

The Slimp house put the castle in Castle Hills

1931 Slimp house holds lots of memories

Thousands of people drive daily by the old two-story stone house tucked in a grove of oaks off busy Lockhill Selma Road, but few know the history of the house that was once far out in the country, known as "the castle" in Castle Hills.

Designed by prominent San Antonio architect Ralph Cameron, whose best-known buildings include the 1925 Neo-Gothic Medical Arts Building (which became the Emily Morgan Hotel), the house was built in 1931 by Chester Slimp, a local oil distributor, and his wife Helen.

A Virginia native, Helen Ferne Slimp was a lifelong artist, who worked in oils, lithography, stained glass and china painting. She was a friend of Mount Rushmore sculptor Gutzam Borglum and art patron Marion Koogler McNay, painted alongside the Onderdonks, and was a teacher to Porfirio Salinas.

"She liked that modern stuff," Slimp said of McNay in the Express-News in 1990, on her 100th birthday. "I never cared for it myself. I thought an apple should look like an apple."

Chester Slimp died in 1965, but Helen Slimp lived to be 105, dying Oct. 29, 2005.

The Slimp family sold the house in 2007; it has been an interior design firm and The Lodge restaurant, and is now The Veranda, a special event venue run by former Plaza San Antonio chef Mike Bomberg.



Helen and Chester Slimp, shown in the '40s, built their home on a hilltop north of San Antonio in 1931.



"Bluebonnet Lane," an oil painting by San Antonio artist Helen Ferne Slimp circa 1935, shows what is now Hildebrand Avenue west of Broadway.



The Slimp house shown soon after it was built in 1931 of stone collected at Olmos Creek.



The 1931 Slimp house in Castle Hills today.

The Article:

These were my grandparents. My sister Charlotte was the one interviewed for the newspaper article.

See full story with 34 photos at <http://www.expressnews.com/lifestyle/home-garden/article/1931-Castle-Hills-namesake-house-holds-a-wealth-7947715.php?t=b805877f2d01065692&cmpid=email-premium>

Paintings:

The Bluebonnet Lane picture hangs in my dining room. My sister and I have a majority of my grandmother's works. She sat in the fields painting on an easel and under an umbrella. My dad hauled her and her equipment all around for her back then. A friend's ranch near Pipe Creek was another favored place to paint her hill country landscapes.

Our Home:

We lived on another part of the property. Our parents' home was at the corner of West Avenue and Military Highway. I had many years of great memories from there and back then.

Lee Connections:

My dad always flew a big Confederate flag at our house on football game days. You could see it from Military Highway above the trees on a 35 foot flag pole.

The Lee band drummers in the class of '67 learned how to march and play drum cadences up and down the road between our house and my grandparents' house during the summer.

The Architect:

My granddad, dad, and my uncle were friends with and often used to eat lunch with the architect, William Cameron. I was at several of these lunches, but I was only about 9-11 years old. I only remember a few WWII stories. Cameron also designed the big post office building on the north end of Alamo Plaza.