

Method, NC and Rich Park



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Berry O'Kelly





Born in 1861 in Chapel Hill, he was motherless and attended school in Chapel Hill.

Berry O'Kelly was primarily responsible for all that happens in the rest of this story.

Berry O'Kelly

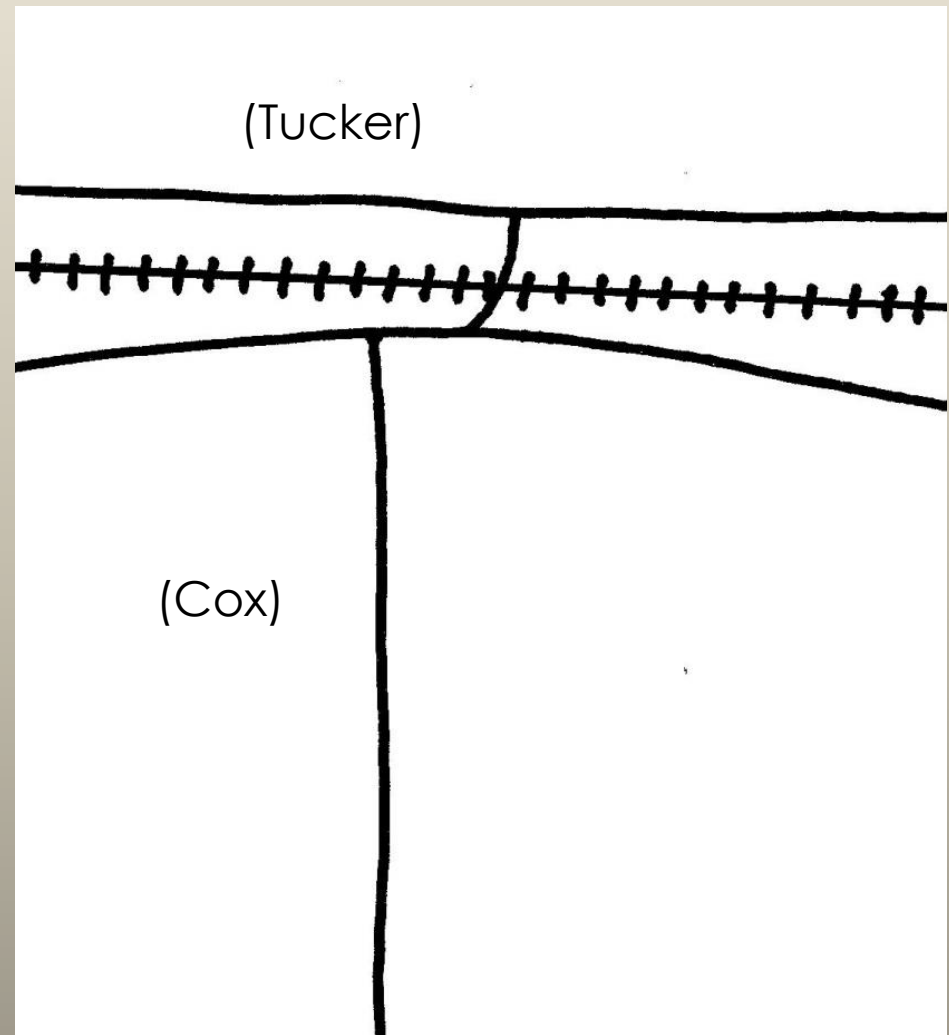
Meanwhile... back in west Raleigh... 1865

- The Civil War had ended.
- Plantations near Raleigh freed slaves.
- Raleigh --Very rapid growth
- 1870: 4094 of 7790 residents are “colored”
- Freed slaves formed communities.
- One of those was the “Method” area.
- The University, Meredith College, and nearby farms provided employment.

Method Area 1865

Here is what it looked like in 1865.

- The Norfolk and Southern Railroad Leading to Raleigh
- Three dirt roads with no names
- Tucker and Cox plantations



