

270 N. Canyon Blvd. The George Spence House 1906 Colonial Revival

George Spence was the nephew of Edward Spence, one of Monrovia's founders. He came to Monrovia with his brother William in 1892 and together they purchased five acres at the corner of Greystone and Canyon (then named Charlotte Ave.) to be planted as an orange grove. By 1901, George had bought out his brother's interest and in 1906 built this fine home. The home remained in the Spence family until 1945, although the five acres of orange groves had by then been subdivided. Sadly, the Spence's son Paul was Monrovia's first casualty in World War I.

The home boasts quartersawn oak floors, leaded glass windows and lovely details throughout. The fireplace in the living room has its original tile, octagonal columns and mirror. The first floor rooms have coved ceilings. The exterior boasts many special points of interest, including the triangular pediment over the front porch and the detailed front door. The home is light-filled due to its many large windows, both double hung and casement style.

The current owners have decorated in a timeless, traditional style. They have shown much care in making changes that enhance the house's classic styling. They have installed intricate trimwork to the lower walls of the central stairway that enhances the beauty of the entryway. Recently they have completed a lovely kitchen renovation giving the 100 year old home a kitchen that can last another century. Another beautiful feature of this home are the large trees on the property. A magnificent oak, planted by the Spence family, is the showpiece of the backyard. A generous deck has been built to take advantage of this oak's towering presence.

This home has been designated Historic Landmark Number xx by the City of Monrovia.

## 270 N. Canyon Blvd.

Edward F. Spence, one of Monrovia's founders, had an older brother, John P. Spence, who moved to the new community from San Jose in 1887. The brothers were originally from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Ireland. They came to the United States circa 1851. John P. Spence and his wife, the former Annie Parker, had a family of six children, among whom were William P. and George L. Spence. Ultimately the brothers, too, moved to Monrovia. Early in 1893 they jointly purchased five acres at the southeast corner of Greystone and Charlotte Avenue, as Canyon Blvd. was then known. The parcel was part of Lot 71 of the Santa Anita Tract, placed on the market in 1883 by E.J. "Lucky" Baldwin. The Spence brothers established a nursery at this location and sold orange, lemon, citron, and grapefruit trees. Their advertisement in the "Monrovia Messenger" for March 9, 1894 lists the following types of orange trees for sale: Washington navel, Mediterranean sweet, Satsuma, Joppa, and Valencia late.

After his move to Monrovia, George Spence met and married Lida E. Barnes, the daughter of Leonidas and Nancy McDonald Barnes. The Barnes family came to California from Missouri, first settling in Duarte. In 1886, L. Barnes became Monrovia's first merchant, operating a general store on Myrtle Avenue at Lemon.

By 1901, George L. Spence had become the sole owner of the property. Five years later, he and his wife built the fine Classical Revival home that stands on the corner today. The five acre parcel continued as an orange grove for a number of years before being subdivided.

George and Lida Spence had only one child, Paul Barnes Spence, who was born in 1896. Paul died in the house April 2, 1918 as a result of spinal meningitis he contracted while serving with the army at Ft. MacArthur in San Pedro during World War I. He was Monrovia's first casualty in that war, and his name is included on the World War I memorial plaque in Library Park, Monrovia. Paul is buried in the Barnes family plot at Live Oak Cemetery.

George and Lida Spence occupied their new home briefly, and then it was rented to a civil engineer, F.D. Howell, who made his home here with his family for five years. Howell descendants still live in the San Gabriel Valley. The Spences were living in Monrovia once again by 1911, and by 1913 they had returned to their house.

George L. Spence died in the house December 14, 1923 at the age of 60. He may never have fully recovered from the shock of Paul's death. He is buried in the family plot at Live Oak. Lida Spence remarried four years later. She and her second husband, George W. Pursell, lived both in the family home and in a bungalow at Harding Court in Monrovia. Widowed once again, Lida Spence Pursell continued to live in the house until she sold it in 1945. The new owner was a widow, Clytie D. French, who converted the house into a rest home for the elderly. Lida Spence died October 14, 1952, and is buried at Live Oak next to her husband and son.

After fifteen years of institutional use, the house became a private residence once again when it was purchased by Kenneth and Betty Cossey. The Cosseys sold the house six years later to John and Dora Boyers, who owned it for three years before selling to Tony and Dolores Chrisler. The current owners purchased the property in 2001. The house was designated Monrovia Historic Landmark #37 on February 12, 2002.

270 N. Canyon Blvd.

- Notes: Cove ceilings in downstairs rooms except kitchen and service porch.  
Quarter sawn oak floors as above.  
Original door hardware throughout with oval door knobs.  
Original hardware finish copper; some has been refinished in brass.
- Exterior: Symmetrical floor plan with recessed front porch.  
Pedimented gable over porch.  
Modillions under cornice.  
Central door with flanking windows.  
Egg-and-dart detail on front door.
- Entry: Open stairway with balustrade leading to second floor.  
Formerly pocket doors leading to living room and original dining room.  
Classical door and window casings.
- Living room: Mantel with octagonal columns and heavy plate bevelled glass mirror.  
Tile surround is original; marble hearth is a replacement.  
Unusual decorate edge to fire box opening.  
Opening to present dining room was once smaller and closed with pocket doors.
- Dining room: Three leaded glass windows on east wall.  
Light fixture not original but dating from same period as house.
- Rear hall: Was probably originally a service porch. Bathroom added circa 1923.  
Door leading outside now sealed.
- Kitchen: Completely remodeled.  
Stairs to basement under stairs to second floor.  
Original finish of woodwork on basement door.
- Family room: Original dining room.  
Leaded glass transom.  
New opening to kitchen--original built-in buffet?
- Upper hall: Spacious, with north-south orientation.
- S.W. bedroom: Window seat with leaded glass transoms above.
- W. bedroom: Stenciling on walls by present owners.
- Master bedroom: Fireplace with classical mantel.  
Dressing room perhaps not original; archway added.
- Bathroom: Original claw foot tub.  
Pedestal sink.
- Sewing room: Bathroom added in south end circa 1935.  
Unusual cupboards, perhaps for bolts of cloth?
- Sun room: Added above service porch on first floor.

