

*Where Elvis Became Elvis:
The Story of 1034 Audubon Drive*

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Introduction: Fame and Familiarity

Remember that time you were shopping in the same store that hip hop artist Usher was browsing in? When you met fashion designer Lilly Pulitzer at a wedding reception? Or the time you asked Roger Moore (a.k.a. James Bond) for directions when you got lost in London and he told you “You’re in for a hell of a walk.”

These are some of my parents’ encounters with fame. These chance encounters became stories they would tell for years afterward around the dinner table, at parties, or while on a walk.

Many of us have had similar experiences, and it’s all the same: you were living in the familiar, and suddenly fame walked through the door.

Now imagine living next door to Elvis Presley in 1956.

1034 Audubon Drive was Elvis Presley’s first purchased house in Memphis, Tennessee, bought in 1956 for his parents with the royalties of “Heartbreak Hotel.” The King only lived there for thirteen months, but from May, 1956 to May, 1957 he became Elvis, at least the early Elvis as the world knows him. While living here, he recorded “Hound Dog,” appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, bought his mother a pink Cadillac, and played touch football with the neighborhood kids.

Audubon Drive in the 1950’s was a new neighborhood right at the edge of Memphis — the suburbs. It was an upper-middle class, almost all-white neighborhood, full of successful professionals and tons of children. Fame always hovered over the street. Residents have included Memphis politician E.H. “Boss” Crump’s granddaughter, Federal Express founder Frederick W. Smith, and fashion designer Dana Buchman. And of course, Elvis Presley.

It was the nicest house the Presleys had ever lived in and the first one they had owned for themselves. They became a part of the neighborhood. Gladys visited with her neighbors, let the children use their pool, and planted a vegetable garden. Elvis gave the kids motorcycle rides and teddy bears. He carried a boy back to his mother after a brick fell on his head. But they were always out of place on Audubon.

As his fame was rising, and fans flooded the street, Elvis tried to establish privacy for himself and his family by building a fence around the house. Even though he wanted to make it work, it became too much, and the family moved to Graceland in 1957. It was only thirteen months, but those thirteen months would define his career and life, and allowed him to go from public housing to purchasing a mansion.¹

This house, like so many other homes of famous individuals, has only been given significance from the public because of Elvis' stay there. But Elvis was only there for a short time. There have been ten different owners and residents of the house since it was built by Howard Handwerker, its first owner, circa 1952. Since then the house has hosted and been a neighbor to countless famous individuals, their families, and their friends.

And even though Elvis is only part of the house's story, he did not leave it for good. In 1998, Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen bought the house and restored it to what it looked like in the 1950's. They gave house tours by appointment, hosted both famous visitors and avid Elvis fans, and used it as their personal home. It was the beginning of the return to the King. In 2006,

¹ Charles McKinney, in discussion with the author, July 2016.
John Bass, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

they sold it to Nashville record executive Mike Curb and his wife Linda, who continued the restoration process.

The Curbs gifted it to Rhodes College as part of the college's chapter of the Mike Curb Institute for Music, which uses the house as a laboratory where students do creative work, research and preserve Memphis music, and film a live house concert web series called *An Evening at Elvis*.

*Where Elvis Became Elvis:*² *The Story of 1034 Audubon Drive* tells the history of this house and its neighborhood from when it was built circa 1952 until the present — approximately 64 years worth of stories, memories, and changes. It is a story of ordinary people, in a very singular place, to whom remarkable things happened. Of fame and familiarity.³



² The phrase, “Where Elvis Became Elvis” was coined by Charles McKinney in July of 2016 in discussion with the author, who has since adopted the phrase for the use of this project.

³ *The image below is of Elvis, his mother Gladys, and his father Vernon outside 1034 Audubon Drive. Courtesy of the web. All rights reserved.*

“Elvis Presley — Audubon Drive House,” *Rock and Roll GPS*, June 9, 2014, Accessed on July 24, 2016, <http://www.rockandrollgps.com/elvis-presley-audubon-drive-house/>.

The Handworkers: 1034 Audubon's First Family, 1953 to 1955⁴

1034 Audubon Drive was probably built in late 1952 by its first owner, Howard T. Handwerker, who also designed it.⁵ According to his son, Dan Handwerker, because Howard worked for a wood company called Welch Plywood, the house received the best of materials. The house was a small, one-story, ranch style house made of cedar wood on the outside and pecan paneling, mahogany, and oak on the inside — it even had wood shingles. During 1953 and 1954, it was home to Howard and his wife Ruth, their oldest son Dan, daughters Jeanne, Carol, and Elaine, as well as the children's grandmother and great grandmother. 1034 Audubon Drive was Elaine's first home.

Howard Handwerker worked for Welch Plywood and later various other businesses involving wood, construction, and building design. He also designed moldings for various buildings in Memphis, including the National Bank of Commerce, and when Elvis bought Graceland in 1957, Handwerker even designed the moulding for one of its fireplaces.

Ruth Handwerker loved to read and play games, and also volunteered with the Madonna Circle, a Catholic women's charity organization. She and Howard married and then moved in with her mother and grandmother after World War II, who continued to live with them for the rest of their lives. Ruth's mother, Ruth Spillane Walker, was called Granny by the kids. Ruth's grandmother, Margaret Spillane, was known as Grandma. While their time on Audubon was

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all of the information from "*The Handworkers: 1034 Audubon's First Family, 1953-1955*" until "*A Tour of 1034 Audubon Drive: circa 1954*" is sourced from an interview by the author with Dan and Margaret Handwerker on June 30, 2016, as well as additional discussions with Dan and other members of the Handwerker family.

⁵ The exact dates for when the house was built are not yet verified for certain, but the original building plans (a copy of which Dan Handwerker gave me for this project) were last edited in spring of 1952, and the family was certainly in the house in 1953.

spent quilting, cooking, and caring for their grandchildren, in their earlier days, these old matriarchs were successful career women: Granny was second in command at the Memphis General Depot; Grandma was the President of the Railway Women's Auxiliary.

The eldest child was Daniel (Dan), born in 1942, the only son, followed by daughters Jeanne in 1944, Carol in 1950, and Elaine in 1954. Twenty years after Dan was born, Nancy Handwerker would join the family. She was the only child not to live on Audubon.

The house was vacant in 1955 because Howard filed for bankruptcy. The house was given over to the control of his employer, to whom he owed the most money, Jim Welch of Welch Plywood. So the Handwerkers moved, but stayed in touch with a handful of Audubon Drive friends, mostly the ones with whom the children continued to attend school. Dan still visited the neighborhood once the house was again occupied. In 1956, the house was sold by Welch Plywood to Elvis Presley.⁶

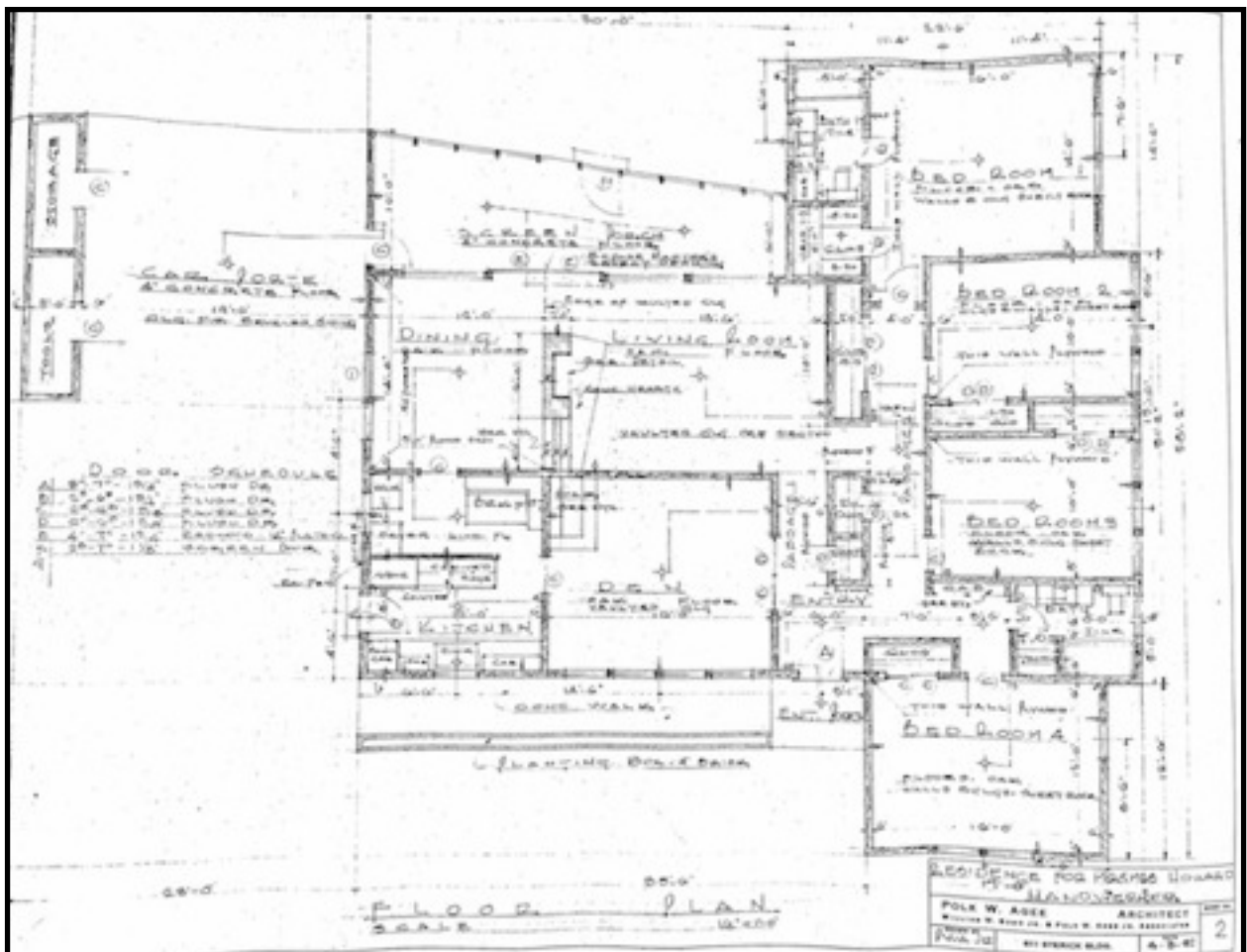


⁶ Scotty Moore and James V. Roy. "Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN," *Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive*, 2002, 2014, accessed on June 14, 2016. <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

The image below is of most of the Handwerker family in front of their redwood screened-in porch. The adults in this photo from left to right are Margaret Spillane (Ruth's maternal grandmother), Howard Handwerker, and Ruth Handwerker. The children are Jeanne Handwerker Brink, Dan Handwerker, and Carol Handwerker. Courtesy of Jeanne Handwerker Brink.

A Tour of 1034 Audubon Drive: circa 1954

The following is a first person tour of 1034 Audubon Drive according to the original building plans by Howard T. Handwerker, the builder and original owner, as well as information shared with me by various members of the Handwerker family. A copy of the plans were graciously given to me by Howard's son Dan Handwerker. The copy of the floor plan is presented below.⁷



⁷ Handwerker, Howard, Polk W. Agee (Architect), and P.W. Jr. "Residence of Howard Handwerker." William W. Bond Jr. & Polk W. Agee Jr. Associates. *Collection of Dan Handwerker*. April 3, 1952.

The year is 1954, and 1034 Audubon Drive is a one-story, green, ranch-style house that sits back from the edge of the road. There is one tree in the front yard and no fencing. The driveway runs up on the left side of the house to the concrete-floored carport: a covered breezeway with a tool shed and closet. It also functions as an outdoor playroom for the Handwerker children when it rains.⁸ A concrete walkway — called a “gong walk” — leads from the driveway to the front entrance, a door with a porch covering overhanging it. I walk up the driveway to the front door and go inside.

Inside I can see down the short hallway to the living room entrance. The inside of the house is full of earth tones — browns and tans — which is what Howard and Ruth prefer. The walls are largely made of pecan and mahogany wood paneling, and I get the feeling that the house is very dark and very small — but I know it isn’t really small at all.⁹ I turn right and find a mini office built-in to the wall with shelves, a magazine stand (which Howard had made especially for the house), and a telephone. I see Jeanne sitting there talking on the phone.¹⁰ I see little Carol run down the hallway, turn, and ram her head into the office corner. She has a crease down the middle of her forehead from where it busts open, and it never completely heals.¹¹

Leaving Jeanne and the rest of the family to tend to Carol, I peek into the narrow tiled bathroom and see that to the right is the front bedroom where Howard and Ruth sleep, along with

⁸ Dan remembers hitting a golf ball, in error, into his parents’ windshield under the carport roof. This is noteworthy because on one of my summer visits to the house in 2016 for the writing of this draft, I discovered some golf balls in the front yard, evidently an overshoot from the neighbors doing the same thing.

⁹ In 1956, the Presleys paint the hallways, which causes the house to feel much larger than it had before.

¹⁰ Jeanne Handwerker Brink and Kim Dearman, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

¹¹ Evidently this wound does not damage her brain, for she grows up to earn her PhD from MIT.

Carol and baby Elaine. A bright room with pink floral wallpaper, it has two closets and three windows looking out onto the front and side yards.

Exiting this bedroom, I walk back to the main hall and head down to the right. All of the bedrooms are on the right, or south, side of the house, including the front bedroom I just left. The next one is a bedroom with three windows facing south and one closet. This is Jeanne's room, and next to it is Dan's room, similarly laid out.

At the end of the hall is the largest bedroom with a large walk-in closet and master bath. There are two windows facing south and two facing east into the backyard. This is Granny and Grandma's room. Ruth picked out green floral wallpaper for this bedroom, and the Presleys will keep it when they move in, as they will with most of the house's original wallpaper.

