

# City of McKinney

## Historic Building Marker Application

(Supporting Documentation)

### The K.D. Thompson House

504 West Virginia Street



## A. Alterations & Construction

### Construction

The K.D. Thompson House was originally a single-story, wood-frame residential structure built on a pier-and-beam foundation. A porch wraps the southeast corner of the house. The roof is hipped with cross gables. The floor plan is asymmetrical but is built around three separate fireplaces sharing a common chimney in the center of the house. Interior rooms have a ceiling height of 12 feet with 10-foot tall entryways and in some cases pocket doors. The interior flooring consists of pine throughout. The house is fenestrated with large one-over-one sash windows.

The home design follows the Folk Victorian Style. While this style embraces nearly any vernacular structure where Victorian elements have been casually applied, the K.D. Thompson House takes a more measured approach to design to create a structure that is obviously inspired by the older Queen Anne Style but still responding to a more modern, less ornamental aesthetic. The Queen Anne Style often included jig-saw cut brackets and spindlework decorating porch columns. However, these decorative elements are absent from the Thompson House. While the fish-scale shingles, the turned-wood columns perched on the porch banister and the roof styling are common to the Queen Anne Style, the form of this house represents a sophisticated and conscious blending of European and vernacular American influences.

### **Alterations**

The footprint of original house remained unchanged during the 65-year ownership by the Thompson family except for the addition of a room on the southwest corner sometime prior to 1927. Photos from 1985 show the house in its original configuration. However, according to tax records, a two-story addition with an attached carport was added to the rear of the house around 1990. Following these changes, at least one owner has used the home as a bed & breakfast.

Despite this sizable addition, much of the character of the original structure remains intact. Doors, windows, flooring, fireplaces and even chandeliers are in their original state. Aside from the addition at the rear of the house, no alterations have been made to the exterior house in recent years.

### **Anticipated Needs**

The current owner anticipates expenses associated with painting the house, returning it to its original white color. Other issues that need to be address include restoring the extensive wood trim used in the interior and repairing several wall cracks. It is also the desire of the owners to make the newer additions blend better with the original architecture where possible.

## **B. Historical Figures**

### **King Daniel Thompson (1862-1946)**

King Daniel "K.D." Thompson was born in 1862 in Aledo, Texas to farmer Thomas E. Thompson and his wife Sophronia L. Bateman who belonged to the well-known grocery family of Tarrant County.

K.D.'s grandfather Joshua B. Bateman was a grocer in Virginia who died of cholera in 1851. Following Joshua's death and just prior to the Civil war, his widow Margaret moved to Jefferson, Texas where some of her children had moved to in previous years. Two of those children started the grocery and dry goods firm under the name Bateman & Brothers. Later, the brothers moved their firm to Fort Worth around 1880.

An older sister of the two Bateman brothers was Sophronia. In 1846 she married Alabama native Thomas E. Thompson who was most likely connected with Bateman & Bothers firm when it moved to Fort Worth. Sophronia and Thomas had eight children. In 1862, their fourth child arrive who they named King Daniel Thompson after one of Sophronia's brothers. When K.D. was old enough he began working in the Bateman & Brothers firm with his father and uncles.

In 1884, K.D. left his association with the Bateman & Brothers and moved to Weatherford to start his own grocery firm. Unfortunately, three years later his business failed. The financial blow was softened somewhat when his uncles purchased K.D.'s remaining inventory to help him pay his creditors. However, in 1900, Bateman & Brothers found themselves in default of a \$10,000 loan from a New York bank ending the firm's 23 years in the trade. The 1900 Census shows K.D. living with an older Thompson brother and family in Fort Worth with both working as farmers.

In 1900, K.D. married Frances G. Abernathy, the daughter of wealthy and prominent McKinney lawyer William M. Abernathy. The couple lived in Fort Worth for three years until moving to McKinney in 1903. K.D.'s father made the move possible by "selling" a lot he owned on Virginia Street to K.D. for one dollar. The lot just happened to be across the street from his own house, the one Frances grew up in. Surely Frances was delighted to be back in her home town with her old friends. The couple moved into their house in June soon began entertaining and enjoying the social life of McKinney.

Frances was part of a family that was full of lawyers, influence and wealth. Her uncle

Mercer Abernathy was a County Judge and her brother William R. Abernathy has been cited as being the wealthiest man in Collin County at the time of his death in 1940. Frances was in her own right a force in McKinney civic and cultural affairs.

