

HISTORIC RESOURCES OF GREENSBORO, GREENE COUNTY, GEORGIA

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY #4

I. IDENTIFICATION

NAME OF PROPERTY: **King-Knowles-Gheesling House**
LOCATION: North Street
CITY: Greensboro
COUNTY: Greene (code 133)
STATE: Georgia (code 013)
ZIP CODE: 30642
OWNER: Mr. and Mrs. Harold Glass
OWNER ADDRESS: 101 N. Main St., Greensboro, Georgia 30642
CLASSIFICATION: Building
CURRENT USE: Residential
ACREAGE: 3 acres approximately
U.S.G.S. QUADRANGLE: Greensboro, Ga.
U.T.M. REFERENCE: Z17 E297420 N3717340
V.B.D. OR TAX MAP NUMBER: G9-1

II. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Two-story, wood-frame, plain-style house with basement, two one-story rear wings, Victorian-inspired front porch; basement contains three cellars with a fireplace and hand-hewn beams in ceiling; kitchen at rear features beaded siding; kitchen and basement area predate other sections of residence; two-story front section has hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles, end chimney, 1/1 windows with shutters, corner pilasters, gabled dormer with decorative attic vent, and side bay window; entrance door has rectangular transom with sidelights; one-story wrap-around porch with turned posts and lattice insets at base; second-floor balcony; brick foundation; interior features plaster walls (some sheetrock added), original wood floors covered in carpet, and plaster ceiling with tongue-and-groove paneling in ceiling of entrance hall. House is situated on three-acre tract; house sited at southeast corner of property on highest point at corner of Main and North Streets; property slopes in three directions from house and is bounded by North Street to the south, Main Street to the east, and the railroad to the west and north, property contains historic pecan grove; good condition.

PHOTOGRAPH NUMBERS: 102-103

III. HISTORY

ORIGINAL OWNER: Yelverton P. King
ORIGINAL USE: Residential
ARCHITECT/BUILDER: unknown
HISTORIC ACREAGE: same
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION: ca. 1823

DATE(S) OF MAJOR ALTERATIONS: late 19th-early 20th century

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE (from origins to present):

This structure was built in the early 19th century as the residence of Yelverton P. King (b.1793--d.1868). According to local tradition, the structure evolved from a one-room log cabin, now incorporated into the rear portion of the house, which may have been constructed as early as 1823 when King bought the land. Photographic evidence shows the house in another phase of its early development as a one-and-one-half story Greek Revival-style cottage. Heavy hand-hewn timbers in portions of the basement of the house confirm this. Judge King was a lawyer, legislator, and mayor of Greensboro from 1856 to 1863. He was also active in national politics and was appointed the Charge d'affaires of Bogota under President Fillmore. He entertained Major General Andrew Jackson during his visit to Greensboro in 1820--but apparently not in this house--and corresponded with Jackson following that visit. King died in 1868 at the age of 75 years, and the house and his other holdings, described in his will as "small," were left to his wife, Eliza F. King. In 1869, the property including the house was sold to Rev. Joshua Knowles (b.1811-d.1887), the second pastor of the Episcopal Church from 1868 to 1887 and the editor of the local paper, The Georgia Home Journal, from 1873 to 1886. In his will which gave his wife Sara a life interest in their home, the property is described as "the Judge King place, bounded on the north by the Georgia Railroad, the east by the Episcopal church, south by Josiah Davis place, and west by the Georgia Railroad depot, containing three acres more or less." Rev. Knowles and his wife are buried in the yard of the Episcopal Church, located across the street from the residence. Dr. Joshua Gheesling (b.1856-d.1916) bought the house and property in 1896. Dr. Gheesling was a medical doctor who had offices in the town center. He was one of three doctors in Greensboro at the turn of the century, according to the 1898-1899 Gazetteer. He and his wife were enthusiastic gardeners and vied with each other to grow the largest, most beautiful chrysanthemums in the terraced gardens at the rear of the house. Dr. Gheesling was also a vegetable gardner who experimented with cross pollination of various fruits. It appears that Gheesling was the planter of the pecan grove now located on the property; it became such a prominent local feature that directional instructions in the county history use "Gheesling's pecan grove" as a reference point. The Gheeslings made several changes to the residence including the addition of two upstairs bedrooms at the rear of the structure and the replacement of the front porch. These changes, which Sanborn fire insurance maps document by 1909, changed the structure from its original Greek Revival styling to its present Victorian eclectic design. Gheesling descendants have noted that in their lifetime one of the cellar spaces was used as a kitchen. A fireplace still remains in this area. The Gheeslings had three daughters and one son. One daughter, Samuella, remained in the home after her marriage to T. Hamp McGibony. She was deeded the home when the estate was

