

Katahdin Court (Spanish Oaks) Apartments

Buildings: Sarasota History

Source: City of Sarasota public records

Credit: Sarasota History Alive

Location: 1637 Oak Street, Sarasota, FL

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In an early advertisement, the **Katahdin Court Apartments** were described as follows: "Katahdin Court Apartments of Spanish design, are located on Oak Street near **Herald Square**, a five minute walk to the business center. The building is unique in plan, affording all the conveniences of an apartment, yet having advantages of a house. The screened porch, living room, dining room, kitchen and trunk room are downstairs and two bedrooms, with large, well-ventilated closets and bath are upstairs. The apartments face a patio, rich in luxuriant growth of tropical plants and shrubberies, adding charm and beauty to the environment and affording the maximum of sunlight and ventilation. The furnishing, complete with the exception of silver and linens, are modern and attractive.

Gas is provided for cooking, heating and hot water. Gas and electricity are on individual meters. Garage may be secured for small additional charge. Rates for the season from November 1st to May 1st are \$50 a month and for shorter periods, slightly higher. Especially low summer rates prevail. Logan and Currin, Agents.

The apartment complex was constructed in 1925 as the Katahdin Court Apartments. It was built by the construction firm of Logan, Currin and Pickett. The complex was originally owned by Frank Logan, Russell Currin, Charlie Pickett, Alice Ross, and Clarence Hitchings. They were sold as individual units.

The contracting firm of Logan and Currin was formed in 1924 by Frank A. Logan and Russell Currin. Apparently, Pickett was involved with them only for the building of Katahdin Court.

The firm of Logan and Currin was responsible for many buildings in Sarasota including the Presbyterian Church (on Oak Street), the first unit of the Sarasota Hospital, Thacker and VanGilders Funeral Home (now Toale Brothers on Orange Avenue), the American Legion Colliseum (demolished), the Bailey High School WSPB Radio Station, as well as private residences, R.C. Caples' and Judge Paul Albritton to name only two. During World War II, Logan and Currin was responsible for many Army Air Corps building projects across the state, including buildings at the Sarasota base.

Frank A. Logan

Frank A. Logan, who was the senior member of the firm, was born on October 15, 1895 in Norwich, Ohio. After graduating in 1915 from Dennison University with a Bachelor's Degree in Science, he went to work for Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio.

At the start of World War I, Logan enlisted in the Army. Appointed to the Gas Defense Division, Logan was credited with inventing a new gas mask canister which was in use with modifications as late as World War II.

After the War, Logan worked for Southern Utility (now Florida Power & Light) for a short time in Lakeland and Sanford, Florida. He was then employed by the U.S. Government to build and supervise a gas mask plant at Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland. After the plant reached a capacity of 500 masks a day, Logan resigned in 1924, moved to Sarasota and formed the company of Logan and Currin.

Logan played an active role in the community affairs of Sarasota. He served for two years, 1929 and 1930, on the City Council. In 1930 he was commander of American Legion Sarasota Bay Post #30, a post that he held for an unprecedented two terms. He was also a member of Rotary and Elks Clubs. Frank Logan died in 1938 at the early age of 43.

Russell Currin

Russell Currin was born May 16, 1894 in Hillsborough, Ohio. After growing up in Ohio, Currin went to Denison University when he met Frank Logan. World War I interrupted his education, but after spending eighteen months in the service. Currin returned to Denison to finish his studies. After graduating, Currin worked for three years as assistant superintendent to Frank Logan at the gas mask plant in Englewood Arsenal.

In 1923 Currin moved to Sarasota where his grandmother had been visiting since 1916. Shortly after, Frank Logan moved to Sarasota also and they started the construction firm of Logan and Currin.

Apart from his business activities, Currin was Chairman of the Sarasota County Board of Public Instruction from 1930-1932; a member of the City Council from 1930-1936; and Sarasota Draft Board from 1944-1945. He was also a member of the Sarasota Bay Post American Legion, Masonic Lodge, Phi Delta Fraternity and Kiwanis Club. Currin also attended the First Baptist Church where he was director of the Choir.

The third member of the construction firm which built Katahdin Court was Charles Pickett. Charles Pickett was one of the 5 investors in the project and his brother Leon was an engineer. Though not documented, it can be speculated that Charles' brother Leon added his engineering skills to the firm of Logan and Currin for this project.

The other investors in the project were all tied to the Bank of Sarasota. Clarence Hitchings was one of the organizers of the bank in 1906. The widow Alice Ross' late husband was cashier for the bank. Charlie Pickett was also a cashier for the Bank of Sarasota.

The group, in a hurry to complete the project, started construction before the technicalities of ownership were worked out. An October 4, 1925 article from the *Sarasota Herald* describes work being done on the complex:

"Work is progressing rapidly on the two-story apartment building now being constructed on Oak Street, east of Orange Avenue, by Logan, Currin and Pickett, local construction engineers. The entire building will have 24 apartments, twelve in two sections.

The first group of twelve apartments will be completed and ready for occupancy on December 1st, according to Frank Logan, senior member of the firm. These apartments will have separate entrances leading into novel Spanish type flower garden and terrace, a beautiful court having been planned to occupy the space between the two buildings."

