

Interview with Damian T. Macey: by Haily Hanna

March 14, 1998

HAILY: How long have you lived here?

Mr. Macey: My wife and I bought the house in 1975, we bought in the early part of the year, basically had it worked on and a lot of renovation work done and moved in, in September 1975.

HAILY: That's a long time, has it been passed down from generations of your family?

Mr. Macey: We has to do quite a bit of history to have the house listed on the National Registry of Historic Places, it was built by Robert Dulaney, he started it in 1862, and finished it in 1864, it was quite a long time in construction, and it stayed in the Dulaney family until 1957, almost a hundred years in the same family, and then it went through two or three other owners before we bought it.

HAILY; Can I ask what made you choose this house?

Mr. Macey: Well, I used to walk by here to the old northside school many, many years ago and just always had a love of old houses. I said someday I would really like to own one just like that. We were living in the Chicago area, and we were coming back and forth visiting, and my dad did some part time work in real estate, we had come home on Thanksgiving in 1974. My dad just happened to mention that the old Dulaney home was on the market. The folks who lived here had moved to California, and it was vacant. I said Oh, I'd love to see it, well that was the start of that, and the thought process well we just as well move back to our home town, and now might be a good time to buy the house while it was available.

HAILY: I'm looking around here at the high arches; what kind of architecture is it?

Mr. Macey: It's Italianate style architecture which was very popular in the 1850's through the 1870's. The style of the Italianate, it's characteristics are the large overhangs on the roof, notice the roof extends out quite away around the whole entire building, away from the walls, there is also fancy brackets that hold that roof up. Those brackets are very typical of the Italianate style. The tall very narrow look of the house, plus windows that are side by side in pairs. There is a couple of those on the front of the house the second floor windows there is two of them side by side, and then on north side there are some that are side by side, that is typical of Italianate style. Another thing is the way the arch is over the third floor windows, the curved arches is typical of Italianate. Those tops over the windows on the third floor, and also the double windows on the front are cast iron.

HAILY: Is there anything left of the original house, like the original wallpaper?

Mr. Macey: Unfortunately not, we have tried to take things kind of back in redecorating like the large floral paper in here that has the peacocks on it. In Victorian times the peacock were symbols of hospitality. We have tried to pick things out that were typical of the mid to late 1800's, but really as far as original to the house, wallpaper of course doesn't hold up too well, but certainly the fireplaces. Many of the light fixtures, and things of that nature are of course original and the mirrors over the fireplaces.

HAILY: Has there been anything in the house that had to be restored, like the floors or the ceiling?

Mr. Macey: Well, fortunately the house has always been lived in, and never vacant for long periods of time so it's been kept in pretty good repair. We had to do, of course a complete redecorating and rewiring. The electrical wiring was the original from back in the early 1900's, and it was in terrible condition. So we redid the wiring, you know put in a furnace, put in air conditioning. As far as the renovation work, what we've done is tried to be very sympathetic to the look of the 1800's, so the floors had already been refinished. Fortunately the wood in the living room and the dining room is all quarter sawn oak, and when we started to clean it, it was just absolutely black. When we started to clean it we really found that there had really been only one coat of varnish on it, so we did all the work like that ourselves. The marble fireplaces here, and the one in the living room were carved by a prisoner in the Joliet prison. Mr. Dulaney was very active in politics and served under several governors in Springfield, and for many years was the president and chairman of the state prison system. I don't know what the guy was up the river for, but he was obviously an excellent artist, this is all caran marble.

HAILY: Do you have any fascinating facts about the house, or personal things you find really fascinating about the house?

Mr. Macey: Well always having loved old houses there is a few things that we have run across. On the third floor there is a couple of unusual things. One is obviously there was no running water when the house was built in a town of this size. They had put in a large tank. A large metal-lined tank in a wooden frame, and it was attached to the gutter on the roof, so that as the rainwater accumulated it ran into the tank and there was an overflow to take it back out. At one end of the tank there is gravel and charcoal mixed in sand, so that acts as a filtering system, so there was running water in the house long before there was a city water system. The tank is still there. It's probably one of the few left in this part of the country. Another thing was the wall on the third floor, there is a little place that we never painted around or had never been painted. It's just around it is Will + Edie 1875, written in pencil on the wall and we found that was part of the family so those were a couple of things that were left that we found. Also in one of the bedrooms on the third floor the fireplace had been walled up, and I always thought there was a fireplace there because it was right in the middle of the room and the large chimney stuck out in the room and there was a extra mantle on the third floor, so when my daughter left and went out on her own, we decided to

redecorate the room. I took the plastering off of that wall and sure enough there was the outline of a firebox, so we took it out and brought the mantle down. I chipped the plastering off of that wall and the nails were still in the mantle and set it up there and it is exactly where that had been. Someone had just taken it and stored it and I'm sure glad they did, cause we put it back in there.