Leaving the bedroom and turning to the right, I enter the the living room. The living room is on the east side of the house and faces the backyard. The ceiling is vaulted, an unusual feature for houses built in the 1950's. The living room flows into the dining room, and both rooms have a door leading to the screened-in porch, which I will look into later. Two large windows open onto the porch on either side of these two doors, one in the living room, and one in the dining room. The wall between the dining room and the living room houses the brick fireplace.

Dan walks up to me and tells me that his father, Howard, is particularly fond of the windows throughout the house, which provide strong airflow through the house. But Dan leans in and tells me that he is also fond of the windows: he often climbs out of them to play neighborhood-wide games of hide-and-seek with his friends.

I walk from the living room to the dining room and into the kitchen. I can see that the kitchen is divided by a wall into two parts — this side is a laundry room with a corner booth area

on the left, where the children eat their breakfast before going off to school. It is separated from the cooking area of the kitchen by the dividing wall, on the other side of which are the stove, refrigerator, cabinets, and more. The floor here is linoleum whereas in the rest of the house the floors are made of oak.

I walk through the kitchen and turn left into the front den on the west side of the house. Like the living room, the den has a vaulted ceiling, as well as four windows facing west toward the front yard and the street. There is a bar to my left, and a green leather couch that still smells of smoke from when Howard accidentally set it on fire. He's a smoker.

I walk out the front door and around through the carport into the screened-in porch. It's slanted so that the room narrows on the south side of the house. The porch is built into the house, but the back wall that faces east is all screened windows. The porch is made of redwood, and has a door that leads to the backyard.

The Neighborhood in the 1950's¹²

The area where Audubon Drive was built used to be farmland until the late 1940's. Further down the street, even in the fifties, was more undeveloped, unsold farmland. During World War II, the edge of Memphis was around Park Avenue (off of which Audubon Drive

¹² Most of the following information, from this section until "The Presleys: Elvis as a Neighbor, 1956-1957," and unless otherwise noted, is presented on the authority of Bill Metz, who lived at 1024 Audubon Drive in the 1950's and early 1960's before going to college, and whom the author has interviewed and corresponded with. His parents lived there from the 1950's to the early 2000's. Bill once had the idea to write a book on the kids who played with Elvis, of which he was one. He conducted ten to fifteen oral interviews with former residents of Audubon Drive, many of his childhood playmates, and focused on the time period from 1956 to 1957 when the Presleys lived on Audubon Drive.

would run) and Highland Street. In the late forties, a man by the name of Robert Snowden¹³ and his business partner started to develop the area, which was in East Memphis, selling lots instead of houses. Audubon Drive became the new edge of the city.¹⁴

Even in the beginning, Audubon Drive was an upper-middle class, predominantly white community. It was a desirable street because during this period it was not yet part of a subdivision,¹⁵ Most of the residents came from well-to-do Memphis families whose parents had big beautiful homes in Midtown, much larger than their children's houses on Audubon Drive. After living through the trials of World War II and a small national recession in 1948, the new residents of Audubon Drive boomed into the wealth and prosperity of America in the 1950's, filling their homes with a multitude of babies. Dan Handwerker says there were sixty-four children on the street in the fifties;¹⁶ Peggy Jemison Bodine says there were one hundred, a number which could include children who came after the fifties or after the Handwerker's left and lost touch with the neighborhood.¹⁷ Regardless, there were plenty of kids! There was a cohort of every age group — from baby girls like Dan Handwerker's sister born in 1954 to boys

¹³ According to a discussion between the author and some former Audubon neighbors (Christine Mayer Todd at 1029, Meg Jemison Bartlett from 1054, Peggy Jemison Bodine from 1054, and Trip Farnsworth from 1142), Robert Snowden lived at the corner of Audubon Drive and Park Avenue, and was a part of the neighborhood for a long time. A church now occupies the space where his house was.

¹⁴ According to Bill Metz, Audubon Park across the road was already in place by the time the neighborhood was being built.

¹⁵ It is now considered part of the Audubon Park Subdivision. Cheyenne Johnson, *Shelby County Assessor of Property, Shelby County, Tennessee*, 2016, Accessed 13 Jun 2016, <https://www.assessor.shelby.tn.us/content.aspx>.

¹⁶ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

¹⁷ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

in their early teens like Dan and Bill Metz. Many of the neighbors who are still alive today were much younger than Dan and Bill, even up to a decade younger.¹⁸

The area south of the street was not developed at the time, but north of it was with Park Avenue, Audubon Park, and beyond that the main city corridor of Poplar Avenue.¹⁹ To the east of the street were the Butler estate and the Dixon family property, and to the west was the Kennedy Veterans Hospital for World War II veterans,²⁰ so the residents of Audubon Drive knew there would be no new neighbors on the other side of the fence.

And it was a long street: Trip Farnsworth, who grew up at 1142, refers to the north and south ends of the street as Upper and Lower Audubon, respectively.²¹ Most of the former neighbors remember it as a happy time, full of playmates. One of the Haizlip girls, who lived across the street from the Metz family, told Bill she most vividly remembered the bike rides. After dinner, ten or more kids would parade the street on their bicycles until it got dark. Each family had its own signal — bells, cowbells, whistles — to summon the kids from their play for meals or bedtime.²²

¹⁸ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

¹⁹ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

²⁰ According to Bill Metz and Dan Handwerker, this hospital was located on Shotwell Road, but after the War, when veterans were coming to the hospital, it was renamed *Getwell* Road so that the wounded and the recovering would not be sent to a hospital on *Shotwell* Road. According to Christine Mayer Todd, the Audubon kids ran and biked all through the old Kennedy Veterans Hospital buildings. The game was to see who could get closest to the dogs there without getting into any danger with them.

²¹ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

²² Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

The front yards were open, flowing into each other. What a group of former neighbors remember as a highlight of the neighborhood were “the night games.” These were big games played in the Doggrell’s front yard at 1000 Audubon Drive. Peggy Jemison Bodine remembers Mrs. Doggrell as being “about the only mother who would let her grass get trampled.”²³ According to Bill Metz, other front yards were also trampled: the Metz’s yard at 1024, the two yards in between (the McRae’s and the Mayfield’s) and the Doggrell’s yard formed the playing field for the neighborhood boys. There were so many of them around the same age (roughly thirteen and fourteen year old boys) that they could form a whole football team. This is the group Elvis and his buddies would play with after the boys got home from school in 1956. Elvis was quarterback, and Bill remembers handing off the ball to him.

But the children found many other spaces to play besides their front yards. The Dixon property, which now houses an art museum and gardens, is on the east side of Audubon Drive, and north of what was the Butler estate. The Audubon kids made it their business to get into trouble there. Meg Jemison Bartlett and some friends on the street made up a phony charity so that they could go see the inside of the Dixon house and their yard. They asked for donations, and later felt so terrible that they left some money on the doorstep.²⁴ Christine Mayer Todd remembers running through the Dixon house and yard with a group of kids, but Mr. Dixon was not amused and shot at them with a BB gun.²⁵ Dan Handwerker remembers swimming with

²³ Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, and Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

²⁴ Meg Jemison Bartlett, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

²⁵ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

some neighborhood boys in the Dixon's pool — until Mr. Dixon ran down the hill brandishing his cane.²⁶

Dan and Bill agree that there was a social division between the old Memphis families and the new Memphis families, the latter of which the Metz family belonged to since they were not native Memphians. Even though they all got along and played together, there was “just a difference” between the kids who went to MUS (Memphis University School) and Hutchison (MUS's sister school), both some of the oldest and most elite schools in the city, and those who went elsewhere. Dan and Bill went elsewhere — to Christian Brothers High School, a Catholic school. There was a group of girls who went to St. Mary's, including Christine Mayer Todd and Meg Jemison Bartlett, with a neighborhood carpool to take them there.²⁷ Trip Farnsworth also remembers a carpool for the MUS boys.²⁸ Additionally, there were children who attended Presbyterian Day School, St. Anne's, and surely more besides.²⁹ Granted, all of the mentioned schools are elite private schools, and on a completely different level from Humes High School, where Elvis and his friends who visited him at 1034 graduated from.

According to Christine Mayer Todd, except for her mother's house, every house was a two-parent home. She also believes that most homes had two cars, which would have made the various carpools possible.³⁰ Every parent had either the implicit or directly expressed authority to

²⁶ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

²⁷ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

²⁸ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

²⁹ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

³⁰ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

discipline any child on the street, whether it was his or her own child or not, in any way that seemed appropriate.³¹

Also, each home had help — an African American woman who was the maid and babysitter. The presence of the help added to the feeling of security on the street: all of the doors were open and welcoming. The children formed bonds with them as they would with the mothers on the street. These women also took the kids on adventures and trips — such as going to the Park to fish. Vera was the Jemison’s maid, and took them to the fair wearing a deer cap, so that the children would see her easier. Once she even took some kids, including Christine Mayer Todd and Meg Jemison Bartlett, to see Jimi Hendrix at the Coliseum when they were in Middle School! Because of all of these adventures and also the general activity of the street, Meg says, “it was like waking up to camp everyday.”³²

The fact that all of the homes had help is indicative of the residents’ social status. Another indication of this is that some neighbors, in fact, ran some the largest cotton and agriculture industries in the region. One of the many socially prominent families on the street was the Willey’s, at 970 Audubon Drive. Howard W. Willey, Jr. was in the cotton business, as was Frank Doggrell, Sr., who lived at 1000. Indeed, Mr. Doggrell’s nickname was “Big Dog.”³³ Bill Metz writes the following on the intensity of this type of cotton trader: “Many of these guys were high stakes players. During my interviews with folks, one of his [Frank Doggrell’s] sons remembered

³¹ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

³² Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, and Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

³³ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

that during a setback for Frank Sr., one of his friends called and said check your mail box. He did and found \$10,000 in cash, to help the family along.”³⁴

Another high stakes player in the neighborhood was Landon V. “Jimmie” Butler. The Butler estate was south of the Dixon’s property,³⁵ and backed up to Audubon Drive and 1034. The family was essentially part of the neighborhood, and their boys Lanny and Sid, who attended MUS, played with the rest of the Audubon kids, who would hop the fence and frolic in the woods on their friends’ property.³⁶

The story varies from person to person about how Landon Butler was involved in the cotton industry. According to Bill Metz, Mr. Butler was a “famous/infamous cotton trader who spent some time in prison for selling cotton that didn’t exist.”³⁷ According to Dan Handwerker, Mr. Butler was put in prison twice, both times because he falsified “soybean warehouse receipts to use as collateral to try and corner the soybean market.”³⁸ Since that time, the estate was sold off and became home to the Holiday Inn/Hampton Inn Headquarters and later Wright Medical Technologies.³⁹

Another handful of residents were prominent not only in business but also in the Memphis social scene, as evidenced by some of their involvement in the Cotton Carnival. The

³⁴ Bill Metz, in an e-mail message to author, July 2016.

³⁵ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.
Bill Metz, in an e-mail message to author, July 2016.

³⁶ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

³⁷ Bill Metz, in an e-mail message to author, July 2016.

³⁸ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

³⁹ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

Cotton Carnival was, and is, a social event that acts as a coming-out for young girls and their escorts, that was called, “The Nation’s Party in the Land of Cotton.”⁴⁰ There is a King of the Carnival, and a Queen, one of the girls coming out that year. The king, queen, and the “court” parade around the city for a week, attending luncheons, events, and parties that last almost all night, going from one country club to the next. Several court members and royalties resided on Audubon Drive.⁴¹ For instance, the Pidgeon family, which lived at 938 Audubon Drive, yet another family prominent in the Memphis social scene, had some connection to the Carnival.⁴² Mrs. Pidgeon was once the Queen. Banners would go up in front of their house during the Carnival week each summer. This sort of a neighborhood is what the Presley’s moved into in 1956 — it was a different world.

Interestingly, on May 15, 1956, the court of the Cotton Carnival attended a performance at Ellis Auditorium, that included Hank Snow, the Jordanaires, and Elvis Presley. This concert and the Russwood Park performance on July 4 of the same summer were chances for Elvis to show his true self to his hometown. In an interview with Bob Johnson from the *Press-Scimitar*,

⁴⁰ The Memphis Cotton Carnival. *Cotton Carnival: Magazine and Official Program*, May 1956. Collection of Jane Wiggins Lord.

⁴¹ Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, Peggy Jemison Bodine, and Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

⁴² Audubon Park across the road from Audubon Drive was created and founded by E.H. “Boss” Crump, a political boss who virtually controlled Memphis from 1909 to his death in 1954. He was mayor from 1909 to 1916. Pallas Pidgeon Zonome, who grew up on Audubon Drive, is his granddaughter. Preston Lauterbach, “Memphis Burning,” (*Places Journal*, March 2016. Accessed 03 Jun 2016) <<https://placesjournal.org/article/memphis-burning/>>.

he said, “I want the folks back home to think right of me. Just because I managed to do a little something, I don’t want anyone back home to think I got the big head.”⁴³

My grandmother, Jane Wiggins Lord, was invited to be a part of the Cotton Carnival court that year, a “Lady of the Realm.” She was twenty-one, the same age as Elvis. Jane is originally from the Mississippi Delta, at the time living in Parchman, Mississippi and attending the W (Mississippi University for Women). She remembers sitting on stage with the court, about ten feet from Elvis. She says those watching were not used to seeing someone move around like that while singing. A couple of girls from Tupelo, old classmates of Elvis’ from his hometown, and who went to college with Jane at the W, had previously told Jane that he was just a tacky country boy. He wouldn’t amount to anything. They likely were of a much higher social class in Tupelo than Elvis and his parents were. So Jane didn’t think much of the performance, other than how unusual he was. One Memphis boy in the court went up to him afterwards and shook his hand. Jane wishes she and the rest of them had been smart enough to follow suit.⁴⁴

It is interesting to note that, theoretically, the people Elvis performed for at the Cotton Carnival in May of 1956 were his own neighbors — or at least, they were of the same social class as the members of the court. His performance took place four days after moving into 1034, and he probably would not have felt welcome at any of their festivities. Although not all of the residents, or even most of the residents, on Audubon Drive were involved in the Cotton Carnival, significantly, a neighbor was still the hired performer for this upper class social event.