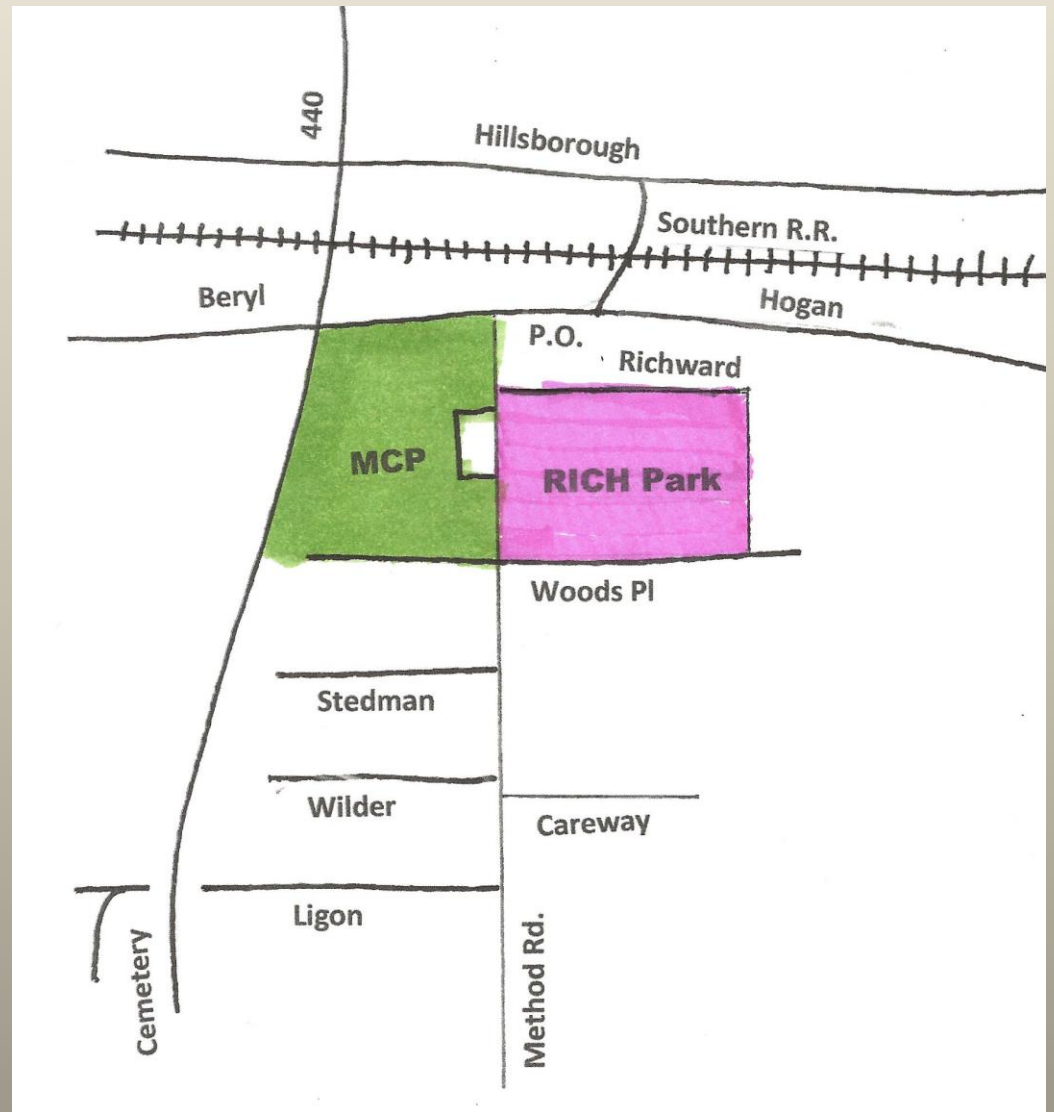
The Area

Today →

In 1865, this area is open fields with only 3 main roads and the RR.

The “Method” settlement was much larger than shown here, extending in all four directions.

For this story, the intersection of Beryl and Method is the focal point. We will come back to this map later





Slab House

Trees were plentiful and one-room log houses quickly filled the settlements.

They were called Slab Houses and the early name for the area was Slabtown.

A New Community

Jesse **Mason** and Isaac O'Kelly (half-brothers) bought 69 acres in the Method area in 1872 and divided it up into lots to be sold.

Jesse started a “free school” in Slabtown.

Soon the town was re-named **Mason Village**.

By 1890 the community was named **Method**.

Mason House



The Mason house still stands at the corner of
Method Road and Woods Place.

3101 Woods Place



Berry O'Kelly in front of his store

About 1880, Berry O'Kelly arrived (at about age 19.)

He first worked at the General Store and later bought it.

He was Postmaster for 25 years. The Store was located where the Method P.O. sits today on Beryl Road. (This photo after 1890.)

View of the Store and P.O.



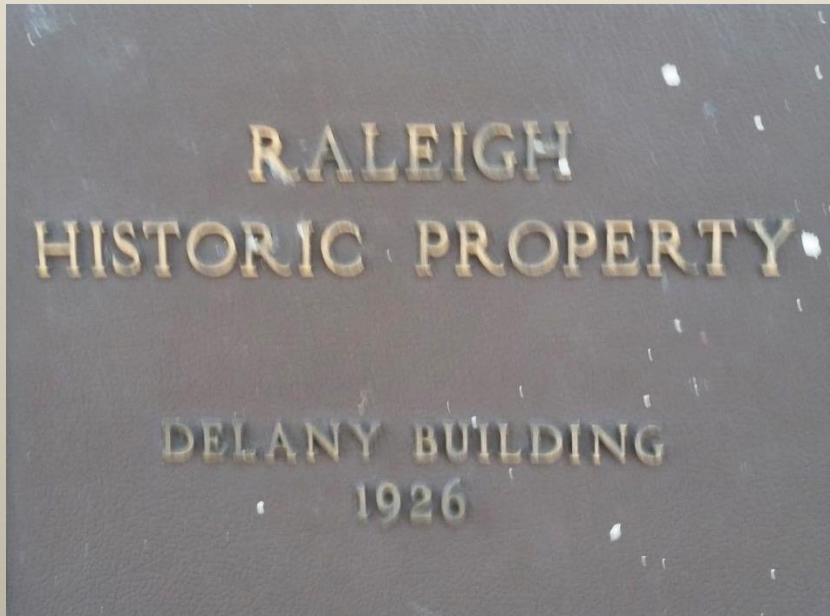
Driver: Algernon Thomas White. Standing Nelson O'Kelly.
Standing on running board: unknown person. Seated in rear: Berry O'Kelly.

This view shows Berry O'Kelly in the rear seat.
This is probably a Touring Car from about 1910.

Berry O'Kelly Became Wealthy

- ❖ The General Store was very successful
- ❖ He owned hundreds of acres
- ❖ He owned area on East Hargett known as Black Main Street.
- ❖ Member of Exec. Comm. of the State Interracial Commission
- ❖ Helped establish the National Negro Business League
- ❖ Helped establish the Mechanics and Farmers Bank

Historic Buildings on East Hargett



The Delaney Building --1926
133 East Hargett

The only remaining commercial structure built in 1920's as part of Raleigh's "Black Main Street."

The Montague Building
-- 1912

Three-story building at
128 East Hargett.



Berry O'Kelly Training School 1895

Consolidated with Apex, Fuquay, Zebulon

- Slaves were Free –
- “Separate But Equal” was the law
- Jim Crow Laws were active
- Schools were segregated but certainly **NOT** equal.
- Berry O'Kelly recognized the need for black schools.
- In 1895 he donated the land for a large school in Method.

