

City of McKinney
Historic Building Marker Application
(Supporting Documentation)

The M.S. Metz House
309 North Benge Street



A. Alterations & Construction

Construction

The M.S. Metz House, constructed in 1908, is a two-story, wood-frame residential structure built on a pier-and-beam foundation. The house has a hip roof rising above intersecting cross-gables. A porch wraps the southeast corner of the house as it faces North Benge Street. The house has varied fenestration with primarily one-over-one single-hung windows but it also has several stained-glass windows set above a single pane of fixed glass. The floor plan is a modified symmetrical one with each side offset along a central axis. The home's design follows the Late-era Queen Anne Style with steep gables, vertical orientation, extended chimneys, bay windows, eave returns and finials

atop gable apexes. Along with these typical Queen Anne motifs is a classically proportioned gabled roof featuring the letter "M," the monogram of the original owner. The porch roof is supported by Tuscan-style columns atop wooden pedestals.

Alterations

The original structure was a ten-room home but has experienced several alterations since its original construction. The most obvious external alterations are the enclosure of the second floor sleeping porch and the conversion of the wood-frame knee-wall around the porch to a rail-style balustrade. These alterations occurred at some undetermined time before 1982. A significant but unseen alteration from the street involves a room addition to the rear of the house made in the mid-1980s.

The owners of the house in 1982 were Max and Sidna Leavenworth. They contracted with architect James West to update the house and design the rear modifications which involved opening the kitchen to a large living space. Other interior alterations include those made to the first and second floor bathrooms. Carpet now covers the original wood flooring.

Anticipated Needs

The current owner has no plans to expand or otherwise remodel the house, but does anticipate repairing some damaged siding on the south side of the house. Other repairs include patching holes caused by squirrels, freeing up stuck windows, and adding weather stripping to several exterior doors.

B. Historical Figures

Dr. Matthew Simpson Metz (1861-1927)

Dr. M.S. Metz was one of McKinney's early physicians specializing in treating women and children. His successful career allowed him to acquire an extensive real estate portfolio as well as the opportunity to lead a number of civic organizations, including the First Christian Church.

Matthew Simpson Metz was born in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania to parents Abraham and Leah Besore on February 8, 1861. Five weeks later, Confederate soldiers bombarded the Union soldiers at Fort Sumter, South Carolina, thus beginning the Civil War. The city of Chambersburg was only 20 miles from the border separating the Union from the Confederacy. The city's location made it a frequent stop on the Underground Railroad that helped slaves escape to freedom. It also saw its share of raids that destroyed homes and property. One such raid occurred on July 30, 1864 when Confederate General Jubal Early dispatched the cavalry to burn down the town for failing to pay a ransom he demanded from the town as compensation for Union raids against Virginians. A newspaper story from the era states that three-year-old Matthew Metz "was rescued from under the hoofs of the daring raiders under command of the intrepid cavalry leader, Gen. Early, as the invading troops marched through the streets of his home city."

Despite the political upheaval and devastation experienced by the town, Matthew attended public schools and graduated from high school in 1877 at the early age of 16. The following year he entered the Chambersburg Academy and developed an interest in medicine which he took up in a college in Cleveland, Ohio. Later he attended and graduated from the Hahnemann Medical College of Chicago in 1883. Following his education, he set up practice at Watseda, Illinois, about 80 miles south of Chicago.

In February of 1886, Matthew married Mary Ellen Pearce, daughter of Dr. E. L. Pearce of nearby Onarga, Illinois. A few months later, the couple moved to McKinney where Dr. Metz continued his practice. In December of 1886, the couple purchased a house in McKinney on a lot that is now occupied by the Hall Library. This house was purchased from grocer C.D. Bates for \$1,500, consisting of no cash but rather three \$500 installments over the next 24 months.

In the early years of Dr. Metz's practice, he had an office on the second floor of the J.D. Stiff Dry Goods Building on the south side of the Square. However, around 1891 Dr. Metz began purchasing farm acreage around McKinney and lots within the City. Some of these purchases included lots on West Virginia Street in Block 2 of the Original McKinney Donation between Kentucky and Wood Streets. By the end of 1892, he had not only purchased several of the lots on this block but also had a two-story brick building constructed which became known as the Metz Building.

It is possible that Dr. Metz inherited at least some of the money he used for his real estate purchases. Dr. Metz's father was Abraham W. Metz who owned a successful plow manufacturing company in Pennsylvania. Abraham Metz died in April of 1891 but due to poor health began liquidating his holdings prior to that. That period roughly coincides with the beginning of Dr. Metz's real estate investments. Over the next decade Dr. Metz purchased for trade over 800 acres of farm properties, not to mention over a dozen city lots.

