

# City of McKinney

## Historic Building Marker Application

(Supporting Documentation)

### Erwin-Finney House

504 North Church Street



## A. Alterations & Construction

### Construction

The Erwin-Finney House was constructed by Andrew J. Martin in 1922 as a two-story, brick home with a pier-and-beam foundation. It has pyramidal hip roof with two gabled dormers at the front of the house. The interior floor is made of oak and the home is fenestrated with the original nine-over-one sash windows.

The home follows the Federal Style branch of the Colonial Revival form with its emphasis on simple massing and strong symmetry. Classic columns support a portico in the center of the front facade that frames a centrally located door flanked with a transom and sidelights.

The architectural significance of this house derives from its faithful adherence to the stylistic conventions associated with the style. From its red brick veneer to its strong axial symmetry, the house is one of the finest examples of the style as one will find in McKinney. The triplet grouping of the windows and proportions, especially in the front, suggest a Palladian influence, a style closely associated with some of America's grand early architecture. The classic cornice of the portico is understated and restrained. The entire effect of the architecture is one of status, education, wealth, and stability, qualities that its historical owners so exemplified. It is a distinct architectural addition amid the wood-frame bungalows of North Church Street.

### **Alterations**

The house replaced one destroyed by fire and little has changed on the front of the house since it was first built. Little changed while the Erwins owned the house. However, once the Finneys purchased the house in 1938, many changes to the interior were made including the addition of three floor furnaces and central air conditioning. In 1962, they added a dining area, den, and garage to the back of the house. The next owners, Griff and Margaret Marshall, gave the kitchen its first updating. Later, in 1997, the Masons add a wine cellar, a pool with pool house, and fencing. In 2012, the Firths continued to update the interior including the kitchen and bathrooms. As a result of these modifications few, if any, original fixtures and fittings remain inside the house.

Despite the extensive interior alterations, little has changed to the exterior on the front and south side of the house. Columns on the portico that were once Tuscan in style were capped with the more ornamental Ionic capital after 1985. Throughout all the alterations the owners preserved the essence of the style.

### **Anticipated Needs**

The current owners have made several repairs to the house since they purchased it in 2016. They anticipate making immediate repairs to the wooden fence and deck. Looking forward, the owners intend to maintain the integrity of the historical character of the house regardless of any future repairs or alterations.

## **B. Historical Figures**

### **Robert D. Erwin (1866-1938)**

Robert Erwin owned a drug store on the McKinney Square in the 1890s and later went on to become one of the founders and directors of the Southland Life Insurance Company of Dallas. He was one of McKinney's prominent businessmen and civic leaders.

Robert Erwin was born in White Oak, South Carolina in 1866, the son of Rev. Thomas W. Erwin and Elizabeth Douglas. The Erwin family moved to Ennis, Texas in 1879 where the Reverend served as minister for nine years. Around 1885, Robert Erwin moved to McKinney along with his older brother Dr. J.C. Erwin who had just finished his medical training at the Louisville Medical School in Kentucky.

Robert Erwin worked at the McAulay Drug Store, owned by his older sister's husband Dr. E.N. McAulay. During his employment there, Robert married Alma Anderson who came from Holly Springs, Mississippi to teach. Alma had a sister Lily whose husband ran a drug store in Fort Worth. In 1894, Robert teamed up with Lily's husband Euclid T. Fant to purchase the McAulay Drug Store. The two brother-in-laws began remodeling the store soon after their acquisition. They operated it as the Erwin & Fant Drug Store until 1898. In October of that year, the business created a stir in the town when it unexpectedly failed to open its doors one Thursday morning. Quickly the word spread that Robert and Euclid were filing for bankruptcy.

Despite this economic setback and the fact that Robert and his wife Alma had a one-year-old child, the couple was able to buy a home on Church Street in 1899. The purchase included two adjacent lots. The couple put \$1,400 down and secured two \$300 notes.

In 1901, Robert became an insurance agent for Mutual Life of New York City which boasted in its ads that it was the "largest, best and most popular life insurance company in the world." Robert found early success in his new career. Soon after joining the firm he expanded his offices on the Square. Both Robert and former partner Euclid bounced back quickly from their bankruptcy. Euclid left McKinney to become manager of the Burrus Flour Mill in Sherman.

At the end of 1901, Robert sold a portion of his property on Church Street to his brother-in-law Arthur L. Anderson for \$1,150. With his finances more secure, he began involving himself in more high-profile community activities. In 1902, he was appointed to McKinney's Tax Equalization Board. For the next several years Robert excelled in his job.

In 1908, Robert Erwin left his employer to join the Southland Life Insurance Company of Dallas. Robert was among the company's founding directors. His success with the company allowed, and in some ways required, Robert to participate in civic causes such as the Good Road Organization, a citizen group comprised of community leaders formed for the purpose of advising the Commissioners' Court on proposed road construction, financing, and maintenance. Robert was also involved in the World War One bond effort, even getting Southern Life to purchase \$2000 worth of Liberty Bonds in 1918. Robert operated his agency offices in the building know as the Morrow Block located on the Square at the northeast corner of the intersection of Virginia and Tennessee.

As was typical of Robert Erwin's fortunes, some days were better than others. In 1920, Robert sustained a broken collar bone as a result of a wreck involving the Interurban he was riding in Allen. He was in pain and laid up for several weeks. The following year a fire completely destroyed his home on Church Street causing \$8,000 in damage. Ironically, his loss was only partially covered by insurance.

In 1922, Robert contracted with Andrew J. Martin to build a new two-story brick home on the property. This is the structure currently located at 504 North Church Street. Soon after its completion, Robert and Alma's son Robert, Jr. married Dorothy Sanford of Sherman. After their honeymoon to Galveston, the newly married couple moved in with Robert and Alma.

Robert Erwin, Jr. moved out of the house in 1929 amidst the Depression to take a job with food distributor Ben E. Keith headquartered in Fort Worth. He originally was hired as the branch manager in Lubbock but after years of service he became the company president and chairman following the death of Mr. Keith in 1959. Robert, Jr. retired in 1965 after 36 years with the company.

Robert, Jr. was not the only notable member of the Erwin family. Robert's brother-in-law, and former business partner, Euclid T. Fant became a manager of the Burrus Flour Mill in Sherman. One of Mr. Fant's son James started Fant Flour Mill in the same city. Mr.

Fant's youngest son Euclid, Jr. became an economics professor at Austin College. The younger Euclid became the subject of mystery when he went missing in 1958 and the possible victim of a murder.

Robert's sister Margaret was an artist who studied at the Art Institute of Chicago and was a charter member of the McKinney Art Club along with well-known regional artist Frank Klepper. She had a studio on Church Street and taught for over 40 years. In her obituary from 1935 she is said "to have done more for the promotion of art in McKinney than any one who ever lived here."

Another lasting reminder of the positive contributions the Erwin family made to the city is the 214 acre donation Robert's nephew Dr. J.C. Erwin, Jr. made to the City of McKinney in 1971. This gift of land in the northwest section of town bears the name Erwin Park in his honor.

Robert Erwin's family and connection extended widely throughout North Texas. His career at Southland Life spanned 29 years. When he died of pneumonia as a complication from leukemia in 1938, resolutions were passed and eulogies made in acknowledgment of his character and contribution to the city. Friend and Englishman Phil B. Aimer wrote of him in the March 24, 1938 edition of the *McKinney Courier-Gazette*:

*Mr. R.D. Erwin was first a gentleman in the best sense of the word and his life was a shining example of what that word can convey in a world in which all men are wont to annex the title to themselves. Mr. Erwin lacked none of the courage it takes to be a man, yet none of that gentleness of spirit and courteous toleration that it takes to be a gentleman.*

*It seems too commonplace to just say that we will miss him. With all his self-effacing modesty he could not escape the spotlight of respect and affection that his devotion to his duty brought to bear.*

Robert Erwin is buried in Pecan Grove Cemetery in the family plot in block 97.

### **William B. Finney (1909-2000)**

William "Bill" Finney came to McKinney in 1938 to run a bakery and became one of the city's largest employers and a popular three-term mayor.

Bill Finney was born in Gilmer, Texas to Reginald H. Finney and his wife Valma Breckeen in 1909. Bill graduated from University of Texas in 1931 and married Leota

Leverett three years later. He began his career working for J.C. Penney in Temple. His father managed the J.C. Penney store in Paris, Texas for many years.

In 1938, Bill's father and younger brother Reginald "Jack" Finney purchased the Knott's Bakery in McKinney located on the north side of town. Within months Bill moved to McKinney to manage the bakery while Jack started another bakery in Greenville, Texas. The following year Bill became the owner and changed the name of the business to Finney's Bakery.

Initially, the bakery employed about 20 people with its main product being Aunt Betty's Bread which bore the slogan, "No bread toasts like ours." The bread was distributed over a 50 mile radius. The bakery was located in the brick building built by Lee Elliot, Jr. that still exists at the corner of Tennessee and Heard Street.

Bill was an astute marketer and promoter of his bakery's brand. One of his first promotions involved paying his employees with silver dollars with the "Aunt Betty" trademark affixed to the back. Every purchase his employees made around town became a hand-delivered advertisement. Bill also sponsored a softball team, as well as various school and municipal events.

Finney's Bakery also had a Country-swing house-band known as Aunt Betty's Texans which was inspired by the more famous Light Crust Dough Boys of the Burrus Mill in Fort Worth. Among the musicians to get their start at the Burrus Mill was Bob Wills. The band also helped W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel become Texas Governor in 1941. One of the Light Crust Dough Boys band members was known to play with Aunt Betty's Texans from time to time.

In 1942, Bill Finney added to his growing bakery empire by purchasing the Dixie Pastry Shop located at 115 W. Louisiana Street (currently Ettienne Market). By 1948, the bakery employed 50 people round the clock baking bread, buns, rolls, cakes and pastries. In 1961, the bakery employed 125 people and distributed to over 600 stores making it one of the largest employers in the county.