⁴³ Peter Guralnick, *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, (Boston: Back Bay Books: Little, Brown, and Co, 1994), 277.

⁴⁴Jane Wiggins Lord, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.



A view of Audubon Drive from the front of 1034 looking northwest. Courtesy of Jeanne Handwerker Brink.



A clipping from the Memphis Press-Scimitar illustrating how many kids lived on Audubon Drive. Howard Handwerker is second from the right on the back row. Jeanne is the tall girl on the left wearing a

scarf. Dan is the tall boy on the right pointing at the sign that reads, "Slow: 60 Children Playing: Caution." Date unknown at present. Courtesy of Jeanne Handwerker Brink.

The Presleys: Elvis as a Neighbor, 1956-1957

Charles (Charlie) and Margaret (Peggy) Metz, built the house at 1024 Audubon Drive in 1951. They would become Elvis' only true next-door neighbors, since a vacant lot sat on the other side of 1034.⁴⁵ Their son Bill was twelve when his lifelong friend and former neighbor Dan Handwerker told him that a singer was moving in next-door. Bill asked if Dan knew much about him. Dan thought he had a song out called "Heartbreak Hotel." This was "minutes before rock and roll."⁴⁶

1034 Audubon Drive was Elvis Presley's first purchased home in Memphis.⁴⁷ He lived in six other places before that, including stays in Memphis' public housing projects, but he and his

⁴⁵ The Metz, both Purdue University graduates from Louisville, Kentucky, bought one of the lots from the neighborhood's developer Robert Snowden, with Charlie as the general contractor and supervisor of the building process. Before Audubon Drive, the family lived on Park Haven Lane, and before that in Milan, Tennessee. Charlie was a chemical engineer. Peggy majored in home economics and minored in French. There were five Metz children: Bill, born in 1943 was the oldest, followed by Mary Anne in 1945, the twins, Barbara and Betty, a year later in 1946, and finally Margaret in 1955, twelve years after Bill. Longtime residents, Charlie lived at 1024 Audubon Drive until he passed away in 2000, and Peggy moved out in 2002.

Bill Metz, interview by Alice Fugate and email message to author, July 2016.

⁴⁶ Bill turned thirteen just after he heard Elvis was moving in. He and Dan graduated from Christian Brothers High School together in 1961.

Bill Metz, interview by Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

⁴⁷ "Welcome!" *An Evening at Elvis*, Rhodes College, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016, <http://eveningatelvis.org>.

parents had never owned a house for themselves, and certainly never lived anywhere as nice as 1034.⁴⁸ This one story ranch house was a huge step for them.

In January, 1956, Elvis turned twenty-one and recorded “Heartbreak Hotel” for RCA Victor, the new record company he had signed with in 1955. The record was a huge success and the royalties of this song enabled him to buy 1034 for \$40,000 cash.⁴⁹ He bought it for his parents, Vernon and Gladys, and his grandmother Minnie Mae, in a new neighborhood that was then the edge of the city — the suburbs.⁵⁰ The Presleys moved in on May 11, 1956.⁵¹

Even though Elvis lived at 1034 for only a short period of time, this house is where Elvis became Elvis. It was the biggest year of his life, a year that saw him become a national celebrity. A large percentage of what most people think about as early Elvis happened while he lived in this house.⁵²

He recorded “Hound Dog;” he bought his mother the iconic pink Cadillac; he wore the famous gold lamé suit for the first time (trying it on for the first time in front of 1034’s living

⁴⁸ Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman, *Memphis Elvis-Style*, (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1997) 1-8, 85-89.

Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 54-56.

⁴⁹ Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman, *Memphis Elvis-Style*, (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1997) 87. Michael Lollar, “No Ordinary Homeowner: Audubon Drive,” In *Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal*, 70-80, (Battle Ground, WA, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 71.

John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

⁵⁰ John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

⁵¹ Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman, *Memphis Elvis-Style*, (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1997) 87.

⁵² Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 6, 47-53.

room fireplace).⁵³ The Million Dollar Quartet Recording Session happened in December of 1956, when Elvis, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash all had a jam session at Sun Studios in Memphis, an incredibly historic moment in music history.⁵⁴ He started his Hollywood career, acting in his first three movies.⁵⁵ He became a millionaire and had ten Top 10 songs on the charts.⁵⁶ Between January, 1956, and January, 1957, he appeared on national television eleven times, five of which occurred while he was living at 1034. Three of those five appearances were on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. After his appearance on that show, his fame exploded.⁵⁷ He was Elvis.

This incredible fame allowed the Presleys to not only buy 1034, but also to make a few modifications and improvements. While they didn't redecorate too much because it was so new,

⁵³ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 50-52, 54.
Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal, (Battle Ground, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 42.

Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

⁵⁴ For a complete list of the songs Elvis recorded while he was living at 1034 Audubon Drive, see Appendix IV.

Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 68-71.

⁵⁵ Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 57-95.

⁵⁶ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 6.

⁵⁷ For a complete list of Elvis' television appearances while living in 1034 as well as the titles of the movies he acted in, see Appendices V and VI.

Alfred Wertheimer, Peter Guralnick, and Chris Murray, *Elvis at 21: New York to Memphis*, (San Rafael, CA: Insight Editions, 2006), 114-119.

"Elvis Presley: The Dorsey Brothers' Stage Show: 1956," *Elvis Australia: Official Elvis Presley Fan Club*, Accessed June and July 2016, <http://www.elvispresleymusic.com.au/pictures/1956-the-dorsey-brothers-stage-show.html>.

"Elvis Presley," *The Ed Sullivan Show: The Official Ed Sullivan Site*, SOFA Entertainment, 2010, Accessed 27 Jun 2016, <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/elvis-presley>.

Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 44-45, 49.

Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal, (Battle Ground, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 42.

they did make a few changes.⁵⁸ Elvis had a pool built out back, with a pool house that doubled as a two-car garage on the other side. He left enough space in the yard for his mother's garden.⁵⁹ They painted the wood paneled hallways, making them feel much larger than they felt before,⁶⁰ and after a while they hung up some musically patterned wallpaper. Gladys bought some musical figurines for the living room wall⁶¹ and set up what Elvis called "a museum of me."⁶² Although his portrait and high school diploma were displayed, among other things, one neighbor remembers his records being stacked against a wall.⁶³

The Presleys removed the screened-in porch, expanding it by about fifteen feet and closing it in to be the large back room it is today, with a red carpet and an added turquoise tiled bathroom.⁶⁴ The ceiling tiles Elvis put up in this room are the same tiles found in Sun Studio, where he got his big break. Perhaps he planned to record music in this room.⁶⁵ Indeed, over Christmas of 1956, Elvis recorded songs he played in the house on his new tape recorder. It is not certain which room he used for these recordings, although I think that it would've been in the

⁵⁸ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 56.

⁵⁹ Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016.

⁶⁰ Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016.

⁶¹ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 56.

⁶² Peter Guralnick, *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley*, (Boston: Back Bay Books: Little, Brown, and Co, 1994), 280.

⁶³ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.
Alfred Wertheimer, Peter Guralnick, and Chris Murray, *Elvis at 21: New York to Memphis*, (San Rafael, CA: Insight Editions, 2006), 194-243.
Frank Jemison, Jr., interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁶⁴ Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016.
Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 56-57.

⁶⁵ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.
John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

middle living room, based on photographs of Elvis at a piano and a house organ near the fireplace.⁶⁶ Most of these recordings are lost, but there is a surviving recording of Elvis singing “When The Saints Go Marching In,” with his friends Red West and Arthur Hooten providing accompanying vocals. They belt out the song like they’re going to glory right then and there. They sing in a wide range, with call-and-response, harmonies, and an upbeat tempo. Elvis’ piano playing is bouncy and vigorous, and their voices act as instruments as in a vocal quartet, ending the song with a ridiculously drawn out last note and laughter. The recording also includes half an hour of Elvis playing pool and watching television.⁶⁷

Elvis probably added the pool right when they bought the house, since it was essentially if not totally complete by the time of photographer Al Wertheimer’s visit to 1034 on July 4, 1956.⁶⁸ Initially, Elvis slept in the front bedroom, a pink, flowery room leftover from Ruth Handwerker’s decorating, but eventually had to switch with his parents and move to the back

⁶⁶ Michael Lollar, “No Ordinary Homeowner: Audubon Drive,” In *Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal*, 70-80, (Battle Ground, WA, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 71.

⁶⁷ RCA released an album called “The Home Recordings” in 1999 of songs Elvis recorded in his various homes. The Audubon House recording is the first track. Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 71-72. Jakob Skjernaa Hansen, “Review: Elvis: The Home Recordings CD,” *Elvis Australia: Official Elvis Presley Fan Club*, January 20, 2002, Accessed 29 Jun 2016, <http://www.elvis.com.au/presley/reviews/cd-review-thehomerecordings.shtml>.

⁶⁸ Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016. Alfred Wertheimer, Peter Guralnick, and Chris Murray, *Elvis at 21: New York to Memphis*, (San Rafael, CA: Insight Editions, 2006), 194-243.

master bedroom on account of the fangirls beating on his windows.⁶⁹ Most likely Minnie Mae slept in the next bedroom over, what used to be Jeanne Handwerker's room, and Dan Handwerker's room became the site of Elvis' pool table.⁷⁰

Even though Elvis was at this point an “accessible” celebrity, and even though the Presleys were now affluent and real homeowners, they all were “fish out of water.”⁷¹ Although they now had more money than anyone else on the street, they were originally from rural Mississippi and had lived in the Memphis housing projects — they came up poor. They were out of place in this neighborhood of upper-middle class professionals.

It wasn't that the neighbors disliked them — contrary to what other people have written on the subject, the neighbors did like them.⁷² The Presleys are repeatedly described by their former neighbors as nice, likable people. Gladys, Elvis' mother, visited with her neighbors, calling back and forth with Mrs. Jemison, getting coffee with Mrs. Mayer, and showing her neighbors her garden.⁷³ Once she visited Mildred Mayer across the street and told her how she could not believe that she had just spent money on curtains — indeed before Elvis became Elvis

⁶⁹ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 56.

Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016. Michael Lollar, “No Ordinary Homeowner: Audubon Drive,” In *Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal*, 70-80, (Battle Ground, WA, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 71.

⁷⁰ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016.

⁷¹ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

⁷² Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

⁷³ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

Bill Metz, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

Christine Mayer Todd and Pallas Pidgeon Zonome, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

she could hardly spend money on anything as luxurious as curtains for her house: “Ain’t Sears high?”⁷⁴

They seemed especially involved with the Audubon children. Gladys let some of the neighborhood kids swim in the pool after feeding them peanut butter sandwiches.⁷⁵ Elvis brought his buddies to play touch football with the neighborhood boys in the front yards on his side of the street. He would pause in his play to sign autographs for the fans watching nearby.⁷⁶ Elvis gave the kids motorcycle rides and teddy bears out of his bedroom.⁷⁷ Once he carried an unconscious boy home to his mother after a brick fell on his head.⁷⁸

But for all of that, the Presleys were peculiar. Gladys grew a vegetable garden in the backyard — corn, tomatoes, purple hull peas — and hung her laundry on a line.⁷⁹ Elvis rode a horse down the street.⁸⁰ Now loaded with money and the ability to do almost whatever he wanted, Elvis began to live the extravagant and curious lifestyle he would later become famous for.⁸¹ It was not a wild, riotous time full of large house parties by any means. They were still on

⁷⁴ Bill Metz, in discussion with the author, July 2016.
Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and email message to the author, July 2016.

⁷⁵ Larry and Suzanne Busby, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁷⁶ Dan and Margaret Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate, June 30, 2016.

⁷⁷ Barbara Metz Steiner, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.
Scotty Moore and James V. Roy, “*Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN*,” (*Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive*. 2002), 2014, Accessed 14 Jun 2016, <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

⁷⁸ Emily and Reb Haizlip, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁷⁹ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 57.
Alfred Wertheimer, Peter Guralnick, and Chris Murray, *Elvis at 21: New York to Memphis*, (San Rafael, CA: Insight Editions, 2006), 213, 194-243.

⁸⁰ Emily and Reb Haizlip, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁸¹ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 57.

their own fairly quiet people. But here in 1034 he grew his collection of motor vehicles — Cadillacs, a motorcycle, a three-wheeled German Messerschmitt car.⁸² One time a helicopter even landed in the vacant lot next to 1034 to pick him up.⁸³ At night, Elvis and his friends would shoot light bulbs over the pool in place of clay pigeons.⁸⁴ They had two dogs and a pet monkey.⁸⁵

Once Elvis walked directly across the street to ask Mildred Mayer what kind of saplings she had just planted. The birch trees looked so nice, he had been wanting to plant some trees in his front yard himself, and would she mind if he bought the same kind? “Sure, Elvis, you can do what you want.” The next day cranes came in with full size trees for the Presley’s front yard.⁸⁶ The neighborhood, needless to say, was shocked at the sudden appearance of the Presley’s forest.⁸⁷

Gladys tried to be neighborly, but really she, Vernon, and Minnie Mae just waited for Elvis to come home.⁸⁸ When he did come home, Elvis tried to be one of the people on the street,

⁸² Barbara Metz Steiner, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.
Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 54.
Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

⁸³ Larry and Suzanne Busby, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁸⁴ Barbara Metz Steiner, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁸⁵ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 57.

⁸⁶ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

⁸⁷ Dan Handwerker, interview by Alice Fugate and in discussion with the author, June and July, 2016.

