

THE DULLNIGS' HOUSE IS 100 YEARS OLD!



For those of you who are unfamiliar, that's the house with tan siding, maroon porch and white trim next to the neighborhood park, at 8400 Rhode Island Avenue. My family has lived here for the last 46 years.

It was built in 1910 by a Mr. Aitcheson on land about where the current Holy Redeemer basketball court sits. In 1930 the Aitchesons moved to Laurel and gave the house to Holy Redeemer church which used it as a convent for the Sisters of Providence.

At this time, or soon after, the back porch was finished off with a huge country kitchen and the community room for the nuns downstairs, and two bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. This kitchen is now our library room. Mother Superior had an office on the first floor there. Our living room used to be a small chapel

where the sisters had mass and prayers.

The house was used as a convent until 1960 when the current convent next to the church was completed. The house was then given by the church to the caretaker of the school, Mr.



The altar used to be where Shirley Smith and Sister Angela are standing.

Umphries, provided he move it. They wanted to keep the land to expand the church/school parking lot. Mr. Umphries had a new foundation built on Rhode Island Avenue, just on the other side of Quebec Street, and had the house moved there. As the house was travelling over Quebec Street, the sewer collapsed underneath it. The whole house shook and nearly all the horsehair plaster walls in the house cracked or broke.

In 1964, Mr. Umphries put the house up for sale and my father noticed it. For a family of nine living in a duplex in Palmer Park, it was a godsend. My dad went to Mr. Umphries and gave him all the money he had on him, \$1.87, to hold the house for him while he got financing. He did, and bought the house for \$17,400.00. We moved in on July 4th, 1964.



The house is on the move! Photo: courtesy of late Jean Woodhouse.



The Dulling family in front of the house in 1972.

As great as it was for our family of nine, it was obvious the house had been lacking maintenance. There was a long list of to-do things. Those cracked walls were falling down, the windows rattled in their frames, the paint was peeling, the wood on the porch had rot, the porch roof leaked, as did the flat roof on the back of the house, doors that no longer led to stairways or side porches were nailed shut. But, it was big enough for the nine of us, was right next door to a Catholic school we would all go to, and was closer to work for both mom and dad. And, as it turned out later, being walking distance from the University of Maryland made it possible for me to afford to go to college. The problems could be fixed.



Chris Dullnig ☺

In 1984, Mom and Dad wanted to retire, but could not sell the house without significant repairs first. So, I bought it from them, as is, and the repairs started. New windows, a new roof, walls, porch, railings, etc. Later – new floors, bathrooms, kitchen, bedrooms.

From loving this new huge place, to wanting to get away from a wreck of a house as soon as I could, to group home, to back to family home, I now find it a pretty nice place to live. The neighborhood ain't so bad neither.