

# Rose Mary Byrne



and the

Cottages  
of  
Sunset Terrace

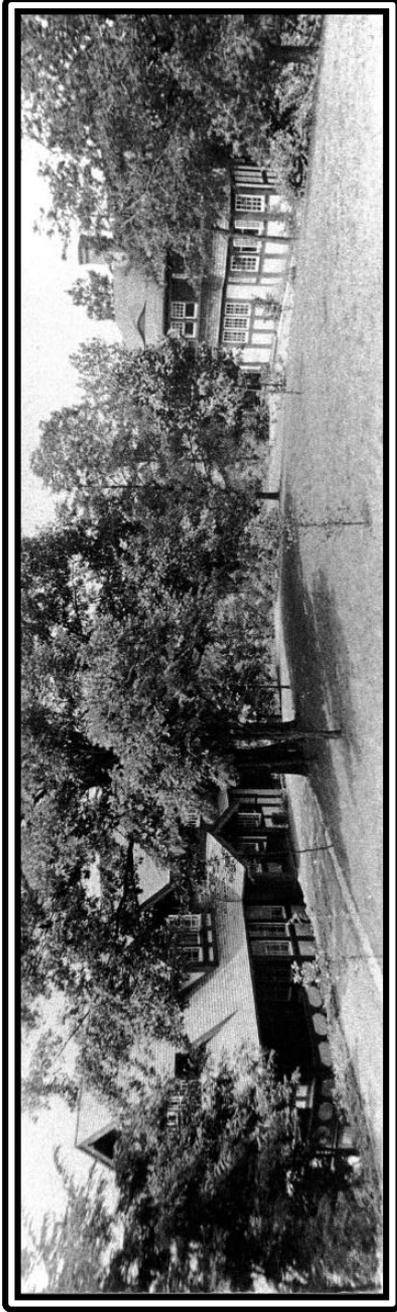


Figure 1 Post Card of "Rambler" and "Westview"  
Ca. 1930s

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# Rose M. Byrne

1879 - 1924



*Few women are recognized for their contribution  
to Asheville's development during the city's early years.  
Despite illness and loss,  
Rose M. Byrne  
contributed significantly.  
Her story began in Brooklyn.*

\* \* \* \* \*

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*Westview Cottage  
26 Sunset Terrace  
Asheville, NC 28801*

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## Dr. Byrne



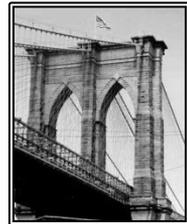
*Dr. John Byrne*  
1825 - 1902

On Monday, October 27, 1902, St. Agnes Catholic Church was crowded with friends and colleagues of one of Brooklyn's greatest doctors. Members of the Brooklyn Medical Society, the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, St. Mary's Ladies Aid Society, and the staff of Long Island Medical Hospital attended the solemn requiem high mass. The entire staff of St. Mary's hospital served as honorary pallbearers for John Byrne.

Conspicuously missing from the service were Dr. Byrne's wife, Mary Winifred and two daughters, Evelyn and Rose. The family's old menace would not relinquish its grip, not even for his funeral. At the time of Dr. Byrne's death, Rose was so sick that Mrs. Byrne and Evelyn remained in Europe with Rose while Dr. Byrne's body was shipped back to Brooklyn for the funeral. Their decision not to attend the service fueled speculation about Rose's condition and the health of the remaining Byrne family. Their absence contributed to the sadness of Dr. Byrne's passing and emphasized his family's struggle with tuberculosis.

Rose Byrne's condition was indeed very serious. The *Eagle* reported, "Mrs. Byrne would remain in Switzerland in the hope that the air there would be beneficial to her daughter." An unidentified friend of the family said that Mrs. Byrne and her daughters would probably not return to this country. Dr. Byrne was very fond of Rose. According to *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, Oct. 27, "worry over his daughter's health helped in a way to hasten Dr. Byrne's death."

John Byrne was the son of Stephen Byrne and Elizabeth Sloan Byrne of Ireland. He immigrated to Brooklyn in 1848. His wife, Mary Winifred O'Connor was the only daughter of William O'Connor of New York and Eliza Winifred Roach O'Connor of Ireland.



John and Mary were married on April 22, 1860, at St. Charles Borromeo, 100 and 41st Streets. The ceremony was performed by Rev. Dr. Pise, founder of the parish. Although little is known of Dr. Byrne's early personal life, noted physician and colleague, Charles Jewett, said that Mary was Dr. Byrne's second wife.

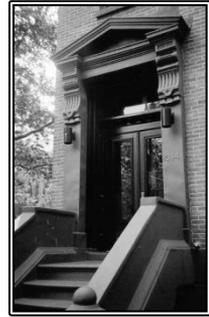
Interestingly, Dr. Byrne decided to specialize after many years as a general practitioner. "An extensive general practice of fifteen years found him in 1860 eminently qualified to adopt any one of various departments of medicine or surgery as a specialty, and he selected diseases of women as the branch most congenial to his tastes." By the time John and Mary were married, Dr. Byrne had already achieved considerable notoriety in the medical community as a founder of Long Island College Hospital. He had completed another medical degree in this country to complement his extensive medical training in Ireland.

Unfortunately, Dr. Byrne's life was marked by significant loss. His colleague, Dr. Charles Jewett said in 1903, "yet great as his grief he seldom spoke of his domestic afflictions." It was certainly not his nature to complain or to solicit sympathy. Dr. Byrne was a man "of sterling character and of a punctilious sense of professional honor. Generous and magnanimous to a fault, he was above intrigue and petty jealousies."

Despite adversity, the Byrnes also enjoyed many happy times. Rose was five when her parents celebrated their silver wedding anniversary on April 23, 1885. Guests were greeted by Dr. and Mrs. Byrne and their daughter, Agnes. According to the Eagle, the Byrne residence was "profusely decorated" and "Mrs. Byrne wore a rich satin brocade with diamond ornaments." Dr. and Mrs. Byrne received many gifts including "costly pieces of silverware."

The Byrnes enjoyed traveling both in this country and abroad. It was not Dr. Byrne's custom to remain in Brooklyn during the hot summer months, so the family usually made the short trek to a second home on Ocean Drive in Bay Shore, Long Island. Their large 'handsome' cottage was spaciouly arranged with 14 rooms and many "improvements" including a fine lawn and stable for three horses. While not in use by the Byrnes, the cottage provided rental income.

According to ads in the *Eagle*, prospective tenants would apply at the Byrne's primary residence at 314 Clinton Street, Brooklyn.



*Byrne residence,  
314 Clinton Street  
as it appears today*

During one trip to Bay Shore, Long Island, some of the Byrne children began showing signs of tuberculosis. This threat to the family's wellbeing would change the course of future vacations. Dr. Byrne would now take the family to Saratoga where the climate, clean air and altitude were thought to be beneficial for those with respiratory problems.

The Byrnes took extended trips to Europe as was the custom for well-to-do residents of Clinton Street. Travel plans of prominent Brooklyn residents were usually recorded in the *Eagle*. A brief announcement in the *Eagle* on Tuesday, June 23, 1896, stated, "Dr. John Byrne of Clinton Avenue (sic), Brooklyn, who has a residence in Bay Shore (Long Island), is to sail for Europe early in July. He will remain some time touring the continent."

