

LANDMARK



SURVEY

IDENTIFICATION

Street Address: 331-333 W. Main Street
Map and Parcel: 32-192
Census Track & Block: 1-309
Present Owner: Altamont Land Trust
Address: P.O. Box 1151 City 22902
Present Use: Store
Original Owner: Johnson W. Pitts
Original Use: Residence

BASE DATA

Historic Name: Pitts-Inge
Date/Period: 1820
Style: Federal
Height to Cornice:
Height in Stories: 2
Present Zoning: B-4
Land Area (sq.ft.): 23 x 85
Assessed Value (land + imp.): 3510 + 1050 = 4560

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Inge Store is one of the oldest remaining structures on what was a rural "three notched road" leading from the town of Charlottesville to the University. It is built of brick, laid in Flemish bond on the facade and in common bond on the sides and rear. Typical of a house of this period is the "mouse-tooth" cornice, the stepped gables, and the slender buttressed chimney on the east end. The original fenestration has largely been obscured by the introduction of large areas of glass characteristic of nineteenth century commercial buildings. Adjoining the main structure is a smoke house, one of the last reminders of the many similar out buildings which have disappeared.

HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION

The land upon which the Inge Store was built was purchased by Joseph Bishop in 1803 from John Carr. The existing structure was constructed by Bishop's son-in-law, Johnson W. Pitts c. 1820. The property was sold on September 29, 1821 to Lawrence Catlett for \$1,000. The dwelling house served as a parsonage for the Charlottesville Methodist Church from 1840 until default of payment forced its sale in 1842 to Nimrod Sowell, who paid \$1,220 for the title. The father of the present owner bought the building in 1890, some 37 years after it had ceased to be used as a residence. Deed references; ACDB 22-416, 27-256, 30-363, 39-152, 40-104, 55-248, 60-218, 65-194, City DB 1-440.

SIGNIFICANCE

This building, with its stepped gables and mousetooth cornice, is a fine example of the Federal Style. It is the oldest surviving building on West Main Street, the old Three-Notched Road. George P. Inge, who bought it in 1890, was a very successful black businessman and a college classmate of Booker T. Washington, who was a frequent guest there.

CONDITIONS

Average

SOURCES

City/County Records
Alexander's Recollections, p. 98N.

Inge's Store Has a Place in Main Street's History and Future

By RAY McGRATH
of The Progress Staff

"My father said when he built the store that was a dirt road out there. It's hard to believe it."

Thomas F. Inge, the second proprietor of Inge's Grocery now in its 88th year, gestures at the scene through his storefront window where West Main Street is busily awash with automobiles.

At one time his father, George P. Inge, who converted the building from residence to store, was the only fish dealer in Charlottesville. He also sold game birds and produce. Inge has account books dating back to 1896 where his father entered in script the names of various University of Virginia professors and other influential people and what they ordered on a particular day.

"They want me to donate these books to the University li-

brary but I haven't made up my mind to do that," he says, flipping through the leaves of one particularly well-chewed ledger. He adds as an afterthought, "They had rats back in those days like they do now."

Inge is not so sure he wants to part with everything in his past at once. The 160-year-old building which houses the store and was the Inge domicile for many years, will change hands around the new year.

Mister Inge, as the venerable proprietor is known to a respectful but dwindling group of neighborhood customers, is gratified the building will be saved for posterity. Indeed, big plans are in store for the brick structure, which is one of the few landmarks dating back to West Main Street's fashionable era. Still, parting won't be easy.

Officially, Inge did not take over the store from his father until 1946. But, as if to assure his attachment is placed in the proper perspective, he notes, "In fact, I was born in the building and came up in the store." So were his three sisters and five brothers.

The sacrifice is going for what, all-considered, seems to be a good cause.

Leslie C. LaFon, a retired Army lieutenant colonel and local entrepreneur, has secured the endorsement of the Board of Architectural Review for his plans to redevelop and embellish the building in a way that some regard as a major gamble on the economic and social revival of the Starr Hill area at the west end of West Main Street.

