



Louisville Historical Museum
December 2007

**The Rhoades/Rockley House
1024 Grant Avenue**

Louisville Holiday Home Tour 2007

This home has the distinction of being one of the twelve structures in Louisville that are on the National Register of Historic Places. When it was selected for the National Register in 1986, significant considerations in its favor were that it was a characteristic miner's house, it had been little altered since it was built in or around 1906, and it still had historical associated outbuildings. Its style is considered to be Queen Anne Vernacular. As you walk through the house, notice that the front windows still have their original stained glass in the upper portion.

The three outbuildings (cottage, outhouse, and garage) are also part of the tour. The cottage was used over the years for renting out to boarders and to house visiting grandchildren in the summers. The outhouse building is believed to have been used for keeping chickens after it was no longer used as an outhouse. A yearly sequence of license plates from the 1930s to the 1960s can be seen where they were nailed to the ceiling of the garage.

Tomeo Family

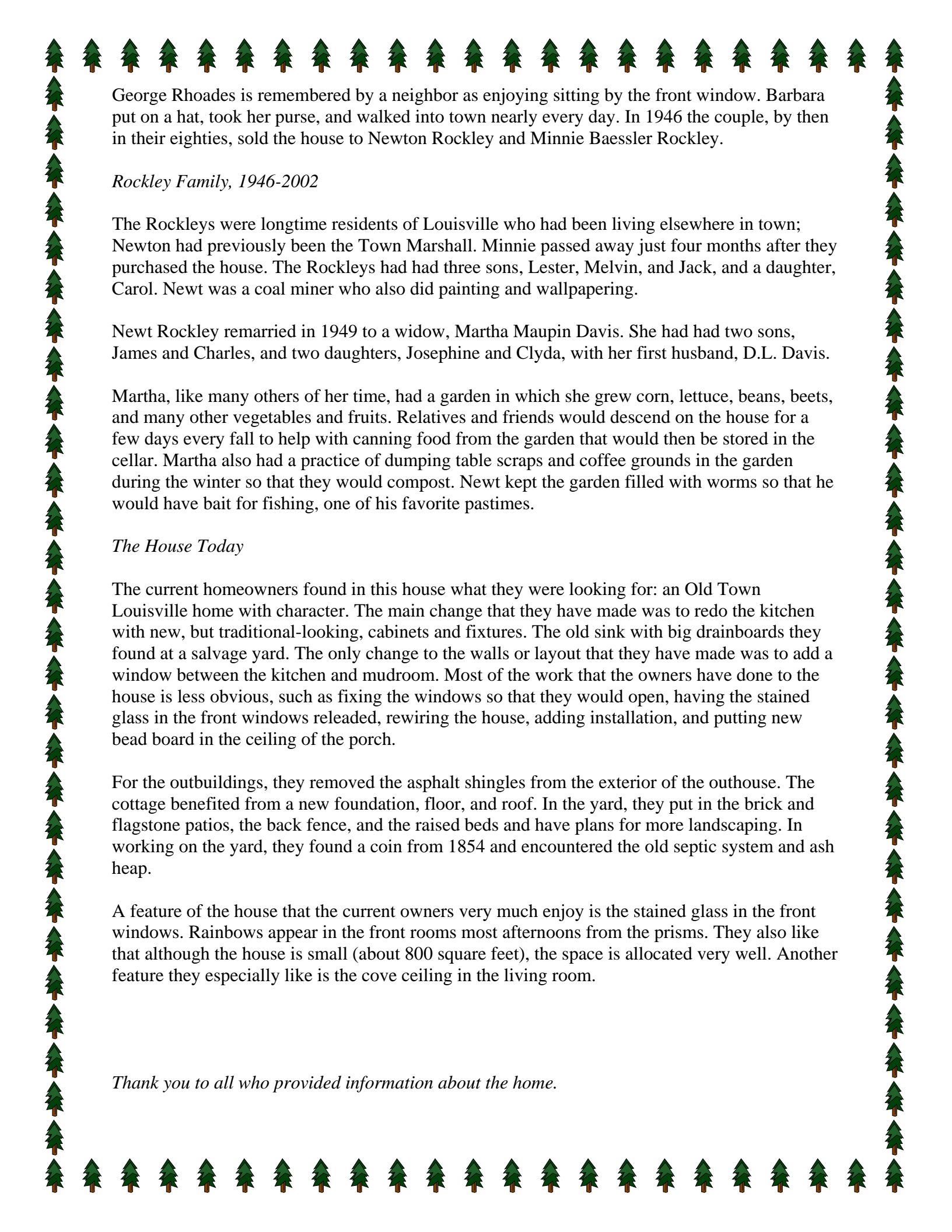
Following the ownership of these two lots by a few others beginning in 1904, Mary Tomeo purchased the property in 1908. Records indicate that the house then became the residence for the Tomeo family. Mary and Nick Tomeo, their two young children, and a boarder, Emilio Staffieri, appear to have all been living on this property in 1910, according to census records. Mary Tomeo was a dressmaker who worked out of the home.