\* \* \* \* \*

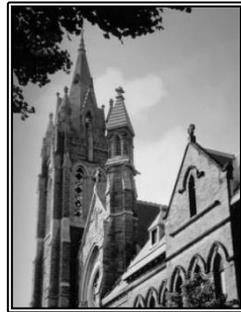
## Some Erroneous Reports

During their 42-year marriage, John and Mary Byrne witnessed the illness, death, funeral and burial of 11 children. William Stephen, Eliza Winifred, Edith Mary, Paul Nugent and Mary Gertrude died as young children. Mary Angela, Eugene Joseph, John Dever, Leontine Mary, Henry Vaughan, and Mary Winifred, died as young adults. Each death was recorded in the Byrne family Bible.

In early March, 1890, Dr. Byrne received tragic news. Rose's sister Angeline, also known as Mary Angela, was suddenly stricken with paralysis. Angeline, age 26, was a novice at an unnamed Roman Catholic convent. News of her illness first reached Dr. Byrne by telegram, at which time he traveled to Westchester County and found Angeline in a state of total paralysis. Angeline was transported to the Byrne home where she died, March 22. The cause of death was listed as a cerebral clot. According to the *Eagle*, Angeline had a charming disposition and "great personal beauty." She was buried in the family plot at Holy Cross Cemetery.

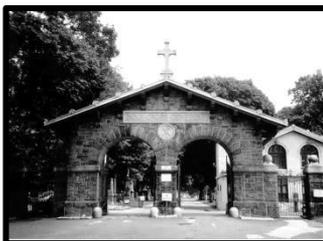
Normally the *Eagle* did not list the cause of death for ordinary obituaries. However, with Angeline's passing, the newspaper was careful to point out that Angeline died of a blood clot. The March 23 story mentioned the details of her death. Unlike tuberculosis, a blood clot is not contagious.

Rose was 15 when tragedy struck again. On August 10, 1894, Leontine Mary Byrne died at Bay Shore, Long Island. Leontine was six days shy of her 24th birthday. She was mourned by her family and many friends at a requiem mass at St. Agnes Church. She was buried in the family plot at Holy Cross Cemetery.



*St. Agnes Church  
Brooklyn*

Still grieving the loss of Leontine, yet another shock hit the Byrne family. Five months after Leontine's death, Henry Vaughan Byrne died on February 12, 1895. Following in his father's footsteps, Henry Vaughan was a practitioner at



*Main Gate, Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn*

St. Mary's Hospital. He graduated from medical school only three years earlier. Henry, like Leontine, died only a few days before his 24th birthday. A solemn requiem mass was held at St. Agnes Church at 10 a.m. on the following Thursday. According to the *Eagle*, February 14, the service was attended by friends, family and alumni of St. Mary's Hospital. Burial followed at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Several years later, three more Byrne children succumbed to tuberculosis. On September 6, 1899, Eugene Joseph died followed by John Dever Byrne, June 16, 1901. John and Eugene were both 33 at the time of their deaths. A few months after John's death, Mary Winifred, named after her mother, died on January 16. She was 26.

Although the passing of Joseph and John received brief mention in the *Eagle*, the newspaper could not ignore the mounting tragedy that afflicted the Byrne family. When Mary died on January 15 the headlines read, "Seventh Child is Dead: Despite All Precautions, Consumption Claims Another Victim in Family of Dr. John Byrne." Although the *Eagle* treated Dr. Byrne and his family with utmost respect, this particular story seemed to invade the privacy of the Byrne family.

Dr. Byrne was no stranger to the public spotlight. The *Eagle* frequently carried stories about the notable surgeon-in-chief of St. Mary's Hospital and his many accomplishments. However, the cause of Mary's death, or for that matter, the deaths of his other children, was a private matter and Dr. Byrne went to great lengths to keep it so.

Mary Winifred's death was publicly attributed to consumption. It was most ironic that a prominent Brooklyn physician could not protect his remaining children from its onslaught. Further, Dr. and Mrs. Byrne had searched their genealogies for traces of the disease, but no evidence of a familial connection could be found.



*Chapel Holy Cross  
Cemetery  
Brooklyn*

Not only grief stricken by Mary Winifred's death, Dr. Byrne was also burdened with the public interest created by news of another family tragedy. The stigma of tuberculosis made many people recoil from public scrutiny, but for a leading physician to lose most of his children by this dreaded disease challenged his professional integrity. The confidence of his patients was at stake, as well as his colleagues. If anyone could protect his family from tuberculosis, it was John Byrne. His insistence on sanitary clinical practice and systematic methods of treatment earned Dr. Byrne great recognition during his early medical career in Ireland. Further, he had more than adequate financial resources and contacts with the finest doctors in Brooklyn. All of this, however, was to no avail.

As expected, the *Eagle's* account of Mary Winifred's death did not sit well with the Byrne family. Although it is not known what transpired between Dr. Byrne and the *Eagle* staff after the story of Mary's death, the very next day the newspaper printed an apologetic retraction with the headline: "Death of Miss Mary Byrne: Consumption Not the Cause of Seven Deaths in the Family."

The *Eagle* made every effort to repair the damage to Dr. Byrne's reputation. "Some erroneous reports as to the cause of Miss Byrne's death have been published, it being stated that she died of consumption. This is not the case, nor has it been the case with regard to the deaths of seven members of Dr. Byrne's family. It is true that there have been cases of tuberculosis in the family, but Miss Byrne (Mary Winifred) was not afflicted with that disease and the surviving members of the family are in perfect health."

The retraction only made matters worse. This overt attempt to deny the cause of death simply heightened speculation about tuberculosis in the Byrne family. By now, the damage had been done and many friends and observers were concerned about Dr. Byrne's welfare.

The growing spotlight of public interest contributed to the physician's mental exhaustion. On Friday, February 14, 1902, the *Eagle* reported that Dr. Byrne would close his residence at 314 Clinton Street and take his family to Europe. Tickets were purchased for the steamship "Minneapolis" of the Atlantic Transport Company.

The aging doctor announced plans to continue his medical practice after the extended trip to Europe, but in a limited capacity. He would change his residence, too. By now, he probably suspected contamination at his home. Perhaps he would move to Manhattan on his return, as was the talk among friends and colleagues. Regardless, the details could be worked out later. John Byrne needed to protect his remaining two daughters from the relentless siege of tuberculosis and the public attention directed toward his family.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A Thunderclap

News of Dr. Byrne's intentions to leave for Europe reverberated through the medical community. Friends and family were sympathetic to the Byrne family tragedies, and saddened to see them go. Colleagues at St. Mary's Hospital arranged to honor their surgeon-in-chief with a reception at the Crescent Club at 5 p.m. on February 14. Many physicians from across Brooklyn attended the event and offered departing gifts for their beloved colleague and his family.

The next day, a large crowd met at the steamer's dock to wish the Byrnes farewell. It was reported that gifts and floral arrangements covered the state rooms. Although Dr. Byrne said the trip was for "a respite" from his many years of labor as a physician, he and Mrs. Byrne were now worried about their younger daughter. Rose was showing signs of the same disease that afflicted her brothers and sisters. The *Eagle* reported the Byrnes departure at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 15, to seek "new surroundings and an entire change of life."

Almost everyone knew this voyage would bring closure to the long and distinguished career of John Byrne. The public reason for this trip was rest and relaxation. Dr. Byrne planned to visit some of the great medical institutions of Europe. The winter would be spent in Paris with tours of Ireland, England and Germany. However, the real reason for the trip was known to almost everyone in Brooklyn.