In 1963, after 25 years in the bakery business, Bill Finney sold his bakery to the Golman-Oak Cliff Baking Company of Dallas known for its Sunbeam brand. That same year he sold the pastry shop to Ray Downs.

In 1964, Lyman D. Robinson resigned from the McKinney City Council and Mayor

Louis Miller appointed Bill Finney to fill his seat. Bill was elected to the Council in 1965 and later won his bid for Mayor against Julia Walters in 1967. He went on to spend three terms (six years) in the office. During his Council tenure, when the population of McKinney was around 15,000, the City built a city hall and a fire station at Davis and Chestnut Street. Another major work was a library built at Chestnut and Anthony Street.

Bill withdrew from city politics in 1973 but continued to be involved himself in business and civic activities. The enormity of his influence on McKinney cannot possibly be measured by a brief biography. He lived in McKinney for less than three years before his activities earned him the title of "Most Distinguished Citizen" by the Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1941. The following is a list of organizations that he was an integral part of throughout his lifetime:

Volunteer Fire Department  
First Baptist Church  
Rotary Club, President (1944-1945)  
United War Chest, Chairman (1944)  
Texas Bakers Association, President (1944-1946)  
Central National Bank, Director (1950-1972)  
United Bankers Life, Director (1951)  
McKinney Salvation Army Drive, Chairman (1951)  
McKinney Country Club, Vice-President (1962)  
McKinney Junior Chamber of Commerce, President (1962)  
Camp Fire Girls  
American Bakers Association, Chairman (1963)  
McKinney City Council, District 3 (1963-1967)  
McKinney Mayor (1967-1973)  
First Savings & Loan  
Central Texas Council of Governments (1970)  
North Texas Municipal Water District (1978)

In 1993, a 13.3 acre park on Glen Oaks Dr. in the Stonebridge area of McKinney was dedicated in his name. Bill Finney died at the age of 91 in his McKinney home at 300 Brook Lane on December 23, 2000. He is buried at Ridgeview Cemetery in Allen, Texas.

### **Andrew J. Martin (1872-1930)**

"Exceptionally pathetic." Those are the words the *McKinney Courier-Gazette* used to describe the 1930 death of Andrew Martin, one of McKinney's most skilled carpenters and builders.

He was born in Lebanon, Tennessee in 1872, the son of Joseph B. Martin and Caroline Chambliss. The family moved to the Vineland area five miles northwest of McKinney and farmed there when Andrew was a boy. In 1895, Andrew married Lovie L. Wiseman and in 1899 she gave birth to their son, Emil Martin.

The young Martin family came to McKinney around 1900. Sometime after that Andrew got a job working for J. Perry Burrus in the Collin County Mill and Elevator Company as a carpenter. One of the first mentions of Andrew in the newspaper occurs in 1910. This event proved prophetic and in some way lead to his death 20 years later. The story reads:

*A.J. Martin, a well known carpenter of this city had a rusty nail run through his foot while at work last Friday, and has been unable to walk without the assistance of crutches ever since. Although exceedingly painful, it is not thought the injury will prove serious.*

Andrew quit the mill and teamed up with W.L. Braswell and they began contracting for commercial and residential construction projects some time before 1917. The partnership proved successful enough for Andrew to buy a lot and build a five-room home for his family on West Hunt Street. The partnership dissolved around 1921 and Andrew began contracting on his own. One of his first projects as a sole proprietor was the two-story brick house at 504 North Church for the wealthy insurance agent Robert. D. Erwin.

Andrew's commercial work included repairs to the W.O.W. and Dowell Hardware buildings. Perhaps his most prominent work of this type is the brick building on the northwest corner of Virginia and Kentucky he built for W.R. and Dick Bass in 1929. This is the same lot where the Foote Hotel once stood. Andrew was also associated on many projects with fellow contractor William L. Watkins.

Though Andrew produced some fine wood-frame bungalows, his best residential work is exemplified by the brick homes he built for R.D. Erwin, Horace Knott, and Mrs. J.C. Greer. Each home represents a different style of architecture but each home is crafted with attention to detail.



In September of 1930, Andrew stepped on a small nail while working on a barn for Dr. C. T. Lewis. The nail was small but it was able to penetrate the sole of his shoe just enough to enter the flesh no deeper than the outer skin. The *McKinney Courier-Gazette* writes:

*The foot hurt him some at the time, but he finished his day's work and didn't call on his family physician until next morning when he went down to his office and had the member dressed. The attending surgeon regarded it as only a very minor injury. Mr. Martin resumed his work continuing until Saturday night Sept. 13. On Sunday morning he took his wife to Dallas in his car and spent the day in that city with his son, Emil Martin and wife. He complained some during the day of finding it a little difficult to swallow. On Monday morning following, he arose with a sore throat and hurting in the back of his neck and jaws. He was treated on that afternoon by his physician and given the anti-tetanus serum and sent to the hospital where he grew desperately ill Monday night, suffering excruciating pain and receiving heroic treatment in an effort by attending physicians to save his life.*

Andrew died on Thursday morning on September 18 at 6:05 am. It is likely that his benign encounter with the nail 20 years earlier led him to discount the danger a puncture wound by a contaminated object. The author of his obituary described Andrew's character and Christian faith in poetic, soaring terms. Though it was the custom of the day to edify the deceased in flowery language, one can glimpse that Andrew approached his life with the same integrity that he expressed in his buildings.

Andrew J. Martin is buried in Block 138, Lot 2 in McKinney's Pecan Grove cemetery.

## C. Property Ownership

**Address:** 504 North Church Street, McKinney, Texas 75069

**Legal Description:** McKinney Original Donation, Blk 85, lot 255B

Purchase Date	Seller	Buyer
Oct. 10, 1856	State of Texas	William Davis
Mar. 24, 1849	William Davis	City of McKinney
May. 20, 1851	City of McKinney	G.A. Foote
Feb. 14, 1856	G.A. Foote	R.L. Waddill
Feb. 6, 1860	R.L. Waddill	Ed Cannon
Jun. 30, 1865	Ed Cannon	Ben T. Estes
Jan. 27, 1899	Ben T. Estes	Jane E. Nelson
Feb. 22, 1899	Jane E. Nelson	R.D. Erwin
Dec. 30, 1938	Alma Erwin <sup>1</sup>	William B. Finney
Nov. 7, 1968	William B. Finney	Russell O. Wilson
Feb. 16, 1983	Russell O. Wilson	G.M. Marshall
Feb. 5, 1992	G.M. Marshall	Peter Mason
Jul. 28, 2003	Mason Living Trust <sup>2</sup>	Dan Chavitage
Jan. 30, 2007	Dan Chavitage	David Firth
Aug. 31, 2012	David Firth	Gary McNiel
Jun. 21, 2016	Gary McNiel	Bryan Johnson

<sup>1</sup> Widow of Robert D. Erwin

<sup>2</sup> Peter Mason transferred ownership to Trust on Nov. 30, 1999

## D. Tenant History

Tenant history is same as deed 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.

A little town called Buckner was the seat of the new county until the 1848 State Legislature required that the seat be within three miles of the geographical center of the county. As it turned out, William Davis' tract sat within this radius and was chosen by a open election (where only 11 people voted) to be the location of the new seat of Collin County.

In 1849, William Davis, along with his wife Margaret, "donated" 120 acres of the southwest corner of his original tract to the county commissioners which became the new town of McKinney. 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 fast as he could. As a side note, shortly after donating the land to be a new city, William left his wife and child in McKinney and headed to California to search for gold.

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. In 1851, two lots in block 85 on North Church Street were sold to Gerald A. Foote. These lots would trade hands no less than five times over the next 48 years. One of those who once owned the property was Ben T. Estes. He purchased the property from Ed Cannon in 1865. Two years later, Mr. Estes married Nannie Howell and began the merchandise company Howell & Estes with her brother John. Some time during their marriage, Mr. Estes had a house built on the property which first appears on Sanborn Insurance maps in 1888. Nannie died in 1884 and three years later Mr. Estes married Alice Gumm. The couple lived in the house two years before selling it and moving to a new house on College Street.

In 1899, Ben T. Estes sold his house and lots (254 & 255) in block 85 to Jane Nelson for \$2,000. She, in turn, sold it a month later to Robert D. Erwin for \$1,400 and two

\$300 notes at 10% interest. Mr. Erwin and his wife Alma moved into the house built by Mr. Estes and in 1906 they began remodeling it. According to a *McKinney Democrat-Courier* article dated June 6, 1906:

*Robert Erwin is having some decided improvements made on his residence on North Church Street. The old house has been moved nearer the south side of the lot, raised higher, and additions will be made, which will transform it into a beautiful modern building.*

Relocating the house allowed Mr. Erwin to subdivide his lots and sell them.

On Monday night of December 12, 1921, a fire broke out in the Erwin home destroying the six-room residence, furniture, and household effects. The fire started after the couple had been gone from the home for only a few minutes. Neighbors discovered the flames breaking through the roof at the back of the home. The cause of the fire was believed to be due to defective electrical wiring. The loss was estimated at \$7,500 to \$8,000 which was partially covered by insurance.

It wasn't until August of 1922 that the lot was cleared and construction began on the ten-room, two-story Federal Style home that now exists on the lot. Contractor Andrew J. Martin was chosen to build the new home for the Erwins. Mr. Martin is best known for the homes he built for Mrs. J.C. Greer (405 W. Louisiana St.) and Richard Bass (1215 Tucker St.). He also built the commercial brick building on the northwest corner of Virginia and Kentucky Street (201 N. Kentucky).

Robert D. Erwin died in March of 1938. His widow sold the house situated on lot 225B in December to William B. Finney for \$5,500. She later moved to Sherman then to Fort Worth in 1949 where she died in 1962.

William B. Finney and his wife, Leota, lived in the house for the next 30 years. During that time they made several alterations to the home. Mr. Finney added three floor-furnaces and installed central air condition. Some sources claim this was the first home in McKinney to have central air. Another change included the removal of several sets of interior French Doors. However, the most significant alteration was the addition of a den, laundry room and attached garage in 1962.