The Main Building 1917

This 2-story brick had 11 classrooms, a library and an auditorium. It was the center of the 8-building complex that eventually made up the school.



Earlier.....

The first school in Method (1871) was a 1-room log house like the slab houses. Other small and primitive schools were built before Rosenwald Fund supported the building in this photo.

The Agriculture Building 1926

The school consisted of 7 or 8 buildings. Only the Agriculture Building still exists. It was the location for wood shop classes.



2 Buildings Added



April 4, 1928. Two buildings were added.

This was the 4000th Rosenwald School Project.

Julius Rosenwald and Berry O'Kelly



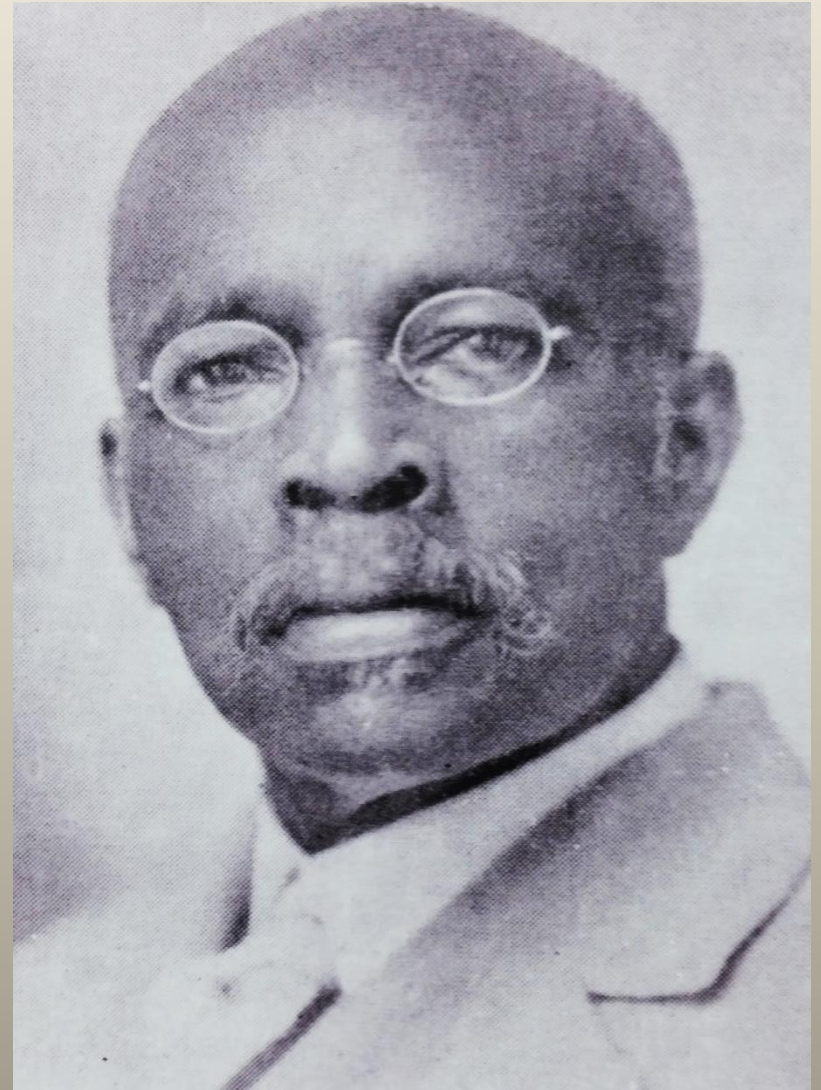
Julius Rosenwald was a Jewish philanthropist who helped create more than 5300 black schools in the South. He was encouraged by Booker T. Washington to do this.

Earlier he had been CEO of Sears Roebuck and Company.

Charles Hunter

A very dynamic political activist, Charles Hunter, became the first high school principal. Born a slave, he fought his entire life for equality and for good racial relations.

The curriculum included agriculture, domestic science, wood shop, hygiene and sex ed



Charles Hunter 1852 - 1931



The Campus

At its peak, there were 7 or 8 buildings. They included a boys' dormitory, girls' dormitory, poultry building, the agriculture building, a kitchen and dining area, classrooms and administration.

The curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, history, geography, and hygiene. Vocational education included agriculture, shop class, cooking and sewing.

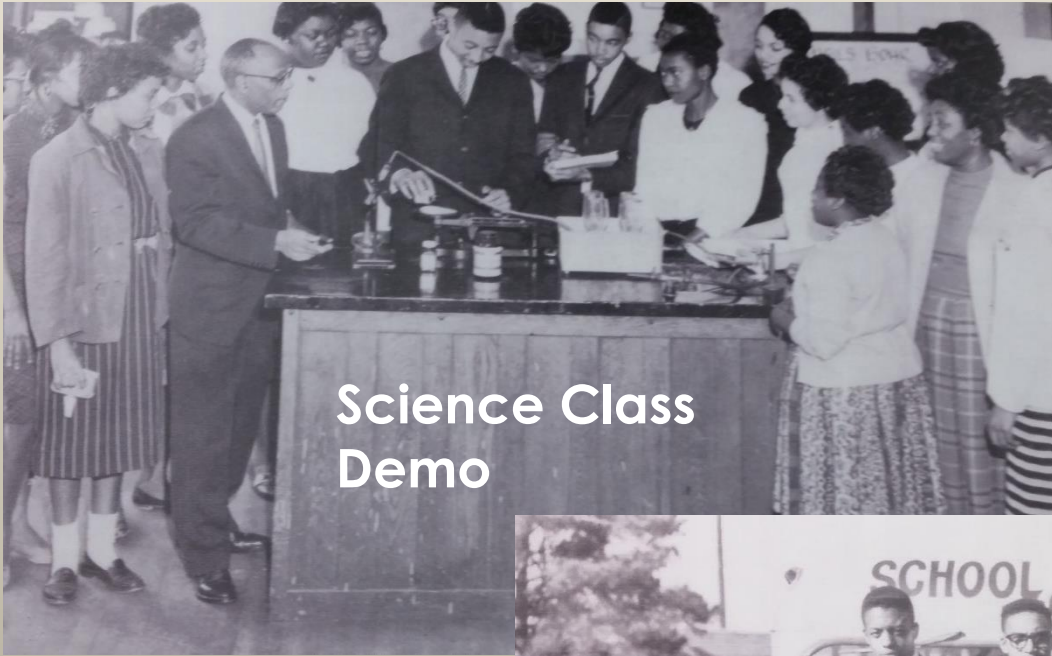
Teachers were trained for rural areas and interned at Shaw University.