settled in 1946. The home is presently owned and occupied by a daughter of the McGibonys, Lucretia McGibony Glass, and her husband, Harold Glass.

IV. SIGNIFICANCE

NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA: B, C

AREA(S) OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Social History

SIGNIFICANT DATE(S): ca. 1823-1916

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Architecture. In terms of architecture, the King-Knowles-Gheesling House is significant locally as a major example of an "evolved" historic house retaining features from several periods in Greensboro's history. In this case, the house went through three successive stages or phases before acquiring its current, largely turn-of-the-century appearance. The earliest phase, which likely was a log cabin or small frame house, is represented by surviving portions of the rear or kitchen section of the house. The second phase, Greek Revival in character, is evidenced by the massive brick end chimney and heavy hand-hewn timbers in the house's structural system. The third, Victorian phase is represented largely by the house as it appears today with its full two stories, its wrap-around porch, its side bay window, its Victorian interior woodwork, and its peaked gable centered in the front of the roof. A number of houses in Greensboro were built in this "evolved" manner, although most are located in the city's historic districts and few have been as well documented as this one. Such evolutions allowed houses to be updated and enlarged to suit new family needs, enhanced financial means and status, and more fashionable architectural styles without being entirely replaced. This house, in its current form, stands as an architectural document to this manner of building and rebuilding historic houses in Greensboro. Additionally, it stands as a rather simple but substantial example of late Victorian residential architecture in town, comparing favorably in terms of size and massing with other large houses in town but contrasting in its relatively simple detailing. Complementing the house is its historic landscaped setting with the landmark turn-of-the-century pecan grove remaining to the rear of the house.

Social History. In terms of social history, this house is significant locally for its association with three important community figures who played prominent roles in community life during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The house is first associated with Yelverton P. King, a prominent early 19th-century citizen of Greensboro. King was a local attorney active in local, state, and international politics during the years he

lived in this house, serving as state legislator, mayor from 1856 to 1863, and ambassador to Bogota during President Millard Fillmore's term of office. He also served on the Board of Trustees of the Greensboro Female College. This degree of political and civic activity in a town the size of Greensboro brought an unusual distinction to both the man and his community. No other historic properties are known to be associated with King. Rev. Joshua Knowles, who was the second owner of the house, was the second pastor at the nearby Church of the Redeemer (property #2 in this multiple resource National Register nomination), serving from 1868 until his death in 1887; during his first year of religious service to the community, the historic board-and-batten church was built across the street from his house. Knowles also was editor of the local Georgia Home Journal from 1873 to 1886. In 1872 he served as vice-president of the Greene County Agricultural and Mechanical Society when it held its first fair in nearby Union Point. Dr. Joshua Gheesling, the third owner, was a physician and surgeon and the town's mayor in 1908 when the first city-owned school was built. He also was an enthusiastic amateur gardener who landscaped his house lot, experimented with fruits and flowers, and planted the pecan grove in the rear yard which became a local landmark. Like other doctors in small Georgia towns, Gheesling was a prominent community figure in many of the day-to-day social and political activities which made up the community life at the time.

CONTRIBUTING/NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES:

1 contributing building

VII. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS: Historic Structures Field Survey: Greene County, Georgia (state-level survey)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: SEE Bibliography, Section 9, National Register Nomination Form

FORM PREPARED BY: SEE Form Prepared By, Section 11, National Register Nomination Form

Historic Resources of Greensboro, Greene County, Georgia

KING-KNOWLES-GHEESLING HOUSE

North: ↑
 Scale: 1" = 275' 0' ----- 275'
 Boundary of nominated property: **—————**
 Photograph/direction of view: ➤