William and Leota Finney sold the house to Russell O. Wilson in 1968. Apparently, Leota wanted to have a single story house. The sale involved an exchange of houses and a \$17,000 payment by Mr. Wilson. The Wilsons lived at 504 N. Church for 15 years

and the only known alteration was the addition of carpet throughout the first floor.

In 1983, Russell O. Wilson sold the house to Griff and Margaret Marshall for \$100,000. The Marshalls made considerable changes including sheet-rocking the entire second floor, installing storm-windows, updating the kitchen, refinishing the first level flooring, and external brickwork.

In 1992, the Marshalls sold the house to Peter Mason who expanded the kitchen, added a wine cellar, and a separate pool house. They also added a new roof to the main house. The Masons lived in the house until selling it in 2003 to Dan Chavitage.

In 2007, David and Karen Firth purchased the house from Mr. Chavitage and began an extensive remodeling campaign. The Firths created a master suite with bath, remodeled the existing bathrooms, added fixtures, plumbing, and new wiring. They added new soffit, gutters, and custom shutters outside.

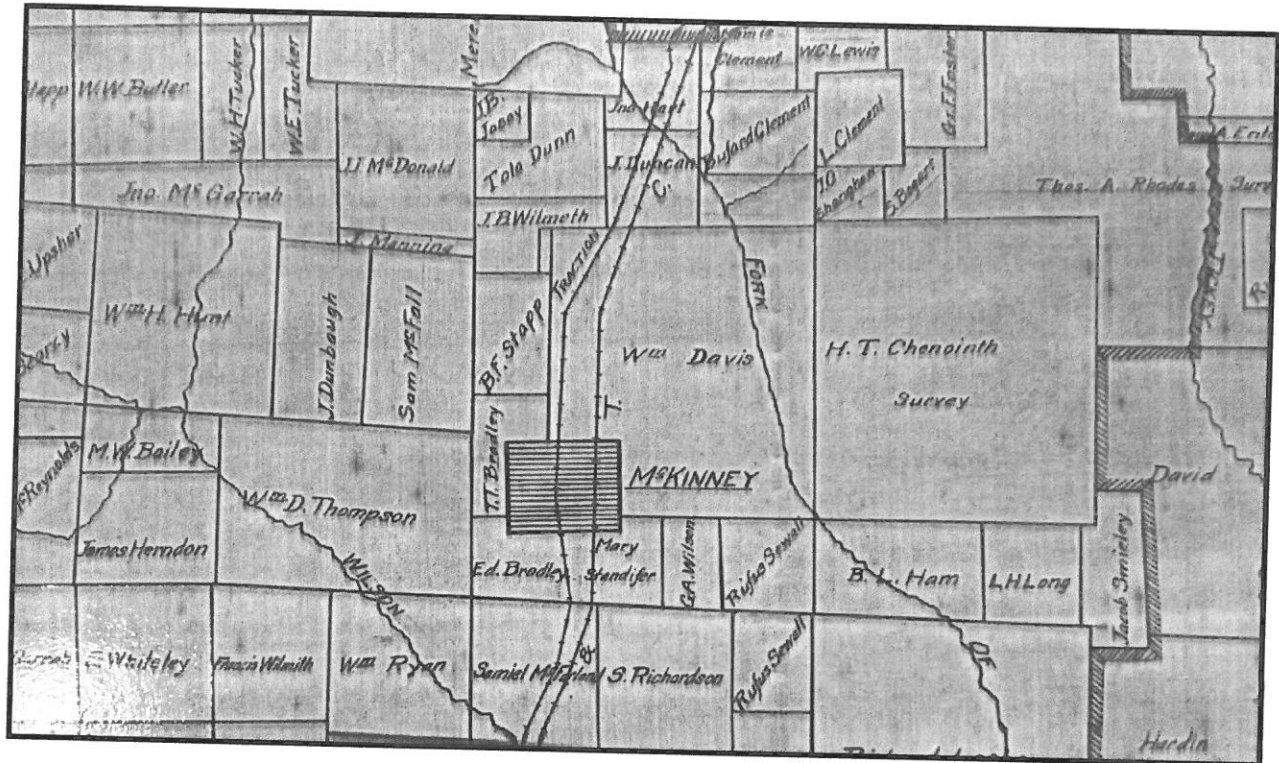
In 2012, the Firths sold the house to Gary McNiel who sold it to the current owners Bryan and Rebecca Johnson in 2016.

# F. Drawings



In 1949, William Davis and his wife Margaret donated 120 acres of his 3,129 acre headright grant to become McKinney, the new Collin County seat. Commissioners J.B. Wilmeth, J.M. McReynolds, and John Fitzhugh instructed George White and Ethelred Whitely to lay out the new town. Mr. Davis' donation was divided into 87 blocks and became known as the McKinney Original Donation (shown in shaded area). The Erwin-Finney house is located in Block 85. The commissioners "paid" Davis by allowing him to have title to three lots within the donation. These lots are highlighted in red in the above map.

# William Davis Headright



When Texas became a republic, it granted land to participants in the battle for independence. There were several classes of grants available depending on when a person arrived in Texas and if they were married. Generally, a married man who was in Texas before March 2, 1836 would be eligible for a First Class Headright grant of one league and one labor of land (4,605 acres). A single man could get 1/3 of a league and one labor.

William Davis was granted 2/3 of a league and a labor of land in 1841. This type of grant did not fit any of the regular headright classes at the time and suggests that William Davis (who was single at the time) was granted an augmentation based on some unique performance associate with his contribution to Texas independence.

This grant became known as the Davis Survey and amounted to 3,129 acres which encompassed the site chosen to be the County Seat of Collin County. William Davis donated 120 acres of his land to the County commissioners to be used to create the town of McKinney. The legal description of properties which were a part of this donation include the words "McKinney Original Donation."

Each acre 1/2 a per 100



Magnite dir. E. 8.

Republic of Texas } 2/3 San Habor  
 County of (Harrison) Survey for William  
 Davis of 31294 acres of Land situate  
 in ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~County~~ <sup>County</sup> of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~East Fork~~ <sup>East Fork</sup>  
 of Trinity being <sup>the</sup> part of <sup>the</sup> quantity  
 he is entitled to Virtue of a certificate  
 no. issued on the day of  
 by a decision of the district court of 3rd county

Beginning at a <sup>(for the N.W. cor.)</sup> Stake in prairie a Pecan bearing  
 5116 1/2 Varas marked W B thence  
 East 1053 Varas to the South West corner of John Duncans  
 Survey thence Along his South boundary Line 2421  
 Varas to the South East corner of the same Survey  
 2681 Varas <sup>at East Fork</sup> ~~crossing creek~~ 3160 Varas prairie  
 4203 Varas det a stake a Red Elm bearing West 12  
 Varas marked W B thence  
 South 1187 Varas cross a spring Branch of the same  
 creek 2756 Varas thence 5467 Varas across  
 the East Fork of Trinity ~~to the~~ 4203 Varas to a small ash an other  
 ash bearing N 61 W 5 Varas marked W B thence  
 West 2970 Varas upon prairie 4203 Varas det a stake a Long  
 forked Cotton wood bearing E 120 Varas marked W B  
 thence  
 North 4203 Varas thence prairie to the Beginning Surveyed  
 on the 20 day of Sept 1841

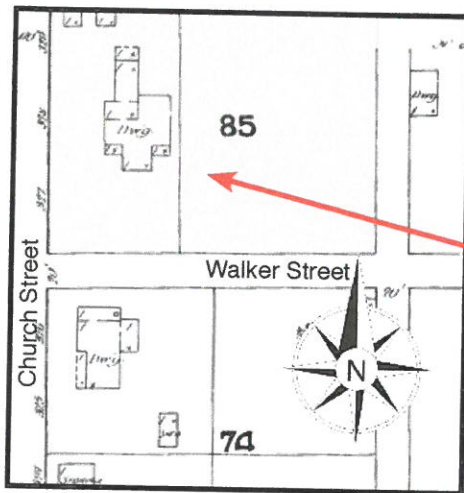
John Duncan } Soil to Fuller  
 John East } Sworn chain carriers } Dept S. F. Co

I do solemnly declare under the Oath of my  
 office that the foregoing Survey was made accord-  
 ing to Law and that the Line Bannans and corners  
 with the marks natural are truly describe in  
 the above plat and file notes and that the Survey was  
 made as above dated also 5 Laborers of قابل Labor  
 and the Islander Preston Lander Jack Walker

This is a portion of the document that granted William Davis his headright in 1841.