According to the *Eagle*, Oct. 27, 1902, Dr. Byrne was distraught over the recent deaths of his adult children, John Dever and Mary Winifred. "When Dr. Byrne left for Europe last February it meant his retirement from practice. He gave as a reason for his trip abroad the need of new surroundings and an entire change of life on account of his family having been broken up by the death of his only (surviving) son and a daughter last year."

While in Rome, Dr. Byrne addressed the International Obstetrical Congress on September 18, 1902, concerning new methods of fighting cancer. At age 76, Dr. Byrne was considered an authority of the treatment of uterine cancer and his remarks were enthusiastically received by members of the Congress. Less than two weeks later on October 1, he died of heart failure.



*"Dr. Byrne"  
8" X 11" Grave Marker  
Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn*

Eugene Berard, Dr. Byrne's attorney at 55 Liberty St., stated that the announcement came like a "thunderclap" to him. Dr. Byrne's last letter to Mr. Berard spoke of his good health. Further, Dr. Byrne indicated that he was considering staying in Montreux, for the winter. Rose was 23 when her father died. Now, Rose and Evelyn, along with their mother, were the sole survivors of the Byrne family.

On Oct. 2, the *Eagle* covered Dr. Byrne's passing with bold headlines befitting a celebrity or a great scientist. Indeed, John Byrne had become something of a hero to the people of Brooklyn and a respected colleague in the medical community. A friend said that he died of worry. Others said that melancholy hastened his death.

Dr. Byrne had been an active practitioner in Brooklyn for 50 years. According to the *Eagle*, "he was known as a leader in his profession and as a citizen of blameless life." He is quoted as saying, "Eternal vigilance and increase of knowledge are demanded of a physician as much, if not more, than of any other professional man."

He was active in Catholic circles and widely known outside of his practice. The *Eagle* said of Dr. Byrne, "For all these services and for others which have left less permanent evidence of his fertile brain and kindly heart, Brooklyn owes to his memory the tribute of a lasting esteem."

## Land of the Sky

Following Dr. Byrne's death, his daughter Rose eventually recovered and returned to the U.S. with her mother and sister. While Rose's condition improved, Evelyn became ill. Four years later, Evelyn Mary, 33, died on Sunday, September 9, 1906. Predictably, the cause of her death was pulmonary tuberculosis. Now, only Rose and her mother survived the once large family of fifteen.

Shortly after Evelyn's funeral, Mary and Rose moved to Asheville. The "Land of the Sky" was described as a wonderful "plateau, diversified and irregular though it be, undulating between the shadows of the rippling Swannanoa to the base of sun tipped mountain crags, with numberless giant peaks as sentinels, rivals even the Rockies" (*Eagle*, December 27, 1897). The small mountain town had become a center for the treatment of tuberculosis. It was well known to Brooklyn residents who were searching for clear mountain air, clean water and moderate climate. Many Asheville resorts were routinely advertised in the *Eagle* including the Manor Inn, Battery Park Hotel and Kenilworth Inn.

People were drawn to Asheville for rehabilitation and many found the scenic beauty, moderate climate and natural amenities to their liking. Consequently, Asheville noticed an influx of wealthy immigrants. Endowed with financial resources, they moved to the city and built homes and businesses. According to Irby Stephens, M.D. (1985), some of the nation's finest doctors moved to Asheville during this time including C. V. Reynolds, Westray Battle, Karl Von Ruck, W. L. Dunn and others.

According to the *1909 Asheville City Directory*, Rose and Mary lived at 428 South Main Street (currently Biltmore Avenue). This was the "Ridgewood" boarding house on the Biltmore trolley line. Mrs. Ridgley Penniman was the proprietress. The property would become St. Joseph's Sanitarium, and later, St. Joseph's Hospital.

Rose and Mary were quickly integrated into the social life of the city. They were communicants of the newly completed St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 97 Haywood Street. According to Ladies of the Altar Society, 1923, Rose is listed as the memorial donor of the large statue of *St. Rose of Lima* in the church proper. The statue was made by the Daparto Statue Company, Italy. Church records show Mary's contribution of \$50 in memory of her husband in 1909.

The Asheville Country Club was a social gathering place for Rose and her friends. She was listed as a "regular, non-playing," member on the Club roster (ca. 1912-1914). Notable members included: George W. Vanderbilt, Richard Sharp Smith, Fred Seely (E. W. Grove's son-in-law), Dr. Westray Battle, Thomas Wadley Raoul and Dr. C. V. Reynolds.

After staying at the Ridgeway Boarding House, Rose and her mother moved to Milfoil Cottage in Albemarle Park. This picturesque community was the vision of Thomas Wadley Raoul. He was in poor health and moved to Asheville to recover. While here, he converted the family farm on Charlotte Street to a famous development.

News of Mr. Raoul's community traveled quickly to Brooklyn. On March 6, 1899, the *Eagle* featured the southern resort: "One of the most notable achievements of Asheville attractions is the opening of the Manor Resort Inn and cottages, erected by the Albemarle Park Company. The park contains thirty-four acres and extends from Asheville suburbs to points in the mountain beyond Sunset Drive. B. L. Gilbert of New York is the architect. The new resort may be reached via the Southern Railroad, which touches at all the attractive resorts of the South. Asheville is one of the most popular of the Southern Railroad's numerous winter resorts."

Rose made many friends while in Asheville. Among her closest was Amy Colyer. The Colyer family lived at the 'Cliff,' on Sunset Drive (at the intersection of Howland Road). Amy's father, Charles Thomas Colyer, was a well-known landscape architect. He was also a writer, painter and a poet. Mr. Colyer was recognized for his landscape design of Sunset Drive, Riverside Cemetery and work in the nearby town of Old Fort. He was also noted for landscape work at the Morganton Asylum (Broughton Hospital), and other sites in South Carolina and Tennessee. He died on September 14, 1915, and was survived by his widow, Mary Ellen; three daughters: Mrs. Ethel W. McAdams and Misses Amy and Julia Colyer. He was also survived by four sons: Charles, Leigh, Arthur and Thomas. Amy, Ethel and their parents are buried in Riverside Cemetery at the 'Old N Section,' Lot 20. Julia and niece Lillie Blackburn are buried in Lewis Memorial Park.

Early in their careers Amy and Julia Colyer were teachers, but later, both sisters became nurses. Julia, a 1905 graduate of St. Francis Xavier Hospital School of Nursing in Charleston, South Carolina, would become the proprietress of the Broadway Terrace Sanitarium in Asheville. Amy was a teacher at Kindergarten No. 2. She was also listed as a nurse in the Asheville City Directory, but information about her medical training is incomplete. Regardless, Amy's nursing skills were probably helpful to Rose.



**Charles Thomas and Mary Ellen Colyer**

## Mother's Death

Seven years after Rose arrived in Asheville, she suffered the loss of her mother, Mary Winifred Byrne. Mary died on Wednesday, February 19, 1913, at Milfoil Cottage. She was 72. Her physician, Dr. W. L. Dunn, an Asheville surgeon, attributed Mary's death to uremia or kidney failure. Mrs. Byrne's body was sent to Brooklyn for interment at Holy Cross Cemetery. A requiem mass was celebrated, February 22, at St. Agnes Church, Brooklyn.



*Milfoil Cottage  
Albemarle Park,  
Asheville*

Mary's death certificate listed Eugene Berard as the informant. Mr. Berard, Dr. Byrne's attorney, was trustee of the family estate. He was summoned to Asheville to assist Rose during the difficult time of her mother's death.

