

**Sandwiching in History**  
**H. A. Bowman House**  
**1415 S. Broadway, LR**  
**February 3, 2012**  
**By: Rachel Silva**



**Intro**

Hi, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the Sandwiching in History tour of the H. A. Bowman House! I'd like to thank Scott Shepard for allowing us to tour his beautiful home.

**Governor's Mansion HD**

The Bowman House, built in 1887 by H. A. Bowman, is a contributing resource in the Governor's Mansion Historic District, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1978 (and has been amended several times). Boundaries are roughly 13<sup>th</sup> street, Louisiana, Roosevelt, and Chester.

The Governor's Mansion HD is the 2nd oldest surviving residential neighborhood in LR, with the oldest being the MacArthur Park HD. The district encompasses the area populated during Little Rock's post-Civil War building boom, which was largely due to the completion of the Memphis & Little Rock Railroad in 1871. For the most part, the Governor's Mansion neighborhood catered to middle and upper-middle class white families.

## **Herschel A. Bowman**

Herschel A. Bowman, commonly referred to as H. A. Bowman, was born in 1853 in Medina, Ohio. When Bowman was only 10 years old, his father died, leaving him to assume responsibility of the family farm. At the age of 23, Bowman left home and moved to Columbus, Ohio, where he met his future wife, Harriet (or Hattie) B. Morledge. The couple married in 1880 and a few years later, they moved to Little Rock.

By 1883 Bowman operated a lumber business at the southeast corner of 6<sup>th</sup> & Main in downtown LR. He sold rough or dressed boards of oak, ash, gum, cypress, or yellow pine in large quantities. But Bowman soon acquired his own planing mill at the southeast corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> & McLean (which was in the path of I-30). Bowman's 1886 advertisement in the LR City Directory read,

“H. A. Bowman, wholesale and retail dealer in lumber and mill work. I am prepared to furnish sash, doors, blinds, frames, mouldings, cypress shingles, oak, ash, gum, cypress and yellow pine for finishing lumber. Dress flooring in large quantities. Office, 601 Main St. Planing Mill, 1100 E. Third St.”

Bowman's lumber business must have been quite lucrative because by the mid-1880s he started dabbling in real estate, building speculative houses and selling them to various clients. About 1886 Bowman built two houses in the 1600 block of Broadway, one of which still stands at 1621 Broadway (NE corner of 17<sup>th</sup> & Broadway). The other house, which he built for himself, stood at the NW corner of 17<sup>th</sup> & Broadway, but it's no longer extant (the lot is now a gas station/store). Bowman continued to build spec houses, including this house at 1415 Broadway, the house next door at 1411 Broadway, and the Dibrell House at 1400 Spring Street. We know that Bowman built this house in 1887 because his signature and the date were discovered on the exterior sheathing during the restoration.

By 1890 the H. A. Bowman family lived here at 1415 Broadway, and Bowman devoted himself to real estate, having given his younger brother, James A. Bowman, control of the lumber business. H. A. and Hattie Bowman had 7 children, 6 of whom lived to adulthood. Their last 3 children were born while the Bowmans lived in this house—all kids in order—Walter (died in infancy), Julia (went by Maude), Gertrude, Lenore, Marie, Elise, and James Earle.

In 1895 or 1896 H. A. Bowman purchased a Gothic Revival-style house on 12 acres, which at that time was about a quarter of a mile southwest of LR. The house

was built about 1871 by carpetbagger Milton L. Rice (Rice briefly served as president of the Cairo & Fulton RR and was elected to the AR State Senate in 1872, but his political career ended abruptly with the end of Reconstruction, and he left the state. The Gleason family owned the Rice House for a short time, and then it was sold to Bowman). In 1897 Bowman subdivided the 12 acres around his new home to create the Oak Terrace Addition to the City of Little Rock. Although significantly altered from its original appearance, the Rice-Bowman House remains today at 2015 S. Battery Street (facing the flower garden or median). The Bowmans lived in the Battery St. house until their deaths (Hattie in 1926 and H. A. in 1935).