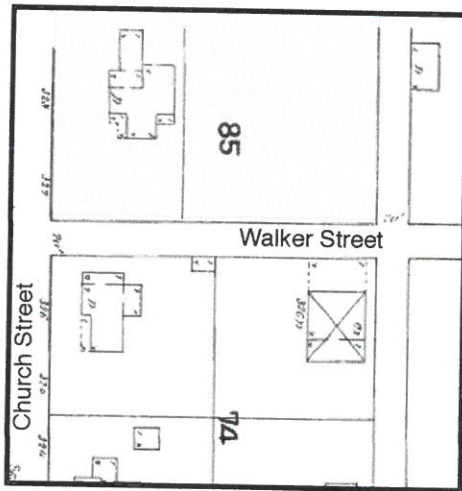


# Sanborn Maps: 1888 - 1927+

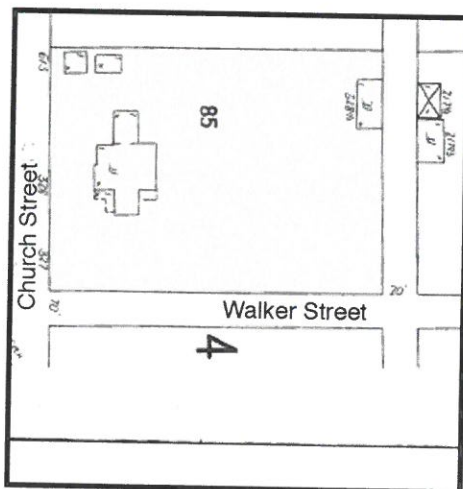


*B.T. Estes House*

1888



1892



1897

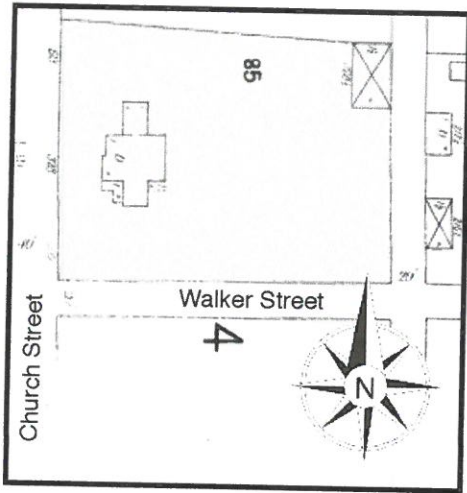
*These site plans are taken from the Sanborn Insurance Map collection whose earliest edition for McKinney shows the structure built by Ben T. Estes between 1865-1888.*

*The Estes house existed on the site until 1908. Robert Erwin purchased the property in 1899 and according to a 1906 newspaper story remodeled and moved the house closer to the southern property line.*

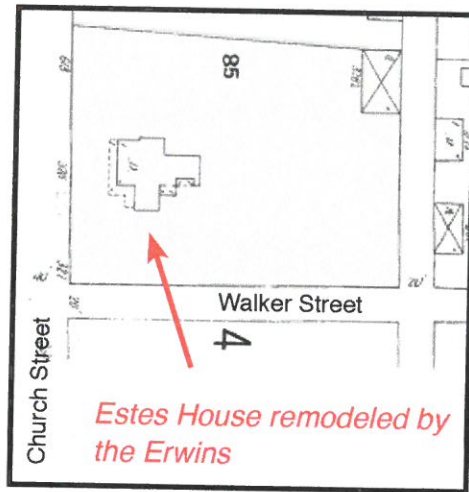
*The footprint of the home in the 1908 survey indicates the remodeling, but not the change in location. It is possible this is an error. The 1914 survey shows what is described in the 1906 article (see following page).*

*Subdivision of the two original lots occurred 1908-1914.*

*The Estes House burned in 1921. The 1927 Sanborn survey shows the footprint of the house that A.J. Martin built for the Erwins in 1922.*

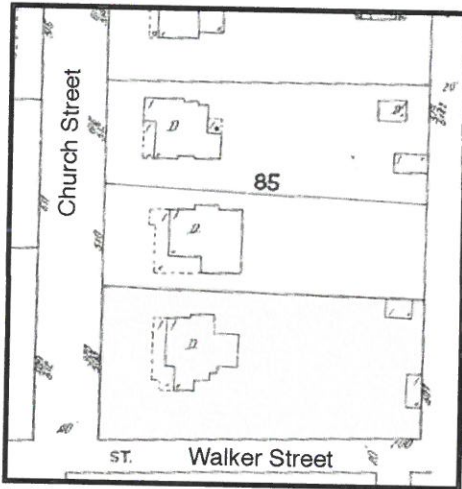


1902

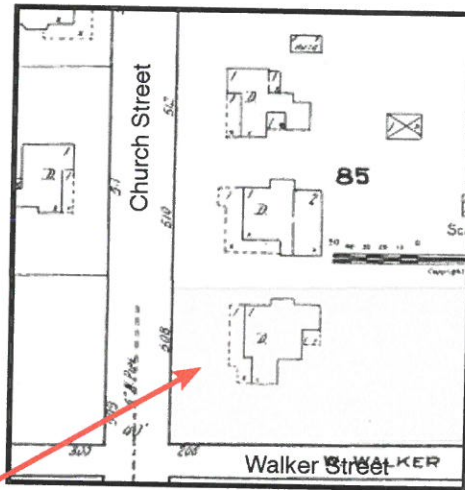


*Estes House remodeled by the Erwins*

1908

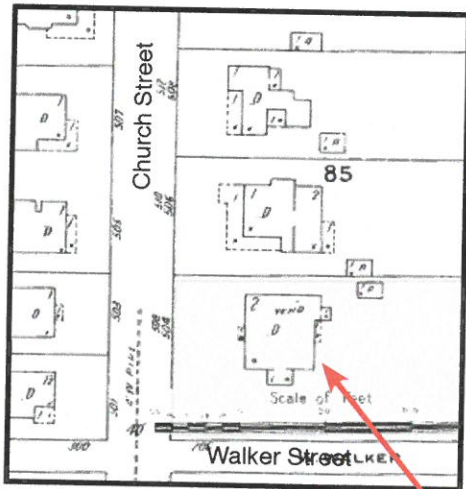


1914



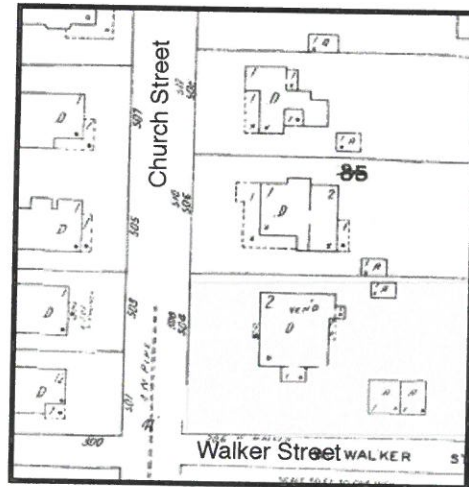
*Erwin House prior to the fire in 1921.*