K.D. Thompson career was spent as a traveling salesman for food-related companies including the Hyman Pickle Company of Louisville, Kentucky. He spent a great deal of time away from home which limited his civic and social activities. On the other hand, it is easy to say that his wife's interests, associations and community affairs were more recognized in the journals and press of the time.

K.D. Thompson died in McKinney of a stroke at the age of 84. Rev. William J.H. Petter of the St. Peter's Episcopal Church conducted the last rites. Interment followed in Pecan Grove Cemetery with the following acting pallbearers: Henry Warden, Will Gerrish, L.A. Sears, P.R. Westmoreland, J.W. Andrews, Clarence Hill, General John Warden and Joe E. Largent.

### **Frances Gibbons Abernathy (1874-1968)**

Frances G. Abernathy was the daughter of William Meshack Abernathy who was one of three brothers who came to McKinney from Mississippi in 1876 to start what became a family dynasty of lawyers. Though that profession may not have been available to Frances at the time, her influence on the cultural life of McKinney was immense.

Her obituary, as it appeared the *McKinney Courier-Gazette in 1968*, captures her character as well the esteem granted her during her lifetime:

“Mrs. K.D. Thompson of 504 West Virginian Street, McKinney, passed away October 23 in Parkview nursing home where she had been a patient for the past few months.

She was born November 18, 1874 in Holly Springs, Miss., the eldest child of William and Lucy (Roberts) Abernathy. The family moved to McKinney in 1876, where she had resided for the past 92 years. Frances Abernathy was married October 23, 1900 to King Daniel Thompson of Ft. Worth in St. Peter's Episcopal Church of this city, and was the oldest member of that church at the time of her death.

Mrs. Thompson was a woman of many talents. She was keenly interested in local and state affairs, a tireless worker in the interest of women's rights to vote and contributed much to the cultural growth and betterment of this city.

Her brilliant mind, remarkable memory and literary background, coupled with her keen sense of humor and quick wit made her a welcome and interesting speaker. In 1910, when the marble statue of Governor Throckmorton was placed on the court house lawn, it was Mrs. Thompson who made the dedication speech and unveiled the statue. She presented the honors to several McKinney High School graduating classes and was a lifetime member of the Owl Club which dedicated its yearbook of 1961 to her. In her younger days she was a member of the Rush Light Club, the Eastern Star and was popular in social affairs.

As a child she showed a remarkable talent for drawing and painting and was given an art education. As a young woman she was appointed art instructor in Jones Academy in McKinney where she taught painting for several years prior to her marriage.

Throughout her life, Mrs. Thompson continued painting, and because of the excellence of her work her paintings have been much in demand. Only when holding her palette became a strain did she stop work at age 89. It is estimated her canvasses number more than 500 and can be found throughout the country.

She possessed a gift for writing and in the past had frequent requests to put into rhymes or prose, specific events. In former years she was often called upon by this paper to report local affairs and topics of general interest.

Surviving Mrs. Thompson are her three children, Mrs. Harry D. Bartsch of Corpus Christi; Mrs. Newton J. Burkett of this city and K. Dan Thompson, Jr. of Longview; seven grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren and two sisters, Miss Cecil Abernathy and Mrs. Ed P. Browne, of McKinney.

Funeral services were held Friday at 2 p.m. at St. Peter's Episcopal church with interment in Pecan Grove Cemetery. Rev. M.B. Terrill officiated and Crouch Moore Funeral Home had charge of arrangements."

### **Lucy Ozella Thompson (1903-1997)**

K.D. and Frances Thompson had three children. Mary, Lucy and King Daniel, Jr. Of the three, Lucy was the only one to make a life in McKinney. Siblings Mary and K.D., Jr. moved away with their spouses in the mid 1930s.

Lucy Thompson was born in McKinney on October 5, 1903. She graduated from McKinney High School in 1922 and was active in McKinney's social circles, hosting parties nearly as often as being a guest at them. Before she married, she was the office manager for Underwood Chevrolet Company on South Tennessee Street.

In 1930, Lucy married bank cashier Newton Burkett who, after 40 years in banking, became the Executive Vice President of the Collin County National Bank. Early in Newton's career, his employer gifted Newton with a lot on West Virginia Street a mere six blocks west from the house she grew up in.

Like her mother Frances, Lucy was active in McKinney social and civic activities. Two organizations that she spent the most time with were the Jeanne d'Arcs Club and the Heritage Guild of McKinney. The Jeanne d'Arcs Club began in 1918 as a way for women in McKinney to deal with "being bored by the lack of young men" as a result of World War I. Following the War, the organization began devoting its efforts and resources to the cultivation of culture, arts, and science. Often leaders in various literary and social fields would be invited to speak at their monthly meetings. The group was also a big supporter of the McKinney Public Library.