1920, the school became the first fully-accredited black high school in the state of N.C. It served as a model for other schools.

The Campus



School Photos



Science Class
Demo

1961 photo
of upper
classmen.
They were
the bus
drivers.



School Photos



Basketball fans in the gymnasium.

School Photos

Two members of the 1965 Championship team came back for the Berry O'Kelly High School reunion in August 2019.



School Photos



A bookmobile that traveled around the neighborhood.

Rev. Dr. Earl Wilson 1946 - 2018

Earl Wilson was a Graduate of Berry O'Kelly High School, Shaw University and Duke University.



Integration

Integration happened very slowly in Raleigh.

In 1966 Berry O'Kelly High School closed and the students were transferred to Cary and Raleigh.

A memorial to its founder can be found not far from the Agriculture Building, which is now a part of Method Community Park.

He died in 1931 at age 70.



The school became a part of Wake County School System in 1958.



William Campbell 1960



First to integrate Raleigh Schools.

1963

Six Berry O'Kelly High School Junior Girls Enroll in Cary High School

It was a lonely and very unhappy experience but they survived and graduated two years later at about the same time Berry O'Kelly High school was closed.

Oak Grove Cemetery



One of the oldest graves in the cemetery.

Tim Marriott is a current, long-time resident of Method. This is the grave of his father.



This Berry O'Kelly is the son of Nelson O'Kelly, and a second cousin of the O'Kelly who founded the school.



Method Residents Fight to Keep Their Space

1958 Method schools became a part of Wake County School System

1959 Method had to fight the State to move 440 to the West and preserve the Method community and schools.

1966 As schools were integrated, rather than fix up the school, they demolished most of the buildings.

2013 Plan to broaden 440. Method had to fight the NCDOT to change the plan and preserve homes in Method and the Cemetery.

_____ Method was annexed to Raleigh

Boys to Men

The group has about 80 members who are current or former residents of Method and attended Berry O'Kelly High School.

The group looks out for the welfare of residents and maintains the Oak Grove Cemetery.

President

John Goode

Vice President

Albert Crenshaw

Part II 1967 RICH Park

In 1967 the “**R**aleigh **I**nter-**C**hurch **H**ousing Corporation formed, with the goal of providing on a non-profit basis, quality and affordable housing for low income families.

- First Baptist
- Davie St. Presbyterian
- First Cosmopolitan Baptist
- Community United Church of Christ
- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh.

The agreement was signed by Robert Ward representing UUFR, January 31, 1968.

Ray Noggle was UUFR President at the time.

