property being nominated includes the house and the city lot on which it stands.
Footnotes (Cont'd)

3 Homer M. Keever, Iredell Piedmont County (Statesville: Iredell County Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 159–160, 162. Hereinafter cited as Keever, Iredell County.

4 Virginia Frazer Evans, compiler, Iredell County Landmarks (Statesville: Iredell County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 1976), 40.


6 Walter McKenzie Clark, editor, Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861–65 (Goldsboro: State of North Carolina, 1901), IV, 650; Keever, Iredell County, 235.

7 Keever, Iredell County, 263; Sanborn Insurance Maps (Statesville, N. C.), 1885, 1890, 1895, 1900, and 1905.

8 Keever, Iredell County, 260.

9 Ibid., 308; Knox Mss.

10 Iredell County Deed Book 74, p. 334.

11 Iredell County Deed Book 119, p. 356.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 127, p. 341.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bibliography (Cont'd)