Mrs. Mary Winifred Byrne was a devoted wife and advocate of Dr. Byrne throughout his medical career. She was active in the Ladies' Aid Association which raised money for the poor and indigent patients of St. Mary's Hospital. One of the notable fund-raising events included an annual garden party. It was held on the campus of the hospital and continued for three days. Friends of the hospital would donate merchandise to be sold at various booths, and the proceeds were donated to the hospital.

Rose remembered the debutante reception and dance given in her honor on February 3, 1898. Rose, 18, was introduced to Brooklyn's elite families at this gala event. Interestingly, February 3 was her mother's 58th birthday. What should have been an occasion to honor Mrs. Byrne was instead lovingly devoted to Rose. Mrs. Byrne had the drawing room and library of their home decorated with southern simflax and roses along a backdrop of green palm leaves. Her sisters, Mary and Evelyn assisted in making the occasion memorable.

## Sunset Terrace

After Mary's funeral, Rose Byrne returned to Asheville and purchased a 2.3 acres from Thomas Wadley Raoul on April 29, 1913. Rose called her tract "Sunset Terrace." It is described in a plat drawn by surveyor F. J. Fanning (see p. 26). Prior to Raoul's ownership, the Sunset Terrace property belonged to the Asheville Country Club.

R. S. Howland, owner of the Asheville and Craggy Mountain Railroad, ran a line above the eastern boundary of the Sunset Terrace property from the trolley car barn on Macon Avenue to Grace. He also ran an electric trolley line from the car barn to Overlook Park, located on top of Sunset Mountain. By 1913, the car barn had been removed along with the track to Grace. The track to Overlook had been replaced by E. W. Grove's "Autoway," a scenic toll road. Trolley service from Pack Square to the Grove Park Inn remained.

Miss Byrne's neighbors were Dr. C. V. Reynolds to the south, and the Asheville Country Club to the north and west. Her newly acquired property was filled with dogwood, rhododendron, wild azalea and redbud. The land was forested with oak, maple and poplar.

Rose immediately built two cottages near Macon Avenue which she named, "Rosemary" and "Primrose." She established residency in the larger "Rosemary." Both houses appeared in the Buncombe County tax record in 1913. Approximately two years later, Rose built three additional cottages: "Rambler," "Westview" and "Blossoms." These cottages first appeared in the tax record in 1915.

In addition to Rose, the *Asheville City Directory* listed Amy Colyer as a resident of "Rosemary" by 1916. On February 26, 1917, Rose sold a small parcel of land (below "Blossoms") to Amy who added a sixth cottage to the neighborhood. "Violet" first appeared in the Buncombe County tax record in 1920.

## **Two Brothers from Hillsboro**

The layout of Sunset Terrace was designed by Civil Engineer, Harry L. Parker. He was the Manager and Engineer of E. W. Grove Investments from 1913 to 1927. He designed the residential area of Grove Park including Sunset Parkway and Edwin, Evelyn, Gertrude, Lawrence, Katherine and Celia places. He was also instrumental in the design of Kimberly Avenue and the Grovemont community in Swannanoa.

In a letter to Rose on January 10, 1916, Harry Parker stated, "You asked me one day about the value of all of your property and I think that I said about \$50,000, but it might be more than that considering the location." The growing popularity of Grove Park contributed significantly to neighboring property values. Harry Parker informed Rose that high property values were "caused by the surroundings."

He also advised Rose to have a plat drawn of her entire community. "It might be well for you to have a large map made at some future time showing the drives and exact location of each house with first floor plan of each. It would be useful both for renting and selling if you ever have desire to do so." The large map was completed on November. 17, 1921 (see p. 27).

Mr. Parker was reclusive and eventually dropped his membership in the Asheville Country Club and other civic organizations. Instead, he preferred collecting and studying maps. The Asheville Times (September. 9, 1947) described him as, "A quiet, modest, unassuming man, he did not particularly care for clubs or public activity." He was interested in art, music and books and was also a member of Friends of the Library.

He was elected County Commissioner of Public Works in 1932 and held that office until his death in September 9, 1947. Harry Parker is buried in Pinegrove Cemetery, Swannanoa with his wife and her second husband.

The cottages of Sunset Terrace were designed by architect, Charles Parker, brother of Harry Parker. Charles Parker was employed by the firm of Smith and Carrier Inc. Richard Sharp Smith and Albert Heath Carrier incorporated in 1910. Charles Parker designed cottages in the communities of Biltmore Forest, Grove Park and Montford, although he is best remembered for his design of the Grove Arcade in downtown Asheville. In 1921, Charles Parker designed an additional cottage for Rose and named it, "Cottage #7." It was never built and the proposed location is unknown.



Cottage #7, Sunset terrace for Miss Rose Mary Byrne, Asheville, N. C.  
Charles N. Parker, Architect, July 28, 1921

Harry and Charles moved to Asheville in 1904 with their mother, Caroline Holmes Parker. They resided on Arlington Street. They came from Hillsboro, Ohio, where their father, John Parker, died when the boys were young.

## Precipitous Declivity

Owing to her considerable inheritance, Rose relied on New York attorney, Eugene Berard for advice on insurance, taxes, new investment opportunities and many other practical matters. Both of her parents came from wealthy families. In addition to being one of Brooklyn's most prominent doctors, Dr. Byrne was the son of a wealthy Irish businessman. Mrs. Byrne's family owned several hundred acres of mining land with timber, coal and mineral reserves on "Little Briar" in Brown County, West Virginia. Mr. Berard proved to be a cherished family friend in addition to his role as trustee of the Byrne family estate.

During the construction of the Sunset Terrace neighborhood, Rose incurred several unexpected expenses. On at least one occasion, erosion damaged the narrow winding road that connected her cottages to Macon Ave. and Linden Lane (currently Woodlink Road). Consequently, Rose questioned the profitability of her real estate investment. Eugene Berard, offered this response in a letter, March 11, 1916. "You have had much expense, and will probably have more, for drainage, road-repair, as a result of the 'precipitous declivity' of Sunset Terrace. " However, "that very precipitous declivity may add considerably to the value of the property by affording such a grand west and south view for all the cottages, and it seems likely that the expenses for drains and roads will be less in the future especially when the grass and shrubbery grow big enough to hold more of the rain and the...ground becomes better settled and less subject to slides."

Rose was also concerned about the high costs of building materials and the rate of return of her rental cottages. Mr. Berard explained that some of these expenses would be offset by the rising value of her property. He wrote, "the actual net income (or "return") above taxes, insurance, repairs, etc., is not a fair test of the value of the investment, if the property should continue to rise in value for which it can be sold at any time."

Inflated property values were due to the growing popularity of Asheville. The city was bustling with activity during the period from 1913 to 1920. Fred Seeley supervised the construction of the Grove Park Inn which was completed in one year. The opening was celebrated in July 1913, two months after Rose purchased the neighboring Sunset Terrace property.

Asheville had become very popular as a golfing destination with the formation of the Asheville Country Club (adjoining Sunset Terrace). In February, 1908, a story appeared in the Asheville newspaper stating, "It is now the plan to erect, about one hundred yards to the north of the old Swannanoa club house, a new building that will cost somewhere in the neighborhood of \$12,000." The old clubhouse was located behind the current Albemarle Inn near Macon Avenue and was later moved to 81 Edgemont Road. It is now a private residence.

