

Statement of Significance

The Conkling/Riley House

1120 Riverside Drive

Architectural Significance

1120 Riverside is a gable-sided Arts & Crafts Bungalow, or Craftsman house. The features that identify it as a Craftsman are:

- ◆ Exposed knee braces (brackets) under gables
- ◆ Wide, unenclosed, overhanging eaves
- ◆ Low-pitch roof lines with exposed rafters
- ◆ Dormers, originally with a "shed" roof
- ◆ Double columns to support the porch roof
- ◆ A front porch beneath an extension of the main roof.
- ◆ Concrete steps with low side walls.

The house had three columns in the corners, a low shed dormer with three windows, offset front door flanked by two windows, a bump out (bay) on the dining room with four windows and small side windows, and also the three windows in the living room on the north side. The formerly open porch is now enclosed with windows all around.

The Craftsman movement, (named after the popular magazine, *The Craftsman*, founded in 1901 by furniture maker Gustav Stickley) reacted against the Victorian 'over-decorated' aesthetic.

The Craftsman style's arrival coincided with the decline of the Victorian era. The American Arts and Crafts Movement encouraged originality, simplicity of form, local natural materials and handicraft, but distinguished itself, particularly in the Craftsman Bungalow style, with a goal of ennobling modest homes for a rapidly expanding American middle class.

That precisely describes 1120 Riverside, a classic Craftsman bungalow.

Two of the manufacturing companies that produced kits and sold them from catalogues for construction on sites during the turn of the 19th century were the Sears Company and The Aladdin Company. However, 1120 Riverside most closely matches a Gordon Van Tine Bungalow, number 2573. *Florida Today* newspaper mentioned 1120 Riverside in an article last year regarding Craftsman houses in Brevard County.

Distinctive features of this house include:

- antique (wavy) window glass in the first floor windows,
- original beadboard on the porch ceiling and elsewhere in the house,
- original double hung windows,
- Dade County Pine floors restored to their original luster,
- original knob and tube wiring (some non-energized remnants are still visible),
- original light switches,
- original brass fittings on windows and doors,
- original glass doorknobs.

Previous owners removed the original fireplace and chimney and constructed an addition on the west end. The three-car garage appears on the 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The property also includes a small dollhouse-like building, now used as a laundry.

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Local Historical Significance

According to records in the Brevard County Deed books, Homer Conkling Sr. purchased two adjacent lots in Gleasons Addition in 1911 and 1913 for about \$700 each from Sarah Gleason. In 1914, Homer and his wife built the house; Homer was President of Indian River Abstract & Guarantee Company. Homer and his wife Sarah raised 2 boys in the house, Virgil and Homer Jr. Both boys played baseball in the backyard of 1120 Riverside. Both boys graduated from the University of Florida Law School. Homer Jr. served in the Air Force JAG. Virgil became a Brevard County Circuit Judge. The current owner, attorney Catherine Riley, appeared in front of Judge Conkling in several cases, one of which was in defense of striking union workers at the McDonnell-Douglas plant south of Titusville. Catherine never expected to live in the judge's boyhood home!

1120 Riverside was the residence of other prominent Titusvillians, including the Brocketts in the 1960s.

There is a granite grave marker in the backyard with the name of a previous owner, Capt. H. L. Vaughan. The stone has his birth date as 1878, but year of death is blank. The marker indicates Capt. H.L. Vaughan served during the Spanish-American war. Vaughan bought the house in 1944; his estate sold the house in 1959. Whether he is buried on the premises remains a mystery.

Previous Owners

1. Homer C. Conkling bought the two lots (Gleasons Lots 3 & 4) that are now called 1120 Riverside Drive from the estate of Sarah G. Gleason. He built the house in 1915.
2. In 1929 the Conklings sold the house to Helen D. Mitchell. The widow Mitchell sold the house shortly after, in 1930.
3. Henry G. Pfiel, a widower, bought the house in 1930. Born in 1880, he later married a widow named Georgia.
4. In 1944, Pfiel sold it to Capt. Henry Lewis Vaughan and his wife Jeanette of Miami.
5. Capt. Vaughan's estate sold 1120 Riverside in 1959 to Arlington and Doris Brockett (Arleigh was the son of George Brockett.)
6. The Brocketts sold the house to Robert and Carol Tonner in 1983.
7. The Kevin and Catherine Riley bought 1120 in 2011.

For details or clarifications, call Kevin Riley 267-5453