

History of 119 E 3rd St (formerly Orange St), New Castle, Delaware



On April 20, 1854, Daniel R. Wolfe sold the lot to John S. King (Deed recorded in Book P, Volume 6, Page (Folio?) 34 (347?)). This suggests that the house was built after April 20, 1854. If the house had been built before this sale, the deed would probably say “house and lot,” not just “lot.” The lot that Daniel Wolfe sold was smaller than today’s lot—it did not extend as far to the rear.

At the time of the 1854 lot sale, Daniel Wolfe was a 32-year-old lawyer and master of the New Castle Masons. John S. King was a 24-year-old machinist.

By the 1860 census, John S. King was married to Anne E. King and then had a 5-year-old son.

On June 3, 1864—ten years after John S. King bought the lot—he and his wife Ann E. King sold the house and lot to Fidelia Stockton for \$1600.

So when was the house built? From the 1860 census and 1864 deed, we know that the other half of the duplex (117 East 3rd Street) was owned and occupied in 1860 by William Herbert, a 34-year-old machinist, and his family. This means the house was built between 1854, when the property was just a lot, and 1860, when the Herberts were living in the other half of the duplex.

Did John S. King and his wife Anne and son ever live in the house, or was it an investment? By the 1860 census, the house was completed but the Kings were living elsewhere in New Castle. The census did not record addresses, but it did record residents sequentially along each side of each street. The census listed, in a row, the Peter Vandever family, who owned what’s now 115 East 3rd Street, the Herbert family at 117 East 3rd Street, and the Robert Harp family, who owned a (now gone) house in what’s now the side yard of 125 East 3rd Street. (On the northeast side of 119 East 3rd Street, you can see scarred bricks where a small section of the Harp house, set back from the street, was once attached to 119 East 3rd.) The census makes no mention of anyone living at 119 East 3rd Street, suggesting that it was vacant at that time.

The 1860 census showed John S. King living with his wife and son between the Nathaniel Young family and the Jonathan Williams family somewhere else in New Castle.

So we know the Kings did not live at 119 East 3rd Street at the time of the 1860 census. Of course it’s possible that they moved in after the census for just a few years before selling. But it seems more likely that, at the time of the census, they either had not yet found a tenant for the house or it was between tenants.

Fidelia Stockton, who bought the house in 1864, clearly bought it as an investment, not a residence. She was the wife of Thomas Stockton, one of Delaware’s governors, and daughter of Kensey Johns, a Delaware Supreme

Court justice. She lived her entire adult life at 300 Delaware Street. And she owned other properties in New Castle as well. In 1860 she bought 27 The Strand for \$1450. It's one of four row houses at 27, 29, 31, and 33 The Strand known as "Stockton-Clellan-Sevil Row," built around 1825. And she may also have owned 28 West 4th Street, which was built around 1850 and known as "Stockton House."

On July 16, 1864, Ambrose Lafferty sold the rear of the current lot to Fidelia Stockton for \$75. For unknown reasons, the deed wasn't received for recording until August 16, 1888—over 24 years later. Ambrose Lafferty ran the Spread Eagle Tavern at 114 East 2nd Street.

In 1868, a Beers map shows Peter Vandever and William Herbert still living at 115 and 117 East 3rd Streets, respectively. The house at 119 East 3rd Street is occupied by a "Mrs. Snogden." The lack of a first name suggests she may have been a renter rather than owner.

Ownership of the house between 1868 and 1937 is not yet researched.

The 1901 map of New Castle shows the house as it is today: three stories in front, then two stories, then a one-story structure at the rear that's the same size as today's kitchen. But, when the rear one-story structure (kitchen) was gutted in 2013, paint and wallpaper on part of the brick wall separating the one- and two-story sections, plus paint on part of the siding separating 119 and 117 East 3rd, suggest that there was once a smaller room at the rear, rather than the larger one-story structure on the 1901 map and today.

By the 1930s, James T. Mullin owned the house and rented it to Herman O. Edwards and Cora D. Edwards, according to the Edwards' niece Dee Ehrenstein. James T. Mullin owned a clothing store in Wilmington. The house thus appears to have been an investment for Mullin, and it's likely he never lived there. According to Dee Ehrenstein, when the Edwards rented the house in the 1930s, the rear one-story structure was a porch.

On July 20, 1937, James T. Mullin sold the house to Herman O. Edwards and Cora D. Edwards (Deed Record Q, Volume 40, Page 41).

After the Edwards bought the house, according to Dee Ehrenstein, they converted the porch into a kitchen and added a pantry that is now a powder room.

In the 1950s, again according to Dee Ehrenstein, the side porch was added.

On December 27, 1966, Herman O. Edwards died, and his wife Cora became sole owner of the house.

On March 6, 1976, Cora D. Edwards died. She left half the house to her son Thomas Herman "Buck" Edwards, a quarter to her daughter Virginia E. Sharpley, and a quarter to her daughter Mary E. Daspher. Buck Edwards lived in the house his entire life.

On March 16, 1978, Virginia Sharpley and Mary Daspher conveyed their interest in the house to Thomas Herman Edwards for \$10. Thomas Herman Edwards then conveyed the house to himself and his wife Dorothea R. Edwards for \$10. According to multiple anecdotal sources, the Edwards redid the kitchen and bathroom around this time.

On August 12, 1995, Thomas Herman "Buck" Edwards died, and his wife Dorothea became sole owner of the house.

On December 30, 2009, Dorothea R. Edwards sold the house to Stephen and Linda Suskie. In 2010, they installed central air conditioning. In 2013, they gutted and redid the kitchen and bathroom and converted the kitchen pantry into a half bath.

