

Sharing an Afternoon with Edna and Paul Meeker

written by Elaine Poovey

One cannot drive by 16 Wendover Road without pausing to take in the lovely manicured lawn and stunning landscaping that meets the eye. And it has been so since 1956. Considered by the community as one of the loveliest lawns/gardens in Malvern Hills, Edna and Paul Meeker prided themselves on “keeping up their yard.” For many years, they did the work themselves. Edna designed the landscaping and Paul did the work but with age creeping up, someone does it for them now.

Edna and Paul Meeker’s home was built by the Keever family who lived there for about a year before they were transferred to California. The famed golf course that borders the property had closed but the club house was in use for social functions when they bought the house. The club house was built over top of the Sulphur Springs. Little cabins sat on Patton Avenue where Goodwill Industries is presently located and a lodge-type fish restaurant was open to the public. The Cogburn family (of Pisgah View Ranch fame) still owns the land behind the Meekers. By the mid-1950s, Malvern Hills was fairly well-developed. The community club held regular meetings. A bridge club was also active. Edna Meeker recalled some very influential people who lived in the neighborhood.

Paul Meeker was born in Savannah, Georgia in 1918. In November he will turn 95 years old. Edna was born in the Leicester community and she turned 92 on April 3. Paul was visiting an Aunt who lived in Asheville and he met Edna on that visit. Three months later they were married and will celebrate 70 years together on July 18. Their son Mike and his wife Connie live in Greensboro where he is an attorney. Edna and Paul have two grandsons and four great-grandsons who affectionately call them Mimi and Granddaddy.

Paul was in the Army at Pearl Harbor on that fateful day December 7, 1941. The Asheville Citizen-Times published a lengthy article this past December highlighting Paul’s memories of World War II. The Meekers enjoyed several yearly overseas travel excursions especially to Europe. Paul commented that “France was a big favorite and all of those countries have a lot of history.” Edna agreed stating that “Paris is so beautiful.”

Edna and Paul were always busy, working in the grocery store on Deaverview Road they owned in 1945. It was during that time that Mike was born and later attended Johnston Elementary School. My Mother was Mike’s fourth grade teacher. Lucky her! Edna was employed with the National Climatic Data Center in the Federal Building for 40 years. Paul was owner and operator of Meeker Lincoln-Mercury Auto Dealership in downtown Asheville at the corner of Patton Avenue and Clingman Avenue. He retired at age 74.

Edna said their life seemed kind of ordinary. But I believe those who know them would describe them as steadfast, hardworking, family-oriented, and strong community supporters. Just take a look the next time you drive by that house on the corner, and you will note in the words of Poet John Keats, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever. Its loveliness increases.” He could have been talking about the Meeker home.