HAILY: Well, that's different. I wonder why someone would have?

Mr. Macey: It was just probably immodernizing, and for a period of time there had been a stove there too, because we found an opening in the chimney for a stove pipe. They probably decided there were a lot more efficient ways to heat the house without having fireplaces. And modernized put in stoves and therefore they broke up the fireplaces. Also the doors there had been an addition that was right after the turn of the century and these doors at the end of the room are not original, those have been put in later as a kind of the modernizing and things, but in that large open door between the living room and the solarium or music room there used to be round pillars that went up on each side with a beautiful cap on the top and those are still on the third floor too. They have saved those, and the large pieces of glass like here in the front the leaded glass and top and in the dining room. When the house was built in 1865 you were just simply not able to buy glass that size so most of the windows were what we call six over six, there were six little panes of glass in the top window and six on the bottom. Well now on the second floor the six windows on the top, those pieces of glass are all still there, and you can see a lot of that's original glass because it has kind of a purplish tint. In the modernizing in about 1890 Queen Ann style became more popular than the Italianate. And that was big glass, you wanted big pieces of glass. So about that time they did some modernizing and replaced the windows here with big pieces of bevel glass, and the top is all bevel, it's almost half an inch thick. The leading is in the top when the sun comes through the north window it shines on that wall, and on this wall it breaks up the color all in purple, oranges and all kinds of kaleidoscopic colors.

HAILY: That's probably very beautiful. I was going to ask you if there had been many additions to the house, but I...

Mr. Macey: Although we can't really know exactly when they took place, but most of the houses major changes were made before the 1900's, when it was owned by the original family. At one time there was another wing on the west of the house that was taken off prior to 1900. Why we don't know, apparently there was a downstairs library, another hallway, a couple of servants rooms in the upstairs wing, and the back stairway, and those have been taken out. So part of it may have been just simply modernizing, and as their family moved away, the Dulaney's had several children, so they didn't need the room and decided in their modernizing to reduce the size a little bit. The porch is a little later addition it was put in prior to 1900. We don't know what was in there before, if it was a smaller porch or just a little front porch, but that was kind of a Italianate revival style. It has a little dental molding that is the little pieces of wood all under the roof, and all the way around that

porch, and those are all carried out also in the stairway and in the trim over the wood in the dining room and the living room.

HAILY: When you moved in did you find any left over momentos, like pictures, anything left by the old families or were they all gone?

Mr. Macey: Unfortunately, it has gone through several owners, and even when we did the work for the National Register application that we had to, we were only able to find one picture that we tracked down. A family descendant that had a postcard from 1907, and again that helped document our case that the front of the house is identical now as it was then. The only difference was the porch on the second floor, in the past went up through the roof, and there was a beautiful balustrade or railing around the top of the roof with the rails all under that.

HAILY: So essentially the house looks the same from the outside as it did when it was first built, or from the time we know?

Mr. Macey: Exactly, and that is what we had to really prove in our application to the Historic Register was when these changes took place, and did it represent the style. Certainly the Italianate style was very popular at that time. We were able to carry through, and show what had taken place over those years.

HAILY: Was it difficult for you to get your home on the National Register?