Forty-five acres of land had been purchased for one of the finest golf links in the South. According to J. J. McCloskey, the course would eventually be nine holes. In addition to golf, other recreational opportunities for squash, bowling and tennis were also planned.

Although the city experienced a few setbacks, Asheville continued to grow as more people learned about the beautiful mountain community. Asheville experienced its worst flood ever in 1916, when the remnants of two hurricanes passed over the city within a few days. The French Broad River flooded areas of the city causing great damage. It claimed Asheville's popular Riverside Park.

In 1917, Asheville participated in a massive military recruitment with the declaration of war. However, none of these events could stifle the enthusiasm of wealthy investors seeking to capitalize on Asheville's economic growth.

## Bon Voyage

In addition to an active social life, Rose enjoyed traveling with her closest friend, Amy. Rose's father believed that 'new surroundings' were necessary for rest and recuperation, so Rose developed an appreciation for adventure and faraway destinations at an early age.

In the spring of 1919, Rose and Amy visited La Jolla, California, the Canadian Rockies and Skagway, Alaska. On April 11, The *La Jolla Journal* reported, "Misses Colyer and Byrne, two estimable young ladies from Asheville, N. C., who have been in La Jolla for a number of weeks, are planning a trip to Alaska. Both of them are charming, agreeable young ladies, and their many friends here are loth to have them leave. We can only wish them bon voyage and happy times."

On their way to Alaska, Rose and Amy visited beautiful Lake Louise in Banff National Park, Canada. Soon thereafter, on July 3, 1919, The *Daily Alaskan* chronicled Rose and Amy's travels on the passenger list of the steamer "Yukon." They visited White Pass Falls and several Indian sites.

In 1921, the two ladies traveled to Europe. They visited Italy, France, England and Egypt. Historic sites and war ruins were among the many places of interest to Rose and Amy. They also enjoyed shopping and taking advantage of local cultural opportunities including a camel ride while in Egypt.

Rose and Amy spoke enthusiastically of their travels. On January 16, 1921, Mrs. C. S. Gray Hill of London responded to correspondence from Amy, "It was such a nice letter that you sent me. My happiness is in my travels and beautiful experiences of my life and I can always get away from sordid housekeeping by taking a look around my rooms which are full of remembrances. The world is so beautiful and lovely Alaska took hold of my imagination as it has yours. I love the lovely grandeur of the Nile great river stretches. You will find Egypt too gay I suspect and too European."

## Travel Photographs



*Rose M. Byrne Travel Photos, Alaska, 1919*



*Rose M. Byrne in Alaska*



*Alaska, 1919*



*Rose M. Byrne in Europe, 1921*

## A New Diagnosis

In 1920, Rose Byrne experienced more health problems leading to diagnoses of diabetes. Perhaps motivated by health concerns, Rose sold “Blossoms” to Amy Colyer on December 15, 1921. “Rosemary,” “Primrose,” “Rambler” and “Westview” would remain in Rose’s possession until her death. Amy was now the legal owner of “Blossoms” and “Violet.”

In May 1922, Rose wrote her will and designated Asheville attorney Kingsland Van Winkle as executor. In it, she divided her sizable estate among several charitable organizations. Specifically, she established a large endowment for one or more beds at St. Joseph’s Sanitarium for the treatment of destitute tuberculosis patients. Amy Colyer, would receive \$15,000, and all of Rose’s personal effects. Rose contributed \$10,000 to the Catholic Missionary Union of Washington, D.C. Misses Nannie and Lizzie Stevens of Asheville would receive \$1,000 each. Nannie and Lizzie operated a private school in their home at 15 Bearden Street in Montford (Tessier, 1982). Rose also bequeathed money to Victorine Page of Brooklyn, Charles Ulrichs of New York, the Provincial House of the Good Shepherd of Baltimore, St. Mary’s Industrial School for Boys of Baltimore and the Right Reverend Benjamin Keiley of Savannah.

Kingsland Van Winkle was the attorney for Rose’s mother. Mrs. Byrne owned a significant amount of acreage in West Virginia that was harvested for timber. Although Mary Winifred Byrne died in 1913, Mr. Van Winkle would be involved in litigation over property disputes for years following her death. These issues involving Mary’s estate remained unresolved during Rose’s lifetime.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Highlands

During the summer of 1924, Rose rented a cottage in Highlands, North Carolina. Unfortunately, her health had worsened. On Sunday, July 27, she became gravely ill. Dr. H. P. P. Thompson attended Rose from Monday until her death at 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, July 29. After slipping into a coma, Rose died at age 44.

Rose's body was transported to Asheville, and then to Brooklyn, where she was interred in the family plot at Holy Cross Cemetery. Her grave lies in a section called, "Front of the Chapel," Range 10, Plot 111. No marker identifies her final resting place.

Thirteen members of the Byrne family are buried at Holy Cross Cemetery in the large plot acquired by Dr. Byrne in May 1880. The plot is conspicuous by the absence of individual grave markers. Two small corner markers offer tribute to the entire family. The first, approximately 8 by 11 inches, simply reads, "Dr. Byrne." The other marker of the same size is inscribed, "No. 109 to 112, S. 10."

On July 30, 1924, *The Asheville Times* reported Rose M. Byrne's death with the prominent headline, "MISS BYRNE DIES AT SUMMER HOME . . ." The story continues, "During her stay in Asheville Miss Byrne became identified with the social life of the city. At the time of her death she owned several residences grouped under the name Sunset Terrace in Grove Park."

Executor of Miss Byrne's estate, Kingsland Van Winkle, carried out her wishes. Her four remaining cottages were sold: "Rosemary" to C. W. R. Radeker, "Westview" and "Rambler" to Maria Louise Stevenson, and "Primrose" to Amy Colyer. By the summer of 1925, Amy had become the matron landowner of three Sunset Terrace cottages.

\* \* \* \* \*

## Amy Colyer



*Amy Colyer*  
1866 - 1949

Amy's financial records provide an interesting account of the upkeep for her Sunset Terrace cottages. In 1924, she paid a considerable sum for property taxes and insurance. She also contracted necessary and routine repair work. In 1925, she paid \$225 to add a garage to "Violet." Amy added lamps and other furnishings to make each cottage more attractive to prospective tenants.

She enjoyed shopping at Bon Marche and Sluder Brothers, two of Asheville's finest stores. Amy frequented the Charlotte Street Pharmacy, Charlotte Street Grocery, J. L. Smathers & Sons and Dunham's Music House.

Amy's love of gardening often prompted the purchase of new plants and shrubs for Sunset Terrace. She spent hours doing yard work and preferred the outdoors.

She was a member of the Asheville Country Club, Saturday Music Club and Trinity Episcopal Church. Amy made contributions to both the church and the Community Chest. She was constantly helping her sisters with financial gifts and loans. On several occasions Amy purchased flowers at Dickinson Florist in memory of Rose Byrne.

Amy died on January 26, 1949, at her sister's residence, 13 Wilmington Street, West Asheville. Before her death, she sold "Blossoms" to Virginia Lasher in 1942. Amy bequeathed all of her real estate to Julia Colyer. Julia sold "Primrose" to Guy and Trula Johnson in October 1950. That same month, she sold "Violet" to Ralph and Marie King.

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Architectural Conformity**

Being the only survivor of the Byrne family, Rose inherited a considerable estate. She was affiliated with the social elite of Asheville. However, she demonstrated concern for others through several substantial gifts. Finally, she was very loyal to her friend, Amy Colyer.