1920

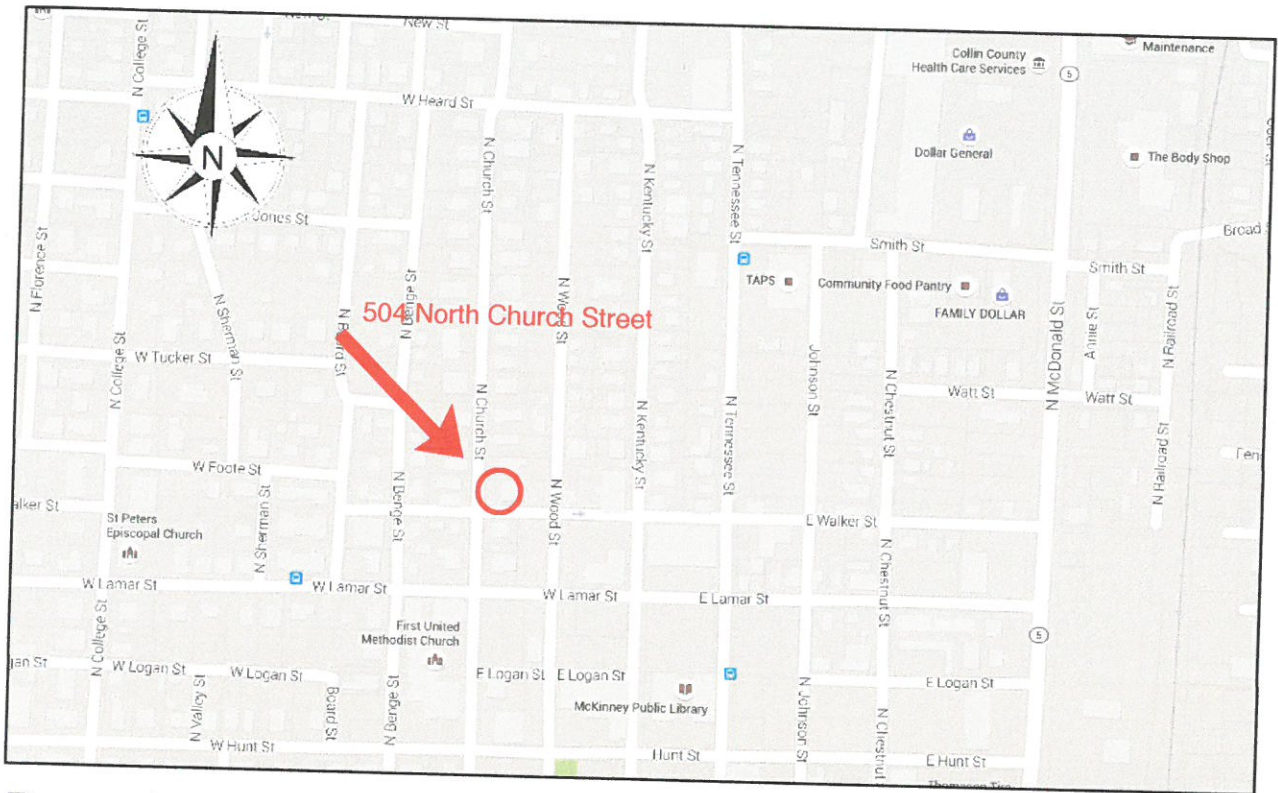


1927

*Erwin House built in 1922.*



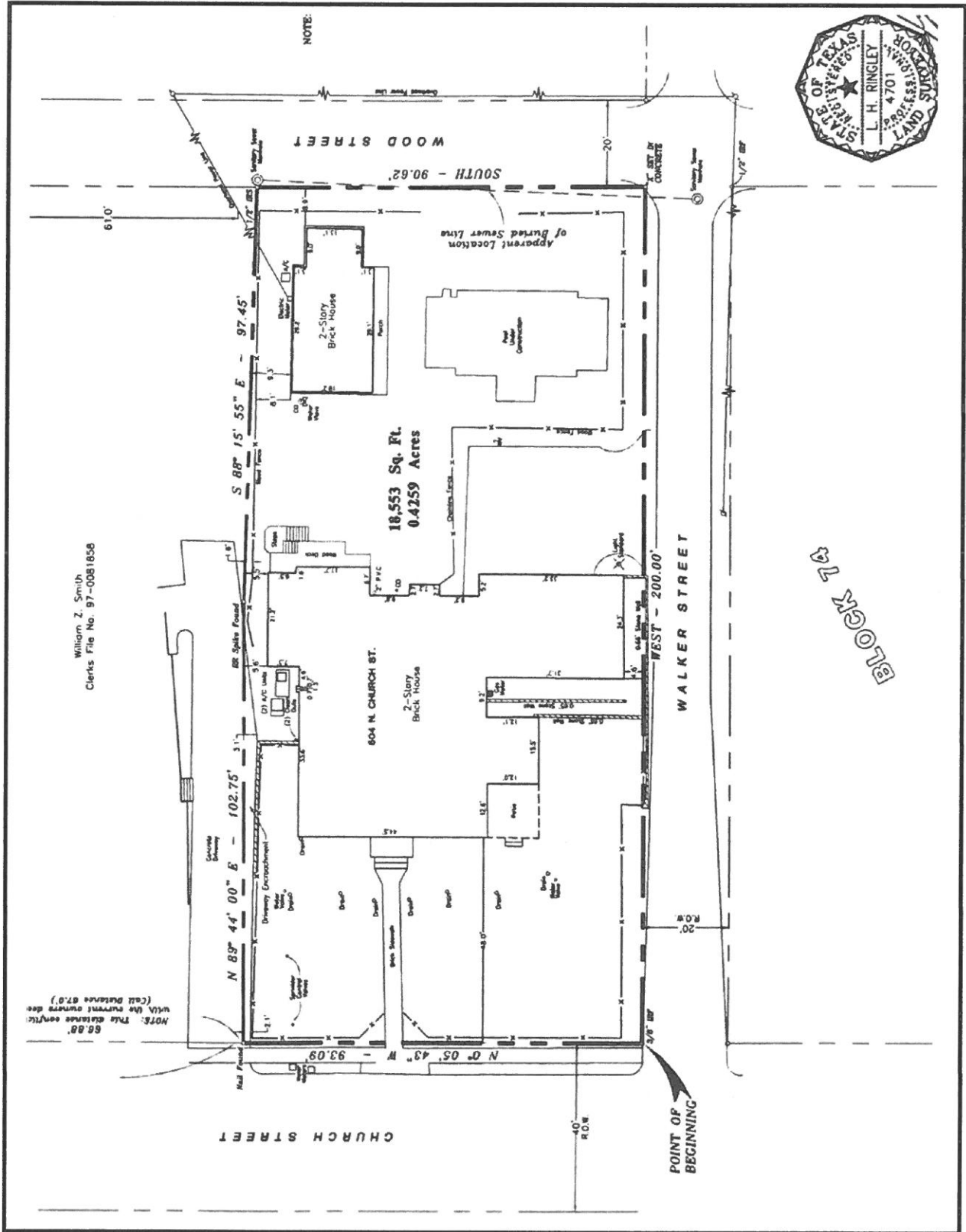
1927+



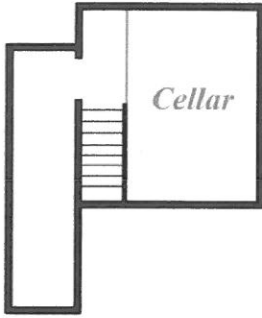
The map above shows the neighborhood around 504 North Church Street. The aerial photo below shows the immediate neighborhood near the intersection of Walker and North Church Street.



# Site Plan for 504 North Church (2016)



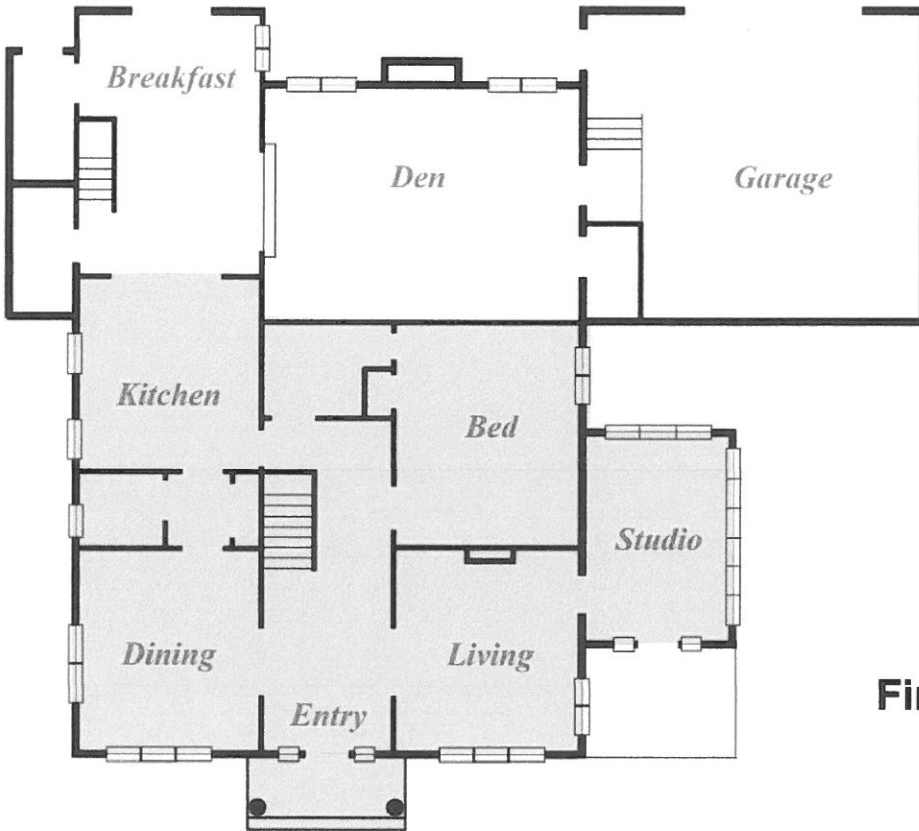
Site plan for 504 North Church Street from 2016.



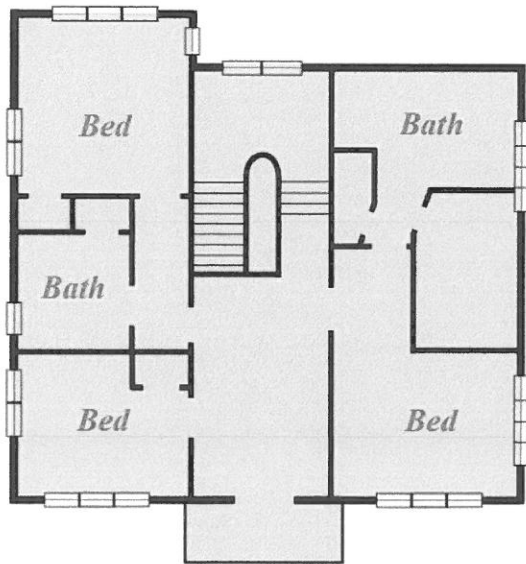
## Floor Plan

*This plan shows the Erwin-Finney House as it currently exists following a fire in 1921 that destroyed the previous home on the property. The house was added to in 1962. The highlighted portion in this drawing indicates the original footprint of the two-story, brick house built in 1922 by contractor Andrew J. Martin.*

 Original structure



**First Floor**



**Second Floor**

## G. Photographs

*Robert D. Erwin came to McKinney around 1885 and worked in the McAulay Drug Store for several years before buying it. The business went bankrupt in 1898. Soon after that he became an insurance agent for Mutual Life. In 1909, he left his employment and became one of the founders and first directors of Southland Life of Dallas. He had been with that company for almost 30 years at the time of his death in 1938.*



**Robert D. Erwin**  
(1866-1938)

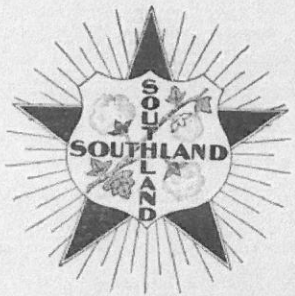
**DR. H. H. ROBBINS,**  
**VETERINARY SURGEON AND DENTIST.**  
Office Over Erwin & Fant's Drug Store.  
**McKINNEY, TEXAS.**  
Calls Promptly Answered Day or Night.

*R.D. Erwin, along with partner E.T. Fant, ran a drug store on the Square from 1894 to 1898*

# WELCOME, OLD SETTLERS !

## Southland Life Insurance Co.

Home Office, Dallas, Texas



**OFFICERS**

Harry L. Souy .....	President
Clarence E. Linn .....	Vice-Pres. & Treas
H. B. Seay .....	Vice-President
P. N. Thevenet .....	Vice-Pres. & Sec'y
P. V. Montgomery .....	Vice-Pres. & Actuary
Dr. Jas. S. Turner .....	Medical Director
Dr. J. T. Montgomery .....	Medical Director
Seay, Seay, Malone & Lipscomb, General Counsel.	

**Net Admitted Assets**

### \$7,500,000

**Insurance in Force**

### \$70,000,000

**Big enough to handle any insurance proposition safely and expeditiously. Not too big to give each policyholder individual attention.**

**R. D. ERWIN**  
GENERAL AGENT  
McKinney, Texas

The Southland Life Insurance Company issues all standard forms of Life Insurance including Monthly Income, Double Indemnity, and Disability Annuity. Our Disability Annuity Policy, which provides that in case of total and permanent disability, the insured will receive a monthly income during the existence of disability WITHOUT REDUCING the amount payable in case of death, recently has been greatly liberalized and now provides for payment of the income to begin IMMEDIATELY upon approval of proofs of disability. See this latest in insurance, underwriting—a postal will bring full information.

*This ad from 1923 welcomes visitors to the 24th annual Ex-Confederate and Old Settlers Picnic held in McKinney.*

## CHURCH STREET RESIDENCE BURNS; LOSS IS \$8,000

CAUSE OF BLAZE IS UNKNOWN,  
BUT BELIEVE DEFECTIVE WIR-  
ING RESPONSIBLE.