In keeping with the historically mixed role of both the building and the neighborhood, LaFon's plans call for doubling the size of the building to accommodate a quality restaurant, emporium and residence. LaFon is supposed to take over the building around Jan. 1, according to Inge.

The arrangement between the retirement-bound proprietor and the ambitious developer is a direct outgrowth of the federally-sponsored Small Cities revitalization effort in Starr Hill.

The chronology of events suffers a bit from the chicken-and-egg syndrome. But there was Inge, whose business had been dropping off steadily, especially since King's Supermarket opened on nearby Vinegar Hill. And there was LaFon who had already established an interest in the area with his renovation of the old Vepco building at the corner of West Main and Ridge streets.

"I think we initiated it. I can't be 100 percent sure. At least if you talk to (LaFon) he'll tell you we've been bugging the hell out of him," says city planning director Satyendra S. Huja.

The success of the West Main Street revitalization, for which more than \$1 million of federal funds will be spent, rests heavily on investors like LaFon. Huja's endorsement of the venture is unqualified.

"In conjunction with the other development this will be a nice attraction for the area," he says in reference to tentative plans for a hotel and conference center complex on Vinegar Hill. Such a development potentially would hold an instant clientele for commercial development on West Main Street. "I'm getting what I want out of it," Huja says.

But if preservation is the issue, the black residents in the residential area of Starr Hill behind the commercial facades along West Main Street can't help but feel a sense of loss.

While the revitalization plan contemplates programs aimed at helping minority enterprises, Charlottesville will lose one of

its oldest black-owned businesses when the Inge building changes hands.

The building has its connection to American history. George Washington did not sleep there, but Booker T. Washington did.

Washington and the senior George Inge attended Hampton Institute together and the two developed a friendship that was to last beyond the school years. The younger Inge recalls one morning after Washington spent the night he went to the barber shop next door to get a shave.

When his father informed the barber who he was shaving, "He jerked and cut him on the neck there," says Inge, making an imaginary nick in the air and chuckling.

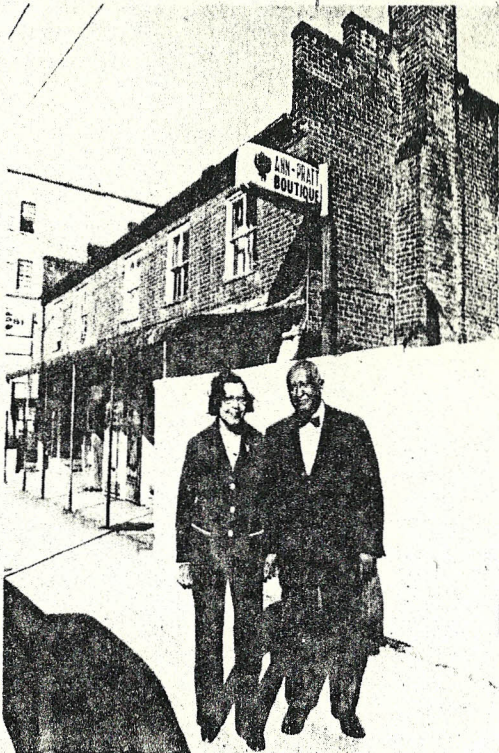
He also tells the story of how benefactor Paul Goodloe McIntire, in informing his father of two parks he intended to give to the city, said the park for the white people would be named after himself and the park for the blacks would be named after

Booker T. Washington.

Inge says he doesn't understand how Washington Park ultimately was named for George Washington, instead. But, he insists, "That's unwritten history I'm telling you."