⁸⁸ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

but it just wasn't possible.⁸⁹ Once, the Jemisons tried to have the Presleys over for dinner at 1054, and they told Bill Metz some years later: "It was just not a success."⁹⁰

The one issue — and it was a big one — was that the fans constantly swarmed this street. Cars were bumper to bumper. The fans, not to mention the neighbors, could hardly find parking. There were all of these neighborhood kids running around, and eventually police would have to escort those children across the street to play with their friends.⁹¹ The neighbors turned on their sprinklers to keep the fans off their front yards.⁹²

The fans lined up at 1034 for autographs, sometimes motorcycle rides, or if they were a lucky group of girls, Elvis would bestow a kiss upon each one before going inside for dinner.⁹³ Girls were picking grass blades from the front yard as souvenirs.⁹⁴ After a while it got so bad that a group of fathers got together and offered to buy Elvis' house from him. Elvis got mad and said something along the lines of, no but I'll buy all of yours. He was the only one without a mortgage and ironically he had more money than any of them.⁹⁵

⁸⁹ Frank Jemison, Jr., interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁹⁰ Bill Metz, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

⁹¹ Larry and Suzanne Busby, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.
Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 2016.
Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, Peggy Jemison Bodine, and Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.
The Audubon neighbors at large, in discussion with the author and in formal interviews.

⁹² Emily and Reb Haizlip, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁹³ Frank Jemison, Jr., interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁹⁴ Scotty Moore and James V. Roy, "*Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN*," (*Scotty Moore - 1034 Audubon Drive*. 2002), 2014, <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

⁹⁵ This story has been told to me and Dr. John Bass by many, many neighbors, and I have even read about it in accounts of Elvis' time on Audubon, so it certainly happened.
John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

But it got so bad for Elvis' own privacy, especially after his appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, that he built a brick and iron wall around 1034's front yard with a gate closing off their driveway, stationing relatives as security guards.⁹⁶ However, the wall could not completely alleviate the problem and the need for privacy grew even greater, so the Presleys moved into Graceland in May of 1957, thirteen months after they had moved onto Audubon Drive.

And when Elvis moved, he moved.⁹⁷ Although sometimes people drove by the house afterwards, just to see it, the neighborhood went back to how it had been before he and all of his fans came.⁹⁸ The former neighbors generally agreed that they talked about it much more long after Elvis moved away. It was considerably more notable to them when they were traveling or living elsewhere, that they could reply to someone's exclamation at their being from Elvis' hometown of Memphis, Tennessee with the words, "Yes, we knew him, and he lived on our street!"⁹⁹ But the street itself remained the same type of neighborhood for the next sixty years.

⁹⁶ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

⁹⁷ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

⁹⁸ Lance Minor, interview by the Mike Curb Institute for Music, 2013, transcript.

⁹⁹ Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, Peggy Jemison Bodine, and Trip Fransworth, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.



The image above is of Gladys and Vernon Presley in 1954 with just a sampling of Elvis' fan mail.¹⁰⁰



The image above is of Minnie Mae Presley and one of Elvis' girlfriends named Barbara Hearn in the middle living room at 1034. Photo by Alfred Wertheimer. All rights reserved.

¹⁰⁰ Marie Clayton, *Elvis Presley: Unseen Archives*, (Barnes & Noble Publishing, Inc. with Parragon Books Ltd, 2006), 76.



The image above is of Elvis and some fans in the driveway of 1034. Photo by Bob Williams Ger Rijff.

Courtesy of the web.¹⁰¹



The image above is of Barbara Hearn, one of Elvis' girlfriends, and Elvis sitting in the middle living room at 1034, listening to records. Photo by Alfred Wertheimer. All Rights Reserved.

¹⁰¹ Scotty Moore and James V. Roy, "Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN," *Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive*, 2002, 2014, Accessed 14 Jun 2016, <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

1034 Audubon Drive after Elvis

Charlie and Peggy Metz often complained to their son Bill about how many different families were in and out of the house next-door at 1034 over the years, and Charlie would joke with him that the house was cursed. Indeed, there have been roughly ten different owners from its genesis until the present.¹⁰² Although Bill Metz doesn't know most of the families who lived there between 1960 and 1998, a recurring theme among the Audubon neighbors, he does remember the Moore family. According to *Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory*, the Moore's moved in right after the Presleys and lived there in 1958 and 1959, however, it does not list them as owners¹⁰³ and Bill Metz remembers them renting the home. Their names were Michael and Marjorie. Michael was a manager at the Delta Refining Company, an oil company.¹⁰⁴ He had a "four-seater plane," and took Bill and the oldest Moore son Jimmy down to "Yazoo City, Mississippi with him a couple of times."¹⁰⁵ According to Metz, they were not the same Moore family who owned Graceland before Elvis, as they were not originally from Memphis, but the Midwest. Bill says they didn't make many changes to the house. They fit well into the neighborhood, especially because their many kids, some of whom attended the Sherwood school, found playmates the same age as them. Jimmy played basketball in the eighth and ninth grades (the years he lived at 1034) with Bill.

¹⁰² For a complete list of owners and residents of 1034 Audubon Drive, please see the Appendix I.

¹⁰³ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers.* 1958, 1959.

¹⁰⁴ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers.* 1958, 1959. Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹⁰⁵ Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

The Stewarts, who lived at 1034 Audubon Drive from 1960 to 1962,¹⁰⁶ is a much more memorable family to a group of former Audubon neighbors than the Moore family.¹⁰⁷ These neighbors threw out the names “Stewarts” and “Pam and Candy” with enthusiasm, and remembering playdates they would have together. Meg Jemison Bartlett and her siblings went over to 1034 to play with the Stewart children, as did Christine Mayer Todd. They remember the youngest children to be twins named Pam and Candy, and shared an email with me in which another former neighbor, Katherine Whitehead Mitchell, remembers the names Gil and Bruce, and that there was one more sister — at least five children.¹⁰⁸ The parents were named Walter and Marjorie, and Walter was a purchasing manager at EL Bruce Company.¹⁰⁹ Christine recalls the Stewarts doing some construction to the roof of the house, because she remembers going over there with a friend and being flabbergasted by the peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the rafters, surely from the workmen.¹¹⁰ Despite these anecdotes and recollections, less is known about 1034 in the years immediately after the Presleys left than during their time there and before.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers. 1960-1962.*

¹⁰⁷ Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, Peggy Jemison Bodine, and Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

¹⁰⁸ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

¹⁰⁹ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers. 1960-1962.*

¹¹⁰ This has not been verified or noticed by any other resident or neighbor that I have been in touch with, but it's possible that the house received more modifications in between the Presleys and Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen in the late 1990's than is explicitly known.

¹¹¹ Further research on the residents after the Presleys is in progress.

The Context of Audubon Drive: Memphis and Audubon from the Late 1950's to the 1970's

In the 1950's, Germantown was completely removed from the city, whereas today the two cities flow into each other.¹¹² Poplar Avenue was not the big busy street it is now. There was no I-240 loop around the city until the mid-sixties. More and more kids were moving out east with their parents. The city rapidly moved out east in the 1960's, between Park Avenue, now home to part of the University of Memphis, and I-240. There was nothing beyond that. Collierville, now a suburb city that Memphis flows into near Germantown, was its own small town. During the 1960's the edge of the city moved a little further out, to near Walnut Grove and White Station.¹¹³

On the other side of Getwell Road, going west from Audubon Drive was, and is, the subdivision known as Sherwood Forest, full of greenery and streets named for characters out of the Robin Hood legends. This was one of the larger suburban neighborhoods close to Audubon Park - a lower-to-middle-class white neighborhood.¹¹⁴ Further down Park Avenue, towards the Mississippi River and downtown Memphis, was and is Orange Mound, one of the oldest African

¹¹² Bill had a friend in high school whose father was a horse trainer in Germantown, so he and his friends had the impression that it was all horse farms and horse trainers.
Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹¹³ Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹¹⁴ Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

American communities in the city. Bill does not remember it being very close nor having a great effect on his parents' neighborhood.¹¹⁵

In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot and killed in Memphis. Bill Metz was getting his Phd in physics in Connecticut, and his parents didn't talk to him about it. But it was a "hellish time," for the city and for the country. Nationally, Memphis was under a horrible light. Robert Snowden, who built the Audubon neighborhood and lived there for a time, said that the city's publicity got worse after King died. According to Bill, TIME Magazine called it a decaying river town, which stung Memphians deeply.¹¹⁶

A Neighborhood Portrait: Audubon Drive from the 1950's through the 1990's

Looking at Audubon Drive on a smaller scale, the neighborhood remained this "idyllic" little spot until at least the early 1980's, especially for its multitude of children, both "as children and as young adults."¹¹⁷ I asked a group of neighbors what it was like in the sixties and seventies.¹¹⁸ Peggy Jemison Bodine says that there were a lot of friendships there. A lot of mutual friends moved there when Robert Snowden started the neighborhood, such as her family

¹¹⁵ However, it is interesting to note that while Orange Mound may have seemed far removed in the 1950's, it is only about three miles away from Audubon Drive. Even if Orange Mound proper was not located in exactly the same location then as it is now, the houses are extremely old, and it is still much closer than it seems.

John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹¹⁶ Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹¹⁷ Trip Farnsworth, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to author, July 2016.

¹¹⁸ Christine Mayer Todd, Meg Jemison Bartlett, Peggy Jemison Bodine, and Trip Fransworth, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

and the Allens. It was always an upscale neighborhood full of professionals, and very family oriented, given the multitude of children.¹¹⁹

The interesting thing about the neighborhood is how much success came out of it. It was, and still is, a small, quiet place, tucked away in a corner of Memphis, but it seems to have always been a magnet for fame and success. Granted, the original residents moved in with certain degrees of success, many were already from socially prominent families, and it was a professional neighborhood, but *fame* hovers over this street at all levels. If the residents are not famous themselves they all seem to have had some proximity to fame in addition to at one point being Elvis' neighbors.

For further illustration, Trip Farnsworth shared with me the following: "Of course, the other claim to fame for us Audubon Drive residents is that Mrs. Sally Smith, at 1130 Audubon, is the mother of three, two daughters, Linda, another daughter whose name I forget, and a son, Fred, named for her late husband who ran the Toddle House chain of restaurants and Dixie Greyhound Transportation, the bus line. Of course, Fredrick W. Smith, the son, is more well known today as the founder and principal shareholder of Federal Express. Back then, he was just "Freddy." Interestingly, Mrs. Smith sold the house to a professor at [The University of Memphis] named Buchman. I think they had two daughters, one of whom was named Dana. She went to Hutchison growing up. She is now the fashion designer, Dana Buchman. So, 1130 Audubon was a good address for success."¹²⁰ Many neighbors also highlighted Judge Robert M. McRae, Jr., who was involved in the 1972 decision to physically bus kids to different schools in order to

¹¹⁹ Peggy Jemison Bodine, in discussion with the author, July 14, 2016.

¹²⁰ Trip Farnsworth, in an e-mail message to author, July 2016.

force the integration of Memphis schools.¹²¹ For a time he lived at 1016 Audubon Drive (he left around 1966), but this was before he became a federal judge.¹²² By the time of the decision, he and his family had moved to Chickasaw Gardens.

Knowing that indeed the whole neighborhood is a good address for success, Christine Mayer Todd tells a story about a Beatles fan club she and some other girls formed while children on the street. The members made a solemn pact to live there when they grew up, saying: “this is the most fabulous street in the world.”¹²³

Interestingly, though, the most fabulously populated house on Audubon Drive, 1034, was just a home on the street after Elvis left. Christine Mayer Todd remembers the house being very often vacant, and how odd that was. The neighborhood kids always waited with bated breath to see who would move in next, earnestly hoping they would bring new playmates with them. Christine remembers walking up to the front door to ask, “Do you have kids?”¹²⁴ And while there were some kids, from 1958 until 1998, the house remained simply a house.¹²⁵

The Chandler Family: the Family that Lasted the Longest

¹²¹ Bill Metz, interview with Alice Fugate and e-mail message to author, July 2016.
John Bass, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

¹²² R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers.* 1954-1956, 1958-1966.

“University News: McRae, Johnson Scholarships Will Benefit Future Educators,” *University of Memphis*, October 10, 2006, Accessed 20 Jul 2016.

¹²³ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

¹²⁴ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

¹²⁵ Again, for a full list of the house’s residents and owners, see Appendix I.

The only other residents of 1034 Audubon Drive that I have been able to find some information on are the Chandlers. The Chandlers, Theodore (Ted) and Janice, lived there from 1976 to 1997, twenty-one years.¹²⁶ If they had children, they were not living with them when they moved out.¹²⁷ Considering how little time any other family seemed to stay in this house makes these people remarkable. They saw the better half of essentially three decades and lived there when Elvis passed away in 1977.¹²⁸ According to the Polk City Directory, Ted was a purchasing agent for Radar Systems from when they bought and moved into the house in 1976¹²⁹ until 1989. From 1990 until 1997, when they sold the house, he was a manager at Buntyn Laundry.¹³⁰ Cindy Hazen, who bought the house from them with her husband Mike Freeman, provided me with a glimpse into who they were and what they did with the house.

The Chandlers owned a dry cleaning business called Buntyn Laundry.¹³¹ The front bedroom, that was once Elvis' bedroom and then his parents', was used as a personal closet for

¹²⁶ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers. 1976-1997.*

¹²⁷ The Polk City Directory only lists adult children in the house in addition to the owner and wife, so in 1993 it lists someone named Stefanie. Possibly this was the Chandler's grown daughter. R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers. 1976-1997.* Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

¹²⁸ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 167.

¹²⁹ According to Shelby County Assessor's Site, they bought it in 1975, during which the Polk City Directory lists it as vacant, and then the Chandlers were the owners and listed in the directory from 1976 until 1997. Cheyenne Johnson, *Shelby County Assessor of Property, Shelby County, Tennessee*, 2016, Accessed 13 Jun 2016, <https://www.assessor.shelby.tn.us/content.aspx>.