Fire at 10 o'clock Monday night destroyed the six-room residence and the furniture and household effects of Mr. and Mrs. R. D. Erwin, 508 North Church street. Mr. Erwin estimates his loss at \$7,500 or \$8,000, partially covered by insurance.

The cause of the fire is unknown. Mr. and Mrs. Erwin had been gone from home about ten minutes, when neighbors discovered the flames breaking through the roof at the back of the building. Mr. and Mrs. Erwin left no fire burning when they left. They believe the fire was caused from electric wiring, which probably had become defective. The fire department put up a heroic fight and soon had the flames under control. Efficient work on the part of the fire boys saved the residence of W. H. Sims, adjoining on the north. The Sims residence caught on fire two or three times.



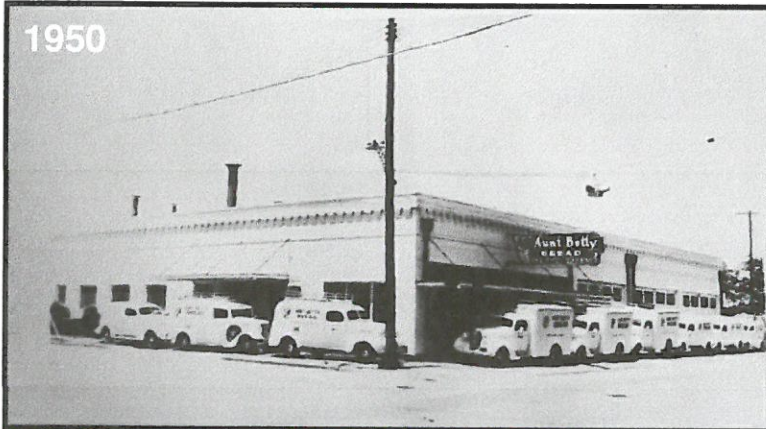
*Southland Life Insurance Company incorporated in 1908 and received its State license in 1909. The Southland Life building in Dallas was completed in 1917 and was 11 stories tall (148 feet). It was the company headquarters until it move to a 42-story building in 1958. This building was demolished in 1980. The Southland Life Company operated under various ownerships until 2004.*

*Dry-goods store-owner Ben T. Estes was the first to have a house built on the lot on Church Street. Robert D. Erwin bought the house in 1899 when Estes moved to 903 N. College St. In 1906, Erwin had alterations made to the house and moved its location to better suit subdividing the property. In December of 1921 the house was destroyed by fire and rebuilt as a two-story brick house the following year.*

William B. Finney came to McKinney in 1938 to run the Knott's bakery located on North Tennessee Street. He soon became its owner. His business merged with Golman-Oak Cliff Baking Co. in 1964. That same year he was appointed to the City Council by Mayor Louis Miller. Later, he served as Mayor from 1967 to 1973.



**William B. Finney**  
(1909-2000)



1950



2017

Finney's Bakery building at 801 North Tennessee.



Aunt Betty's Texans played at local events to promote the Finney brand in the early 1940s.

CELEBRATING OUR  
**1st ANNIVERSARY**  
Under the present management

INTRODUCING -  
**A NEW DRESS FOR  
AUNT BETTY  
BREAD**

At Entirely New WRAPPER - Increased Freshness - Evident

Always the Finest LOAF in Your Favorite Grocery

For over 25 years the product of this Bakery has been the producer "QUALITY BREAD" that always takes "First Place". Today you will find "AUNT BETTY BREAD" still leading the list.

**WHY?**

- 1. More than 25 years of experience.
- 2. Only the finest flour.
- 3. Made by expert bakers.
- 4. Made in a modern plant.
- 5. Made with the best ingredients.
- 6. Made in a clean and sanitary plant.

NEW MODERN END DESIGN

LOOK FOR  
AUNT BETTY BREAD  
IN THE NEW WRAPPER

HOME OWNED - HOME OPERATED

**Knott's Bakery**  
W. B. Finney, Owner      McKinney, Texas



# VOTE FOR A CONTINUING PROGRESSIVE PROGRAM FOR MCKINNEY

## STUDY THE FACTS CONCERNING THE PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMS THAT HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED DURING THE PAST 4 YEARS.

- MASTER PLAN**  
 Adopted long range master plan for the City—includes water distribution plan, sewer collection plan, street & thoroughfare plan, storm drainage plan, zoning plan
- STREETS**  
 Paved over seven miles of streets with the first pavement in the city in many years with NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- WATER**  
 Installed seven acres miles of major water main—save from 17 to 25  
 Installed overhead water storage and pressure tank one and one-half million gallons, three times the size of the old tank
- SEWER**  
 Installed eight miles of sewer collection mains
- EQUIPMENT**  
 Replaced old, worn-out equipment in street department, water department, fire department, and police department. Purchased new Caterpillar tractor for more efficient operation of a sanitary land fill at dump ground—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
 Purchased one fire engine and one new ladder for the fire department, generally without all equipment in that department—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- POLICE DEPARTMENT**  
 Added men and had modern equipment to the police department to give the people of McKinney the same police protection that they have enjoyed in many years—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- SEWAGE PLANT**  
 Acquired sewage treatment plant north of town from the General Services Administration—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- ACCOUNTING**  
 Installed modern machinery in the accounting department of the city and modern methods in the way that the city received one of its lowest costs in the state of Texas for expenses in municipal accounting—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- EXPRESSWAY**  
 Installed eighteen water and sewer crossings in and along the new expressway for future development at a cost of \$40,000—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- LIBRARY**  
 Made improvements to the library building and the normal operation of the library with a substantial increase in the operational budget—NO INCREASE IN TAXES
- PARKS & RECREATION**  
 Acquired additional land and authorized additional bonds for the improvement of the park and recreational facilities of the city—NO INCREASE IN TAXES

# VOTE FOR THIS OUTSTANDING TEAM OF BUSINESS AND CIVIC LEADERS

Who Want To CONTINUE Present Sound Programs; To ENACT NEW Sound Programs For McKinney's Future Progress. They Ask Only For The Opportunity To Serve You!

## Meet the Team

that promises GOOD GOVERNMENT for McKinney

**Hugh McCortley**  
 Councilman, Place 1  
 Hugh McCortley was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1931. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.



**W. J. Harlow White**  
 Councilman, Place 2  
 W. J. Harlow White was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1931. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.




**W. B. (Bill) Finney**  
 Councilman, Place 3  
 W. B. (Bill) Finney was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1938. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.



**Louis C. MILLER**  
 Candidate for MAYOR



**Tommy Lane**  
 Councilman, Place 4  
 Tommy Lane was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1938. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.



**James Stewart Jr.**  
 Councilman, Place 5  
 James Stewart Jr. was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1938. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.



**Leon Lisbery**  
 Councilman, Place 6  
 Leon Lisbery was born in McKinney, Texas, and graduated from McKinney High School in McKinney, Texas, in 1938. He was a member of the McKinney Rotary Club and the McKinney Chamber of Commerce. He has been a resident of McKinney since 1938.



THESE MEN ARE EXPERIENCED RESPONSIBLE, RELIABLE, PROGRESSIVE

A VOTE FOR THIS TEAM IS A VOTE FOR GOOD GOVERNMENT

## W. B. (Bill) Finney Councilman, Place 3

W. B. (Bill) Finney has been a resident of McKinney since 1938; he is a graduate of the University of Texas where he received a B. B. A. degree; he is a member of the First Baptist Church; he is a past president of the McKinney Rotary Club and past president of the Chamber of Commerce; he has served the citizens of McKinney in many other capacities of civic endeavor; until very recently he owned and operated Finney's Bakery; he now serves on the Board of Directors of Central National Bank and the Board of Directors of First Savings & Loan Association; he has served the City of McKinney for one year as councilman. Bill Finney is recognized by all who know him as a man of exceptional executive ability, a quality highly sought after in the big business that is city government.



Bill Finney won the District 3 seat on the City Council in 1965. In 1967, he ran for Mayor against Julia Walters and won. Finney served three terms as Mayor from 1967 to 1973. This political ad from Finney's 1965 campaign shows the issues of the day.



Erwin family plot is in the Pecan Grove Cemetery in Block 97. Buried there are: son Thomas A., parents Thomas W. and Elizabeth, sisters Margaret, Nettie, and Hattie. His wife Alma is buried there but no headstone exists.



Andrew J. Martin is buried in Pecan Grove Cemetery in Block 138. He is buried next to his wife Lovie (Wiseman) who remarried Nathaniel Talkington in 1944.

## The Colonial Revival Style

The elements that characterize the Colonial Revival Style are:

- typically two stories
- symmetrical front facade
- accentuated front doorway
- evenly spaced windows
- long roof ridge with side gables
- dormers
- shallow eaves
- boxy, rectangular mass
- wing extensions of the sides
- understated adornment

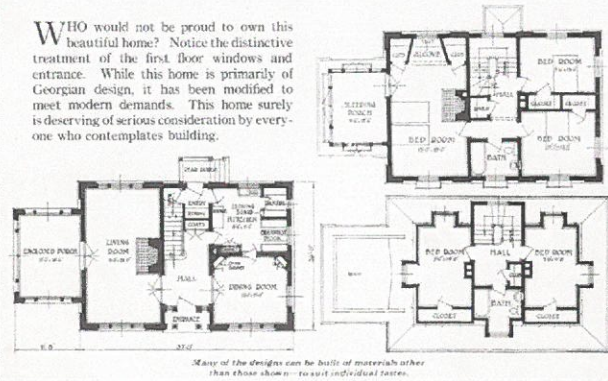
The Colonial Style encompasses two stylistic variations, Georgian and Federal. The most notable difference in the variations can be seen in the windows and front door. In both cases, the Federal Style entryway and windows are more elaborate often with Palladian inspired effect. The entryway is usually sheltered by a classical portico. Thomas Jefferson's Monticello home is a good example of the Palladian influence on this style.