The other organization that Lucy was active in continues to make major contributions to the preservation and celebration of McKinney's history. She was one of the founding members of the Heritage Guild in 1974. It was the Guild that established the Christmas Tour of Homes in order to raise money to buy the Dulaney House and create the complex now known as Chestnut Square.

Lucy lived in the house at 1102 West Virginia until selling it 1993. She died in Baltimore, Maryland in 1997.

## C. Property Ownership

**Address:** 504 West Virginia Street, McKinney, Texas 75069

**Legal Description:** McKinney Outlots, Lot 594

Purchase Date	Seller	Buyer
Apr. 28, 1841	State of Texas William Davis	William Davis
		William M. Abernathy <sup>1</sup>
Jun. 12, 1903	William M. Abernathy	King Daniel Thompson
Oct. 31, 1909	William M. Abernathy	King Daniel Thompson
Oct. 14, 1969	Dan & Lucy Thompson et al. <sup>2</sup>	O.K. Simpson
Oct. 1, 1973	O.K. Simpson	Danny Doyle
May 1, 1983	Danny Doyle	Brian J. Sena
Aug. 1, 1984	Brian J. Sena	John H. Binkley, Jr.
May 24, 1995	John H. Binkley, Jr.	Jay & Judy Lindell
Nov. 21, 2007	Jay & Judy Lindell	Suzanne M. Groffie
Oct. 4, 2011	Suzanne M. Groffie	Federal Natl. Mortgage Assoc.
Feb/. 29, 2012	Federal Natl. Mortgage Assoc.	Paul Licata
Dec. 29, 2017	Paul Licata	Tim & Erika McWilliams

<sup>1</sup> The dead history from William Davis to William Abernathy is unclear. However, it is known that Mr. Abernathy was living on West Virginia Street in 1887.

<sup>2</sup> Heirs to Lucy Thompson, widow of K.D. Thompson

## D. Tenant History

Same as ownership 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 small 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 an 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.

In 1887, William M. Abernathy purchased some land along West Virginia Street from merchant Issac D. Newsome and built a house on the south side of the street for his wife Lucy (Roberts) and his eight children. One of these was his eldest child Frances G. Abernathy who was 14 years old when the family moved into their new home.

In the last decade of the 18th Century, King Daniel "K.D." Thompson lived in the Fort Worth area where he worked in the grocery trade and had his own business before it fell into bankruptcy. K.D. Thompson had two uncles in the grocery business who also lost their business. The Census from 1900 shows K.D. claiming farming as a profession. At the time, he was unmarried and living with the family of one of his older brothers. Despite these difficulties K.D., married well. In 1900, he married Frances G. Abernathy who came from one of McKinney's most wealthy and influential families.

K.D. and Frances made Fort Worth their home for three years before moving to



McKinney in 1903. Frances' father sold K.D. a lot on West Virginia Street across the street from his own house (and the one Frances grew up in) for one dollar. Contractor John M. Martin was hired to build the house and, judging from the time he started construction and the time W.M. Abernathy sold K.D. the property, the sale may have also included the home as well.

The return home of one of McKinney's favorite daughters was cause for celebration in the town and an event worthy of mention in the local press. The *McKinney Courier-Gazette* noted:

*A number of the young people enjoyed another dance at the new home of Mr. and Mrs. K.D. Thompson last evening. The colored orchestra furnished the music.*

After K.D. Thompson's arrival in McKinney he became a traveling salesman for food-related businesses. One of the companies he represented was the Hyman Pickle Company of Louisville, Kentucky. His territory included North Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas. His frequent trips away from McKinney provided him few opportunities to participate in civic affairs. The opposite is true for his wife Frances who frequently hosted meetings and teas in the couple's sumptuous home.

In 1909, K.D. purchased for \$175 another lot which his father-in-law owned. This lot was directly behind the lot he purchased in 1903, thus doubling the land size of his original lot. The 1927 Sanborn Map shows that some time prior to that date a room with a ribbon of windows was added to the southwest corner of the house. This was likely the art studio where Frances did her painting.

Frances



In 1946, K.D. passed away in his home of 43 years. Frances continued to live in the house for another 22 years until her death in 1968. The following year the Thompson heirs sold the house to Oran K. Simpson.