Mr. Macey: It took a lot of legwork, and a lot of research. We started in the summer of 1995, and took a lot of pictures, and then in 1996 we finally decided to go ahead and do that. We just sent some of those pictures that I had taken too (I got the name of the state historian that works on the National Register in Springfield,) and sent that to them, and they came back very promptly, and said we appreciate your pictures, you have a very interesting house. However, we were in Marshall in 1970, and took pictures of a lot of houses, well we took pictures of all the old houses, and there are several Italianate houses in Marshall. Would you please, they sent us xerox copies of the pictures they had taken in the 70's. What we had to do was to go around, and take pictures from the same view of those houses today. Or at that time showing that from 1970, either they were still there or that they had been modified or changed, and compare that then to our house. To really show is our house unique, is it one of a kind, is it something different, or just like everyone else in town? I spent a lot of time documenting the other houses then sent that information back. They evaluated it, and came back again, and said we think your house has some merit here is the paperwork to complete, send that to us. We will evaluate it, so we had to have it in by the end of the year 1996, so I spent many many months, and it's along time, a lot of stuff that you have to do. You have to explain the house from an architectural standpoint, and describe each side of the house in architectural terms, so that the architect could get a visual image of the house before he ever saw it. We had to describe all the features and then you have to give a history of the house, and we did a walking tour

through it explaining each room, again verbally, so the bottom line was we had many, many pages. The whole application was thirty - four pages of typed commentary about the house. You have to have a floor plan, not to scale, but a floor plan of the house. Sizes of each room, so that we did, and then you have to give a history of the family that had owned the house. A documented history of the ownership of the house, things from any abstract or history of the first land. You had to produce pictures of the house in black and white, not color but black and white. They would like to have 8 by 10's, but we sent 5 by 7's, and that was acceptable. That included 54 pictures that we took of the outside, different angles, explaining the architectural features, and then that walking tour showing them what the inside of the house looked like. Then you have to give a brief history of Marshall, and explain then the other houses that they had taken, the other Italianate houses and all the old ones. We had eight other Italianate houses that I provided pictures for, and then a brief paragraph about each one of them, compared it to our house. After all that went in they reviewed it in their committee in the spring of 1997, in January, and then in February we got a certified letter saying they had approved it in Springfield for listing, and would we please come up in March. This would be in the March of last year, and make the presentation to the committee. We also had to send the slide presentation in color, so we had about sixty some slides in color. My wife and I went up in March of 1997, to appear before the state historical committee to make a presentation. They had the slides there already in the slide projector, and that's basically what we were doing then, was taking the eleven person committee in a walking tour around the outside of the house and explaining it and a walking tour through the inside. It was almost as if they were here, but by picture, to tell them about the house, so from that then there were four other buildings in Illinois that they were reviewing at that time. Before we left Springfield then we were advised that they had approved the committee for National Register listing in Illinois, but they don't make the final decision. Once out of the state committee, it then goes on to Washington D.C., and they review it out there. In May of 1997, it was approved May 12, of last year.

HAILY: It looks like all the hard work paid.

Mr. Macey: It took a lot of effort and we are glad we did. It's not something you take lightly, and I guess many people get started on it and simply don't finish, because of the efforts and time needed.

HAILY: The time that it took, I mean it must be quite an honor. The payoff of actually going and doing all that work and then you finally achieve it.

Mr. Macey: We have a beautiful certificate stating that it was listed and you may have noticed on the front door there is the brass plaque. We had to purchase that, but we wanted to put a plaque on the house.

HAILY: So this house is most recently adopted on the the National Register, I guess I was under the impression that it has been for some time.

Mr. Macey: No, just about a year.

HAILY: How many rooms does the house have?

Mr. Macey: Thirteen rooms.

HAILY: Thirteen rooms.

Mr. Macey: Eight fireplaces.

HAILY: Thirteen rooms including bathrooms?

Mr. Macey: No that wouldn't be including the bathrooms. There is two and a half baths. There is a full third floor. I guess a couple unique things, if you notice the walls in between the rooms they're all solid brick. The entire house is all brick. There is no wood in the walls at all. All the way through the third floor, so that wall right there is brick all the way through, almost up to the roof. That's why I think it took so long to build it.

HAILY: Well it is very durable then.

Mr. Macey: The partitions there is a couple partitions that are wood, but basically even inside is all brick, and the plastering is right on the brick. Most homes you get a layer which is a wood leaf that the plastering is put in but not here that's right on the brick.

HAILY: It seems like you have done a lot of research into your house. I'm sure that also has to do with actually applying to be on the National Register.

Mr. Macey: We have always enjoyed old houses and I have always taken interest in the history of houses, but I guess I got into it obviously for the National Register application.

HAILY: Well I think that's about all I can ask, except I would like to know if you would take me through the house to look around?

Mr. Macey: Sure can.