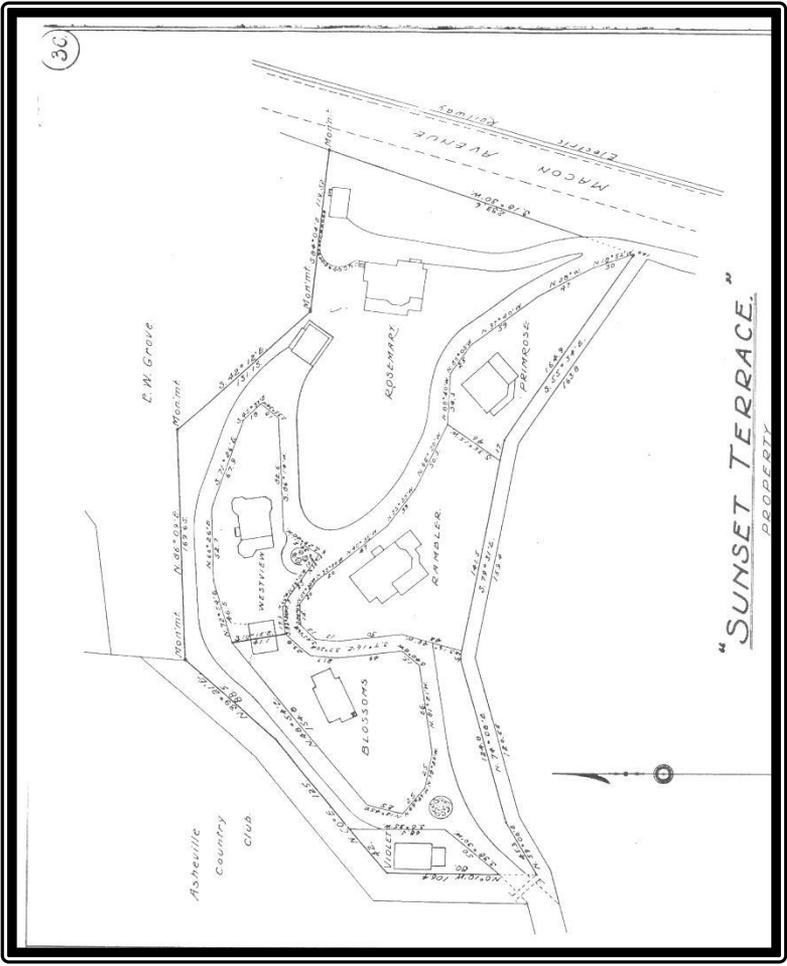
Sunset Terrace was dear to Miss Byrne. In her directives, Rose ordered the careful management of her neighborhood. She stipulated that no changes should be made to the existing structures that would alter the character of the houses or the landscape. In a deed to C. W. R. Radeker, she stated, “. . . roads or driveways shall be and remain forever kept open as roads or driveways for the use and benefit of all the owners of property in Sunset Terrace.” Further, “. . . the buildings erected, or improvements made, upon any of the property hereby conveyed shall conform architecturally to the buildings now on the Sunset Terrace property . . . ”

Although her grave in Holy Cross Cemetery is unmarked, the best monument to Rose Byrne lies in the cottages that line the narrow street of her beloved Sunset Terrace. Each cottage is uniquely different, but each is charming in its own way. This quaint neighborhood is Rose Byrne's legacy.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Sunset Terrace Plat**  
*Harry L. Parker, Civil Engineer*



Plat Book 2, p. 36, November 17, 1921 (Note: Electric Railway, top right)

Rose M. Byrne  
Obituary  
July 30, 1924

THE TIMES, WEDNESDAY JULY 30, 1924

## MISS BYRNE DIES AT SUMMER HOME

Body of Well Known Resident  
May Be Taken to New  
York City

Miss Rose M. Byrne, well known Asheville resident died at Highlands in Macon county yesterday, according to word received in the city by friends last night. Miss Byrne had been seriously ill since Sunday. She left this city last June to spend the summer at Highlands, leasing a summer cottage there.

Funeral arrangements have not been made, but friends here believe the body will be taken to New York city for burial. Miss Byrne came here in 1906 from New York city. Her mother accompanied her. In 1913 Miss Byrne died here. Her father, Dr. John Byrne, prominent physician in New York city, died several years prior to Miss Byrne's coming to this city.

During her stay in Asheville Miss Byrne became identified with the social life of the city. At the time of her death she owned several residences grouped under the name of Sunset Terrace in Grove park.

Miss Byrne was a communicant of St. Lawrence Catholic church. A brief funeral service may be held here in case the body is taken to New York city.

Miss Byrne had not been in good health for several years. She came to this section to recover. Miss Byrne's mother was prominently connected in West Virginia.

No near relatives survive.

*The second paragraph contains an error. "In 1913 Miss Byrne died..." It should be, "In 1913 Mrs. Byrne died..."*

## Rosemary Cottage

Rose Byrne's executor, Kingsland VanWinkle, sold "Rosemary," July 1, 1925, to Charles Washington Reed Radeker of Parkersburg, West Virginia. Mr. Radeker also owned Sunnicrest Villa which he purchased from George W. Vanderbilt in 1911. "Sunnicrest," designed by Richard Sharp Smith, is the only surviving villa of Mr. Vanderbilt's five original villas on Vernon Hill in the community of Victoria (currently Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College). Mr. Vanderbilt's villas were: "Sunnicrest," "Dovecote," "Ridgelawn," "Spurwood," and "Westdale."

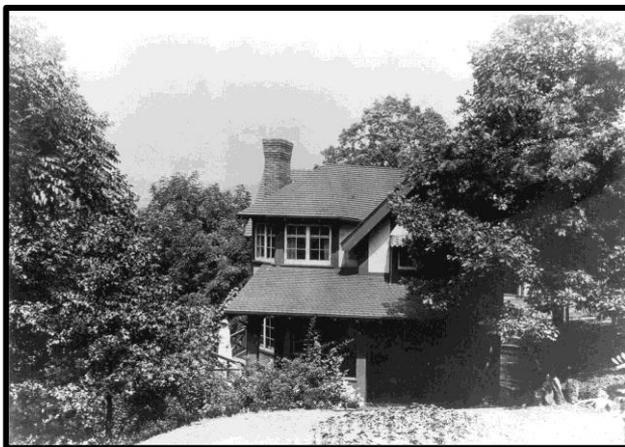
According to the *Asheville City Directory*, Mr. Radeker's daughter, Ruth Radeker Cooper, lived in Rosemary until her death on September 22, 1949. She was an accomplished pianist and studied at the New England Conservatory of Music. Two other Sunset Terrace property owners died in 1949, Amy Colyer and Maria Louise Stevenson.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Rosemary Cottage Completed 1913</i>	<i>Rose M. Byrne</i>
<i>July 1, 1925</i>	<i>C. W. R. Radeker</i>
<i>June 9, 1934</i>	<i>Carrie E. Radeker</i>
<i>Nov. 9, 1935</i>	<i>Ruth Radeker Cooper</i>
<i>Aug. 10, 1950</i>	<i>William G &amp; Charlotte M. Prentice</i>
<i>Aug. 11, 1960</i>	<i>Reid D. &amp; Evelyn Drum</i>
<i>Dec. 15, 1969</i>	<i>Jay O. &amp; Sandra M. Roesner</i>
<i>July 26, 1971</i>	<i>Thomas A. &amp; Rebecca C. Neely</i>
<i>Oct. 4, 1979</i>	<i>Jack C. &amp; Lee H. Anderson</i>

