

City of McKinney

Historic Building Marker Application

(Supporting Documentation)

The Alice Taylor House

510 North Church Street



A. Alterations & Construction

Construction

The Alice Taylor House is a single-story, wood-frame residential structure built on a pier-and-beam foundation. A front-gable roof above a deep, wrap-around porch dominates the front of the house. The floor plan is asymmetrical with rooms connecting along a central hallway. The house is fenestrated with the original, vertically-oriented, four-over-one sash windows grouped in pairs.

The house design follows the Craftsman Bungalow Style with its large porch and broad eaves supported with knee-bracing.

Alterations

The Alice Taylor House was originally build in 1922. An earlier house was moved off the lot to accommodate a new structure. The house was enlarged in the late 1930s to provide accommodations for two separate families. In the late 1970s, the house became a single-family home again and was altered to reflect that. At sometime prior to 1985, a portion of the porch was screened in. Prior to 2005 the screening was removed and the porch columns were reinforced.

The interior has been altered several times to accommodate the changing function of the home. The house served as a duplex from around 1940 to 1975. It was not owner-occupied until around 1977.

Anticipated Needs

The current owners have incurred recent expenses regarding water-damage to the interior, roof repairs, gutter installation, sub-flooring repair, and exterior trim painting.

The owners anticipate some expansion of the house at the rear and some interior remodeling. However, the renovation will not change anything in the front of the house including front porch, living room, dining room, kitchen or master bathroom. The original windows and doors will remain. No walls will be altered as a part of the work.

B. Historical Figures

Euclid Taylor Fant (1872-1937)

Euclid Fant was born in Coffeerville, Mississippi in 1872. He came to Texas at the age of 20 and engaged in the drugstore trade for several years before becoming a successful flour-mill manager and owner.

Euclid was the son of Seldon Fant and Nannie Bell Williams of Coffeerville in northern Mississippi. When Euclid was six years old his father died of yellow fever during the epidemic of 1878 which killed 20,000 people throughout the Southeast.

When Euclid first came to Texas in 1892, he worked in a Fort Worth drug store. At the same time, Mr. Fant's bother-in-law Robert D. Erwin* worked in a McKinney drug store owned by Dr. E.N. McAulay. In 1894, Messrs. Fant and Erwin formed a business partnership and purchased the McAulay Drug Store. They operated the new business 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 Erwin and Euclid Fant were filing for bankruptcy. Following this economic setback, the men became insurance agents and purchased neighboring lots on North Church Street. In 1902, Mr. Fant ran for the office of County Tax Collector but lost to another insurance salesman R. Van Brown.

Both men achieved considerable success in their new fields. Robert Erwin went on to become one of the founders of Southland Life Insurance Company of Dallas. Meanwhile, Mr. Fant made the front-page news when he sold wealthy mill-operator J. Perry Burrus a \$50,000 life insurance policy in 1902. Mr. Burrus was so impressed with Mr. Fant that he offered him a job working at one of the Burrus mills in McKinney. By 1910, Euclid was promoted to General Manager of the Burrus mill in Fort Worth. He held that position until he moved to Sherman to organize the Fant Milling Company in 1921.

In 1894, Mr. Fant married Lily Anderson of Holly Springs, Mississippi, a city from which many prominent McKinney residents migrated. They had two sons, James and Euclid, Jr. When Mr. Fant died of a heart-attack in 1937, it was his son James who took over the Sherman mill. The 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. His body was never recovered.

* *Erwin Park in McKinney is named for Robert Erwin's nephew, Dr. John C. Erwin.*

Euclid Fant, Sr. is buried next to wife Lily in the Pecan Grove Cemetery.

Alice Catherine (Barry) Taylor (1885-1955)

Alice Catherine Barry was born a mile south of Van Alstyne in 1885. She worked as a teacher in Weston (near Van Alstyne) and went on to become the first woman to be elected to County office in 1918, two years before the passage of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

Alice was the daughter of Tennessee natives Samuel M. Barry and Emily J. Greever. She attended school in Van Alstyne and spent one term at Carlton College in Bonham, Texas. She taught piano before marrying Thomas J. Taylor, Jr. in 1903. Her husband Thomas arrived from Tennessee with his farming parents when he was 17 years old. Despite his humble origins, he was able to receive a good education and become the superintendent of schools in Prosper and Celina. In 1903, Alice and Thomas were married and became parents to three children. In 1914, Thomas was assigned to be the conductor of the Normal School, a teacher education program held in McKinney during the summer. During that summer, the family traded 55 acres of land they owned in Princeton for a house on North Church Street owned by Collin County Superintendent of Schools W.E. Foster. However, the family did not make Church Street their permanent home for two years due to Mr. Taylor's job assignments in nearby towns. In the summer of 1916, Thomas Taylor ran for and won the Democratic nomination for District Clerk. Following his primary win, the family moved into their Church Street home. At the time, the Democratic Party was so dominant in the county, a win was all but guaranteed in the general November election.

Tragically, a month after taking office Thomas Taylor died from an intestinal infection leaving Alice and three children without a source of income. To make ends meet, she taught school when she could and, according to an article appearing in the *Dallas Morning News*, picked cotton on her family's farm in Weston.

