

History of the Sample-McDougald House



The Sample-McDougald House Turns 100!!

The Sample-McDougald House, located at 450 NE 10th Street in Pompano Beach, celebrated its centennial in 2016. The house was built in 1916, and it is today one of a relative handful of structures in Broward County that are 100 years old or older.

The Sample family arrived in South Florida soon after the turn of the century. John M. Sample, the first to settle in the Pompano area, had purchased farming land from the Florida East Coast Railway prior to 1910.

Albert Neal Sample, a onetime architect, followed his younger brother John to the north Broward County area in 1911 from Chester, South Carolina. He was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina on April 16, 1866, the oldest of six children. Neal, the name he was

known by, purchased his brother's land on June 11, 1915, and began constructing his new house soon thereafter.

Sample built a spacious house located on high elevation, over 22 feet above sea level, alongside the Dixie Highway and the Florida East Coast Railway, the area's two major means of transportation. Also known as the Old Sample Estate and Pine Haven, the house is a seventeen room Georgian Colonial structure constructed by Sample supposedly as a replica of a home he previously owned in South Carolina. It is unquestionably one of the most architecturally significant historic homes in the county, and one of the earliest to display a formal architectural style.

The home served as the base for Sample's farming operations that stretched from today's Lighthouse Point out west past what is now Powerline Road. At first, Sample grew pineapples, a popular crop for earlier settlers to the area, but it soon became apparent that winter vegetables, such as string beans, bell peppers, eggplant and squash, among other crops, were more profitable. Sample constructed a road in 1917 to reach his cropland (like most local farmers, Sample's agricultural fields were not contiguous). Today that thoroughfare still bears his name: Sample Road.

On December 27, 1940, Albert Neal Sample and his wife Maggie deeded the property to their daughter Lois S. Barksdale of Greenville, South Carolina. Sample died less than five months later, on April 4, 1941; he was seventy-four years old and well-respected among Broward County's business and political leaders. He was survived by his widow, Maggie Henderson Sample; three sons, Lee M., Hugh H., and Albert, Jr., all of Pompano; as well as his daughter, Lois Barksdale.

Sarah Sellers McDougald and William D. McDougald, Sr. had been living with their children in a two-bedroom home in Deerfield when they learned of the availability of the Sample residence from a friend. Although they purchased the home on August 14, 1943, Mrs. McDougald who was then acting postmistress of Deerfield could not get a release from her job due to a manpower shortage during the war years. They had to postpone the family's move until May 11, 1944.

By the time the McDougald family moved into the home, the Dixie Highway had lost some of its glamour. Mrs. McDougald recalled, "Much to my sorrow there was not much traffic - just a couple cars a day. It was lonely. We often went out on the lawn and waved at engineers and conductors in trains rolling down the Florida East Coast Railway tracks."

William Duncan McDougald, born in Montgomery County, Georgia, had arrived in Deerfield in

1921. In 1929, he married schoolteacher Sarah Sellers. Although his main occupation was farming, he also served as a city commissioner for Deerfield as well as its Chief of Police. He was deputized by the Broward County Sheriff's Department and was elected to several terms as Constable of the north Broward district.

Over time, the McDougalds saw the farmland surrounding their residence transformed into commercial property and encroaching residential development; the roadway once known as the "new" Dixie Highway become the "old" Dixie Highway. A founding member of several North Broward historical societies, Mrs. McDougald feared that because of its location the structure was threatened and its future uncertain. A fifty-year resident of Broward County, she died at age 73 in April 1979.

The McDougald children, William D. Jr., Mary Ellen, Margaret, Donald, Betsy and Dixie, inherited the house, and in keeping with their mother's desire, placed it on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Anxious to see the house preserved for future generations, the McDougalds supported several attempts to preserve it, including moving the house to Deerfield Beach, Tradewinds Park and the municipal golf course in Pompano Beach, but logistical and financial complexities could not be overcome.

In 1999 several community volunteers -- Margaret White, Rebecca Maddox, Marvin Buntrock and Margaret McDougald Shadoin -- incorporated the non-profit Sample-McDougald House Preservation Society. Margaret White had previously contacted Pompano Beach's city manager, C. William Hargett, about municipal help in finding a suitable location to which the historic structure could be relocated. Soon thereafter a parcel of city-owned property on the southwest corner of NE 10th Street and 5th Avenue was leased to the new non-profit.

In November 2000, the McDougald family donated the house to the non-profit. The State of Florida and Broward County awarded grant funds for the project and on May 30, 2001, just minutes after midnight, the house was moved off its original site and over the next seven hours moved south on Dixie Highway and then east on NE 10th Street to its new location. Hundreds of people lined the streets in the middle of the night to view this once-in-a-lifetime sight.

The next phase of the project was the actual restoration of the house's exterior. This included repairing damaged wood siding, restoring masonry features, partial re-roofing, restoring the house's columns and other architectural features, and painting the structure. This was followed by work to restore the house's interior, including new electrical and climate-control systems, refinishing floors, walls, ceilings and woodwork, as well as fixtures. Much of this need work was performed as in-kind donations by local businesses.

In the early morning hours of October 25, 2005, Pompano Beach was struck by Hurricane Wilma, resulting in significant damage to the historic structure: the roof was opened, leading to water damage to walls, ceilings and floors. Wooden awnings were ripped from the house and a number of windows were broken, as was the distinctive leaded-glass fan light above the entry door. Extensive repairs began to "re-restore" the house.

The non-profit organization then embarked on a 1.5-million-dollar site development and landscaping project, featuring native trees and vegetation, with adequate space for special events and social functions. Other aspects of this phase incorporated parking, lighting, walkways and restrooms.

In 2008, during the celebration of Pompano Beach's 100th anniversary of incorporation, the city commission passed a resolution designating the Sample-McDougald House grounds as "Centennial Park". In 2010, the commission approved expanding the grounds by about 35 percent, incorporating a former city tree nursery into Centennial Park.

The Sample-McDougald House at Centennial Park opened to the public in 2011. Since then it has offered narrated tours of the historic house to the public, schools and private groups. The Sample-McDougald House has also developed a number of annual events, including its antique automobile show, the Florida Highwaymen Art Show and Holidays at the Sample-McDougald House, in addition to be the site for public events of other local non-profits such as the Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce, Pompano Proud and the Rotary Club of Pompano Beach among others. The Sample-McDougald House at Centennial Park also hosts a wide variety of private events, including weddings, company picnics, parties and corporate meetings.

One hundred years after its construction, the Sample-McDougald House is an important part of Pompano Beach's social, cultural and civic life. It connects current residents and visitors with our region's fascinating heritage.

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