

High Point was built in the Federal style in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, around 1820 to 1821, perhaps even earlier. The house is said to have been the creation of the master builder and designer, Collin Rogers, a native of New England.

Sometime in the 1840's, cotton became "king" and the house received its central pediment and four fluted columns in the Ionic order with matching pilasters. John Pace Carr (b. 1797) called his house "High Point," not only because it originally sat on a high ridge, but probably because Mr. Carr's home town was High Point, North Carolina.



The interior of the house is built around a central hallway, both upstairs and down, with a large walnut wainscot. The chimney features sunbursts and human faces from Greek Mythology. The flooring is heart of pine in various widths and much of the window glass, hardware, and wood work are original.

Originally, High Point had a separate kitchen, carriage house, barns, smokehouse, privy, and a summer house. There were boxwood plantings, lawns, and a private bridge spanning Dried Indian Creek.

Madison Dewell Cody and his brother, Dr. Jephtha M. Cody married two of John Pace Carr's daughters. Madison Cody married Amanda Carr and later purchased High Point from his father-in-law in 1863. The Cody brothers were second cousins to the famous William Frederick Cody, better known as "Buffalo Bill."

As the years passed, the condition of this once beautiful residence steadily

declined. This Covington landmark was rescued by my wife and me in 1975. We moved the house from Corley's Hill in nearby Covington to its present location in Oxford, the lot previously owned and occupied by Bishop James Osgood Andrew, who called the place "Chestnut Grove." The home that Bishop Andrew built there burned down in 1910.



It's not ancient history, but it was 39 years ago that our house, "High Point," a very old painted lady, came to Oxford. This old house, built in 1821, had survived urban sprawl, fire, and much neglect that causes the destruction of so many of our grand old homes.

My family moved to Oxford from Jonesboro, Georgia just to purchase another such house, "Orna Villa," also known as the "Alexander Means House." My wife, Glynora and our children, Judy, Jamie, and our twin boys, Bill and Bob, thought I was out of my

mind to buy High Point when we already owned Orna Villa, but that is exactly what we did.

For a few years before this event took place, I had discovered High Point quite by accident when I turned onto Conley Street on the west end of Covington. I was struck by the beauty and grace of this old home place juxtaposed against the many abandoned cars, chickens, and children running all over the yard and through the sagging old doors of the old house. I tried to talk other people I knew into buying and restoring it, but they all had the same response, "It was surely very handsome in its day, but no thanks."

One day, a medical doctor came to Oxford looking for a house and before I realized it, he had made an offer to purchase Orna Villa. After a long family discussion, we accepted their offer. Next, we had to find a suitable section of land to buy in Oxford and found one on Watson Street. After a handshake agreement with the owner of the lot, I set out to find the owner of High Point, which turned out to be not such an easy task. After some investigative sleuthing, I learned that the owner was a woman who lived in Sparta, Georgia. Although she had remarried and changed her name, I was able to track her down. It took several attempts to get in touch with her, but at last I was successful and went to see her. She sold me High Point right then and there on her back porch.



I was working in Atlanta at the time, and, as luck would have it, I had previously hired a young man to work in my office whose father and uncle owned a house moving company in Calhoun, Georgia. After they evaluated the house, they told me it would

“be a snap” and we were all anxious to get the adventure (literally) on the road. After making all the necessary arrangements for telephone, utilities, and getting the tenants to move out, the contractor arrived to take off the roof, the porches and the massive, two-story columns. Just when I thought I had everything handled, the city manager of Covington showed up and asked to see our liability insurance policy. We had all the insurance that the state of Georgia required, but the city manager told us we would have to have an additional million dollar liability policy before he would issue a permit to move the house. It took calls to six different insurance companies before I found one that would issue such a policy – the world famous, Lloyds of London. The good news was, that the policy only cost me sixty-five dollars. At last I got a break!