His real estate dealings added substantially to his wealth, perhaps even more than his medical practice. In fact, a newspaper article that appeared in his hometown Chambersburg paper in July of 1907 mentions a trip he was to take to London to "close an extensive land deal with a number of English capitalists." Interestingly, the McKinney newspaper printed a story about his trip abroad but made no mention of his real estate dealings. Instead, it described the purpose of the trip was for "observation and study of the latest methods and treatments in the leading hospitals of London and Paris."

Dr. Metz married twice. His first wife Mary Ellen Pearce came with him to McKinney but died unexpectedly in 1900 at the age of 38. Her remains were removed to her hometown of Urbana, Ohio for interment.

In April of 1908, Dr. Metz married Annie Hill, daughter of stockman Doc Coleman Hill. At the time of their wedding, she was 33 years old, he was 47. By September, the newly weds were living in a house Dr. Metz built just north of the First Christian Church parsonage on what is now 309 North Benge Street. Eleven months after the wedding, the couple welcomed their first and only child, Matthew Hill Metz. Around this same time Dr. Metz's real estate dealings essentially ended. Instead, he devoted his time to his practice and civic affairs.

Dr. Metz was an active member of the First Christian Church. The lot on North Benge Street that Dr. Metz built his house on was previously owned by the church. Prior to

1876, the church owned nearly all of the City block known as Block 49. However, to accommodate the growing congregation, a larger building was built across the street in 1897. The abandoned structure was remodeled to become a parsonage. The lot north of the parsonage was sold in 1876 and changed hands several times before eventually being purchased by Dr. Metz in 1906. The new church building was the site of the Hill-Metz wedding in 1908. In the early 1920s, Dr. Metz was Chairman of the church and at the time of his death served as an elder.

Dr. Metz was also active in several fraternal organizations. He became a Master Mason in McKinney's St. John's Lodge in 1895. He became a Knight Templar in 1898. He was a charter member of the Elks Lodge and served as its Exalted Ruler in 1906. Professionally, Dr. Metz acted in a leadership position with the Chamber of Commerce and in 1920 was elected to Vice President of the Collin County Medical Association.

In 1927, Dr. Metz's health, which had been in decline for some time prior, took a turn for the worse. On the morning of October 27, he came down the stairs and while resting on a couch died of a heart attack. Pastor of the First Christian Church, Dr. Clifford Weaver, led the generously attended funeral service. Many of Dr. Metz's business and fraternal associates traveled from other cities to attend. An indication of the depth of Dr. Metz's value to the community is apparent by who his active pallbearers were. Among them were some of McKinney's most prominent leaders including, lawyer William R. Abernathy, dentist William T. Hoard, insurance broker A. M. Scott, businessman William J. Rhea, bank president Henry W. Warden, merchant William C. Gerrish, businessman Joe E. Largent and Mayor Tom W. Perkins. Dr. Metz was 66 years old at the time of his death. He is interred at Pecan Grove Cemetery.

Annie G. Hill (1875-1973)

Annie Hill was the second of three children born to "Doc" (a.k.a. Wootson Coleman) Hill and Nola J. Field. Her father was among several siblings who migrated from Missouri following the Civil War, including brothers "Woot" and "Tuck." Of these three adventurous brothers, Tuck (a.k.a. Francis Marion) Hill was the most colorful. He was an expert horseman and good with a gun. Legend has it "that with his bridle reins between his teeth and a pistol in each hand he could shoot a ring around a tree." During the Civil War, he served under guerrilla Confederate William Quantrell who led ruthless attacks on Union soldiers and civilians. Among other members of Quantrell's Rangers, as they were called, were Tuck's second cousins, Frank and Jesse James. Though Doc was too young to participate in the war with his brothers, he no doubt joined with his older siblings when the James brothers would make their visits to McKinney.

Doc Hill was a successful mule trader. For a time, he worked as an agent for the U.S. government and supplied many railroad carloads of mules to the military. Annie's brother John worked in the family business as D.C. Hill & Son.

Annie was born in McKinney in 1875. Except for growing up in a family of mule traders, there is little in the record that provides details about Annie's early life. However, newspaper articles relating to her marriage in 1908 to Dr. Metz reveal that she was well-connected to McKinney's elite society. Her bridal party consisted of the daughters of several prominent families, including Rosabel Hynds, Bessie Heard, Mrs. Stanley Quesenbury, Corrie Dulaney, Enid Perry, Ida Dowell, Evelyn Erwin, and Kathryn Heard.

At the age of 33, it was Annie's first marriage. Dr. Metz, who was 14 years her senior, lost his first wife in 1900. Less than five months after the wedding, the newlyweds were moving into their newly constructed house on North Benge Street. Within a month after that, Annie was hosting a meeting of the Pierian Club in her new home.