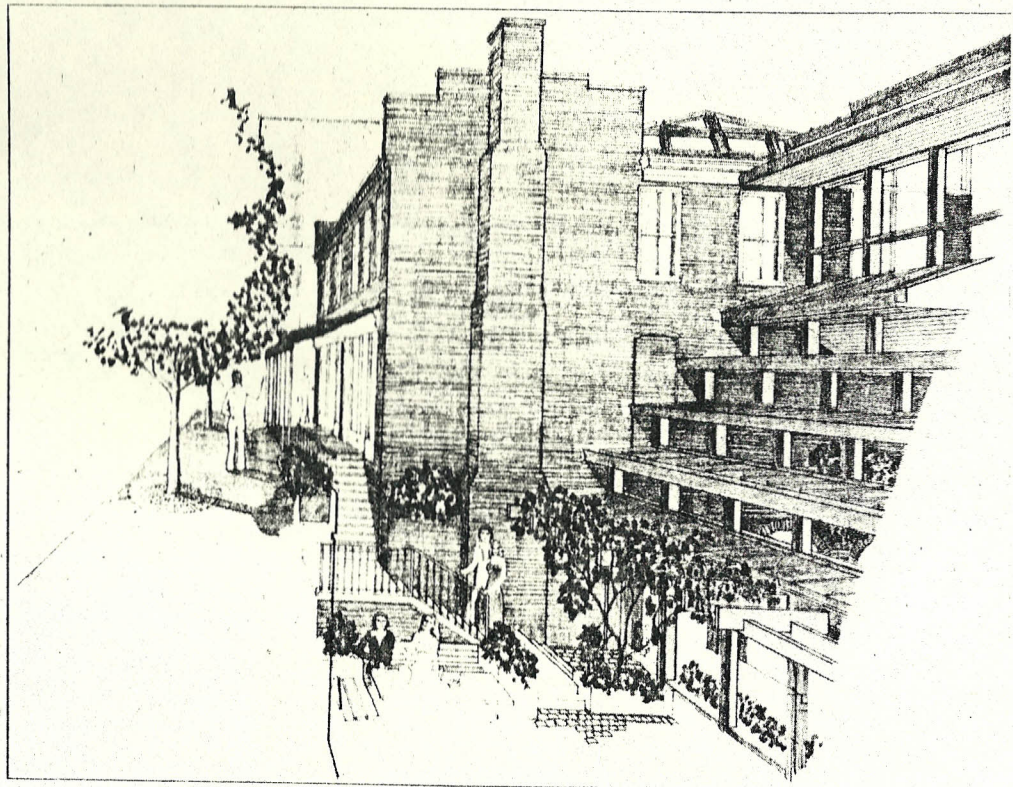
But then Inge has witnessed a number of incongruities in his lifetime. Once the first and only black to live on Anderson Street, he witnessed his neighborhood become all black and now sees the trend reversing. "The blacks are moving out and buying fancy houses and the whites are coming in and buying their houses," he says.

As a firm deadline for his retirement closes in, Inge is selling down his limited inventory and looks ahead with both resignation and apprehension. In the same breath he recalls how horse-drawn coaches once pulled up in front of the store and then he says, "I used to enjoy those things but you can't get in the way of progress. You've got to accept the modern ways."



Progress Photo by Jim Carpenter

MR. AND MRS. THOMAS INGE
The Grocery As It Appears Today



ARCHITECT'S RENDERING OF CHANGES PLANNED BY LESLIE C. LaFON
Some See Development as Major Gamble on Future of West Main Street

Jefferson's Travelogue

Inge's Store

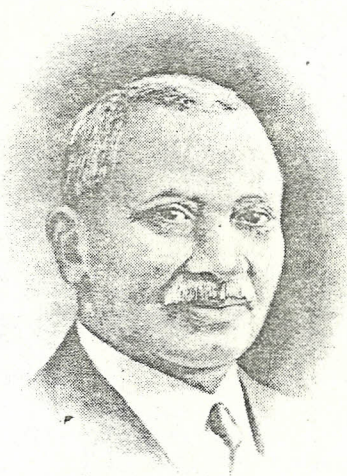
As the years have passed and the face of Charlottesville has changed one place remains the same, Inge's Store on West Main Street. Beginning in 1891, the store has changed hands only once. George P. Inge passed the store to his son, Thomas Ferguson Inge in 1946.

George P. Inge (d. 1948) came to Charlottesville from Danville. A graduate of Hampton Institute in Hampton, George Inge was a public school teacher for the City of Charlottesville. At 28 years of

age, he opened his store at 333 West Main Street.

