



Olivia Newton Cobb House, 490 Oglethorpe Avenue. Mrs. Cobb built this masonry house in 1908 after the death of her husband, Lamar Cobb. The street was originally named Mitchell Street, until Mrs. Cobb decided that Oglethorpe Avenue was a more suitable address for her and her family.

Courtesy of Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation.

17) **490 Oglethorpe Avenue** Growing up, I heard this place called The Commandant's House or Quarters A. My father was friends with several of the commandants, and during my teenage years, I had dates here with their daughters. There were lots of big parties for young people held in this spacious home at 490 Oglethorpe Avenue. It seemed to be designed for entertaining. The very early twentieth-century masonry residence was the last home for Mrs. Lamar Cobb. In 1897 they left Cobb Street and moved here to "The Heights," into a house they acquired from their son-in-law, Delony Sledge. That home was either razed to build this new house, or it was completely incorporated into the modern new structure. The lady of this house was born Ann Olivia Newton in 1841, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Hamlin Newton. Her 1861 marriage to Lamar, the son of Howell and Mary Ann Cobb, caused her to bear the somewhat improbable (in the late twentieth century) name Olivia Newton Cobb. She is known in Athens history as the first president of the first garden club in America. This house was built on what was at the time called Mitchell Street. The road from Athens to Atlanta in those days went from downtown, out Prince Avenue to Mitchell Street, where a left turn was made. This took the traveler out to cross the Oconee River at Mitchell Bridge, after which the state highway continued to Atlanta and parts west. (Broad Street did not extend west of Milledge Avenue at that time, since four Hodgson houses had raised contiguous lawns and gardens stretching from what is now the ADPi House almost to Lucy Cobb Institute. That was not the highway out of town.) At some point, Olivia Newton Cobb decided for some reason that she had rather live on Oglethorpe Avenue than Mitchell Street. And, with no opposition, city council changed the name for her.