¹³⁰ R.L. Polk & Co. *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers. 1990, 1992-1993, 1996-1997.*

¹³¹ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

Janice. “Double rods” were set up all around the room with her dry-cleaned clothes hanging off of them. Janice had pomeranians, and when one of them died, they stuffed it and placed it in this front room closet on one of the dressing tables. Stuffed animal heads adorned the front den of the house, as Ted was a big hunter. Cindy theorizes that they might have added the red corner bar in the large back room. Cindy also believes that since Elvis was still alive when they bought the house, “there wasn’t as much attention on him in Memphis” as there was after he died. Once this happened, and Elvis Week began to be held every August to celebrate the legend and commemorate his death, the tours picked up.¹³² Although they were aware that it was formerly Elvis’ home, the Chandlers “didn’t buy the house expecting tour buses to go by.” Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen themselves were on some of these tour buses.¹³³

Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen: the King Returns to Audubon, 1998-2006¹³⁴

Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen were married, living in Memphis, working corporate day jobs, giving Elvis tours, and writing books — two of which were on Elvis — on the side. One of the stops on their Elvis tours included a drive-by of 1034 Audubon Drive. Mike worked in the corporate offices of Harrah’s, a casino company, near Audubon Drive. One day his coworker informed him that Elvis’ house was for sale, and he and Cindy leapt at the chance.

“The house needed some repair,” and it was a process for them to buy and move in because they had to settle affairs with their other properties. The house “had never been

¹³² According to Cindy Hazen, Elvis and 1034 Audubon Drive do not get a lot of attention in Memphis, compared to what they receive nationally and internationally.

¹³³ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

¹³⁴ *Unless otherwise noted, all of the following information is gathered from my personal interview with Cindy Hazen.*

updated,” just redecorated with each owner: the “typical Memphian would walk in and not want to take it on — [but we] wanted that history.” The couple was pleased that 1034 looked “almost entirely” the same as it did in the fifties. The old kitchen, the 1950’s bathroom — it was perfect.

Their goal was to fully restore the house to what it looked like in the 1950’s, with certain touches honoring and mimicking Elvis’ time there. They bought fifties style furniture in thrift stores, old record players, and of course, lots of Elvis photographs, artwork, and other memorabilia. Cindy went thrift shopping on Elvis Presley Boulevard, where Graceland is located, and a decorator helped them dig up period pieces, or things with an “older feel,” such as the dining room wallpaper — patterned with green foliage and red birds.

During the restoration process, they made several exciting discoveries. In the back master bedroom, for example, they uncovered Ruth Handwerker’s wallpaper, kept by the Presleys. The couple saved a scrap of this and replaced it with an almost exact replica. Additionally, a scrap of original red carpet that the Presley family put down in the large back room was found, and although they did not replace it, they did put down a red rug. They saved bits of all of the old layers they found and used these to inform their decorating decisions moving forward.

The most incredible discovery was the music-patterned blue and black wallpaper that Gladys Presley put in in the hallway by the bedrooms. There were two layers of wallpaper on top of it: one was a blue floral and beneath that was a “red-striped velvet... very seventies,” Cindy says. As they scraped these off, bits of blue and black began to peep through, quickly giving way to full musical instruments, staves, and notes. The wallpaper was preserved and is still there today. Hidden on a side of the piano keys, they discovered the word “ELVIS.” Mike and Cindy assumed the signature was from a fan, someone who was there after Elvis, or perhaps someone

who scrawled it on whim in Elvis' presence. However, years later, after they had moved out of the house, Cindy attended a performance by an old Stax Records artist named Don Nix in Memphis. He "talked a lot about Elvis" during his performance, and afterwards she told him that she had lived in his old house. The first thing he asked her was, "Is Elvis' signature still there?" No one had ever said anything like that to Cindy before, especially because it is so small and secret a thing in the house, and the immediacy with which he asked about it makes her wonder. For whatever reason, he had been in the house after Elvis left, and believed the signature was Elvis'.¹³⁵

Cindy once saw a picture in a magazine of the Presleys in the middle living room, and noticed the music note figurines on the wall above the couch. Gladys likely purchased them at Sears. Then, at "an estate sale in Frazier" (an area in North Memphis),¹³⁶ she and Mike found almost identical figurines. There are three pieces to the set: two music notes, each with a little musician sitting in it, and an outline of a violin in between them.

The front bedroom was used as a guest room, where they had "uncovered some of the wallpaper," the "next bedroom was Mike's office," the third was a TV room, and the larger master in the back belonged to Mike and Cindy. The middle living room, although very

¹³⁵ A few years ago, a Rhodes College student in the Mike Curb Institute for Music named Dianne Loftis did some additional research on the legitimacy of this signature. Her findings supported the theory that it is in fact Elvis' own signature, because he apparently wrote in all-caps for personal notes such as set lists or scribbled poems. The signature on the wallpaper is in all-caps. John Bass, in email message to the author, July 2016.

¹³⁶ Cindy believes that the Presleys might have moved there "had Elvis not started making a lot of money, because a lot of middle class, working class people moved to Frazier."

authentically decorated, was largely unused. Of course, they used the kitchen and the dining room and turned the front den into Cindy's office.

The large back room was a place to lounge, watch television, and give tours in. The red corner bar was already there, but they added old-timey red stools. They filled shelves built into the walls on either end of the room, protected by glass panes, with some of their Elvis memorabilia — records and photographs. The couple deduced that the ceiling tiles in this room are the same as the tiles used on the walls and ceiling of the famous Sun Studio. Cindy worked at Sun for a time, and some other Sun folks who visited the house agreed with them.

The brick and iron wall and fence from Elvis' day still surrounded the front yard, but it was painted white, as was the house, which was green during Elvis' stay.¹³⁷ The front gate was kept open and, to Cindy's knowledge, most of the original trees Elvis planted were still in the front yard.

In the backyard, there were pots that Cindy used for planting, a fig tree, pine trees along the fence, and a Japanese maple. The pool house was used for storage on account of some water damage, but the pool was in almost constant use. It was particularly useful for Elvis fan club pool parties, which Cindy called "Elvis parties."

Many of these "Elvis parties" were fundraisers for various organizations and charities they were interested in, including "Memphis Heritage, Center for Southern Folklore, and pet rescue organizations," but some were simply fan club pool parties. Sometimes Elvis' movie or television co-stars were even in attendance. The couple gave house tours "by appointment," very

¹³⁷ JAARN088, "Elvis' Audubon Drive Home, Inside Tour, 2002. Mike Freeman Tours," *Youtube*, June 27, 2007, Accessed 08 Jul 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OyELdj9IG58>.

likely a pleasure and a thrill to show the inside to fans. Just a few years before they could only drive by. Most of the tours were given in January, the month Elvis was born, and August, the month he died. People came on tour buses from all over the world. The French, Danish, and Japanese all had visiting Elvis fan clubs. The British fan club still “comes several times a year,” and during Mike and Cindy’s day its bus came “like clockwork.” All of this activity caused “a little boy who lived down the street” to dub any coach bus “an Elvis bus.”

Mike and Cindy had to learn to be good neighbors on Audubon Drive, just as the Presleys did long before them. They differed from previous owners because they brought the house back to Elvis and his legacy. Though the tours were by appointment and it was still a private home, activity picked up under their ownership. They always notified the neighbors of their events, making sure to end exactly on time. And of course, the neighbors were invited to see the house. They socialized with some of the people on the street, and Cindy thinks that overall the neighbors respected them. She says it was the kind of place where people would walk a lot, a place where she “never felt frightened,” either in the house or outside of it. “The people look out for each other.” When they moved in “there were a lot of elderly people who had lived there since the fifties and sixties,” but during their residence, they began moving out. Younger families or couples took their places. Even so, it “stayed a very stable neighborhood.”

Once they had a party that the Metz family attended. Charlie and Peggy Metz were still living next door during the first half of Mike and Cindy’s eight years at 1034. They had a book out at the party by Marvin Israel, who took pictures of the house when Elvis was there. The Metz family recognized one of their daughters in the picture: behind Elvis, “Mrs. Metz [is] looking out the window and a little girl [is] starting to run away.”

In addition to fan clubs and neighbor visits, quite a number of more famous individuals visited the house, keeping up its long tradition of hosting celebrity, and of course paying tribute to the King. “You never knew who was going to come to the door.”

Jimmy Payne, a Nashville songwriter, dropped by and shared stories about visiting the house as a kid during Elvis’ time. Kirk Whalum, a Memphis saxophone player, came to an event at the house with his brother Kevin Whalum, a minister who lived around the corner from Audubon Drive. Kirk told them how much he appreciated what they were doing at the house and later left a signed CD of his music on the door. A friend of Cindy’s, the writer Laura Kalpakian, dropped by the house multiple times. She wrote a piece of fiction called *Graced-land*, which became a movie called “The Woman Who Loved Elvis.” A Japanese rock and roll singer even “filmed [a show] in the house.”

Another international musician, the Belgian singer Helmut Lotti, filmed part of a television special at the house, which became wildly successful in Europe. Rock and roll singer Wanda Jackson joined him for the show.¹³⁸ Lotti was so huge in Europe that there was concern for his security and privacy, but Mike and Cindy felt sure that he would be left alone. Lotti was charming, and gifted his South African music album to Cindy because he knew she enjoyed the genre. “About two years later,” Mike and Cindy were having dinner at “about 8:30 at night,” and someone knocked on the kitchen door. There “was a limousine at the end of the driveway, and

¹³⁸ Although Cindy isn’t sure, it was likely the same television special Lotti filmed to accompany his 2002 Elvis tribute album commemorating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the King’s death called “My Tribute to the King.”

“Discography: My Tribute to the King,” *Helmut Lotti*, 2002, Accessed 20 Jul 2016, <http://helmutlotti.be/en/discography/my-tribute-to-the-king>.

Helmut Lotti was standing there.” He wanted to thank them “for helping [him] sell” over a million records.

One particularly interesting visitor and King lover was author Bobbie Ann Mason, winner of the Southern Book Award and the PEN/Hemingway Award. The famous music scholar and Elvis biographer Peter Guralnick¹³⁹ referred Mike and Cindy to Mason. She was writing a short biography of Elvis for the Penguin Lives Series and consulted Guralnick for her work. She wrote a letter to Mike and Cindy, telling them about the book and requesting a visit. Mason corresponded with them after her visit and eventually, Cindy told Mason about their upcoming trip to Ireland. Mason was invited to housesit and pet sit at 1034. It “worked out really well because Bobbie Ann likes to travel, and her husband likes to stay home with the dogs.” Cindy has kept in touch with Mason since then, and Mason thanks Mike and Cindy in the book’s acknowledgments, describing her stay at the house.

In a true return to the King, George Klein and Richard Davis visited the house multiple times. George Klein was one of Elvis’ best friends and his best man in his wedding. Richard Davis worked for Elvis, was a member of the Memphis Mafia, and came to the house with his wife. Mike and Cindy held his surprise sixtieth birthday party at the house, and when he died they hosted the reception there too.

But perhaps the most intriguing visitor was Gladys Presley herself. That’s right, Mama came back!

¹³⁹ Peter Guralnick met Mike and Cindy at some point, but Cindy does not remember how. He never came to the house “but he credited [them] in one of [his] Elvis books.”

Cindy calls 1034 one of the “most quiet houses I’ve ever lived in.” So quiet that she couldn’t hear a car accident right in front of the house when standing in the kitchen. The quietness “gives credence to this story,” according to Cindy. Mike and Cindy were out back by the pool with two foster dogs, separating them from their own, who were inside barking furiously at the strange animals in their yard. “It was the night before the anniversary of the fiftieth recording of ‘That’s All Right.’” Suddenly, they heard a soft, southern, female voice that said, ‘Hush!’ and seemed to come from the house. The dogs stopped barking. They moved away from the back sliding doors and into the kitchen. Surely someone had come into the house — but no one was there. Mike and Cindy later realized “that there was no way someone could’ve spoken in the house and [we] could’ve heard it outside. I mean if you can’t hear a car crash you couldn’t hear a soft voice. And if it had been a neighbor, the dogs wouldn’t’ve responded.” Cindy has always thought it must have been Gladys: “I think that house was very, very important to her, more so than Graceland, because — and before the fencing went up — she could be ordinary. She could go across the street and have a cup of coffee, she could have a garden. It was somewhat normal. I think that’s where she was happiest once he became so famous. It would make sense to me that there’s some energy there.”

And the house does have “a wonderful energy” — ghost or no ghost. However, it was sometimes “surreal,” and at times “very overwhelming” to live there. They were both working various jobs, Cindy had writing deadlines, and of course they still gave city and house tours. A tour bus might pull up at night, and “light bulbs [would] flash” outside their windows. Once during Elvis Week, people boldly came up and “peered in the windows [at] eight o’clock in the morning.” This attention gave them “just the slightest glimpse of what the Presleys” experienced.

They were “open and generous” with their treasure, as were the Presley’s, but “it became...a challenge.”¹⁴⁰

They sold the house in 2006. Mike and Cindy were separating, and they agreed that neither would keep the house. 1034 was put up on eBay, the online market site, “as a means of bringing buyers to the table.” There was “enormous international attention” and “bidders from all over the world.” “It was in the India Times,” and “virtually every publication you can imagine.” The highest bidder was an Israeli psychic magician known for spoon bending named Uri Geller, who had appeared on *The Mike Douglas Show*. Two other partners joined him on the venture, which he later confessed included turning the house into a museum to the paranormal. Their plans had nothing to do with Elvis, unless they planned to “channel” him and use the house’s history for publicity. Mike and Cindy sent them their own contract, which was geared to “protect the integrity of the house and the quality of the neighborhood.”

But Geller and his partners crossed out a few sections of the contract, in disagreement with Mike and Cindy’s terms. In contract law, the contract is void if one party crosses out any

¹⁴⁰ A historical event in Memphis that occurred during Mike and Cindy’s ownership and that was itself quite a challenge: On July 22, 2003, Hurricane Elvis hit Memphis. It was “a massive windstorm” that knocked many people’s power out for days, and for about ten days at 1034. The storm essentially shut down the city: the power was out, cell services and internet connections were unavailable, water and wind damage devastated homes, offices, roads, and more. Lives were lost. It was incredibly destructive, which seems to contribute to why it had to be named Hurricane Elvis, although it wasn’t an actual hurricane. Memphians needed those two names combined to communicate the enormity of the storm to the outside world. Mike and Cindy were going to give a tour that day but cancelled because of the violence of the storm. Trees fell down all along on Park Avenue, off of which Audubon Drive runs, so that it would have been difficult if not impossible to even reach 1034 from anywhere else in the city. Amazingly, Cindy doesn’t recall any damaged houses on Audubon Drive.