Mr. Inge raised a big family. He had nine children and saw to it that they all had a good education. Three daughters, Mrs. LaVern I. Hepburn, Mrs. Gertrude I. Brown, and Mrs. Kate I. Fuller, are retired school teachers. Two sons, Dr. Hutchins S. Inge and Dr. Theodore R. Inge are medical doctors.

Another son, Dr. Frederick D. Inge, is a doctor of philosophy and a doctor of science and the



GEORGE P. INGE

retired chairman of the science department at Hampton Institute. J. Rodger Inge, is a retired realtor. And another son, George P. Inge, Jr. is a retired high school teacher. The youngest son is Thomas Ferguson Inge, present owner of Inge's Store on Main Street.

Many things have changed on

Main Street but Inge's Store has remained the same. Originally Main Street was a dirt road. This means that one could either choke on the dust or slosh through the mud. As time passed bricks were added and a side walk.

Thomas Inge can remember the addition of an electric trolley car. (1914) He also remembers how the neighborhood looked.

Jefferson Cable, McGregor Motors and Trailways were all residences. There was a small grocery store on the corner of Main Street and Ridge Street. The present location of the Lewis and Clark statue was a public drinking fountain which ran continuously and was used to water horses. Where the Virginia Telephone and Telegraph Company is located today was once the location of Harris Hardware, Model Steam Laundry, a small grocery, and a few residences.

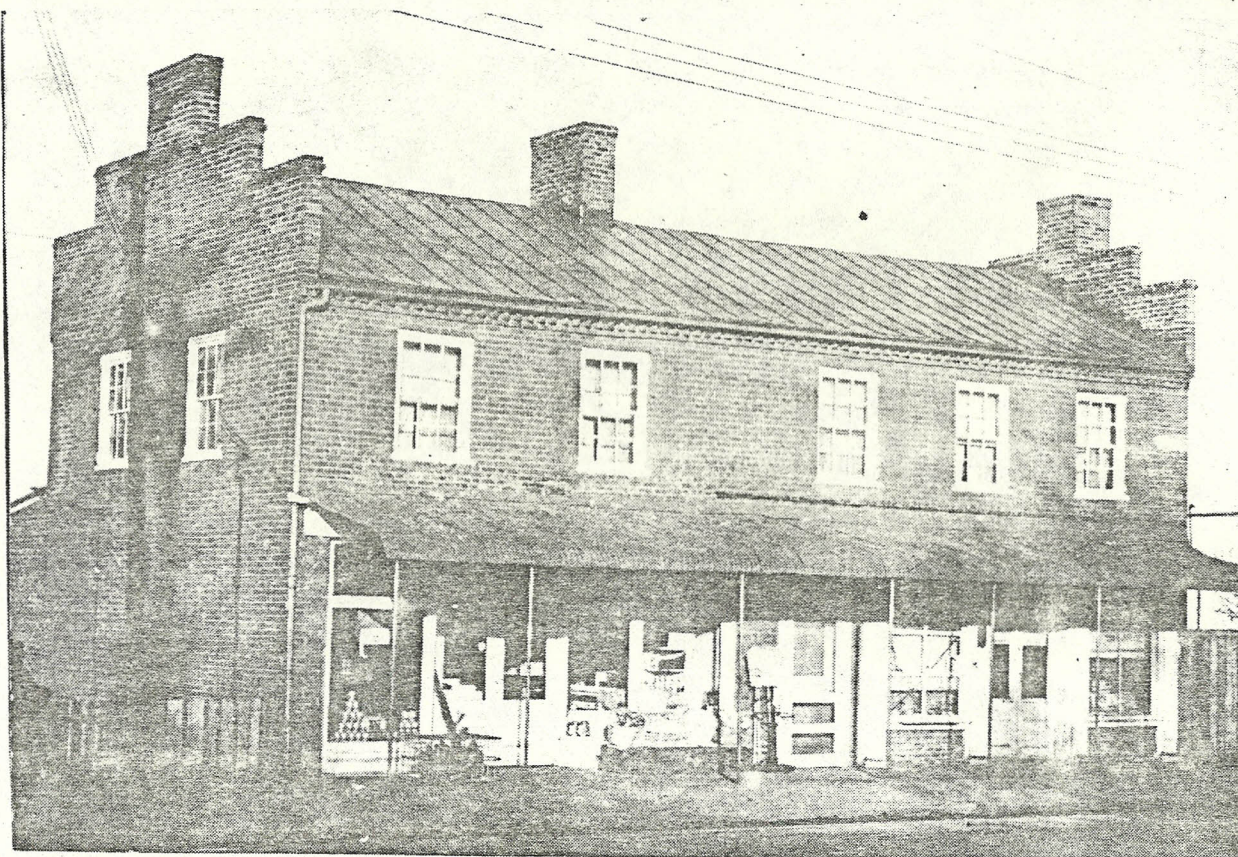
At one time, Inge's Store provided all of the fresh fish sold in town. It supplied Clairmont Hotel, Gleason Hotel, University