The Federal Style was developed in Scotland by architect Robert Adam in the late 18th century and is sometimes called the Adam Style. This style was popular during the founding of the United States. Its stately proportions made it popular among people of "traditional" values. Its simple massing and lack of adornment made it an economical choice as well. Interest in this style was re-ignited by the U.S. Centennial Exposition of 1876 and again by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The style maintained its popularity until the 1950s when a less formal aesthetic began to take hold. Still, this architectural form has never gone completely out-of-style. Federal Style homes can be seen even in new subdivisions.



Morgan Plan Suggestion No. 25-A

WHO would not be proud to own this beautiful home? Notice the distinctive treatment of the first floor windows and entrance. While this home is primarily of Georgian design, it has been modified to meet modern demands. This home surely is deserving of serious consideration by everyone who contemplates building.



*The above illustration is from a pattern book of 1923 showing a Colonial Revival home.*



*The hip roof of the Erwin-Finney House represents a departure from the gabled roof typical of the Federal Style. However, its proportions stay true to Palladian ideals.*



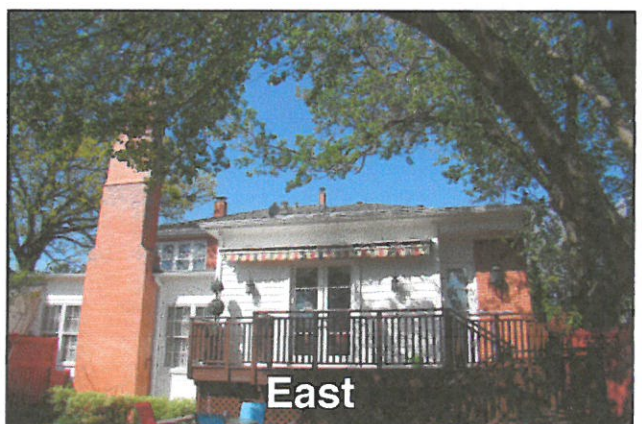
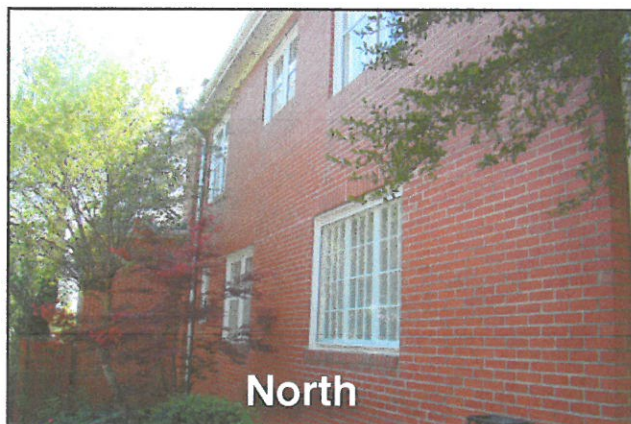
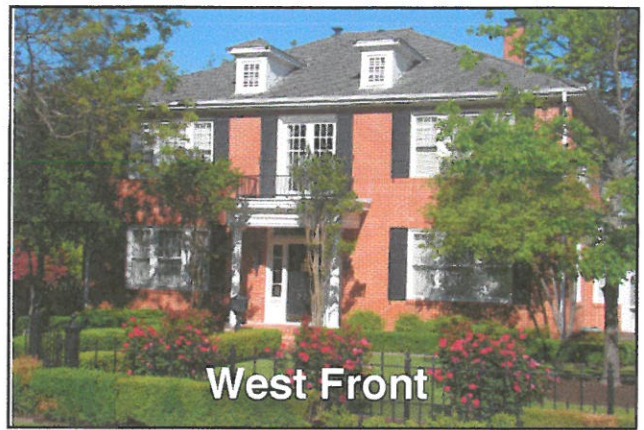
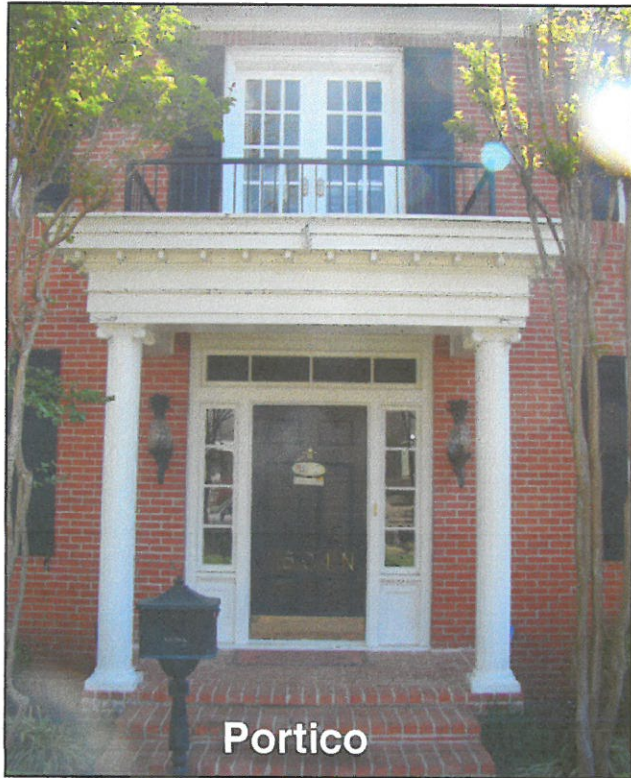
## The Work of Andrew J. Martin

*Andrew J. Martin came to the McKinney area as a young boy with his family around 1890. Martin worked on farms until going to work for J. Perry Burrus in the Collin County Mill & Elevator Company around 1900. His work at the mill gave him the skills to contract for carpentry work in McKinney. Soon he became one of the best known builders in town. Though he built many wood-frame bungalows (including his own home at 607 W. Hunt St.), his commercial and residential brick structures show off his skills best. This page shows known examples of his extant work.*

*Andrew J. Martin's career was cut short when he contracted tetanus after stepping on a nail. He died in 1930 at the age of 58.*



**Current Photos (2017)**



# Current Photos (2017)

## 504 North Church Street neighborhood context



*View looking North on North Church Street*



*View looking South on North Church Street*

## Architectural Accents



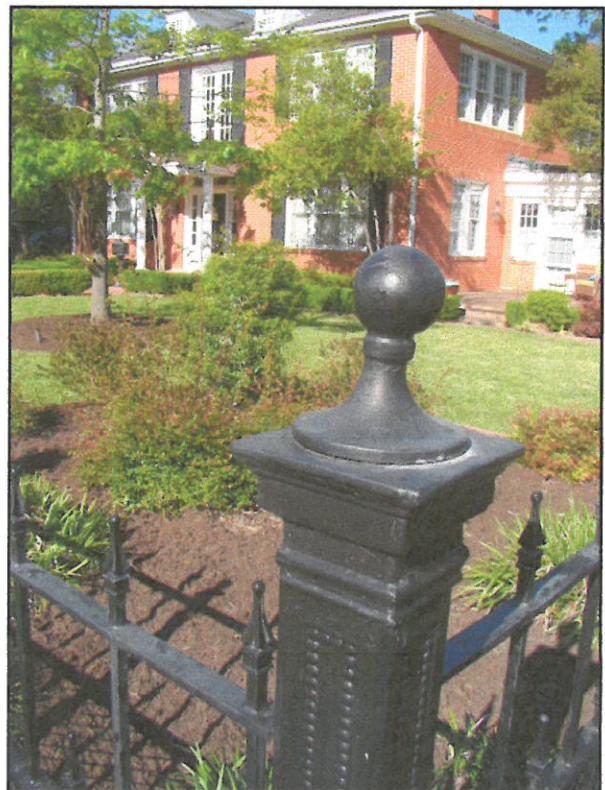
*Ionic capitals that now decorate the portico columns were added after 1985. The original column appears to have been ornamented with a simple Tuscan base and capital.*



*The original door knob remains on the front door.*



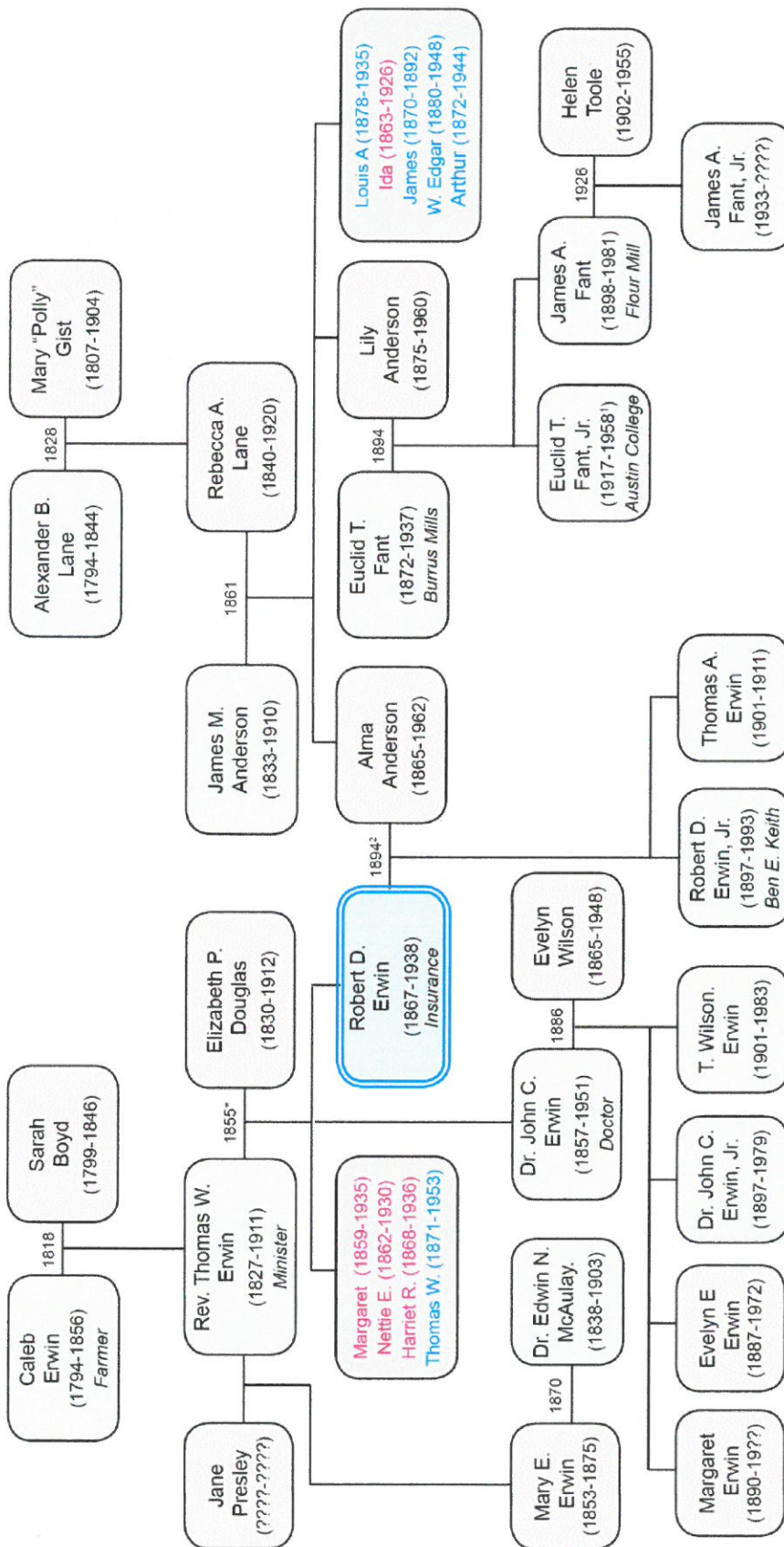
*These are the original glass cabinet doors in the kitchen dresser.*