The Pierian Club in McKinney was organized in June of 1908 by seventeen married women with the chief aim of promoting charity and increasing their own general knowledge. Each year the group would make two donations to benefit civic improvement. One such donation helped pay for the Throckmorton Monument on the McKinney Square in 1911. Their motto, taken from the Alexander Pope's poem "Essay on Criticism," read, "A little learning is a dangerous thing: drink deep or taste not the Pierian Spring. There, shallow draughts intoxicate the brain, and drinking largely sobers us again." In Greek mythology, the Pierian Spring was sacred to the Muses and therefore a metaphor for the source of mankind's understanding of art and science.

Annie was a founding member of the club and served as its first treasurer. She took on several leadership rolls in the club over the years and served as its president in 1919. Her involvement with the group continued until at least until 1952 when she was 77 years old.

Dr. and Annie Metz welcomed the arrival of their first and only child Matthew Hill Metz in March of 1909. In a prophetic mention of the birth, the *McKinney Courier-Gazette* wrote:

Dr. M.S. Metz is contemplating the organization of a new firm, to be known as Dr. M.S. Metz & Son, a fine baby boy having just arrived at his home. Mother and babe are doing well and "Papa" is supremely happy.

Though the son never entered into practice with his father who died in 1927, he did

become a physician. Hill Metz, as he was called, attended S.M.U. and received his medical degree from Baylor University in 1932. He began his practice in Dallas in 1936. Two years later, he received national attention when he and his colleague Dr. Robert Lackey created a new treatment for stomach ulcers. The treatment involved a snuff powder made from the pituitary gland of animals. Inhaling the powder brought relief within two to four days. The story of the treatment appeared in major regional newspapers. It was also featured in the November 28 edition of Time Magazine. Dr. Hill Metz was awarded a commendation from the Southern Medical Society for his work.

Dr. Hill Metz continued his practice in Dallas until his death. He died due to kidney disease on March 24, 1973. His body was removed to Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney for interment. Three weeks later, his mother, Annie, died at the age of 98 from a heart attack. She, too, was buried in the same cemetery.

C. Property Ownership

Address: 309 North Benge Street, McKinney, Texas 75069

Legal Description: McKinney Original Donation, BLK 49, Lot 205a & 221a

Purchase Date	Seller	Buyer	Book/Page
Sep. 23, 1841	Republic of Texas	William Davis	
Mar. xx, 1849	William Davis	Town of McKinney	B / 279
Sep. 6, 1850 ¹	State of Texas	William Davis	J / 459
Nov. 1852 ²	Collin County	Alexander Berry, Comm.	
Feb. 10, 1853	Alexander Berry, Comm.	John Faires	F / 281
Mar. 17, 1854	John Faires	Joseph W. Waddill	G / 246
Jun. 8, 1858	Joseph W. Waddill	First Christian Church	L / 456
Oct. 17, 1876	First Christian Church	E.J. Foote	2 / 130
Apr. 15, 1898	G.A. Foote	Corinne Foote	83 / 104
Dec. 6, 1904	N.A. & Corinne Shaw	W.E. Ditto	130 / 72
Feb. 20, 1906	W.E. & Lula Ditto	Matthew S. Metz	145 / 107
Jul. 1, 1974	Matthew Hill Metz	Robert A. Bruckner	920 / 675
Mar. 8, 1976	Robert A. Bruckner	Gary Thompson	990 / 507
Jul. 29, 1977	Gary Thompson	Dana C. Verrill	1063 / 294
Nov. 17, 1977	Dana Verrill	J.E. Cooper	1082 / 630
Nov. 14, 1979	J.E. Cooper	Paul Welch	1207 / 902
Apr. 11, 1982	Paul Welch	John Martinez	1372 / 96
Jan. 15, 1982	John Martinez	Max & Sidna Leavenworth	1467 / 73
May 10, 1988	Max & Sidna Leavenworth	Micheal & Beverly Luby	2836 / 352
Nov. 8, 1995	Michael & Beverly Luby	Edward & Diane Craig	95-0094275
Feb. 2, 2015	Edward & Diane Craig	Diane Craig	

¹ This is the date the State of Texas issued a patent reaffirming William Davis' ownership.

² Collin County assigns property for Alexander Berry to sell on its behalf.

D. Tenant History

Tenant history is the same as owner history.

E. Narrative History

In 1841, the Republic of Texas granted William Davis 3,129 acres of land in return for his participation in the new nation's battle for independence. This two square-mile tract of land was situated on East Fork of the Trinity river in what was then Fannin County. After the Republic of Texas became the 28th state to enter the United States of America in 1845, it subdivided several counties into smaller units. Collin County was such a county, carved out of Fannin County.

