

1638 FOURTH AVENUE (HOUSE)
Columbus
Muscogee County
Georgia

HABS No. GA-2343

HABS
GA
108-COLM,
40-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
SOUTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
100 Alabama St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30303

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

1638 Fourth Avenue (House)

HABS No. GA-2244

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Location:

1638 Fourth Avenue is located on the east side of Fourth Avenue immediately north of the Central of Georgia Railroad in Columbus in Muscogee County, Georgia.

Significance:

1638 Fourth Avenue is a c. 1910 Shotgun type house. This residential building is significant for its architecture as a representative example of the Shotgun house type.

Description:

1638 Fourth Avenue is an early-twentieth century Shotgun type house. It is of frame construction with clapboard siding, and rests on a concrete block pier foundation. It also possesses a front-gabled roof with gable returns and an integral full-width entry porch supported by square posts.

History:

1638 Fourth Avenue was constructed c. 1910, and originally was a part of an early-twentieth century residential area known as North Commons. It is believed that the original owner of 1638 Fourth Avenue was Mr. C.V. Phipps, who acquired the property on which two residences were to be constructed in 1909. The property included a lot in North Commons that measured 48.11" by 147.10". According to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of the area, the two residences were constructed sometime between 1910 and 1929. In 1933, Mr. Phipps' heirs sold both residences and the associated lot to Ms. Eva Moore Palmer. Ms. Palmer retained ownership of this property until her death in 1956. Upon her death, the property was sold to Mr. Raymond Wright, who in turn, sold it to Ms. Annie Jones Johnson and Elizabeth Johnson in 1961. The Johnson Family continues to retain ownership of both residences and the associated lot.

North Commons was located north of the downtown area in Columbus, and originally was comprised of several blocks of small single-family frame residences. Given the proximity to the Central of Georgia Railroad, a few industrial establishments also historically were a part of the North Commons area. However, only one of these businesses, P.C. Saul's Ice Company, predated the construction of 1638 Fourth Avenue, and there is no evidence that this business contributed to or was the impetus for the development of the residential area in which 1638 Fourth Avenue was constructed.

A review of the available city directories of Columbus, Georgia, from 1898 through 1937 demonstrate that the North Commons area was historically a predominantly African-American residential neighborhood. The 1907 and 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Columbus, Georgia also show the presence of a "Negro" church, known as the Metropolitan Baptist Church, located on Third Avenue between Sixteenth and Seventeenth Streets.

While the style and pattern of housing in the North Commons area resembles that typically associated with mill development, the Sanborn Maps did not show the presence of any mills or other large industrial establishments near this neighborhood that predated the residential development. Furthermore, a sampling of occupations of some of the residents of North Commons, as listed in the city directories from 1898 through the early twentieth century, show that these residents had a variety of occupations, which included cooks, gardeners and laborers. Since the North Commons neighborhood was sited in close proximity to some of the city's larger homes, it is postulated that many of the residents of North Commons worked for their wealthier neighbors.

Today much of the area historically known as North Commons is characterized by late-twentieth century commercial development and vacant lots. 1638 Fourth Avenue is one of the few remaining single family vernacular houses that represent the original pattern of residential development in this area.

Sources:

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Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Georgia, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Map Company), 1907, page 38.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Columbus, Georgia, (Pelham, New York: Sanborn Map Company), Volume 1, 1929, pages 70-71.

Columbus, Georgia City Directory, 1898-9, (Charleston, South Carolina: William H. Walsh Directory Company), p. 87.

Columbus, Georgia City Directory, 1902, (Charleston, South Carolina: William H. Walsh Directory Company), p. 128 and 257.

Polk's Columbus (Muscogee County, Georgia) City Directory, 1937, (Birmingham, Alabama: R.L. Polk and Company), p. 118, 502 and 605.

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