## Primrose Cottage

“Primrose” and “Rosemary” were built in 1913. After Rose Byrne died, “Primrose” was sold to Amy Colyer on April 13, 1925. The cottage remained with Amy until her death on January 26, 1949. Julia Colyer, heir to Amy’s estate, sold “Primrose” on October 25, 1950, to Guy and Trula Johnson.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Primrose Cottage Completed 1913</i>	<i>Rose M. Byrne</i>
<i>April 13, 1925</i>	<i>Amy Colyer</i>
<i>Sept. 30, 1950</i>	<i>Julia Colyer</i>
<i>Oct. 25, 1950</i>	<i>Guy M. &amp; Trula Johnson</i>
<i>Sept. 20, 1978</i>	<i>Maryrose MacNeil &amp; Harold Cumbaugh</i>
<i>March 31, 2003</i>	<i>Robert H. Weed</i>



*Primrose Cottage, ca. 1918*

## Rambler Cottage

“Rambler” and “Westview” were sold to Maria Louise Stevenson, March 11, 1925. One year later Miss Stevenson sold “Rambler” to Eugene Sly. Following Mr. Sly’s death, the cottage was sold to Ruth Radeker Cooper of “Rosemary” in 1937.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Rambler Cottage Completed 1915</i>	<i>Rose M. Byrne</i>
<i>March 11, 1925</i>	<i>M. Louise Stevenson</i>
<i>Jan. 2, 1926</i>	<i>Eugene Sly</i>
<i>March 13, 1937</i>	<i>Ruth Radeker Cooper</i>
<i>May 11, 1950</i>	<i>David S. and Madine J. Latham</i>
<i>Dec. 7, 1956</i>	<i>Ralph R. (Jr.) &amp; Nelly G. King</i>
<i>Dec. 12, 1962</i>	<i>Clarence M. English</i>
<i>Feb. 10, 1978</i>	<i>Maryrose MacNeil Cumbaugh</i>
<i>Sept. 21, 1979</i>	<i>Richard V. &amp; Kay H. Gallagher</i>
<i>July 9, 1986</i>	<i>Gary S. &amp; Georgeanne Eaton</i>
<i>Nov. 16, 1989</i>	<i>Terry J. Powell</i>
<i>Sept. 29, 2000</i>	<i>Matthew &amp; Kimberly Wood</i>

## Westview Cottage

Miss Maria Louise Stevenson, a native of Glasgow, Missouri, moved to Asheville (ca. 1924) from Chicago. She was a minister in the Christian Science Church. During the Great Depression, Carolina Mortgage Company foreclosed on Miss Stevenson's "Westview."

On September 8, 1937, Helen (Stevenson's sister) and Henry Hudson, purchased "Westview" and eventually sold the cottage back to Miss Stevenson on October 7, 1940. Miss Stevenson lived in "Westview" until her death on September 12, 1949.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Westview Cottage Completed 1915</i>	<i>Rose M. Byrne</i>
<i>March 11, 1925</i>	<i>M. Louise Stevenson</i>
<i>Jan. 24, 1933</i>	<i>Central Investment Corporation</i>
<i>Sept. 8, 1937</i>	<i>Henry &amp; Helen Hudson</i>
<i>Oct. 7, 1940</i>	<i>M. Louise Stevenson</i>
<i>Nov. 11, 1949</i>	<i>George &amp; Randolph R. MacAtee</i>
<i>Nov. 29, 1955</i>	<i>Jack C. &amp; Lee H. Anderson</i>
<i>Oct. 10, 1980</i>	<i>Ray &amp; Deborah W. Kluttz</i>
<i>March 8, 1982</i>	<i>Jack C. &amp; Lee H. Anderson</i>
<i>July 28, 1982</i>	<i>Jonathan W. &amp; Kyle H. Russell</i>
<i>Aug. 31, 1984</i>	<i>Gregory R. &amp; Mary J. Edwards</i>
<i>July 18, 1986</i>	<i>Joseph W. &amp; Janet L. Franklin</i>

## Blossoms Cottage

“Blossoms” was the only cottage in the Sunset Terrace community that Rose Byrne sold. Amy Colyer purchased “Blossoms” from Rose on December 15, 1921. Amy sold “Blossoms” to Virginia Lasher in 1942. According to the *Asheville City Directory*, Amy lived in “Blossoms” for a brief period around 1930 to 1932.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Blossoms Cottage Completed 1915</i>	<i>Rose M. Byrne</i>
<i>Dec. 15, 1921</i>	<i>Amy Colyer</i>
<i>April 10, 1942</i>	<i>Virginia Wells Lasher</i>
<i>Jan. 17, 1945</i>	<i>Harold &amp; Patricia P. Suttles</i>
<i>April 14, 1955</i>	<i>Marian T. &amp; Arthur Chesbro</i>
<i>April 3, 1959</i>	<i>Kathleen B. &amp; W. R. Agee</i>
<i>July 22, 1959</i>	<i>Earl L. &amp; Margaret M. Shook</i>
<i>March 17, 1970</i>	<i>Harold C. &amp; Martha O. Enloe</i>
<i>May 28, 1971</i>	<i>George E. &amp; Elizabeth L. Ivey</i>
<i>Oct. 20, 1976</i>	<i>Maryrose MacNeil Cumbaugh</i>
<i>July 27, 1990</i>	<i>Frederick W. Zurburg &amp; Renee M. Janin</i>
<i>Sept. 15, 2000</i>	<i>Christine D. Longoria</i>

## Violet Cottage

Amy Colyer built “Violet,” and it remained in her possession until her death in 1949. Julia Colyer inherited the cottage in September 1950. Julia sold the property in October to Ralph and Marie King.

Noted architect and silversmith, William W. Dodge Jr. lived in “Violet” in 1924. According to his daughter, Nancy Holloway, he suffered from tuberculosis. “Bill” Dodge purchased property on Woodlink Road in 1924. He owned the house at 20 Woodlink from 1924 to 1959. His silversmith shop was located at 421 Charlotte Street until 1927, when he moved it to 365 Vanderbilt Road in Biltmore Forest. His first architectural commission (1925) was an English Tudor house at 30 Kimberly Knoll.

<i>Purchase Date</i>	<i>Owner</i>
<i>Feb. 26, 1917</i>	<i>Rose Byrne sells parcel to Amy Colyer</i>
<i>Violet Cottage Completed 1920</i>	<i>Amy Colyer</i>
<i>Sept. 28, 1950</i>	<i>Julia B. Colyer</i>
<i>Oct. 25, 1950</i>	<i>Ralph R. &amp; Marie H. King</i>
<i>Aug. 26, 1966</i>	<i>Jack C. &amp; Lee H. Anderson</i>
<i>Aug. 3, 1981</i>	<i>Christine D. Longoria</i>
<i>Sept. 16, 1985</i>	<i>Ann M. Campbell</i>
<i>Aug. 28, 1997</i>	<i>Christine D. Longoria</i>
<i>Oct. 30, 2000</i>	<i>Geni W. &amp; Douglas N. McKee</i>
<i>March 28, 2002</i>	<i>Deborah and Gordon Pirie</i>

**St. Rose of Lima**  
St. Lawrence Catholic Church, Asheville  
*(Currently St. Lawrence Basilica)*



*Memorial Donation*  
*by*  
*Rose M. Byrne*

**Byrne Burial Plot**  
Holy Cross Cemetery, Brooklyn



*The Byrne family plot is located between the two small flat markers in the foreground*

