

History and Location Features

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This Prairie style home was built in 1909-1910 by Mr. J. R. Wilcox for his daughter. The Wilcox's were established lumber merchants, owning local lumber companies and lumber mills in east Texas. As a result, only the finest hardwoods from his mill were used in the construction. The Wilcox family were prominent in Collin County and one of the founding families in McKinney. J. R. Wilcox's mother was Nancy Throckmorton, who was the daughter of Dr. W. E. Throckmorton, who brought the first settlers into Collin County and the sister of James W. Throckmorton, the eleventh governor of Texas and possibly the most illustrious citizen from Collin County for Texas.

In reviewing the Sanborn maps, which were used by the fire departments in earlier years, the house was built after the 1908 map was published and prior to the 1914 map.

The home was originally of wood siding and the brick veneer was added around the 1950's. After World War II, many soldiers had seen homes with brick exteriors throughout Europe and became interested in using this building material. Siding frequently needed to be painted and brick offered easier maintenance. Also, bricks had become more affordable with the increase in availability of natural gas to fire the kilns in the manufacturing of the bricks.

This house is part of the official Historical District of McKinney. It does not have a state historical designation because an application has never been submitted. It is very probable that this designation would be given to the property due to its architectural style and ties to local historical figures.

This grand home is conveniently located near McKinney's Downtown Square where many businesses offer day and evening activities along with dining and shopping. There is a music and art festival in the Spring, Independence Day activities in the Summer, Oktoberfest in the Fall and "Dickens of A Christmas" in the Winter. The McKinney "Main Street" program is continually adding events and currently have a Second Saturday evening of fun with entertainment for the McKinney residents and guests.

Later, the church held its annual meetings in the courthouse in McKinney.¹⁰ The second story Mr. Wilmeth had added to the back part of his house also accommodated the free school he established and taught, with the help of his children, from 1848 to 1887.

On May 3, 1848, twelve yoke of oxen pulled McKinney's first building, owned by John L. Lovejoy, across the prairie from Buckner to McKinney, placing it on what would someday become the northwest corner of the square. The Lovejoy Store and its adjacent post office was, at that time, the only plank building in Collin County. E. Whiteley's "Our House" saloon and Dr. Worthington's office were built soon afterward.

On March 24, 1849, William Davis and his wife, Margaret, conveyed 120 acres of land to county commissioners J. B. Wilmeth, Jas. M. McReynolds, John Fitzhugh, and William McKinney for the purpose of establishing a town site. This property is referred to in records as The Old Donation. Records show that the commissioners, in an effort to fully establish the town, sold parts of this land to raise funds for a courthouse and jail. Soon wooden municipal structures were constructed.¹¹

The village prospered, serving as the hub of a rich farming and stock-raising area. In 1850, the city had a population of 315.



McKinney
The Fort
150 years
by Julia C.
Vargo



THROCKMORTON, JAMES WEBB

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David Minor

THROCKMORTON, JAMES WEBB (1825–1894). James Webb Throckmorton, governor of Texas and Congressman, the son of Susan Jane (Rotan) and [William Edward Throckmorton \(/handbook/online/articles/ftH37\)](/handbook/online/articles/ftH37), was born on February 1, 1825, at Sparta, Tennessee. One of eight children, Throckmorton spent the first eleven years of his life in Sparta, where his father practiced medicine. In 1836 Dr. Throckmorton moved his practice to Fayetteville, Arkansas. Shortly thereafter his wife died. In 1840 he married Melina Wilson. The next year he visited Texas and purchased land near the East Fork of the Trinity River in Collin County, two miles northwest of the site of present Melissa. Later that year he moved his family to their new home. Less than a year later he became ill and died. Following the death of his father, Throckmorton spent a year helping his family settle in their new home. After assuring his family's safety, he left Texas to study medicine with his uncle, James E. Throckmorton, in Princeton, Kentucky. He remained in Kentucky until the outbreak of the [Mexican War \(/handbook/online/articles/qdm02\)](/handbook/online/articles/qdm02). He returned to Texas and volunteered for military service. He joined Capt. [Robert H. Taylor \(/handbook/online/articles/fta24\)](/handbook/online/articles/fta24)'s company as a private in February 1847. He served less than three months in the field, however, as he became ill, apparently the first