### **Occupants of 1415 S. Broadway**

The 1897-98 city directory lists Russell B. Gress at 1415 S. Broadway. Gress was an insurance agent with R. B. Gress & Company and later, Gress & England. From 1919 to 1926, Isaac Loewenberg and his wife, Clara, lived here. Mr. Loewenberg was the president and manager of the Loewenberg Company, a ladies' ready-to-wear store at 206 Main in LR.

In 1929 W. P. Goodrum and his wife, Leta, bought the house, but Mr. Goodrum died shortly after moving in, and with the onset of the Great Depression, beginning in 1930 Ms. Leta Goodrum (listed as a widow) rented "furnished rooms" or "tourist rooms" out of the house. Ms. Goodrum owned the house until the mid-1950s. [By 1939 the house next door at 1411 Broadway was divided into 5 apartments.]

From the mid-50s until 1970, the home was owned by Mike Lindley and his wife, Gladys. In 1971 the house was purchased by Ferdinand A. Crockett, who also owned the house next door at 1411 Broadway. Crockett was president of Crockett Motor Sales, Inc., a used car dealership at 23<sup>rd</sup> & Broadway. Crockett owned 1411 and 1415 Broadway until the mid-1990s, when they were purchased by Carl Miller, Jr., who also owns the Dibrell House at 1400 Spring. In 2009 Miller sold this house to Scott Shepard and the late Randy Jeffery, who began the ambitious project of restoring the home.

### **Alterations to house**

No historic photos of the house are known to exist, but based on Sanborn maps, the house originally had a one-story front porch with a corner turret (or witch's hat), giving it more of a Queen Anne-style appearance. But sometime before 1913, the

porch's corner turret was removed and reconfigured to make a 90-degree angle. At some point in time the porch was altered to a Craftsman-style appearance with square brick columns (see the before restoration photos).

Although owner Leta Goodrum offered rooms for rent from about 1930 to the mid-1950s, I am not certain if she actually changed the interior configuration of the house or simply rented existing rooms. I have, however, been given other information stating that in the early 1970s the home was converted into five separate apartments. This is probably also when the front porch was enclosed (see before photos).

The house originally had wood siding, but it had been covered with a layer of pink shingles and then brown aluminum siding on top of that. In the 1960s, a small addition was built onto the back of the house to expand the kitchen. A separate, poorly constructed addition was built out from the southeast corner of the house as well. These exterior changes do not even begin to touch on the interior—the house had been chopped up into 5 apartments with separate bathrooms, etc. and it was suffering from deterioration and neglect.

## **Restoration**

The home's restoration was completed in fall 2010.

On the exterior, they rebuilt the brick pier foundation and put a new roof on the house. The front porch was rebuilt according to the square footprint on the 1913 Sanborn map because the turret feature was too expensive to replace. However, the porch railing was taken back to a more Queen Anne-style design and replicates a design on a State Street house. Almost all of the one-over-one windows are original to the house, as is the stained glass window (luckily protected by the enclosed porch in recent years). The exterior wood siding is all new, and the idea for the mustard and brown color scheme came from the depot at Scott (Scott Connections)...the red is an added touch to make it "pop." The 1960s kitchen addition was incorporated into the restoration design, but the other addition was removed.

On the interior, all flooring was replaced with pine. All trim had to be re-milled and replaced. The house was insulated and rewired. Had to remove the extra bathrooms and some walls from the apartment conversion.

Original interior pieces—staircase is original and the balustrade features an interesting pattern of cypress and walnut. Interior doors, including one set of pocket doors, are original. The mantle in the main dining room is original.

The light fixtures are not original but are period appropriate antique fixtures. The fretwork throughout the house is also old but recycled from other structures.

**Extras:**

Carriage house—there was a carriage house behind 1415 Broadway until at least 1950, but it is no longer extant. Still one footing left though.

Service station—the service station on the southeast corner of Broadway & Daisy Bates was built about 1946 by Walter R. Joblin. By 1957 it was Sid Brown's Gulf Service Station. [Nothing substantial was ever constructed on that corner until the service station in the mid-1940s.]

Wallace Davis—from about 1920 to 1960 Wallace Davis lived next door at 1423 Broadway. Davis was Arkansas's attorney general from 1915 to 1917. [Rumor that AR Governor Jeff Davis lived there was not confirmed.]

Thank you!

Next tour March 2 at Karl L. Stahl House at 1504 MLK, LR.