**Harry Parker**  
*Civil Engineer*



*Harry Parker designed the roads and laid out the lots for Rose Byrne's Sunset Terrace. She consulted with him regarding erosion on the property.*

**Charles Parker**  
*Architect*



*Charles Parker is best known for his design of the Grove Arcade, Asheville. He was also employed by Rose M. Byrne to design the cottages of Sunset Terrace. His caricature is embossed on the Grove Arcade at the main entrance.*

### **Early Rambler Cottage Photo**



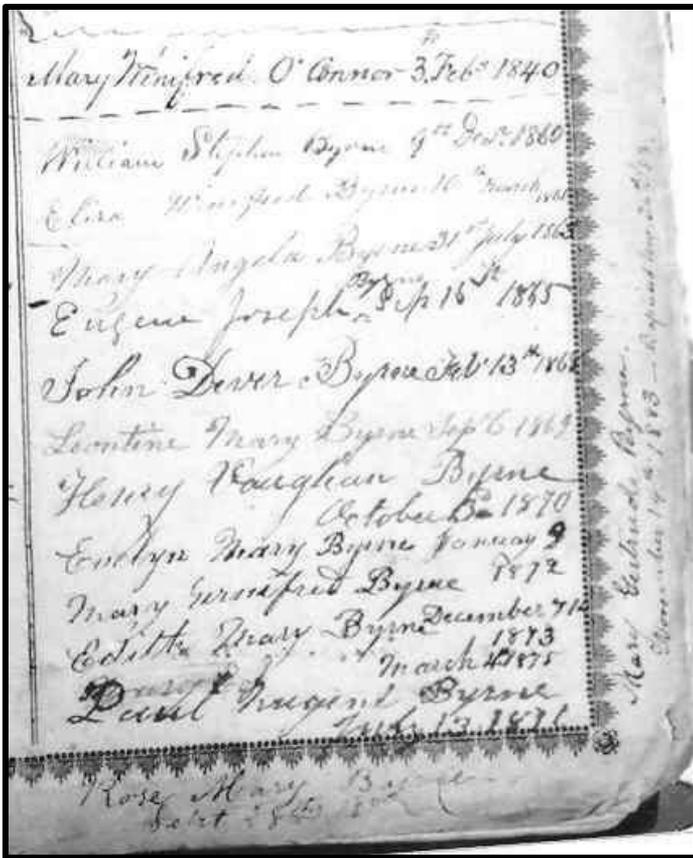
*Rambler Cottage as it appeared, ca. 1918*

### **Early Sunset Terrace Photo**



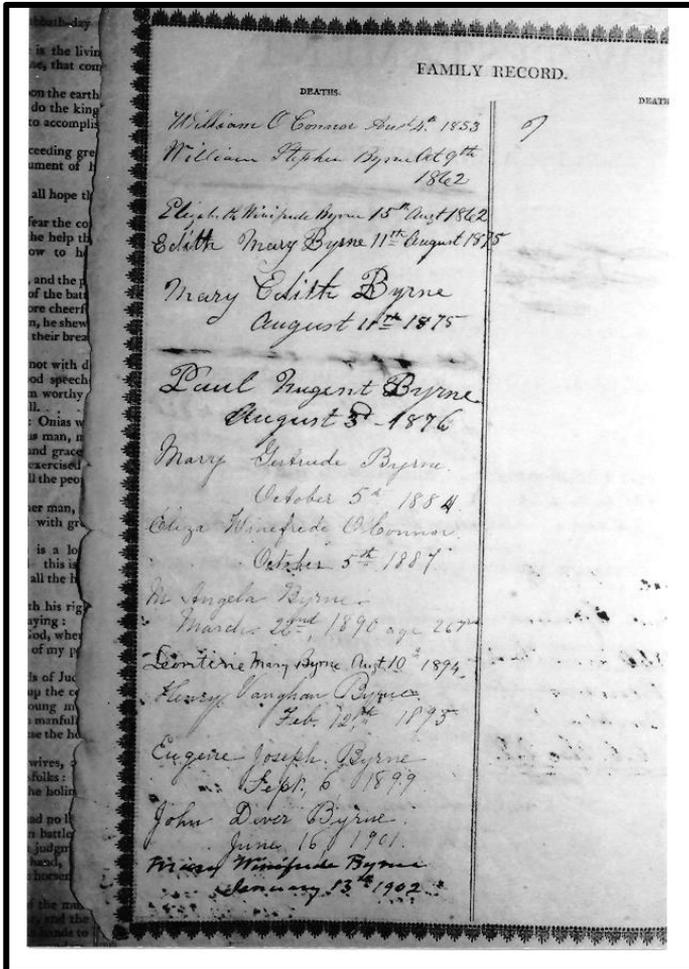
*This photo was taken ca. 1918, prior to the construction of Violet Cottage. The photographer is standing on the future site of Violet Cottage.*

**Births**  
Byrne Family Bible



The Byrne family Bible listing the births of Mrs. Byrne (Mary Winifred O'Connor) and Byrne children. Rose is listed below the margin at the bottom. Her birthday is Sept. 28, 1879

## Deaths Byrne Family Bible



The Byrne Bible contains an incomplete record the the deaths of Byrne children. Edith is recorded twice. Mary Winifred Byrne's death was the last entry in the Bible. Evelyn died in 1906 and Rose died in 1924.

**National Register of Historic Places**  
*Dec. 16, 2005*



**State of North Carolina**  
**Department of Cultural Resources**  
**Office of Archives and History**

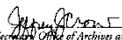
This is to certify that

**WESTVIEW COTTAGE**  
**Sunset Terrace Historic District**  
**Asheville - Buncombe County**

has been entered in  
**THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

by the  
United States Department of the Interior  
upon nomination by the State Historic Preservation Officer under  
provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-665).

The National Register is a list of properties "significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture—a comprehensive index of the significant physical evidences of our national patrimony." Properties listed therein deserve to be preserved by their owners as a part of the cultural heritage of our nation.

  
Deputy Secretary, Office of Archives and History  
and  
State Historic Preservation Officer

**December 16, 2005**

*Date Entered*



*Westview Cottage*

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\* \* \* \* \*

## Acknowledgments

*For June*

*You knew of Rose long before this project was born.  
I'm grateful our paths crossed.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Rick Colyer, descendant of Charles Thomas Colyer.  
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Register of Deeds, Macon County, NC. Zoe Rhine and Ann Wright, Special Collections, Pack Memorial Library Asheville.  
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\* \* \* \* \*

*I would like to express grateful appreciation to my wife, Janet, and two daughters, Anna and Corrie, for their support and enthusiasm.*

\* \* \* \* \*

Photographs were taken by the author except for the portraits of Dr. John Byrne, Amy Colyer, travel photographs and 1918 photographs of Sunset Terrace.  
Special thanks to Zoe Rhine, NC Collection, Pack Library for permission to use the 1918 Sunset Terrace photos and for her assistance with this project.  
Portrait of Dr. John Byrne, courtesy State University of New York, Downstate Medical Center Archives  
Portrait of Amy Colyer, courtesy Rick Colyer  
Portrait of Charles Thomas and Mary Ellen Colyer, Amy Colyer Collection  
Travel photographs, Bible and blueprints, Amy Colyer Collection  
Rose M. Byrne Obituary, courtesy Asheville Citizen-Times