

E. Narrative History

In 1855, the State of Texas, with Elisha M. Pease as Governor of Texas, granted Thomas T. Bradley title to 291 acres of land a half mile west of the city of McKinney. Andrew J. Tucker bought a portion of this acreage but soon sold it to R.L. Waddill. When Mr. Waddill died in 1867, he owned about 108 acres of the Bradley tract. His widow Sarah died in 1896. The following year, the surviving children subdivided the land into 28 blocks (divided into four lots each) which became known as the Waddill Addition. J.W. Waddill, one of five children, received 17 lots in the new subdivision. One of these was Lot 1 in Block 5 located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Waddill and West Virginia Streets. J.W. Waddill died in 1900 and his sister Fannie Page Waddill inherited this lot from him.

Fannie was a school teacher and owned a substantial amount of property in McKinney and elsewhere in Collin County. She held onto the property for nearly a decade before selling it in 1910 to the newly married Eugene Crouch for \$50 down and a \$450 note.

Eugene and his bride Carrie hired a contractor to build their one-story home in the Four-Square style. This was a popular style at the time. The style's simple, geometric form was easy to build and more affordable than the elaborate Victorian alternative. The homes location and date of construction makes it among the first homes built in Waddill Heights, as the area was known at the time. Though the builder of the house has not been confirmed, the style of the home is similar to many of the Four-Square homes built by carpenter W.J. Higgins around that time. It is known that Mr. Higgins performed work for other Crouch family members as well.

The size of the lot that Eugene purchased from Fannie measured 97 feet by 200 feet. However, in 1918 he purchased a portion of the adjacent vacant lot owned by Moxie A. Craus. He paid \$225 for the 14 feet by 200 feet addition. This purchase gave Eugene more frontage on Waddill Street and provided a larger area for a driveway on the north side of the house.

Eugene and Carrie owned and lived in the house until around 1931. At that time, the couple sold the house to their 14-year-old daughter for \$1 with the stipulation that Eugene could live there until his death. This sale was likely made as a part of divorce settlement between Eugene and Carrie. Following the sale (and divorce), Carrie and daughter Alyne moved to Grand Prairie.

Eugene suffered prolonged periods of poor health from time to time during and after his marriage to Carrie. In 1936, he suffered a nervous breakdown. Upon his death in 1940, possession and ownership of the house went to Alyne who sold it the following year to land surveyor Add G. Wilson who in turn sold it to Emmett W. Dobbs a week later.

Emmett Dobbs was the plant manager for Cabell's Inc., a frozen-food processing company north of town. In 1943, around the time Emmett changed jobs to become the manager of the Sunshine Gin Company he sold the house to Rev. H.F. Vermillion.

Rev. Henry F. Vermillion was a Baptist supply preacher by trade, meaning he would substitute for ministers in various churches when they could not otherwise be present. He also held other teaching credentials with the Baptist Church in Texas and Arkansas. His duties prevented him from living anywhere for any length of time and he ended up selling the house to farmer John W. Milstead in 1946.

John Milstead lived in the house with his wife Lizzie for almost a decade before selling it in 1955 to Rev. Robert B. Ring, the pastor of the Southside Assembly of God Church. The Reverend and his wife Esther began making significant alterations to it as soon as they purchased it. Apparently, the house was due for an "update." An article appeared in the *McKinney Courier-Gazette* that referred to extensive repairs and remodeling taking place on "the old Crouch homestead."

Rev. Ring added a bathroom and a laundry room to the back of the house. He enclosed part of the porch on the south side of the house. He removed the original wood columns and replaced them with wrought iron ones and applied a stucco veneer to the exterior siding that mimics red brick. These "improvements" created a structure with an awkward combination of architectural forms from different periods. Rev. Ring and his wife Esther lived in the house for 10 years until selling it to Arvel Underwood in 1965.

The house survived unchanged through several owners until well after 1985. A photo from that time shows the house weathered and neglected. However, around 2004 while owned by Tom W. Pingleton, the house experienced a revitalization that restored the exterior of the home to reflect its early 20th Century origins. The wrought iron columns were replaced with Tuscan ones. The porch enclosure was removed to allow the porch to once again wrap around the southeast corner of the house. The windows, despite the mid-century alterations to other parts of the house, are original.

There are three windows in the house that have transoms made of stained glass.

Though the stained glass appears to have been custom built for the windows, it is not clear if they were included in the original 1910 construction. David Kettrell of Kittrell Riffkind Art Glass of Dallas observed that the glass could have been made during the period. However, since the leading on the glass appears relatively modern, it may have been added to the house at a later date. Mr. Kittrell believes that the glass came from the Kokomo Opalescent Glass Company in Indian and Paul Wissmach Glass Company in West Virginia. Both suppliers were operating in 1910 and continue to make glass today. If these stained glass windows were not original to the home's 1910 construction, they were probably added by Rev. R.B. Ring who was responsible for the home's 1955 update.

Throughout the home's 107 year history, it has changed ownership 19 times. The home's architectural form has bent to the preferences of changing times but it has sprung back to a form associated with its origins. Meanwhile, each of one the home's owners have added their stories to the history of McKinney.