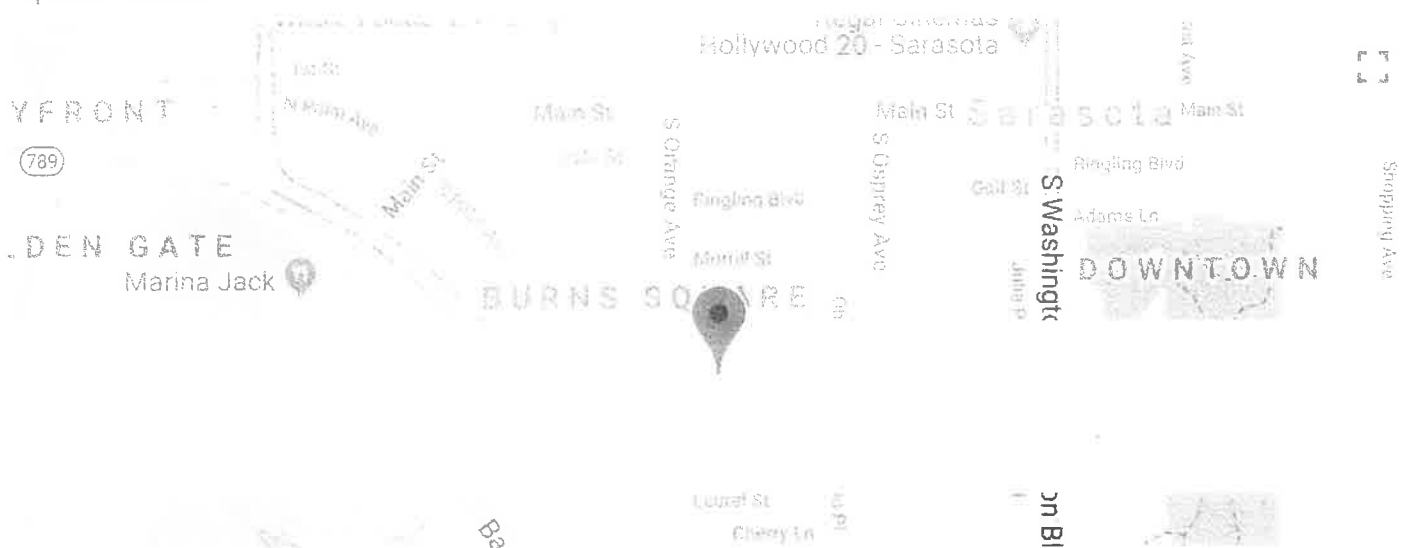
This article is typical of articles written during Sarasota's boom time which ended in early 1926. However, sobering times were ahead. Unable to sell any of the units, the owners decided to rent them as apartments. Frank Logan resided in one of the apartments, apparently as manager of the complex.

Some of the people who lived in the apartments during the first 5 years include Russell A. Gray and his wife, who worked in the Advertising Department of the *Sarasota Herald* which was directly to the west of the building and is now the Woman's Exchange. Thomas Reed Martin Jr., son of a prominent local architect; and Alice Sheppard, mother of Guy Sheppard, founder of Sheppard Lumber.

On December 29, 1931, the group sold the project to Louis J. Miller of Pasadena California. In 1935, Baxter W. Terrell acquired ownership of the apartments, and renamed them the Terrell Apartments which they would be called until 1964. The chain of ownership between Miller and Terrell is unknown. B.W. Terrell had moved to Sarasota in 1925 from Greensboro, North Carolina where he was involved in furniture merchandising and real estate. Upon arrival to Sarasota, he continued in the real estate business.

The Terrells owned the building for 9 years until they sold it to Gertrude Price of Warwick, Rhode Island on September 1, 1944. Ms. Price held the property until 1953.

The complex has passed through many hands and several names from the Terrell Apartments to the Cherma Apartments in 1964, then to the DeWitt Apartments in 1968. In 1970 it was renamed the Spanish Townhouse Apartments and continued to be known as such until after 1981, when it came to be popularly known as "Spanish Oaks."



Spanish Oaks Apartments

Mr. Miller- Owner

Known variously as Katahdin Court, the Terrell Apartments, the Charma Aparatments, the Dewitt Apartments, and the Spanish Townhouse Apartments, today's Spanish Oaks Apartments has retained if not its original name, certainly its charm. Built hastily late in 1925 the original vision for the complex was that units would be individually sold. However, sobering times were ahead with the bust of the Florida Land Boom in early 1926. Unable to sell the units the owner decided instead to rent them as apartments.

Spanish Oaks was constructed by the firm of Logan, Currin and Pickett. Apparently this was the only project that Charles Pickett participated in with the firm, probably because of his involvement as investor. The firm of Logan and Currin, built many notable boom time structures including the First Presbyterian

Church, the first unit of the Sarasota Hospital, Toale Brothers Funeral Home, the residence of R.C. Caples and many of the west of the trail bungalows.

Today's Spanish Oaks Apartments are a wonderful representation of the Mediterranean Revival Style of Architecture. "Med-Rev" was the style of choice during Sarasota 1920's land boom because of the mysterious and far away atmosphere that evoked.

Take a moment to enjoy the lovely enclosed courtyard, aptly described in the Sarasota Herald in 1925 as "... a novel Spanish type flower garden and terrace..." while you step back in time at historic Spanish Oaks.