Research shows that Mary and Nick Tomeo also had a saloon on Front Street. Both the saloon and the house were put up as collateral for a loan from the Industrial Building & Loan Association. There are indications that they defaulted on the loan, perhaps due the advent of Prohibition in Colorado in 1916 which came as a financial blow to Louisville saloon owners. By 1919, both the house and the saloon were the property of the Industrial Building & Loan Association.

Rhoades Family, 1919-1946

George and Barbara Rhoades purchased this home in 1919. By the next year, they were living here with one of their sons and two grandchildren, a total of five people.

At the time of the 1930 census, the property was valued at \$1000. George and Barbara Rhoades' granddaughter, Nellie was still living with them; she was a teacher in the Louisville Public Schools. Ellen West, a widow originally from England, boarded with the family. She may have lived in the cottage behind the house.



George Rhoades is remembered by a neighbor as enjoying sitting by the front window. Barbara put on a hat, took her purse, and walked into town nearly every day. In 1946 the couple, by then in their eighties, sold the house to Newton Rockley and Minnie Baessler Rockley.

Rockley Family, 1946-2002

The Rockleys were longtime residents of Louisville who had been living elsewhere in town; Newton had previously been the Town Marshall. Minnie passed away just four months after they purchased the house. The Rockleys had had three sons, Lester, Melvin, and Jack, and a daughter, Carol. Newt was a coal miner who also did painting and wallpapering.

Newt Rockley remarried in 1949 to a widow, Martha Maupin Davis. She had had two sons, James and Charles, and two daughters, Josephine and Clyda, with her first husband, D.L. Davis.

Martha, like many others of her time, had a garden in which she grew corn, lettuce, beans, beets, and many other vegetables and fruits. Relatives and friends would descend on the house for a few days every fall to help with canning food from the garden that would then be stored in the cellar. Martha also had a practice of dumping table scraps and coffee grounds in the garden during the winter so that they would compost. Newt kept the garden filled with worms so that he would have bait for fishing, one of his favorite pastimes.

The House Today

The current homeowners found in this house what they were looking for: an Old Town Louisville home with character. The main change that they have made was to redo the kitchen with new, but traditional-looking, cabinets and fixtures. The old sink with big drainboards they found at a salvage yard. The only change to the walls or layout that they have made was to add a window between the kitchen and mudroom. Most of the work that the owners have done to the house is less obvious, such as fixing the windows so that they would open, having the stained glass in the front windows releaded, rewiring the house, adding installation, and putting new bead board in the ceiling of the porch.

For the outbuildings, they removed the asphalt shingles from the exterior of the outhouse. The cottage benefited from a new foundation, floor, and roof. In the yard, they put in the brick and flagstone patios, the back fence, and the raised beds and have plans for more landscaping. In working on the yard, they found a coin from 1854 and encountered the old septic system and ash heap.

A feature of the house that the current owners very much enjoy is the stained glass in the front windows. Rainbows appear in the front rooms most afternoons from the prisms. They also like that although the house is small (about 800 square feet), the space is allocated very well. Another feature they especially like is the cove ceiling in the living room.

Thank you to all who provided information about the home.