My bad luck wasn't over yet, however. The house mover said that he would have High Point on my lot in two days. In actuality, it took most of seven days. I told the owner of the Watson Street lot that I would meet her at the property to finalize our handshake agreement and she informed me that I would have to contact Emory University in Atlanta because she had just given them the property! I called Emory to see if I could complete the sale with them, and they told me that they would indeed sell me the land – but for triple the price that the original owner had agreed to! I was now the owner of a 210 ton house in pieces, with signed contracts for moving it, and nowhere to move it to. My brother suggested that I have a very large firewood sale, but a friend of mine who was in real estate had a somewhat more useful suggestion; he called me up to tell me that he had a pretty 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ acre wooded lot on Wesley Street in Oxford that was for sale and asked if I would be interested. I was saved! I was familiar with the property and knew that there couldn't be a better place for my new old house.

So the move was back on and it began well enough. It all began on a Wednesday morning and by the time the house was put on the back of a huge semi-truck, moved into the street and had gone two blocks, night was falling. Then the first of a series of

problems began. The movers had to find a place to park the house for the night. Miraculously, they found two homeowners who were willing to let us “park” the house in their front yards. The fun really began the next day when the house had to cross over the railroad tracks, get around several large trees, negotiate onto Highway 278, and travel east to the Covington by-pass.



The truck carrying the huge house got stuck on the railroad tracks between two telephone poles. Then, you guessed it -- we suddenly heard a freight train coming down the tracks, blowing its whistle while the train crew was running at us, frantically waving us to get out of the way. Two of the house moving crewmen were on top of the house trying to free the telephone lines that had gotten caught and when they saw the locomotive coming right at them, their jaws dropped and their faces went ashen. The screech of the train's brakes sent sparks flying from the tracks. The sound was deafening. Everyone held their breath until the train ground to halt -- 8½ feet from the house. A chain saw was brought in, sending the telephone poles crashing to the ground, freeing the house.

What a sorry sight our house had become. No roof, no chimneys, no elegant porches,

no stately columns, windows boarded up with plywood – and one of the former tenants had left an old mop hanging out of the upstairs windows. But we took solace in the fact that we had survived a calamity and soon this once-magnificent house would have its elegance and grace restored at its new home among peaceful woods and gardens in Oxford.

Then we came to the bridge over Interstate 20 on Hazelbrand Road. An engineer from the Department of Transportation (DOT) showed up telling us that we had to check with the DOT office in Atlanta to see if the weight of the house fell within the weight restrictions of the bridge. Then he left. As soon as he was out of sight, the movers “snuck” across the bridge (with a two-ton house) without incident. There were still more telephone lines to move and places to find to park for the night. Every night I would drive back along the planned route and look for our house. One night it was raining hard and when I found where the house was parked, I got out to inspect it. It smelled like a wet dog. It was dreadful.

As the house came down Emory Street, the principal of Palmer Stone Elementary School let all the students out to watch as the truck carrying a two-story, 310 ton house turned west onto Soule Street – with a mop still hanging out of the upstairs window. A bulldozer had already done its work cutting a road and foundation pad – and fortunately, was still on hand to help push the huge truck with a house on its back up the steeply inclined road. It took seven days of inching its way along, but High Point finally came to rest, nestled among the beautiful trees of Oxford, just in time for Thanksgiving, 1975. There is now a genuine antebellum home back in Oxford; a little compensation for so many of the elegant homes that were lost to her over the years to fire.



It's been a long struggle to restore High Point to the grand old lady of the south she was in the 1820s – and we still not quite finished; but then, a mission of love like this is a lifetime adventure.

“High Point” was the name given to the house by previous owners when it was in Covington, back when there were no addresses containing numbers. “Chestnut Grove” was the name of the house that once stood on the Oxford site, but was lost long ago. Chestnut Grove belonged to Bishop James Osgood Andrew and it was here that, in 1844, the great split of the Methodist Church began, which heralded the first signs of secession and the war that was to follow that would change this nation forever. But that's a story for another time

Source: <http://www.oxfordhistoricalsociety.org/a-house-comes-to-town.html>