Zach McMillan, “Hurricane Elvis: The Unforgettable Storm of 2013,” *The Commercial Appeal*, July 19, 2013, Accessed 12 Jul 2016, <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/hurricane-elvis-the-unforgettable-storm-of-2003-ep-361357537-326653061.html>.

part of it. While this was in process, and Mike and Cindy were hoping they would not have to go through negotiations with Geller, one of the lower eBay bidders tried again. Mike Curb, a famous Nashville record executive, offered a different, and better, deal, with “pure intentions.”¹⁴¹ He wanted to make the house part of an educational institution, to honor Elvis’ legacy, and to promote music history in Memphis. The deal was closed in less than a week.

The couple’s “attorney begged [them] not to sell the house,” because Geller would feel it was a “breach of contract,” even though legally their agreement was not binding. The day after they closed with Mike Curb, there was “a federal lawsuit filed against” them. Cindy “had lost [her] corporate job, [they] had had to file for bankruptcy, [she] was working three jobs when they sold it because [she] was trying to settle everything and take care of the house.” “Camera crews [appeared] outside the house.” Of course, “the big joke was that if [Geller was] a psychic, [he] should’ve seen it coming.” The whole process with the lawsuit, bankruptcy, and the total closing of the house took two years.

But it all cooled off, and the house entered a new phase. It’s been ten years since Mike Curb and his wife Linda bought the house for one million dollars,¹⁴² and for ten years it has been the central component of the Mike Curb Institute for Music at Rhodes College in Memphis.

¹⁴¹ “Welcome!” *An Evening at Elvis’, Rhodes College*, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016, <http://eveningatelvis.org>.

¹⁴² Cheyenne Johnson, *Shelby County Assessor of Property, Shelby County, Tennessee*, 2016, Accessed 13 Jun 2016, <https://www.assessor.shelby.tn.us/content.aspx>.



The image above is of the house when Mike and Cindy lived in the house. It was painted white at the time. Photo by James V. Roy. Courtesy of the web.¹⁴³



The image above is of Mike Curb in 1034 at an episode of An Evening at Elvis'. Courtesy of the web.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Scotty Moore and James V. Roy, "Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN," (*Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive*. 2002), 2014, Accessed 14 Jun 2016, <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

¹⁴⁴ "Photos," *An Evening at Elvis'*, Rhodes College, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016, <http://eveningatelvis.org>.

The Curbs and Rhodes College, 2006-2016

The Mike Curb Family Foundation owns 1034 Audubon Drive to this day. Mike Curb is passionate about what he calls the “Tennessee Music Miracle” and the rich history of music in the South. He and his foundation seek to promote the research and preservation of music in the region, largely through education. This is why Mike and Cindy felt comfortable selling the house to the Curbs — the house would not be a museum or a tourist attraction like Graceland, but remain a quiet house, loaned, but really gifted, to Memphis’ Rhodes College.¹⁴⁵ The fact that the house is now part of an “institution of higher learning” is a huge source of pride for Cindy Hazen. She believes that Gladys and Elvis would have been proud, as Elvis was the first in his family to graduate high school. It was a huge accomplishment and incredibly important to his parents. His high school diploma hung in their front den. For a college to take care of the house now would surely have meant a lot to them.¹⁴⁶

Once the Curbs bought 1034, they decided to continue its restoration. Most of the house remains the same as when Mike and Cindy lived there; Cindy left the Curbs almost all of the fifties furniture she and Mike collected, and Al Wertheimer’s photographs are still all over the walls. But now the house is much more sparsely decorated: there is hardly anything in the bedrooms, except for the twin beds in front bedroom. The Curbs left up the original music wallpaper in the hallway and the recreation of the original green floral wallpaper in the back bedroom, but the rest of the rooms and hallways are either painted in an off-white color or show

¹⁴⁵ For more information on Mike Curb’s impressive career, visit the Mike Curb Institute for Music page on the Rhodes College at www.rhodes.edu/curb and click on “People.”

¹⁴⁶ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

the original wood paneling. The Curbs put down red carpeting in the large back room, as Elvis had it, and spread that carpet to the dining room, middle living room, front den, and hallways by the bedrooms. The bedrooms have beige shag carpets on the floors. The Curbs painted the outside of the house green and white, as it was in Elvis' day, put up the white window awnings in the front with the green scripted letter "P" for "Presley," took the white paint off of the brick wall, renovated the pool house, and filled in the pool (mostly for liability reasons).

At the same time the Curbs were buying the house, they were also working to found the Mike Curb Institute for Music at Rhodes College.¹⁴⁷ This institute seeks to research, preserve, and promote music in Memphis and the region, in accordance with Mike Curb's vision. The use of 1034 Audubon became a part of the gift to the college to be used to foster the mission of the institute. Dr. John Bass, already working at Rhodes, was hired as the first Director of the the Curb Institute in 2010. Through the institute, students get business experience in public relations and marketing, creative experience in video and audio production, outreach experience through community engagement, and academic experience in research and writing.¹⁴⁸ Obviously the Curb Institute does much more than just work with 1034 Audubon Drive, but the house is certainly a highlight and one of the organization's most valuable resources. But after the restoration of 1034 was complete, the big issue became: "We have this amazing place, but what do we do with it?"¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ There are 11 other Curb supported schools around the country. See www.mikecurb.com/ccs for more information.

¹⁴⁸ "Mike Curb Institute for Music," *Rhodes College*, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016, <http://www.rhodes.edu/content/mike-curb-institute-music>.

¹⁴⁹ John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

The mission was, and is, to use Elvis' house on Audubon Drive to do creative things with young people. Elvis was twenty-one years old when he bought the house, a young man changing the world through the new musical genre of rock and roll. Dr. Bass and those involved in the Curb Institute at Rhodes realized that their main resource was young people around the same age as Elvis: energetic, creative individuals trying to enact change in the world through their own initiatives. 1034 has become a laboratory for creative work, carrying on the King's tradition of "bucking the system," as Dr. Bass says, using archival and historical works to research the impact that Memphis music has had on the world.¹⁵⁰

One of the main projects started by the Curb Institute in 2012, and now one of the main uses of the house, is a live house concert series called *An Evening at Elvis*'. The show is run by Rhodes students who work alongside Dr. Bass and professionals to book artists, run and film the show (which takes place in the big back room that Elvis built), edit the material, and release it online. The show features an interview with the artist in addition to the performance. The guests have been a combination of local Memphis artists and both small and big names in the music industry.¹⁵¹ To date, the artists have included Roseanne Cash, Bobby Rush, Bill Frisell, Valerie June, Marcella Simien (Marcella & Her Lovers), Charles Lloyd, Mason Jar Fireflies, PreuXX, Terry Manning, Tyrannosaurus Chicken, Star and Micey, and a Rhodes student band called The Flying V's. In addition to these famous artists, drummer Stewart Copeland visited in 2016 for a

¹⁵⁰ For some examples of creative work and research, students have recorded songs and conducted video interviews at 1034.

John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

¹⁵¹ "Welcome!" *An Evening at Elvis*', Rhodes College, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016. <http://eveningatelvis.org>.

small interview session with Dr. Bass.¹⁵² And in 2012, Al Wertheimer returned to the house for a presentation for Rhodes College and invited guests, when he was in town for Elvis Week. It was the first time he had seen the house since that historic visit on July 4, 1956.¹⁵³

The Audubon Drive neighborhood is still a neighborhood. One of the challenges the College faces, just as the Presleys and Mike and Cindy before it, is how to be a good neighbor. There have been mixed interactions with the neighbors, with both skeptics and supporters. That being said, in addition to learning how to live and interact with the current Audubon community, the former Audubon neighbors have not been forgotten.¹⁵⁴ In 2013, the Curb Institute held a reunion at the house for some of the neighbors who lived there in 1956. Students conducted video interviews so that the former neighbors could share their memories of the house and street when Elvis lived there. One of the women interviewed, Emily Haizlip, still lives on the street today.

This house and neighborhood are very *familiar*. They seem to have always been the kind of places where people just walk up and knock on the door: “Do you have kids?”¹⁵⁵ “Is Elvis at home?” 1034 Audubon Drive has retained its hospitality, that familiar quality the Audubon neighbors exhibit even to this day, some of whom invited me into their homes to share their stories and resources. Surely this welcoming personality that has endured since the fifties is what

¹⁵² John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

¹⁵³ John Bass, “Wertheimer Photographed the Young Elvis,” *The Memphis Flyer*, November 4, 2014, Accessed 23 Jun 2016. <http://m.memphisflyer.com/memphis/wertheimer-photographed-young-elvis/Content?oid=3770602>.

¹⁵⁴ John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

¹⁵⁵ Christine Mayer Todd, in discussion with the author and e-mail message to the author, July 2016.

keeps people on the street and connected with each other for so long. Even after they move or pass away, their spirit remains.



The image above is what 1034 Audubon Drive looks like today. Photo by Jon Reed. Courtesy of the
*web.*¹⁵⁶



The image above shows the setup of An Evening at Elvis' episode before the concert. Courtesy of the
*web.*¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Scotty Moore and James V. Roy, "Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive, Memphis, TN," (*Scotty Moore — 1034 Audubon Drive*. 2002), 2014, Accessed 14 Jun 2016, <http://scottymoore.net/audubon.html>.

¹⁵⁷ "Photos," *An Evening at Elvis* , Rhodes College, 2016, Accessed 19 Jul 2016, <http://eveningatelvis.org>.

A Tour of 1034 Audubon Drive: 2016

About 64 years after Howard Handwerker built it, 60 Years after Elvis Presley bought it, and 10 years after Mike and Linda Curb bought it and gifted it to Rhodes College.

The house is old and smells like it: that musty, unpeopled scent of a little used building. It isn't that it's never used, but without people truly living there, it has become very still, a completely silent house. It feels much bigger than it is due to the lack of furniture, and also because the countless photographs on the walls have the same effect a mirror does in enlarging a room. The majority of the photographs are of Elvis Presley, his family, and his friends standing in the same area of the house as each photograph is placed. Most of them are the famously intimate pictures by Al Wertheimer, who spent his July Fourth in 1956 capturing Elvis in his hometown. They look like black and white windows into each room's past, opening up a little world within each space, so that one is constantly reminded of the King's stay.

Most of the furniture, many of the photographs, and some of the art are leftover from when Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen were there, since they decorated it in the fifties' style. Mike and Linda Curb made some changes and got rid of some furniture, but much of it is the same.

Upon entering the front door, you see a framed set of pictures on a white wall announcing that this is Elvis' first purchased house in Memphis. To the right is a hallway with red carpet that runs past all of the bedrooms, straight ahead is a tiled walkway leading to the red carpeted middle living room, and to the left is a door leading to the front den.

As you turn to the right from the front door, you see the mini office built into the wall next to the bathroom. The shelves are full of pictures of the Presleys in this spot, Elvis on the

phone leaning against the wall. The bathroom is covered in an off white wallpaper with a pink flamingo pattern on it above the grey tile covering the bottom half of the wall.

Next to the bathroom is the front bedroom. This was Elvis' bedroom at first, until the fangirls became too much to handle, coming up to his windows to catch a glimpse and maybe a kiss. His parents then switched their back master bedroom for his front one. This room today has two wooden twin beds in it just like Elvis, a shelf in between the beds, a closet to the right of the door, and a wooden dresser to the left, with a little old, red RCA Victor television sitting on top of it. There is a beige shag carpet on the floor and the walls are painted off-white.

You exit this room and walk back down the red carpeted hall, passing off-white walls on the left with closets taking up that space, and the Presley's original blue and black music wallpaper on the right. The blue parts of the pattern have faded into a paler, almost green hue. Towards the right, if one knows where to find it, is a picture of piano keys within the wallpaper pattern, and on one of these keys is written in all-caps "ELVIS," which was discussed earlier.

The first bedroom on the right has the same off-white walls and beige carpet as the front bedroom; indeed, all of the bedrooms have that carpet and the same off-white wall paint except the back master bedroom. The first bedroom has a few pieces of brown, fifties' style furniture in it. There is a little brown 45 record player on a chest with a Johnny Cash Sun Studio record in it. There is a low, brown, mirrored vanity with a red cushioned stool, and a corner shelf featuring pictures of the Presleys next to it.

The second bedroom only has a blue chair and a brown record player in it. A turquoise lamp and telephone sit on top of it. In a frame on the chest, Elvis shoots pool in this same room, which was at the time not painted but showed all of the original exposed wood. A brown

suitcase-record player sits on the floor next to the closet. There are two headshots of Elvis on the wall.

The back bedroom, the largest of the four, has green painted shutter doors leading to the large closet and the master bath, both on the left wall. The wallpaper is green with a pink and blue floral pattern on it, imitating the pattern of the original wallpaper the Handworkers put up. The trim on the walls and around the windows are also green. There are photographs of the Presley's clothes, Elvis' front bedroom, and Elvis looking at clothes inside of this room's walk-in closet. A black and white cutout of Elvis in a suit presides over the otherwise empty room, giving the visitor his classic half-smile — one corner of his lips turning up ever so slightly.

Exiting the back bedroom, you turn right into the middle living room. This room is painted off-white and has red carpet on the floor. The red carpet throughout the house imitates the red carpet Elvis put down in the large back room he expanded from the old porch room to be his bigger and better game room. This room has a lot of Al Wertheimer's photos on the wall, for this room is where he shot Elvis listening to records and dancing with one of his girlfriends, Barbara Hearn. These photos reveal that the walls were not painted at the time but showed the original wood paneling.

