

EDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
5358 N. Ashland Ave.
Chicago IL 60640

August 24, 2009

Ms. Laura Bain
5354 N. Paulina
Chicago IL 60640

Dear Ms. Bain:

As I expected, the house at 5354 N. Paulina was in all probability built before the area was annexed to the City of Chicago in July 1889.

Here's what I found out by checking various sources:

A review of the ancient card permit card files reveals just one permit for the address; it is N13, dated January 24, 1900. A check of the ledger containing permit information for this permit reveals that a permit was issued this date to a Thomas Stevens for a one story frame rear addition, [italics added] 22 feet by 17 feet by 20 feet on lot 2 in block 3 of the Summerdale Addition. The address was given as 3181 Paulina, the builder as an F.O. Johnson, and the estimated cost \$700. (The number 3181 was the number of the house before all Chicago north side properties were renumbered in the comprehensive renumbering that went into effect October 1, 1909.)

A check of the Cook County Recorder of Deeds records for the property based on its PIN # of 14-07-213-026 shows that the property consists of lots 1 and 2 in block 3 of the Summerdale Addition. That addition was recorded May 4, 1886, but was a subdivision of lots 31 to 40 of an earlier subdivision, namely Louis E. Henry's subdivision. The tract book with a history of warrantee deeds shows that lots 1, 2, and 3 were transferred to a Wilber Wait on March 24, 1887; lots 1 & 2 were transferred to a Genia M. Culver on July 10, 1887, and these same two lots were again transferred to a Thomas Stevens on October 6, 1887.

A check of the Chicago City Directories for the years 1888, 1889, and 1890 reveals no entry for a Thomas Stevens. The 1891 City Directory shows him as a laborer with home at Wright near Balmoral; the 1892 City Directory shows him as gardener, with home Wright av Cor. Balmoral (LV); the 1893 City Directory shows the same information as the 1892 directory; the 1895 directory shows his occupation as gardener with home as 155 (Wright) N. Paulina. Jumping ahead, the 1917 directory shows him as gardener with home as 5354 Paulina. The fact that there was no listing for him in the 1888-1889-1890 directories does mean he was not living in the house during those years. In most cases the Chicago City directories did not give home addresses for individual living outside the city. Since the official effective date of the annexation was July 1889 and since the data collection for the directories was carried out in May and June of each year with a planned sale day of early July, the lack of a listing for the 1888 and 1889 directories is easily explainable. The lack of a listing for the 1890 directory is not as easily

explainable; however, the area was still sparsely settled at the time and probably the compiler did not survey the area.

There is no mention of Thomas Stevens in the 1900 census; however, the 1910 census shows the following information:

Stevens, Thomas, age 57, b. England, gardener, cemetery (1880 yr of immigration to US)
 Emily, daughter, age 34, single, also b England
 James, Florence, d. age 38, married, also b England
 James, Thomas, son in law, age 40
 James, Earl, grandson, age 19 b Ill.
 Karner, Marie, daughter, age 32, married, b England
 Karner, Walter, son in law, age 36

The 1920 census shows all of the above (with different ages of course) except the two Karners.

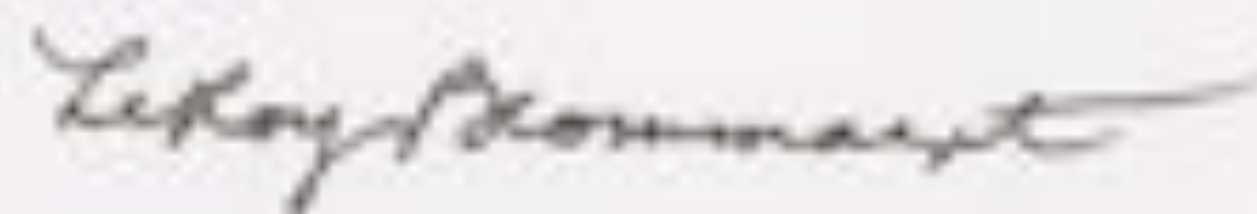
It is very probable that Thomas Stevens worked at Rosehill Cemetery as his 1910 occupation is listed as a cemetery gardener, Rosehill Cemetery is the closest to his house, and he is buried there. Thomas Stevens died in December 1925.

The 1955 reverse telephone directory shows that two members of the family still resided in the house: Emily Stevens, the unmarried daughter and Earl T. James, the grandson.

Recap:

The house was completed before May/June 1891 as Thomas Stevens was listed in the 1891 City Directory as living there. The house was probably not started before May 4, 1886, as that was the day the Summerdale subdivision was recorded. It is highly probable that the house was built for Thomas Stevens, as the previous transfers of the property are also found for other lots.

Sincerely,



LeRoy Blommaert