The Signatures

First Baptist Colored Baptist Church

Dr. Charles Ward

Davie St. Presbyterian

Frank Hutchinson

First Cosmopolitan Baptist

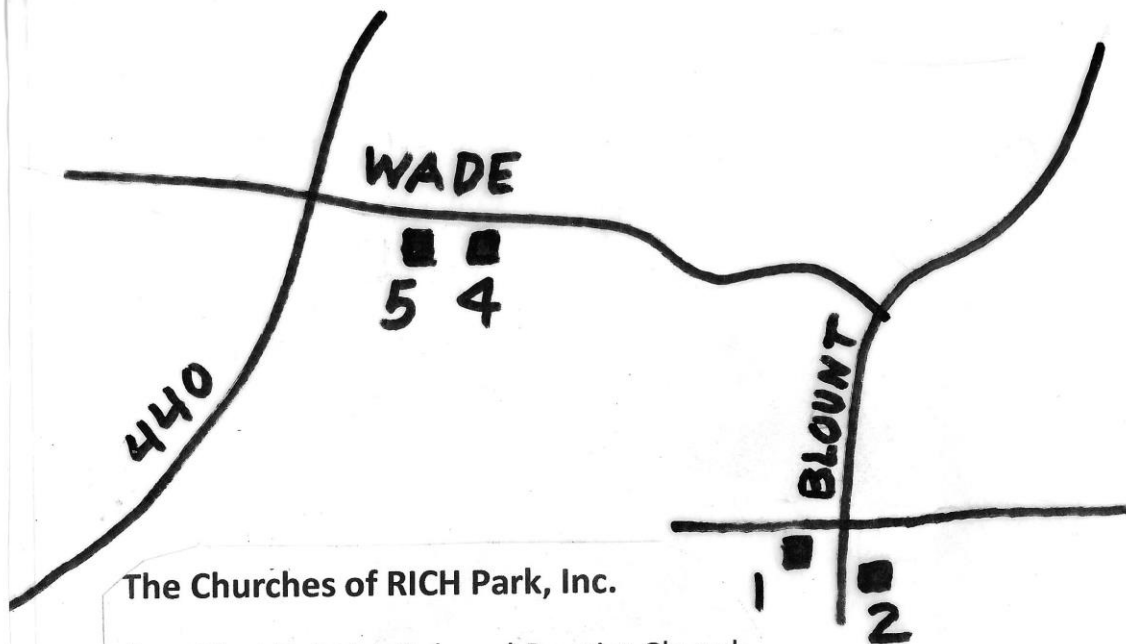
Rev. W. B. Lewis

Community United Church of Christ

Gene Namkoong

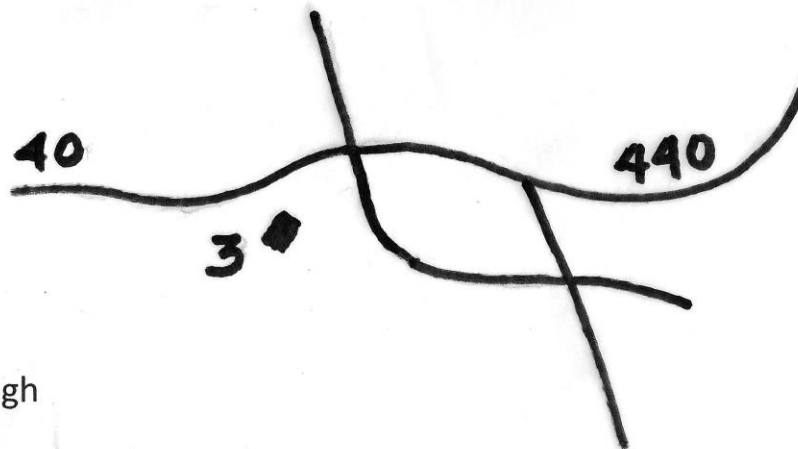
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh

Bob Ward



The Churches of RICH Park, Inc.

- 1 First Baptist Colored Baptist Church
101 S. Wilmington
- 2 Davie St. Presbyterian
300 E. Davie
- 3 First Cosmopolitan Baptist
1515 Cross Link Rd.
- 4 Community United Church of Christ
814 Dixie Trail
- 5 Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh
3313 Wade Ave.





First Baptist CBC



Davie St. Presbyterian



First Cosmopolitan Baptist

Heiress Beryl O'Kelly

Pedigree Chart for
Beryl O'Kelly



Berry O'Kelly

b: 1861 in Chapel Hill, NC
m: 1923 ; He 62, she 30
d: 1931 in Method, NC; Beryl was 2

Name:

b:
m:
d:

Frances O'Kelly

b:
d: 1861 ; Died in childbirth

Beryl O'Kelly

b: 05 Nov 1929
m: 20 Dec 1953 in Wake Co, NC
d: 21 Jan 2002 in Long Beach, CA

Name:

b:
m:
d:

Marguerite E. Bell

b: 1893
d:

Name:

b:
d:

Berry O'Kelly did not have a will, so his estate went to his wife, Marguerite, and his daughter, Beryl. After the death of Marguerite, Beryl acted as Executrix of the estate and sold the 9+ acres to Raleigh Inter-Church Housing Corporation.

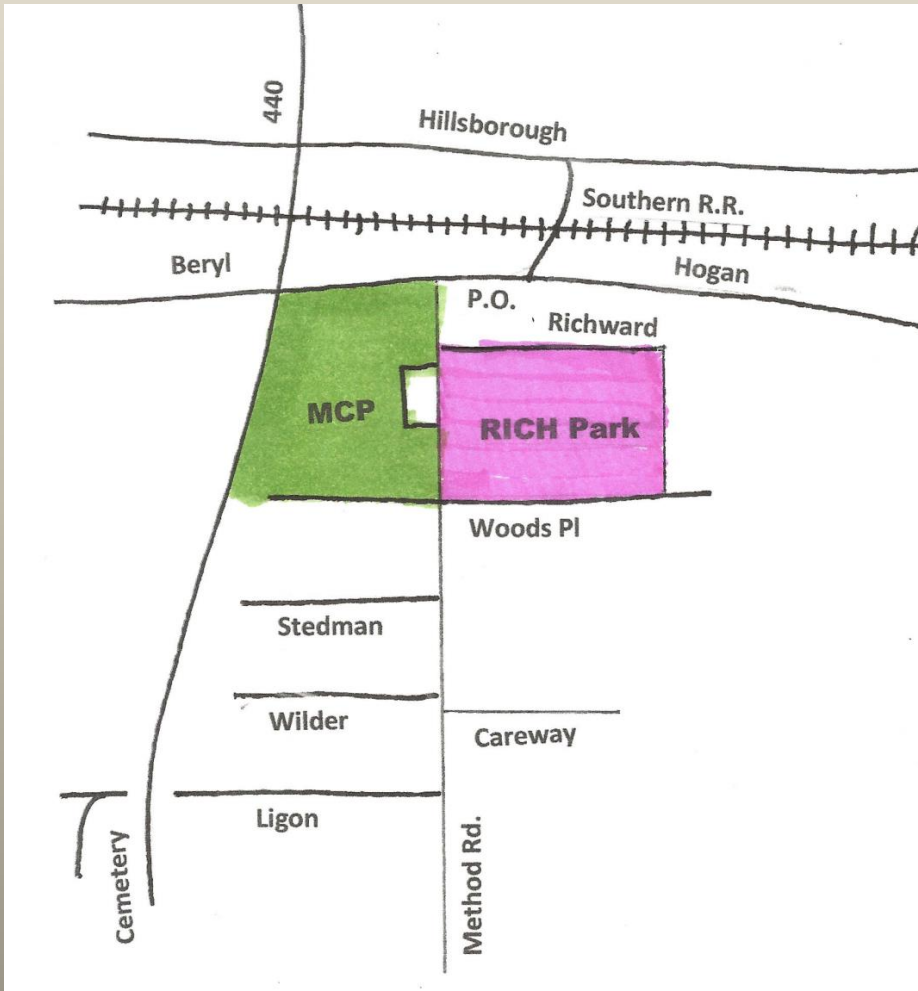
Copy of deed is available.