*The iron fence with posts was added after 1985.*

# H. Additional Information

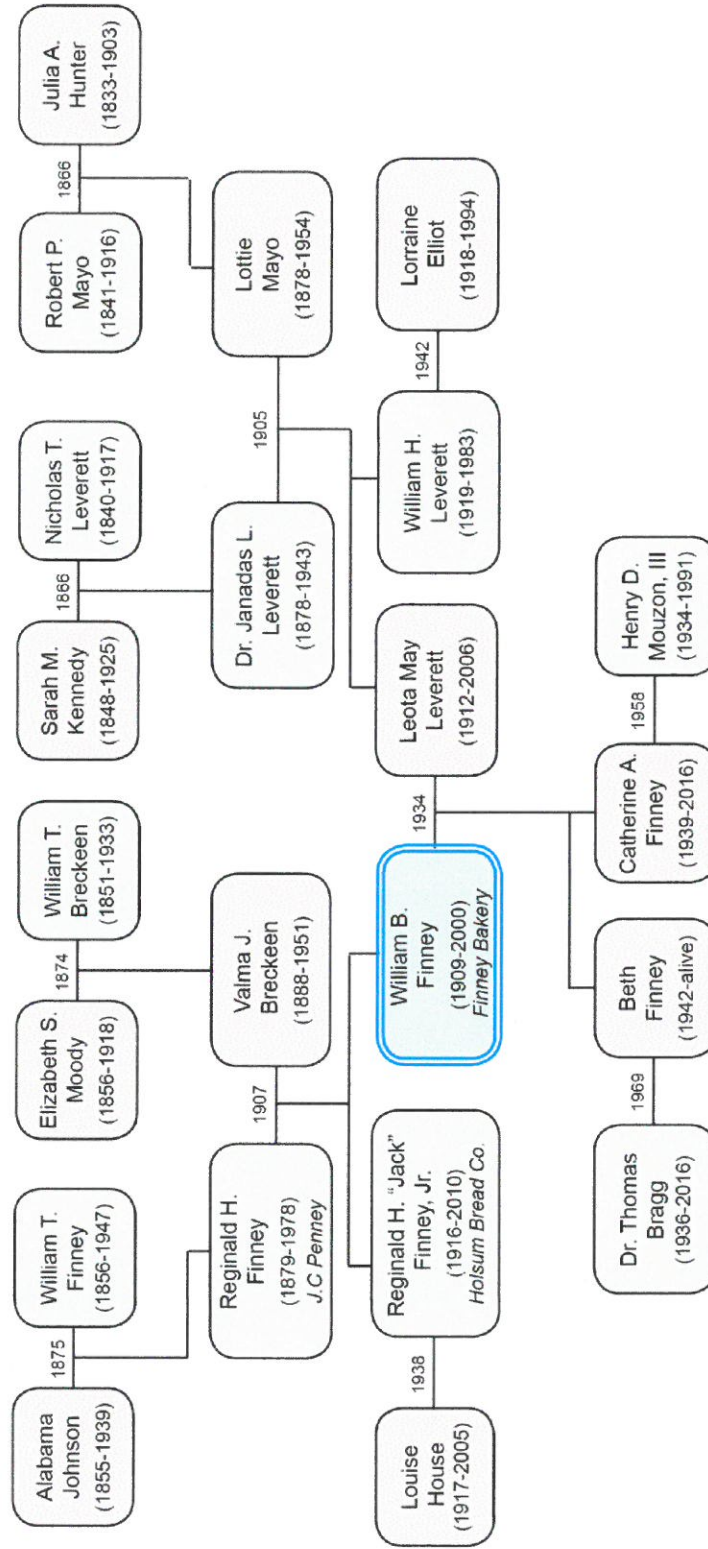
Robert D. Erwin Family Tree\*



\* Not all family members are included  
 1 disappeared, possible murder  
 2 unverified estimate

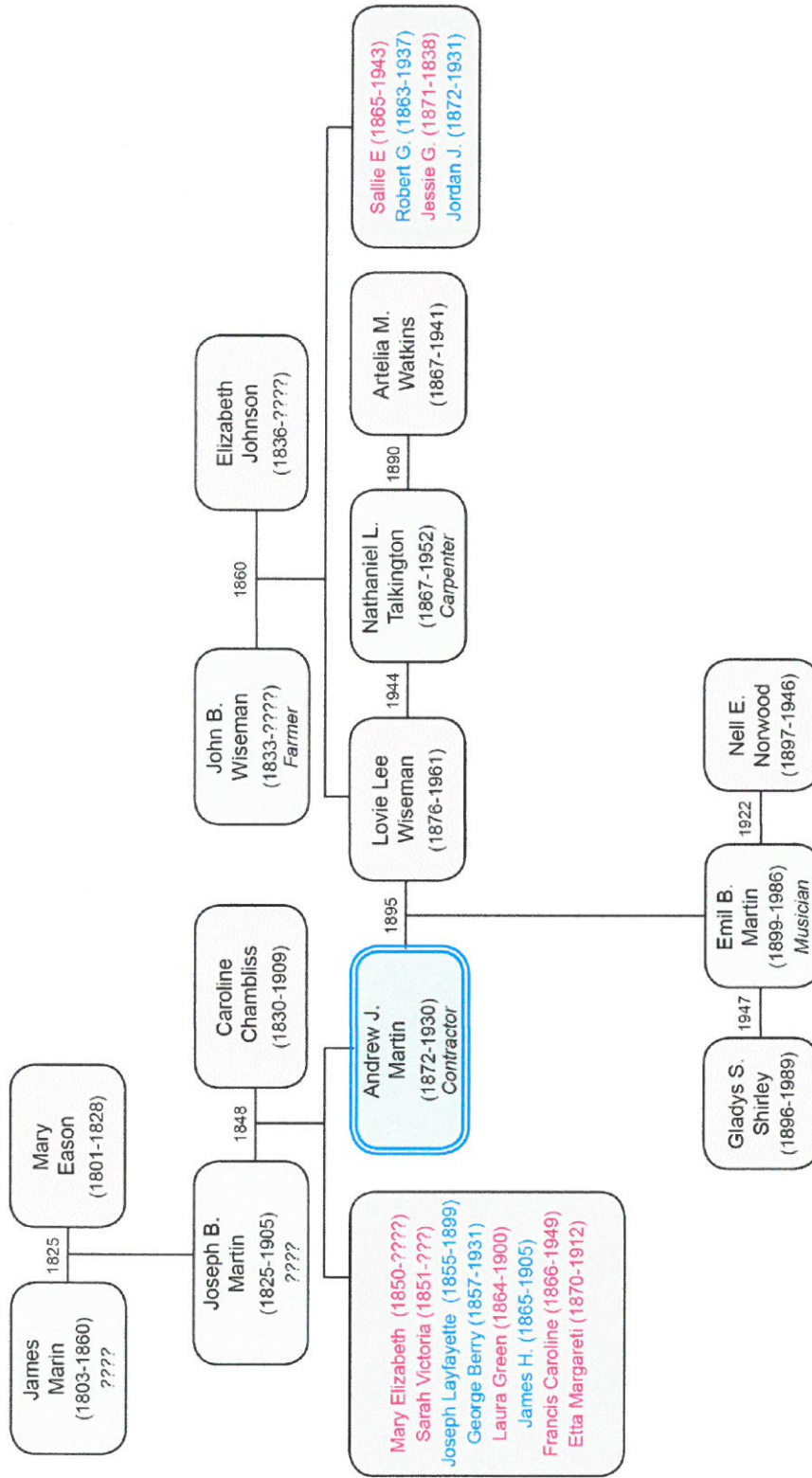


# William B. Finney Family Tree\*



\* Not all family members are included

# Andrew J. Martin Family Tree\*



\* Not all family members are included

## I. References & Resources

Collin County Deeds Records Office.

Courier-Gazette, published by Perkins and Wilson, McKinney, Texas.

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"Portal to Texas History," [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu)

Ancestry.com

McKinney Public Library

*Research assistance provided by Tom Michero*

\* \* \*