Additional notes: Present owners bought house in April, 1988.  
Home has approximately 2400 square feet.  
Oak tree in yard perhaps planted by Spences; believed to  
be almost a hundred years old.

270 N. Canyon Blvd.  
Assessor's Parcel Number 8518-018-005  
Year of construction: 1906

Sewer Index Card

Owner: Geo. L. Spence  
Permit #828  
Date: 12/17/12  
Contractor: Patton & Miller

Building Department Index Card

Permit #3061  
Date: 1/23/24  
Owner: Mrs. George Spence  
Addition  
Contractor: Owner  
Value: \$500

## **270 N. Canyon Blvd.**

1967            Boyers John D (Dora E) eng Western Marine  
h270 N Canyon blvd (o)

1968            Boyers John D (Dora E) eng Western Marine  
h270 N Canyon blvd (o)

1970            Boyers John D (Dora E) eng Western Marine  
h270 N Canyon blvd (o)

1971            Chrisler Tony M ((Dolores) tech dir KHJ TV  
h270 N Canyon blvd (o)

Los Angeles County Tax Assessor

Last recording date:    2001

Year of construction:    1906

Portion of Lot 71, Santa Anita Tract

Monrovia Telephone & Telegraph Company

January 1913            #20 Spence, George L. Charlotte &  
Greystone

July 1913 Canyon Blvd.	#21 Emerick, E.E.	Greystone &
April 1914	#22 Spence, Geo. L.	N. Canyon Drive
August 1915	#24 Spence, George L.	N. Canyon Blvd.
July 1917	#26 Spence, George L.	N. Canyon Blvd.
April 1918	#27 Spence, George L.	N. Canyon Blvd.
February 1919 Blvd.	#28 Spence, George L.	N. Canyon
January 1920	#29 Spence, George L.	N. Canyon Blvd.
January 1921	#30 Spence Geo L	N Canyon Blvd
January 1922	#31 Spence, Mrs. Geo. L.	406 South Ivy

Lida E. Spence served as president of the Woman's Club in ?

California State Death Index

SPENCE LIDA E 07/21/1868 MC DONALD F MISSOURI LOS ANGELES 10/14/1952

Census of 1920      Owned 270 N. Canyon free of mortgage  
Monrovia, Los Angeles, California

”

-

## **270 N. Canyon Blvd.**

Edward F. Spence, one of Monrovia's founders, had an older brother, John P. Spence, who moved to the new community from San Jose in 1887. The brothers were originally from Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Ireland. They came to the United States circa 1851. John P. Spence and his wife, the former Annie Parker, had a family of six children, among whom were William P. and George L. Spence. Ultimately the brothers, too, moved to Monrovia. Early in 1893 they jointly purchased five acres at the southeast corner of Greystone and Charlotte Avenue, as Canyon Blvd. was then known. The parcel was part of Lot 71 of the Santa Anita Tract, placed on the market in 1883 by E.J. "Lucky" Baldwin. The Spence brothers established a nursery at this location and sold orange, lemon, citron, and grapefruit trees. Their advertisement in the "Monrovia Messenger" for March 9, 1894 lists the following types of orange trees for sale: Washington navel, Mediterranean sweet, Satsuma, Joppa, and Valencia late.

After his move to Monrovia, George Spence met and married Lida E. Barnes, the daughter of Leonidas and Nancy McDonald Barnes. The Barnes family came to California from Missouri, first settling in Duarte. In 1886, L. Barnes became Monrovia's first merchant, operating a general store on Myrtle Avenue at Lemon.

By 1901, George L. Spence had become the sole owner of the property. Five years later, he and his wife built the fine Classical Revival home that stands on the corner today. The five acre parcel continued as an orange grove for a number of years before being subdivided.

George and Lida Spence had only one child, Paul Barnes Spence, who was born in 1896. Paul died in the house April 2, 1918 as a result of spinal meningitis he contracted while serving with the army at Ft. MacArthur in San Pedro during World War I. He was Monrovia's first casualty in that war, and his name is included on the World War I memorial plaque in Library Park, Monrovia. Paul is buried in the Barnes family plot at Live Oak Cemetery.

George and Lida Spence occupied their new home briefly, and then it was rented to a civil engineer, F.D. Howell, who made his home here with his family for five years. Howell descendants still live in the San Gabriel Valley. The Spences were living in Monrovia once again by 1911, and by 1913 they had returned to their house.

George L. Spence died in the house December 14, 1923 at the age of 60. He may never have fully recovered from the shock of Paul's death. He is buried in the family plot at Live Oak. Lida Spence remarried four years later. She and her second husband, George W. Pursell, lived both in the family home and in a bungalow at Harding Court

in Monrovia. Widowed once again, Lida Spence Pursell continued to live in the house until she sold it in 1945. The new owner was a widow, Clytie D. French, who converted the house into a rest home for the elderly. Lida Spence died October 14, 1952, and is buried at Live Oak next to her husband and son.

After fifteen years of institutional use, the house became a private residence once again when it was purchased by Kenneth and Betty Cossey. The Cosseys sold the house six years later to John and Dora Boyers, who owned it for three years before selling to Tony and Dolores Chrisler. The current owners purchased the property in 2001. The house was designated Monrovia Historic Landmark #37 on February 12, 2002.