Buying the Land

The parcel (pink) on Method Road is purchased from the heirs of Berry O'Kelly, 1968.

Method Community Park (green) will not become a City Park until 1982.

NCSU and Meredith College property surrounds the community.



Financing Rich Park

1968 - Buying the Land. Each church donated \$ 2000.

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1968 Deed of Trust: \$ 1,045,700 at 6% interest for construction of apartments.

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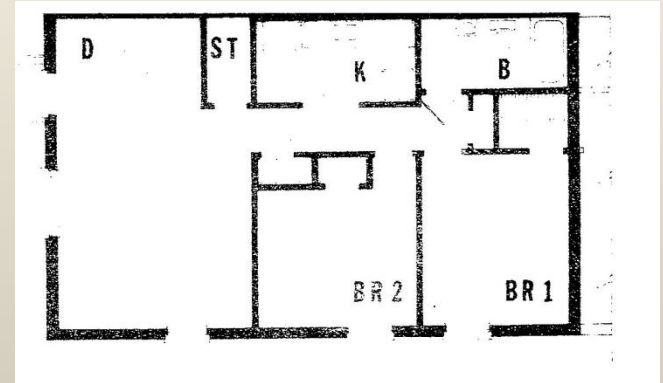
1968 Deed of Trust: \$ 1,045,700 at 6% interest for construction of apartments.

March 8, 2010 - Paid off

Property now worth 5 million??