Hospital, Dolly Madison Inn and many of the boarding houses around the University.

In the early days of Charlottesville, black people didn't have any place to stay when visiting the city. They were refused at the hotels, boarding houses and public inns. They could only enter these places if they worked there.

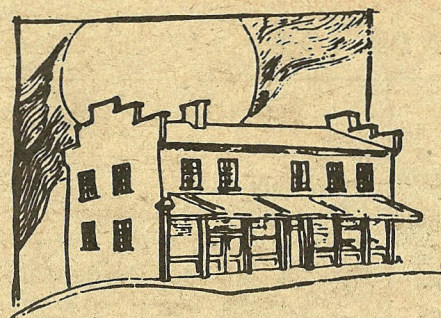
George Inge had many distinguished black visitors to Charlottesville share his residence above the store. Among them were Booker T. Washington, past president of Tuskegee Institute, T. C. Walker a noted lawyer from Gloucester County. Dr. Robert R. Martin, his successor, and many other guests and politicians.

In addition to being a shop keeper, George Inge was a man of accomplishment. He was chairman of the Charlottesville Republican Party in 1900. He was a Republican committeeman in 1904. And he was involved in many civic and political organizations.



INGE'S STORE ON MAIN STREET

Photo Courtesy Albemarle County
Historical Society.



"Bull Alley restaurant on West Main Street in Starr Hill occupies one of the oldest structures in Charlottesville. We offer two levels of dining; downstairs in our Tap Room or upstairs in the elegance of our Main Street Dining Room. We offer a wide selection of draft beers: Heinekin, Becks, O'Keefe, Bass Ale, Michelob, and

slow pour Guinness. Live entertainment most weekends. Reservations are encouraged for the Dining Room, and accepted for parties of eight or more in the Tap Room."

"Open seven days; Monday through Friday 11:30 A.M. until 2:00 A.M. Saturday and Sunday Brunch begins at 11:00 AM."

"Football Saturdays (Night or Day games) Dinner begins at 4:00 PM, other days at 6:00 PM."

BULL ALLEY
RESTAURANT

333 West Main

At The Corner of Fourth & Main

979-0128

Street Address: ³³¹ ~~33~~ 333 W. Main

Map & Parcel:

Census Tract & Block:

Present Owner: Thomas F. Inge
Address: ~~815~~ 815 Madison St.

Present Use: ANDERSON ST.

Original Owner:

Original Use:

Historic Name: INGE STORE

Date/Period: 1820

Style:

Height to Cornice:

Height to Stories: 2

Present Zoning: ?

Land Area (sq. ft.): 23 x 85

Assessed Value (land + imp)

2750 + 1500 = 4250

2 story brick - east outside chimney - step front + rear -
masonry both cornice - Flemish front - random sides -
W = Z bay org. window 2 = 3 bay - 2 over 2
org. door - carpenter box -
Flem - 4 ft. side

rear wing about 60 yrs. ago

change west street glazing - Mrs. Doris Collins

East - double doors -
brick under window - Flem.