The fireplace in this room is still painted white as it was during Elvis' time there. The only difference is that the original brick base is now tiled over. Above the fireplace is a painting by Ronnie McDowell of a little blonde boy in overalls playing a guitar while looking into a mirror. Elvis as a young star, also playing a guitar, looks back at the boy. To the left of the fireplace when facing it is an old brown television with an old cream telephone on top. There is also a framed photograph of Elvis standing in front of the fireplace wearing the famous gold

lamé suit. For this reason, a life-size cardboard cutout of Elvis in the suit stands in front of the fireplace.

The turquoise couch that Cindy Hazen bought still sits along the wall that faces the large back room. It has a mirror and a large framed photograph of Gladys and Elvis above it, sitting on their own couch. To the left of the mirror above a side table are the musical wall figurines from Mike and Cindy's day, an imitation of the musical figurines Gladys placed in this same spot. On the wall to the left of the bedroom hallway entrance (when facing that entrance) are a brown wooden dresser, with some donated photographs and art pieces on top, and a couple of old chairs. In the left corner is an artificial house plant.

You can see into the big back room from this middle living room through the old open window spaces and open doorway in the white wall. This room is where Rhodes College holds its house concerts. It has the red carpet, in keeping with Elvis' tastes, and retains the old wood paneling on the walls. On the right, when facing the backyard, which can be seen through the glass sliding doors, is a red corner bar. A record player and a small collection of records Elvis

probably would have listened to sit on top of the counter.¹⁵⁸ Red bar stools are fixed into the floor.

On the wall to the left of the bar are shelves cut into the wall and covered in a glass case. A copy of a picture of Elvis' graduating class at Humes High School is inside, as well as a plethora of other Elvis photographs, some metal music notes that are copies of what Elvis had on his iron fence outside, a framed movie poster for "Love Me Tender," which was filmed and released while Elvis lived here, and a license plate that reads, "1 [picture of Graceland] ELVIS" on it. Additionally, Mike and Cindy left a framed bit of a scrapbook gifted to them by an Elvis fan. It is titled, "Treasure Page," and contains a plastic bag with blades of grass from Elvis' front yard, popular house souvenirs in 1956 and 1957, a photograph of the house when Elvis lived there, and a headshot of Elvis wearing his motorcycling hat.

¹⁵⁸ Rhodes student and Curb Fellow Dianne Loftis made an inventory of the albums in the house several years ago. Here is her list, organized by artist, title album, and then record label:

Jackie Gleason, *Music, Martinis and Memories*, Capital
 Frank Sinatra, *No One Cares*, Capital
 Roy Hamilton, *With All My Love*, Epic
 Roy Hamilton, *You'll Never Walk Alone*, Epic
 Johnny Rivers, *Here We A Go Go Again*, Imperial
 Rick Nelson, *Memphis Sessions (1986)*, CBS
 Les Baxter, *The Fabulous Sounds of...*, Pickwick
 Will Lockridge Orchestra, *Tribute To Henry Busse*, Score
 Malcolm Loklear Orchestra, *We're Having a Party*, RCA
 Louis Prima, *Strictly Prima*, Capital
 Mantovani, *Latin Rendezvous*, London
 Johan Jones and..., *Jazz Tropical*, Decca
 Julie London, *Julie Is Her Name*, Liberty
 Loretta Lynn, *You Ain't Woman Enough*, Decca
 Prez Prado, *Mambo Mania*, RCA
 Nat King Cole, *Love Is The Thing*, Capital
 Judy Garland, *The Letter*, Capital
 Sam the Sham & The Pharoahs, *The Best of...*, MGM
 Brother Dave Gardner, *Ain't That Weird*, RCA
 Brook Benton, *Just a Matter of Time*, Mercury
 Hill Boen & Orchestra, *I Married an Angel*, RCA

To the left of this case are Al Wertheimer's photos of Elvis and his family and friends sitting on their patio out back, before he knocked it out to build the room you are standing in, and Elvis with his motorcycle outside. To the left again is a door that leads to the tiny turquoise tiled bathroom Elvis put in, with mirrors on the wall, a toilet, a window, and a sink and counter. There is a sitting area by the bar with four low chairs and a coffee table. On the other side of the room, in the right hand corner when facing that north side of the house, is an upright piano with a chair next to it in front of a closet. You open the piano bench to discover books of sheet music, all Elvis tunes.

Above the piano Elvis plays his own house organ for his girlfriend Barbara Hearn in 1956. Barbara signed it, addressing it to Mike and Cindy. There is a similar glass covered shelf on this side of the room as well. In it are Elvis records, photographs, and a framed gold record celebrating the thirty-fifth anniversary of "Heartbreak Hotel." The ceiling of the room boasts the same tiles as those used in Sun Studio, allegedly put in place by Elvis. A ceiling fan and star shaped light fixtures hang from this ceiling.

The visitor returns to the entrance to this room and walks to the right into the dining room, which is wallpapered in a retro-styled pattern featuring green foliage and red birds. There are a small table and chairs against the right wall below the window. On the wall to the right of the window is a framed poster of Elvis and another illustrated character, titled "Lonely Street." A light brown dresser stands against the far wall next to the doorway leading to the kitchen. On it are a lamp, a frame with a clipping from what appears to be a magazine article from when Elvis lived at the house, and the glass case showing the original wallpaper and carpet samples. The back of the painted brick fireplace forms the left wall. On it is hung a "painting by Ronnie

McDowell that was donated to Mike Curb.” “It portrays a famous recording session at RCA in Nashville. Mike Curb is painted into the picture (he is seated at the piano and looking straight at the viewer).”¹⁵⁹ The painting shows Elvis sitting on a stool with his guitar, smiling at his audience, which appears to be made up of friends from his early days. A small gold chandelier hangs from the ceiling.

You walk through the doorway into the kitchen. The walls are all wood paneling and the floor is a mottled beige tile. Immediately to the right is a closet with a window inside of it, now used for storage, but previously used to hold a washing machine and dryer. An old, flat, circular speaker is above this closet. Some believe it to be original to Elvis’ time here.¹⁶⁰ To the left of the closet is the door to the driveway. On the wall facing the front street are the countertops, cupboards, a dishwasher, and a sink with a window above it. To the left of this is a small chrome and white topped kitchen table with four chairs around it, with red and white cushions. A small white chandelier hangs above it, illuminating some pictures behind the table, one of which features Elvis and Gladys in the kitchen. On the wall opposite the sink are more cupboards and a stove top, with an old brown refrigerator on the right and two old brown ovens on the left.

Exiting the kitchen, you walk through the doorway towards the south side of the house, in the direction of the front door. You pass through the front den, all red carpet and wood paneling. There are windows facing the street wearing cream curtains patterned in acorns and oak leaves. Photographs form a steady line all around the room, some of this room when Elvis lived here, some of the outside of the house in the fifties, and four of Elvis sitting outside the house, each

¹⁵⁹ John Bass, in discussion with the author, July 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Cindy Hazen, interview by Alice Fugate, July 14, 2016.

one a different variation of the same shot, the King with his shirt unbuttoned looking very serious. There are some floor lamps and a table with some donated Elvis art on it in the front right corner, and two cutouts of Elvis in concert populate the space.

You walk out of the front den and turn right to exit through the front door, passing a blue painting of Elvis by Rhodes College student Jeanne Xiong. The front yard has most of Elvis' original oak and birch trees, a stone bird bath, and a green lawn. There is a brick walkway leading to the driveway, which is bordered by low boxwoods. Elvis' brick and iron fence still surrounds the front yard, and his gate still prevents fans and passersby from walking onto the property. Down the driveway is the carport, now boasting garage doors on either side. Inside the carport is an old ice cream chest that used to sit in the cafe next door to Sun Studio. The legend is that if Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, or Carl Perkins ever got ice cream at this cafe after a recording session, they would have gotten it from this chest.¹⁶¹

At the end of the driveway is the pool house. Inside is a tiled floor, white walls, a kitchenette, a closet, and photographs of Elvis swimming in the not-completely-filled pool with his cousins. The backyard has pine trees along the tall, brown, wooden fence and a grass lawn surrounding what used to be the pool. The pool was filled in by the Curbs for liability reasons and is now a stone patio. Facing the back of the house, you can see a Japanese maple to the left of the steps leading from the large back room to the pool-patio, monkey grass covering the slope on either side of the steps.

The house is painted green and white, a change made by the Curbs during the restoration process. The white awnings hanging over the front windows bear a green, scripted letter "P."

¹⁶¹ John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

1034 Audubon Drive is still nestled in a normal, quiet neighborhood in East Memphis, although it is not the edge of the city as it was in the 1950's. It is a privately run home, not a museum. This is what Mike Freeman, Cindy Hazen, Mike and Linda Curb, and Rhodes College all want in order to preserve the house and the neighborhood. This is probably what Elvis Presley himself would have wanted, a young kid who tried to make a normal life in this neighborhood work for his family. Although it can never be normal, it can still remain one of Memphis' most important hidden treasures, without the glitz and glory of Graceland.

Conclusion: Family Connections and Intersections¹⁶²

The story of the house ends with a return to Rhodes College, a return to Elvis Presley, and a return to the Handwerkers. 1034 is now a tribute to the King in the hands of Rhodes students, who owe the existence of this house to the Handwerker family. Margaret Handwerker worked at Rhodes College in the dean's office for thirty-two years; Dan and Margaret's son attended Rhodes; and Dan's uncle attended Southwestern at Memphis, which was later renamed Rhodes College.¹⁶³

¹⁶² All information on the Handwerker family in this section was shared with me by Dan and Margaret Handwerker in our interview and in subsequent discussions.

¹⁶³ Margaret Handwerker, Dan's wife, lived close enough to Audubon Drive in 1956 that her mother would give in to her and her sister's pleas to drive them past on their way home from school, hoping to catch a glimpse of Elvis. After moving to Memphis from Jackson, Mississippi for her father's work, her family lived on Marcia Road in Colonial Lakelands, just a short ways from Audubon Drive. She was in the fifth or sixth grade. For Christmas, Santa Claus brought her sister a record player, and Margaret's mother drove her over to Audubon so they could get an Elvis record signed by the artist to accompany the record player. He was out front playing football with the neighborhood kids and graciously paused to sign the Christmas gift.

This uncle, Dr. John Valentine Handwerker, suffered from osteomyelitis, but nonetheless had great success in life.¹⁶⁴ He was on the pre-medical school track at Southwestern and went on to attend UT Medical School in Memphis, eventually becoming one of the only doctors on the island of Key Biscayne, Florida. When Richard Nixon came to the island, John was his doctor, and they became friends.¹⁶⁵ Years later, in 1970, Elvis Presley would shake President Richard Nixon's hand.¹⁶⁶ Dan looked at me and said, "You've seen the picture of Elvis shaking Richard Nixon's hand? It's in the Library of Congress and my sister went and got me a copy of it...zero degrees of separation. Here's Elvis Presley that bought my father's house shaking hands with Richard Nixon, whose doctor was my uncle...It's a small country."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Mayo Clinic Staff, "Diseases and Conditions: Osteomyelitis," *Mayo Clinic: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research*, September 25, 2015. <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/osteomyelitis/basics/definition/con-20025518>.

¹⁶⁵ When John died, Nixon made a video eulogy and gave it to the family. John Handwerker is in the University of Tennessee Hall of Fame for his work in the medical field.

¹⁶⁶ Bobbie Ann Mason, *Elvis Presley*, (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 143.

¹⁶⁷ In addition to this connection, Dan's great grandmother on his father's side (not the one who lived with them), Ann (Annie) Wise Schaffler Handwerker, gave the family another Presley connection. She inherited Russwood Park from her father, who built the stadium, and it remained in the Handwerker's possession from the late 1800s until right after World War II. Some years later, it would pass out of their hands, and on July 4, 1956, while he was living at 1034 Audubon Drive, Elvis Presley would give a homecoming concert there.

Alfred Wertheimer, Peter Guralnick, and Chris Murray, *Elvis at 21: New York to Memphis* (San Rafael, CA: Insight Editions, 2006), 240-243.



The image above is of Richard Nixon shaking Elvis Presley's hand in December, 1970. Courtesy of the web.¹⁶⁸



The image above is of Elvis outside 1034 in 1956. Courtesy of the web.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ Peter Carlson, "When Elvis Met Nixon," *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2010, Accessed 24 Jul 2016, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/when-elvis-met-nixon-69892425/?no-ist>.

¹⁶⁹ "Elvis Presley — Audubon Drive House," *Rock and Roll GPS*, June 9, 2014, Accessed on July 24, 2016, <http://www.rockandrollgps.com/elvis-presley-audubon-drive-house/>

Reflections from the Author: Insiders and Outsiders

Before attending Rhodes College, I was not an Elvis fan. Before I started working for the Mike Curb Institute for Music on the Research and Writing team my sophomore year, I was not an Elvis fan. Before I started working on this project on Elvis' house, I was not an Elvis fan. And although I call myself a fan now, I hardly feel myself worthy of the title in comparison to the people I've met and read about during my research. I haven't even collected grass blades from the front lawn!

Through my work with the Curb Institute, I began to visit this charming, magical house for the *An Evening at Elvis'* concerts, since my job is to write about each one as part of the monthly Curb Newsletter, which I write with Dr. Bass's student assistant, Ashley Dill. My mother and I talked about the house and thought how interesting it would be to write a history of the house and turn it into a coffee table book. My aunt, my father's sister Susan Haltom, wrote a book about her work on the restoration of author Eudora Welty's garden in Jackson, Mississippi, and so inspired the idea. I think that houses and their histories are fascinating, and love the Southern obsession with place. So through an interesting idea, my love of music and writing, and the encouragement and generosity of my parents, friends, and professors, I threw myself into the world of Elvis and 1034 Audubon Drive. Many thanks to Dr. John Bass, my boss as a Curb Fellow and my advisor on this project, for inviting me to think about this idea further, and then allowing me into the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies summer research program a little late in the game.