sign of a kidney disease that would haunt him throughout his life. Because of his medical training he was reassigned as a surgeon's assistant in Maj. Michael H. Chevallie's Texas Rangers (</handbook/online/articles/met04>). During the war, either as a soldier or surgeon, Throckmorton served at Monterrey, Saltillo, and Buena Vista. Because his health did not improve he received a medical discharge on June 8, 1847, and returned to his family. Following his recovery, he left Texas in early 1848 to marry Annie Rattan in February in her native state, Illinois. The couple returned to Texas that year and built a home just outside McKinney, where Throckmorton began his medical practice and fathered the first of ten children. Throckmorton quickly established himself as one of the prominent members of the community. He invested in real estate, read law, promoted education, and participated in church affairs. His interest in education led him to financially support the establishment of the Mantua Seminary (</handbook/online/articles/kbm02>), seven miles north of McKinney. Although a successful doctor, Throckmorton found the practice of medicine personally distasteful. He dissolved his medical practice and became a partner in the law firm of R. DeArmond and Thomas Jefferson Brown (</handbook/online/articles/fbr97>). A lifelong interest in politics persuaded Throckmorton to consider running for political office. He inherited his party loyalty from his father, a Whig of the Tennessee school. In 1851 he was elected to the first of three terms as representative of the Twenty-fifth District, which included both Collin and Denton counties. As a member of the Texas House of Representatives from 1851 to 1857, Throckmorton helped to negotiate a settlement of disputed land titles of early Texas settlers, especially those involving the Peters colony (</handbook/online/articles/uep02>). As chairman of the Internal Improvement Committee he advocated land grants to establish public free schools and the construction of a statewide railroad network. In 1857 he was elected to the Texas Senate. He entered the chamber as a Democrat, the party he chose following the dissolution of the Whigs in the mid 1850s.

Throckmorton's party loyalty was soon put to the test. In the 1857 gubernatorial election he supported [Sam Houston](/handbook/online/articles/tho73) and unionist sentiment against states'-rights Democrat [Hardin R. Runnels](/handbook/online/articles/fru13). Houston lost but successfully challenged Runnels in 1859. That same year Throckmorton won reelection. The state senator from McKinney became a political advisor to the governor and Houston's ally in attempting to restrain the forces within Texas who favored [secession](/handbook/online/articles/mgs02). Throckmorton's attempt to organize a state Union party attracted few supporters, and he watched helplessly as the events between 1859 and 1860 precipitated the crisis of 1861. He refused to concede, however, and was one of only eight delegates to the 1861 [Secession Convention](/handbook/online/articles/mjs01) who voted against Texas withdrawal from the union. Shortly after the secessionist vote, Governor Houston received a note from the Lincoln administration suggesting that if Houston wished to organize a resistance group within the state, the president would provide military support. Houston called those closest to him and asked their advice. Throckmorton argued against taking action, concluding that the young state might not survive a civil war within its borders. Houston agreed and shortly thereafter retired from office. Although he fought for two years against secession, Throckmorton was one of the first men in Collin County to join in the defense of his adopted state. He helped organize over 100 men into the Company of Mounted Riflemen from Collin County in May 1861. The company secured forts Wichita and Arbuckle on the frontier. Following the dissolution of the company in August, he joined the Sixth Texas Cavalry, participating in the battles at Chustennallah and Elkhorn. He also saw action in Mississippi but was forced to resign and was discharged from service on September 12, 1863, because of his recurring kidney problem. He served in the state senate in 1864, representing Collin and Grayson counties. In December 1864 he was commissioned brigadier-general of the state's First Frontier District. The following year Gen. [E. Kirby Smith](/handbook/online/articles/fsm09) appointed

Throckmorton Confederate commissioner to the Indians. He successfully negotiated a number of treaties with tribes on the frontier, who nicknamed him "Old Leathercoat."