In 1850, Peter H. Bell, the third Governor of Texas, signed a Letter of Patent re-affirming the Republic's grant of land to William Davis. This grant was recorded and signed by Governor E.M. Pease in 1856. Even before this grant was recorded by the new State of Texas officials, William Davis and his wife at the time, Margaret, "donated" 120 acres of this tract to the Collin County Commissioners to create the new County Seat in the City of McKinney in 1849. At the time of his donation, he considered this acreage to be some of his least valuable land because of the heavy brush that covered it. Still, as consideration for granting this property, he was deeded three lots within the new town site, which he sold as quickly as he could. This 120 acres became known as the McKinney Original Donation and was divided into 87 blocks which were to be sold to finance the City of McKinney. As a side note, shortly after donating the land to be a new city, William abandoned his wife and child in McKinney and headed to California to search for gold. Land records indicating that William and Margaret were married for only a few years following the donation. By early 1859, William was married to a woman named Sallie (a.k.a. Sarah).

After the Original Donation's 87 blocks were further divided into lots, it was the job of the County Commissioner Alexander Berry to sell these lots to buyers. It was not until 1853 that land purchases were made on Block 49 in the northwestern portion of the Original Donation. The man who made this first purchase was blacksmith John Faires. He purchased the three lots that made up the entirety of Block 49 for \$21. John Faires, who lived on Tennessee Street at the time, is known for building what is now the oldest house in McKinney. This house, built in 1854, is now one of the six homes preserved on the grounds of Chestnut Square.

In 1854, Mr. Faires sold the three lots to Kentucky resident Joseph W. Waddill for \$120. This transaction was facilitated by Judge. R.L. Waddill who acted as his brother's attorney. In 1858, Joseph W. Waddill sold the lots to Alexander Berry of \$350. In

this transaction, Mr. Berry was acting as a trustee for the First Christian Church which wanted the property to be the site of the congregation's first permanent home. That same year a wood frame church building was erected on Block 49, facing North Bengé Street.

In 1876, the church sold a portion of Block 49 just north of the church to Eliza Jane Foote for \$100. At the time of the purchase, Eliza was the wife of Dr. Gerald A. Foote. When she died in 1889, her husband inherited the property. Nine years later at the age of 75 Dr. Foote married the 29-year-old Corinne Lee of Clarksville, Texas. Four days after the wedding, Dr. Foote deeded the northern portion of Block 49 along with two other nearby lots to his new bride for "one dollar paid in cash and love and affection." Dr. Foote died in 1902 leaving his wife with the three contiguous lots, not to mention a sizable fortune. She remarried in 1904 to wealthy farmer Nicholas A. Shaw in her home town of Clarksville. That same year Corinne sold the three lots that Dr. Foote had given her as a wedding present to grocery merchant William E. Ditto for \$8,000. In 1906, Mr. Ditto sold the unimproved lot in the northern portion of Block 49 to Dr. Matthew S. Metz for \$550 cash and a \$450 note.

In 1908, Dr. Metz married Annie Hill of McKinney. That same year, Dr. Metz contracted with a builder to erect the two-story, wood-frame house that now occupies the lot in Block 49, also known as 309 N. Bengé Street. The two-story, wood-frame house follows a simplified version of the Queen Anne Style, a typical style for homes built in the first decade of the 20th Century. McKinney historian Helen Hall wrote in a letter to the Texas Historical Commission in 1985:

There is [sic] no records anywhere that tell us about the architect of the fine old homes of McKinney, but by talking with the oldest residents it appears that this was another of the works of art from John M. Martin who is credited with designing most of the early homes for the newly prosperous people of McKinney.

Though it is not certain who designed and built the house, it is known that the construction materials came from the lumber yard of J.W. Wilcox. This information comes from a release of mechanic's lien recorded with the County Clerk in 1913. Dr. Metz paid three notes of \$400 to the J.W. Wilcox & Son.

In 1919, sidewalks and a driveway were added to the house and property. Dr. Metz died in 1927 leaving Annie Metz the sole resident of the house. In 1934, her father spent the last four months of his life in Annie's house due to his declining health and feeble-

ness. Again, in 1938, Annie's mother convalesced in the house after breaking her hip in January. She did not recover from her injury and died in March.

In August of 1954 a fire erupted on Benge Street that destroyed five houses and severely damaged several others. Flying embers from nearby houses fell onto the roof of the Metz House but some of the more than 75 firefighters attending the blaze were able to extinguish the threat with minimal damage occurring.

When Annie Metz died in 1973, her son Dr. Hill Metz sold the property to Robert Bruckner. The property changed hands several times without significant alteration until Max and Sidna Leavenworth purchased it in 1982. They hired architect James West to add a room at the rear of the house as well as a semi-detached garage. Other changes were made to the baths and kitchens. Max died in 1986. Sidna, who was the first woman to be elected to the McKinney City Council, sold the house in 1988. Currently, Diane Craig owns and occupies the property.