In a surprisingly bold gesture for the times, Alice entered the Democratic primary race for Collin County District Clerk. She went up against Charles L. Sears, the man appointed to her late husband's office upon his death. She won her party's nomination and went on to win the November election in 1918. At the time, women were only allowed to vote in state and local elections, but not Senator or President. That right would not be acknowledged until the ratification of the 19th Amendment in August 18, 1920.

Alice spent \$394 on her campaign, outspending Mr. Sears by \$169. She won the primary race with 6,708 votes over her opponent's 1,320. Her win in the November election allowed her to become the first woman to be elected to a Collin County governmental office. She served four two-year terms before being defeated in her fifth and final run in 1926, losing to Halsell S. Davis who received 5,001 votes to her 3,853.

Alice continued to live in McKinney until she married cotton ginner Albert F. Tidwell in 1930. When the couple married, Mr. Tidwell was 63 years old, Alice was 45. They made Celina their home, but only for a short time. In 1937, Mr. Tidwell died from a stroke. Following her second husband's death, Alice made her home in Fort Worth with her widowed daughter Donna Hilliard. Alice died in 1955 at the age of 70 and is buried in the Masonic plot at the Mount Olivet Cemetery in Fort Worth.

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.

Andrew Martin 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. Upon his arrival, 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 Streets 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 and Mrs. J.C. Greer. These homes represent 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.

C. Property Ownership

Address: 510 North Church Street, McKinney, Texas 75069

Legal Description: McKinney Original Donation, Blk 85, lot 254a

Purchase Date	Seller	Buyer
Spring, 1841	Republic of Texas	William Davis
Jul. 26, 1849	William Davis	Collin County
Feb. 18, 1852	Collin County	G.A. Foote
Feb. 14, 1856	G.A. Foote	R.L. Waddill
Feb. 6, 1860	R.L. Waddill	Edwin Cannon
Jun. 30, 1869	Edwin Cannon	Benjamin T. Estes
Feb. 23, 1899	Benjamin T. Estes	Jane E. Nelson
Feb. 23, 1899	Jane E. Nelson	Robert D. Erwin
Jun. 26, 1999	Robert D. Erwin	E.R. Hall
Apr. 16, 1902	E.R. Hall	J.L. Greer
Aug. 26, 1902	J.L. Greer	Euclid T. Fant
May 1, 1911	Euclid T. Fant	T.C Perry
May 1, 1911	T.C Perry	W.R. Abernathy
Sep. 6, 1911	W.R. Abernathy	J.C. Stovall
Jul. 14, 1913	J.C. Stovall	A.A. Lindsey
Oct. 2, 1913	A.A. Lindsey	W.E. Foster
Aug. 22, 1914	W.E. Foster	Thomas J. Taylor
Feb. 9, 1952	Alice Tidwell ¹	Dale & Helen Thurman
Feb 3, 1955	Dale & Helen Thurman	Norman G. Dotson
Oct. 16, 1973	Norman G. Dotson	Jimmy L Hill
Sep. 8, 1992	Jimmy L Hill	Marilyn Cook
Apr. 28, 1994	Marilyn Cook	Andrew M. Guarriello, Jr.
Nov. 9, 1995	Andrew M. Guarriello, Jr.	Brian Beeman
Jun. 29, 2000	Brian Beeman	Joakin & Stacy Walstam
Feb. 10, 2010	Joakim & Stacy Walstam	Terry J. Scott
Apr. 14, 2011	Terry J. Scott	Avatar Real Estate
Dec. 26, 2016	Avatar Real Estate	Timothy & Carey Zumwalt

¹ *Widow of Thomas J. Taylor*

D. Tenant History

The chart below shows the known tenants of 510 North Church and the years they are known to have occupied the house. The “Notes” column provides a brief description of each tenant. Sometime between 1975 and 1977 owner Jimmy L. Hill began living in the house which made him the first owner to occupy the property since Alice Taylor first began renting the house around 1930.

Year	Tenant	Notes
1933	Floyd W. Taylor	Son of Alice Taylor
1935	J. Boyd Webb	District manager, National Farm Loan Association
1938	J. Boyd Webb	
1940	Desmond Travillion	Asst. cashier, Central National Bank
“	Maurice Howell	Insurance clerk
1949	Ridgell M. McKinney	A&P Manager, Grand-nephew of Collin McKinney
“	Dennis R. Scott	District manager, Texas Employment Comm.
1953	Ridgell M. McKinney	
“	Dennis R.. Scott	
1954	Ridgell M. McKinney	
“	Dennis R. Scott	
1956	Ridgell M. McKinney	
“	Cloyce Powell	Music Director for First Baptist Church
1960	Roy R. Horton	Assembler
“	Robert H. Jones	Employee, Texas Instruments
1964	William E. “Jack” Few	Clerk, Whites Store
1968	Frances D. Rogers	Nurse at Wysong Clinic
“	Constance Harper	Nurse at Wysong Clinic
1971	vacant	
1975	Ruby Kennedy	

Owners:

- Alice Taylor (1914-1952)
- Dale M. Thurman (1952-1955)
- Norman G. Dotson (1955-1973)
- Jimmy L. Hill (1972-1992)