Besides not being an Elvis fan from the outset, I came into this project as an outsider. I was born in Jackson, Mississippi, but raised in Atlanta, Georgia. I am Southern, but not from

Memphis. And this is a Memphis story. I came into this city, this neighborhood, this house, and the lives of the people whom I interviewed as someone unfamiliar with this world. But in a way, making the connections to the familiarity of fame was a way to bring myself closer to this story — to think about my aunt who restored Eudora Welty’s garden, to talk to my grandmother who saw Elvis on stage. And after all, Elvis and I were both born in Mississippi. As Dan Handwerker said, “It’s a small country,” and the South might be the smallest place within it.

Without a doubt, the highlight of this project has been to talk with and form relationships with the former neighbors and residents of 1034. The hospitality of these neighbors has struck me again and again, both in their personal histories and in their willingness to share those stories with me today. Peggy Jemison Bodine brought me into her home to talk with her, her daughter Meg Jemison Bartlett, Trip Farnsworth, and Christine Mayer Todd. Dan Handwerker let me visit his house to copy some family photographs, to touch the original blue print building plans, of which he had also given me two copies. Even Cindy Hazen, who came to Audubon much later than the rest, kindly met me for coffee and tea one morning to share with me her dazzling tales. All of these people graciously emailed me all summer long, offering their knowledge, resources, encouragement, and enthusiasm.

One of the most interesting and special of these relationships was that which I formed with Bill Metz. Dan got us in touch, and Bill reached out to me before I ever had a chance to email him, expressing his interest in providing me with his knowledge via a phone interview. After that first interview, he became what I call my “writer friend.” As a journalist and writer himself, Bill offered his assistance and guidance beyond the facts and information I needed for my draft’s material: he offered his connections, encouragement, and always described to me

exactly what he could see from where he was sitting when he called me. After emailing me to share more stories, facts, and “long distance neighborliness,” he called me out of the blue while I was writing the first draft due that same week. He offered to be my “soundboard” and talk through my paper’s structure with him. He read and commented on that first draft before anyone else. He told Dan and Christine how much he enjoyed working on this with me. Long distance neighborliness to Bill my Writer Friend.

The final presentation of my summer research for the people in the Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies was enjoyable, but it was also very rewarding and very humbling for me, because the Audubon People came. Christine Mayer Todd and Trip Farnsworth attended, and Christine thanked me for my work on behalf of the “Audubon People.” Dan and Margaret Handwerker, and four other members of their family came. One was a child who had never seen pictures of her great grandparents before, and who happened to be in town with her mother, Kim Dearman, to learn about her Memphis roots.¹⁷⁰ Dr. Bass and I took them and several more Handworkers to 1034 the next day, and I took some additional family members there on my own the day after that. Many of them had never seen it or had not been inside for years. Even Elaine, who born there in 1953, came. They all repeatedly expressed to me how much it meant to them. The whole experience was special for me to say the least.

This draft was initially written for Elvis fans to add to their wealth of knowledge and treasure troves of lore, and it still is. But now after all of the work, I will say it is really written for the Audubon People, past, present, and future.

¹⁷⁰ Kim is Jeanne Handwerker Brink’s daughter.

Appendices

*I. Residents of 1034 Audubon Drive*¹⁷¹

1953-1954: Howard and Ruth Handwerker, with four children, a grandmother, and a great grandmother

1955: Vacant because Howard Handwerker filed for bankruptcy

May, 1956-May, 1957 (13 months): Elvis, Vernon, Gladys, and Minnie Mae Presley

1958-1959: Michael E. and Marjorie Moore, and children

1960-1962: Walter G. (Jr.) and Marjorie Stewart, and children

1963-1969: J. Lee and Mary W. Hatchett

1970-1972: James S. and Delaurice L. Roaten

1973: No Return

1974: Joe A. and Mary R. Isbell

1975: Vacant

1976-1997: Ted and Janice S. Chandler, the Polk City Directory lists Stefanie Chandler in 1993 as an additional adult resident

1998-2006: Mike Freeman and Cindy Hazen

2006-2016 (the present): Curb Memphis Nonprofit LLC (Rhodes College Chapter of the Mike Curb Institute for Music)

*II. Elvis' Homes in Memphis*¹⁷²

- 572 Poplar Avenue, boarding house (1948)
- 185 Winchester Avenue, Apartment 328, Lauderdale Courts, public housing projects (1949-1953)
- 698 Saffarans Avenue, apartment (1953)
- 462 Alabama Avenue, apartment (1953)

¹⁷¹ Cheyenne Johnson, *Shelby County Assessor of Property, Shelby County, Tennessee*, 2016, Accessed 13 Jun 2016, <https://www.assessor.shelby.tn.us/content.aspx>.

John Bass, in discussion with the author, June and July 2016.

R.L. Polk & Co, *R.L. Polk & Co.'s Memphis City Directory: Polk City Directory. R.L. Polk & Co. Publishers*, 1954-1956, 1958-1990, 1992-1993, 1996-1999.

¹⁷² Unless otherwise noted, the information in Appendix II comes from the book *Memphis: Elvis-Style*, by Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman.

Cindy Hazen and Mike Freeman, *Memphis Elvis-Style*, (Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, 1997), 1-8, 85-93.

- 2414 Lamar Avenue, house (1954-1955)
- 1414 Getwell Road, house (1955-1956)
- 1034 Audubon Drive, house (1956-1957)
- Graceland, 3764 Elvis Presley Boulevard (U.S. 51 South), mansion (1957-1977)

IV. Songs Elvis Recorded While He lived at 1034¹⁷³

June 5, 1956, for The Milton Berle Show

- Hound Dog
- I Want You, I Need You, I Love You

July 1, 1956, for The Steve Allen Show

- Hound Dog
- I Want You, I Need You, I Love You

July 2, 1956, for Studio Sessions for RCA in NYC

- Hound Dog
- Don't Be Cruel
- Anyway You Want Me

“August, 24, September 4-5, October 1, 1956:” “Soundtrack Recording” “for Love Me Tender”

- We're Gonna Move
- Love Me Tender
- Poor Boy
- Let Me
- Love Me Tender (end title version)

September 1-3, 1956: RCA Session in Hollywood

- Playing For Keeps
- Love Me
- How Do You Think I Feel
- Old Sheep

¹⁷³ Unless otherwise noted, the information in Appendix IV comes from the book *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, by Ernst Jorgensen.

Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 49-90.

- Too Much
- Ready Teddy
- How's the World Treating You
- When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again
- Long Tall Sally
- Paralyzed
- Anyplace Is Paradise
- First Line
- Rip It Up

September 9, 1956, Recording for "Toast of the Town" (*The Ed Sullivan Show*)

- Don't Be Cruel
- Love Me Tender
- Ready Teddy
- Hound Dog

"Private Recordings, September 26, 1956: Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show, Tupelo"

- Heartbreak Hotel
- Long Tall Sally
- I Was the One
- I Want You, I Need You, I Love You
- I Got A Woman
- Don't Be Cruel
- Ready Teddy
- Love Me Tender
- Hound Dog
- Love Me Tender
- I Was The One
- I Got A Woman
- Don't Be Cruel
- Blue Suede Shoes
- Baby Let's Play House
- Hound Dog

October 28, 1956, Recordings for "Toast of the Town" (*The Ed Sullivan Show*)

- Don't Be Cruel
- Love Me Tender

- Love Me
- Hound Dog

December 4, 1956, The Million Dollar Quartet Session, at Sun Studios¹⁷⁴

- "Instrumental"
- "Love Me Tender - Instrumental"
- "Jingle Bells - Instrumental"
- "White Christmas - Instrumental"
- "Reconsider Baby"
- "Don't Be Cruel"
- "Don't Be Cruel"
- "Paralyzed"
- "Don't Be Cruel"
- "There's No Place Like Home"
- "When The Saints Go Marchin' In"
- "Softly and Tenderly"
- "When God Dips His Love in My Heart"
- "Just a Little Talk with Jesus"
- "Jesus Walked That Lonesome Valley"
- "I Shall Not Be Moved"
- "Peace In The Valley"
- "Down By the Riverside"
- "I'm with a Crowd But So Alone"
- "Farther Along"
- "Blessed Jesus (Hold My Hand)"
- "On the Jericho Road"
- "I Just Can't Make It By Myself"
- "Little Cabin Home on the Hill"

¹⁷⁴ Jorgensen's list of the Million Dollar Quartet recordings does not match what I had listened to and seen elsewhere, therefore the song list for this session is from the World Wide Web.

"Million Dollar Quartet," *Wikipedia*, Accessed June 29, 2016, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Million_Dollar_Quartet.

- "Summertime Is Past and Gone"
- "I Hear a Sweet Voice Calling"
- "Sweetheart You Done Me Wrong"
- "Keeper of the Key (Carl Lead)"
- "Crazy Arms"
- "Don't Forbid Me"
- "Too Much Monkey Business"
- "Brown Eyed Handsome Man"
- "Out of Sight, Out of Mind"
- "Brown Eyed Handsome Man"
- "Don't Forbid Me"
- "You Belong to My Heart"
- "Is It So Strange"
- "That's When Your Heartaches Begin"
- "Brown Eyed Handsome Man"
- "Rip It Up"
- "I'm Gonna Bid My Blues Goodbye"
- "Crazy Arms"
- "That's My Desire"
- "End of the Road"
- "Black Bottom Stomp"
- "You're the Only Star in My Blue Heaven"
- "Elvis Says Goodbye"

December, 1956, Private Recordings at 1034 Audubon Drive

- When the Saints Go Marching In

January 6, 1957, Recordings for "Toast of the Town" (*The Ed Sullivan Show*)

- Hound Dog
- Love Me Tender
- Heartbreak Hotel
- Don't Be Cruel
- Too Much

- When My Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again
- (There'll Be) Peace In The Valley (For Me)

January 12-13, 1957, RCA Studio Sessions

- I Believe
- Tell My Why
- Got A Lot O' Livin' To Do
- All Shook Up
- Mean Woman Blues
- (There'll Be) Peace In The Valley (For Me)
- I Beg Of You
- That's When Your Heartaches Begin
- Take My Hand, Precious Lord

January 15-18, 21-22, February 14, 1957, Soundtrack Recordings for Loving You

- (Let's Have A) Party (vocal and band)
- Lonesome Cowboy
- Gotta A Lot Of Livin' To Do (opening)
- (Let Me Be Your) Teddy Bear
- Loving You (end version)
- Loving You (main version)
- One Night (Of Sin)
- Blueberry Hill
- Hot Dog
- Gotta A Lot Of Livin' To Do (finale)
- (Let's Have A) Party (vocal and group)
- Mean Woman Blues
- Loving You (farm version)
- Loving You (main version)
- Loving You (farm version)

January 19, 1957, RCA Studio Sessions

- It's No Secret (What God Can Do)
- Blueberry Hill
- Have I Told You Lately That I Love You
- It Is So Strange
- Peace In The Valley

- Loving You
- Loving You
- Just For You (EP)

February 23-24, RCA Studio Sessions

- Don't Leave Me Now
- I Beg Of You
- One Night
- True Love
- I Need You So
- Loving You
- When It Rains, It Really Pours

April 30, May 3, May 9, 1957, Soundtrack Recording for Jailhouse Rock

- Jailhouse Rock
- Jailhouse Rock (movie version)
- Young And Beautiful (movie end)
- Young And Beautiful
- Young And Beautiful (jail version)
- Young And Beautiful (Florita Club version)
- Treat Me Nice
- I Want To Be Free (jail version)
- I Want To Be Free
- (You're So Square) Baby I Don't Care
- Don't Leave Me Now (movie version - not used)
- Don't Leave Me Now
- Don't Leave Me Now
- Don't Leave Me Now

V. Movies Elvis Acted in While He Lived at 1034

- i. *Love Me Tender*, 1956
- ii. *Loving You*, 1957
- iii. *Jailhouse Rock*, 1957

VI. Television Shows Elvis Appeared in While He Lived at 1034

- i. *The Milton Berle Show*: June 5, 1956, Hollywood, California¹⁷⁵
- ii. *The Steve Allen Show*: July 1, 1956, New York City¹⁷⁶
- iii. *The Ed Sullivan Show*: September 9, 1956; October 28, 1956; January 6, 1956, New York City¹⁷⁷

VII. Reflections on Spending the Night at 1034 Audubon Drive, July 16-17, 2016

Two friends and bandmates of mine, Riley McCormick and Jolie-Grace Wareham, joined me to spend the night at 1034 on Saturday, July 16, 2016. Riley and I arrived first after dinner and recorded a song for her project with Kim Macharia on vocals in the big concert room. Riley was composing music that summer and recording it in the house. It was pleasant, but once Kim left and Riley started editing the recording while I wrote some of this draft, it was slightly eerie to be there. The house is totally silent, and we kept joking about the ghost story shared with me by Cindy Hazen. Even though I wasn't worried about ghosts, I joined Riley, and later Jolie-Grace, in the desire to keep as many lights on as we could and to not go anywhere in the house alone.

It felt much bigger than it is (in comparison to other houses) because there is so little furniture, no one lives in it, and everywhere you look a Presley returns your gaze. We were constantly reminded that we walked the literal barefooted steps of the King. We slept in his bedroom, watching a documentary on his life in 1956, the year he lived at the house, before

¹⁷⁵ Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music: The Complete Recording Sessions*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), 49.

¹⁷⁶ *Elvis Presley's Memphis: Presented by Elvis Presley Enterprises and The Commercial Appeal*, (Battle Ground, WA: Pediment Publishing, 2010), 42.

¹⁷⁷ "Elvis Presley," *The Ed Sullivan Show: The Official Ed Sullivan Site*, SOFA Entertainment, 2010, Accessed 27 Jun 2016, <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/elvis-presley>.

going to sleep. I believe Jolie-Grace felt the most awe. I myself was not blown away by the experience, and although it was a privilege, it was certainly a little strange.

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