Shed on W. when buy

1 room sleep -

1868 - George Pinkney Inge - Historic Description

84 - 1891, July law store - live above - ~~see~~ other room
smoke house for storage & rental

BUILT 1864 - ACC. TO MRS. DORIS COLLINS

~~31 - 245~~
~~31 - 297~~

32 - 142
~~144~~

Office of Kentucky Int. Review:
295 - 2536

THOMAS INGE

1948

VB 6 - 136

GEORGE P. INGE

LOT OF TO CITY - PB 150 - 195

1950 City buy 12' on 4th St.

Alexander p. 98 - 1820-21 (ACBB 22, 416) built by Johnson W.

Pitts, son-in-law of Joseph Bishop who in 1803 bought 12 acres from John Can on western boundary of the old town.

1890 1-44 G. 1890 George Inge from David Levine \$3000

1887- Levine from Isaac Leterman \$450 - 49

1887 Leterman buy 1870 from Simon Leterman \$2000

1870 65-194 mention improve. 1870

1856 55-248 - R.A. Muirgrove & John C. Patterson sell to John T. Barksdale & John N. Fry \$1900. 1856

1853 Muirgrove & Patterson buy from Nimrod Sawell 1853 \$1800

52-157 up to buildings, was occupied by Sawell as residence 8-10 yrs. before M&P buy.

1821 22-416 - 1821 - Johnson Pitts sells dwelling house & lot of ground
↓ ? same structure
Lawrence T. Catlett

1863 60-218
Isaac & Simon Leterman buy from Fry & Barksdale
4050. w/ BUILDINGS & IMPROVEMENTS

1890

93-98 - 1864 - Mc. Inge

Street Address:

Historic Name: *Grange Store*

Map & Parcel:

Date/Period:

Census Tract & Block:

Style:

Present Owner:

Height to Cornice:

Address:

Height to Eaves:

Present Use:

Present Zoning:

Original Owner:

Land Area (sq. ft.):

Original Use:

Assessed Value (land+imp)

Architectural Description

- Deed from Lawrence Catlett - 1828 - 27-256
#820 Dwelling House and lot containing 85 perches
Lot #3
- Catlette from Johnson W. Pitts 22-416 \$1,000
Sept 29, ~~1829~~ 1821 ~~213~~ - ~~1876~~ 1877

Historic Description

Name of Persons Interviewed:

de

Nimrod Sowell collect 4 parcels to form property.

- from Sounley
- 1) Buckner ~~Sounley~~ 1842 40-104
 - 2) John A. Marchant 1842 40-130
 - 3) Lewis Sowell 1843 40-455
 - 4) Henry Dave 1843 41-272

1.) 4 1/2 square poles. Brick Dwelling and brick Kitchen \$1220 - Sounley ^{comm} from Walker Timberlake, Nathan Goodman; Hester Harrison, trustees of the M-E. Church - Sounley from John A. Marchant 1841 ^{renamed Henry} (\$1200) 39-152

1220
325
175
250
1970

2) \$325 51 3/4 poles containing a Brick Meat House

3) \$175 - On the Bonacks road

74) \$1250 - H. Dave ^{ILLITERATE} from Lewis Sowell - containing a house w/ ? ? , "but now converted into a dwelling house"

Probably a
tentament

M. E. Church from John A. Marchant 1840 \$2000

40 1/2 Poles - Brick Dwelling House: kitchen - for the use of the presiding elder

- Marchant from William F. Hoach 700 - Jan 1, 1833
these parcels of land w/ buildings and improvements

58-420 - 4 Tail Yards
35-149 - 7 Dwelling
32-492 - 30 acres 1/2 Dwelling
31-468 - 1/2 acre 1/2 Dwelling
30-363

331-333 N. MAIN

Store since 1891
big chuck n' den

Johnson Pitts House (VHLC)

#148

32-192, 193



Store +
res.

Owner : Thomas F. Inge
#192 815 Anderson St.

#193 : Frederick D. Inge +
G.I. Brown
5336 Locust St.
Philadelphia, Pa.

c.1970