555 Method Road

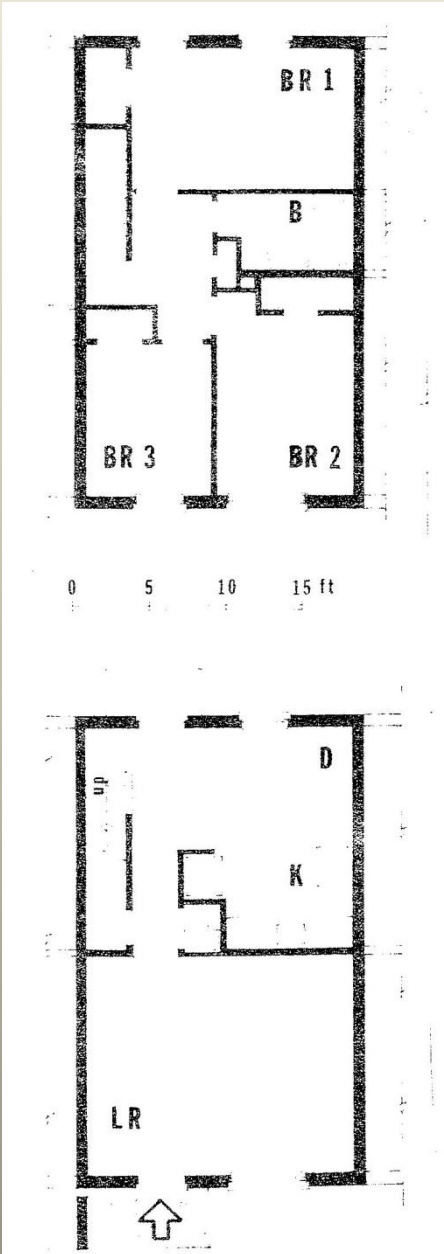
Apartments



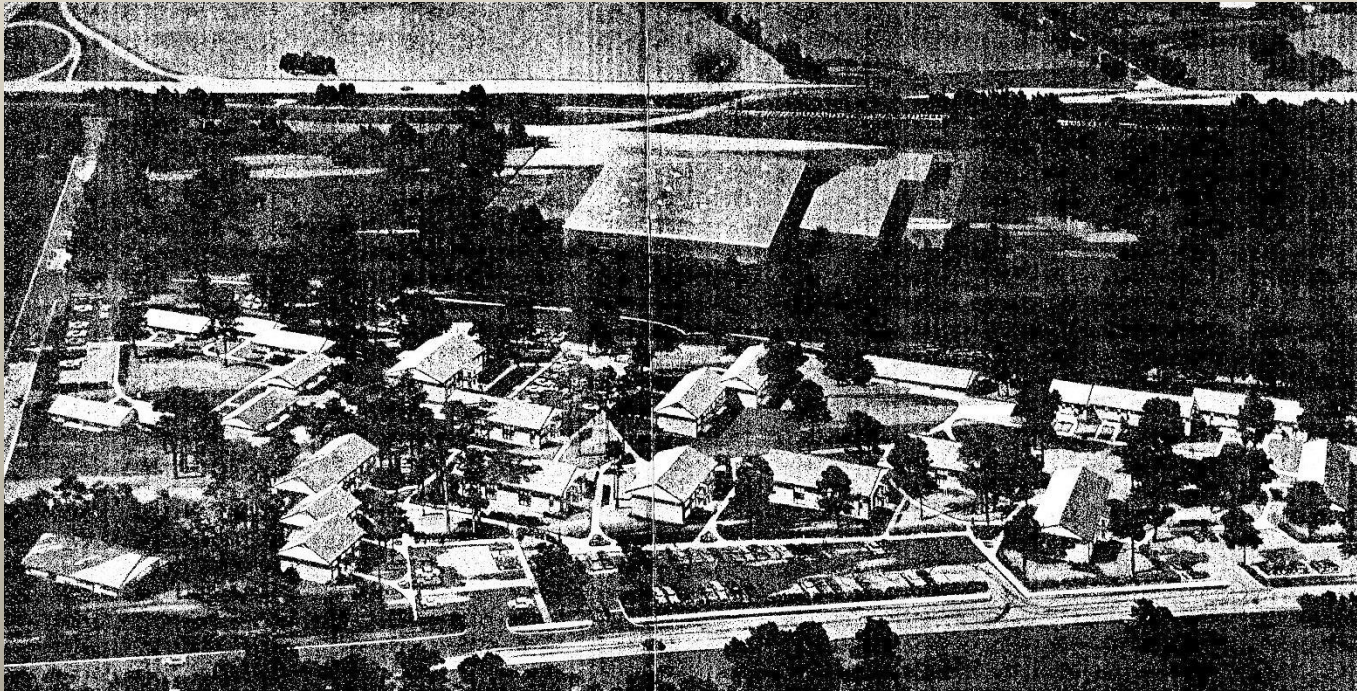
1- floor, 2 bedrooms

2- floors, 3 bedrooms

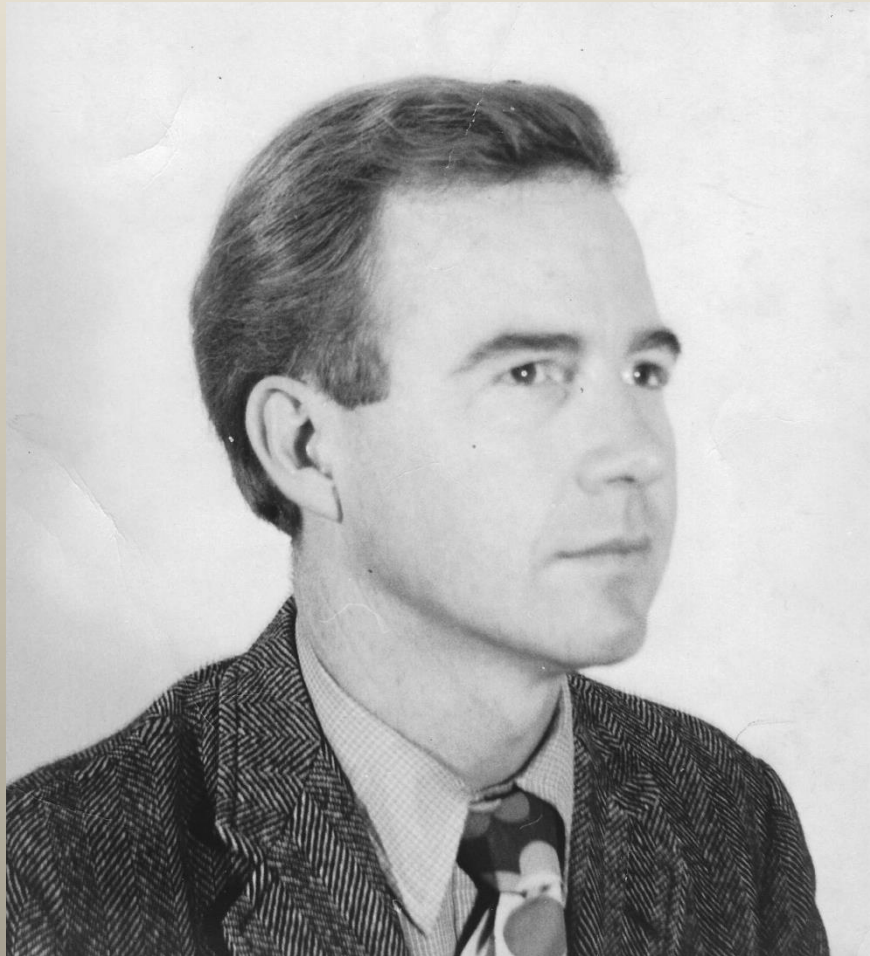
**1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom
apartments were available.
Managers were hired to
maintain the property.
There were/are 100 rental units.**



100 Units!



Units: 14 One BR, 56 Two BR,
30 Three BR



UUF Member

Jim Quinn

was the primary architect for the apartment complex and also a major force behind the project.

Photo: about 1968

HUD Agreement 1968

A 40-year contract was signed.

40 % of residents received subsidies in the beginning.

The contract expired in 2009, and since then residents may apply for Section 8 vouchers.

Making Repairs

1993 A management company was hired.

1995 A loan of about \$ 400,000, at 1% interest for urgent repairs

1998 A loan of \$ 150,000, for furnaces, refrigerators, iron steps

2009 Original mortgage paid off and complete renovation planned.



THE BIG RENOVATION

A commercial loan plus a loan from the City of Raleigh financed \$4 million in improvements.

The commercial loan is for 40 years with a monthly mortgage payment of about \$ 16,000.

MAJOR items included:

- New water, sewer, and electrical service

- ADA standards

- Asbestos removal

- Energy Star appliances

- Insulation

(Completed January 2012 – May 2013)

Assistance Projects

UUFRR has supported RICH Park with:

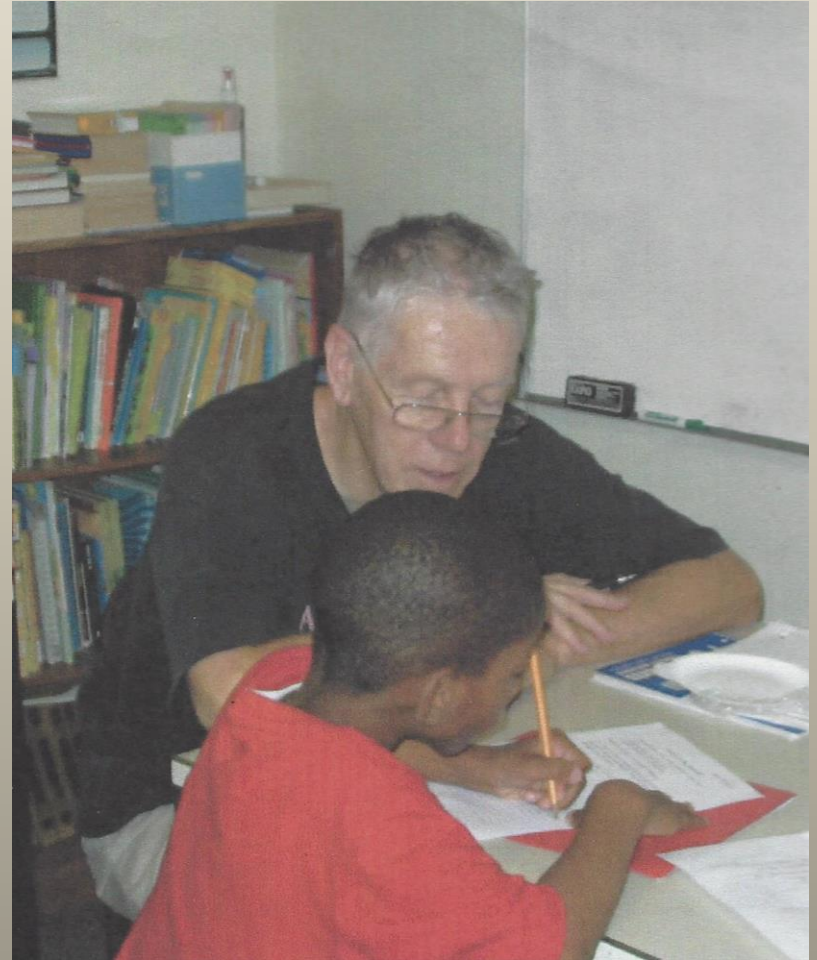
- Helped establish the Method Day Care Center
- Sunday Social Action offerings
- Providing backpacks and school supplies
- A tutoring program for 5 years.
- 2015 and 2016 LEAP Day projects

Numerous other organizations have offered help in many ways

After-School Tutoring

Rand Irwin was a tutor on a regular basis. He often paired up with students who wanted help with math.

Snacks were provided.



RICH Park Board of Directors

Current UFR members on the Board are:

Joyce Gad	– since 1980
Gisela Fleming	– since 2011
Bob Moxley	– since 2016
Claire Miller	– beginning 2019

Others who have served on the Board are:

Bill Devereux	Julie Grasso
Claude Martin	Shayne Gad
Dan Steen	Lynda Hambourger
Greg Meyer	

RICH Park Today

RICH Park has been managed for 54 years by the same 5 churches.

The churches are determined that it will continue to operate within its rental income, and will remain as low-income housing.

Part III 2019 Update



The property where the school had been located, became a Raleigh City Park in 1982. It is now named **Method Community Park**. It covers 8.3 acres and offers: a gymnasium, fitness room, pickle ball courts, volleyball, tennis, a kitchen, and outdoor multipurpose fields.

Historical Recognition



Plaques on the outside of the Method Community Park display the historical significance of this site.

RICH Park Today - April 2021

Occupancy - 97 %

Waiting list - about 60

Income limits – vary with size of family

Age distribution

0 – 18 years	67
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18 – 65	146
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over 65	23
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Books About Method

The Little Place and the Little Girl
by Bertha Maye Edwards

Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina
by John H. Haley

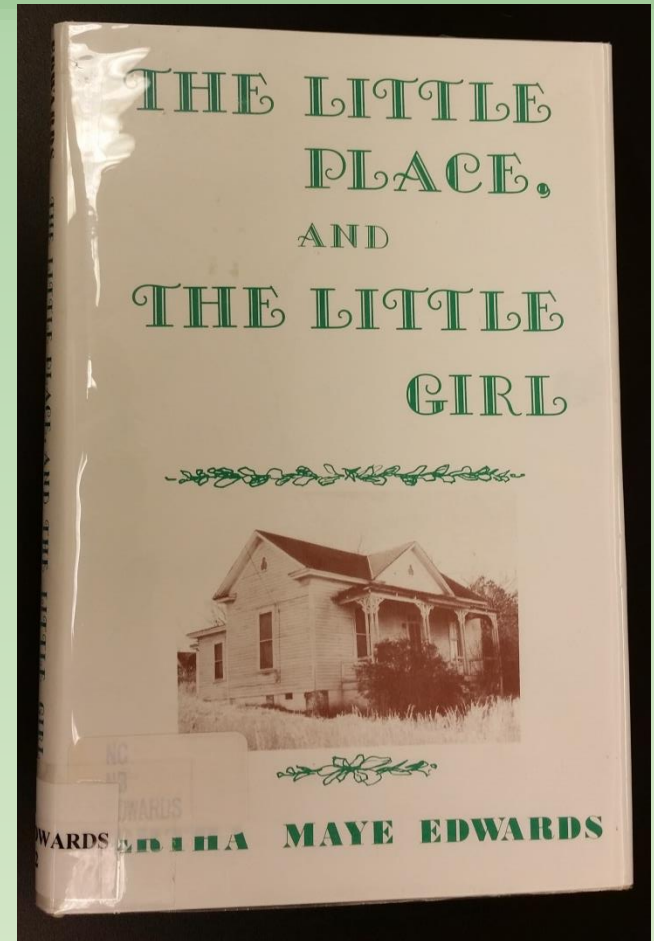
Culture Town
by Linda Simmons-Henry and Linda Harris Edmisten

Bertha Maye Edwards grew up in Method and was in the first graduating class at the high school.

When Rich Park evolved, she was inspired to write the book at age 74.

At the end of the book....."No one would be more interested in or more proud of the improvement made in Method or of the new housing project, than Berry O'Kelly."

"BETTERMENT" was one of his favorite words, and he would have seen Rich Park as Betterment.



RICH Park Today

RICH Park is not just history, it is an important part of UUFR **TODAY**.

We deserve to be very proud of the UUFR members who had the courage, the vision, and the foresight 54 years ago to make RICH Park happen.

The story of Method as of

May 2021

We hope to continue each year
adding stories and photos
to this story.

-- Linda Hames --