Following the [Civil War \(/handbook/online/articles/qdc02\)](/handbook/online/articles/qdc02) Collin County voters elected Throckmorton as their delegate to the [Constitutional Convention of 1866 \(/handbook/online/articles/mjc03\)](/handbook/online/articles/mjc03). The convention was divided into three factions, secessionists, conservative union men, and radical unionists. Throckmorton, receiving the support of the first two groups, defeated the radical [A. H. Latimer \(/handbook/online/articles/fla44\)](/handbook/online/articles/fla44) and became chairman of the convention. He presided over the writing of a new state constitution that provided limited civil rights to [African Americans \(/handbook/online/articles/pkaan\)](/handbook/online/articles/pkaan) (they still could not vote) and refused to take action on the Thirteenth Amendment, arguing that the abolishment of [slavery \(/handbook/online/articles/yys01\)](/handbook/online/articles/yys01) was already law. President Andrew Johnson accepted the Texas constitution, and state wide elections were held in June 1866. Politically ambitious and promised the support of both secessionists and conservative union men, Throckmorton entered the governor's race. He easily defeated the radical candidate, [E. M. Pease \(/handbook/online/articles/fpe08\)](/handbook/online/articles/fpe08), by a margin of 49,277 to 12,168. Governor Throckmorton was inaugurated on August 9, 1866, and faced the difficult task of returning political, social, and economic stability to Texas while maintaining a semblance of order between former Confederates and former slaves. Political opposition from radicals, suspicion from federal military officers, violence against freedmen and [Freedmen's Bureau \(/handbook/online/articles/ncf01\)](/handbook/online/articles/ncf01) agents, combined with his public repudiation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the emergence of Radical Republican power in Congress destroyed what little chance of success Throckmorton's administration might have had. Following the passage of the Military Reconstruction Act of 1867, which placed Texas under military command, the governor consistently clashed with Gen. [Charles Griffin \(/handbook/online/articles/fgr60\)](/handbook/online/articles/fgr60), commander of the

Texas sub-district. Griffin demanded that the governor provide more protection for African-American citizens of Texas and publicly support Radical Republican policies. Throckmorton refused, stating that he had done all he could, given the powers of his office and that his state did not support the Fourteenth Amendment so that he, its governor, could not. Griffin appealed to Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan (</handbook/online/articles/fsh26>), for Throckmorton's removal from office, which was ordered on July 30, 1867.

Prohibited from holding public office, Throckmorton returned to McKinney and resumed his law practice. He did not, however, remain silent. In summer 1870, along with former governors Andrew J. Hamilton (</handbook/online/articles/fha33>) and E. M. Pease, Throckmorton signed a public document circulated throughout the state that attacked the policies of Radical Republicans as dangerous threats to the civil liberties of Texans. Thus, although a private citizen, he was able to remain a public figure. With the passage of the General Amnesty Act of 1872, Throckmorton was able to return to public office. In 1874 he was elected to Congress from the state's Third District and reelected in 1876. Throckmorton concentrated his efforts on lobbying for education and federal support of railroad expansion. The latter concern reflected the interests of his employer, the Texas and Pacific Railway Company, which retained Throckmorton as an attorney. In 1878 the former governor made an attempt to return to that office but was defeated in the Democratic party (</handbook/online/articles/wad01>) state convention. Throckmorton returned to Congress in 1882 and was reelected in 1884 and 1886. His health once again forced him from public service. He declined to run in 1888 in order to recuperate. For a few weeks in 1892 Throckmorton actively sought support for another run at the governor's office. His lifelong bout with kidney disease, however, left him without the strength to endure another campaign. He retired from politics and returned to McKinney, where he was the receiver for the Choctaw Coal and Railroad Company. During a business trip in March 1894 Throckmorton suffered serious injuries from a fall. His fragile health was unable

to recover from this accident, and he died at McKinney on April 21. The citizens of McKinney erected a statue in his honor that carries the inscription, "A Tennessean by Birth, a Texan by Adoption."

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THE WILCOX FAMILY

In 1844 James M. Wilcox, then only sixteen years of age, came to Collin County to visit his brother George, who lived a few miles east of Lebanon. After a stay of only a few months, he returned to his home in Missouri, riding the entire distance alone on horseback. In 1849 he joined in the gold rush to California, riding his pony in a caravan of other 49ers. He soon returned to his home and entered the University of Missouri, from which he graduated with highest honors in 1852. In about 1855 he came back to Texas and bought out the heirs of his brother George. Soon thereafter he went to Galveston and purchased a stock of goods, including ten 100-pound sacks of salt, and took this merchandise by boat to Jefferson, thence overland to Weston, where in 1856 he established one of the first mercantile stores in that town. While at Weston he married Nancy Throckmorton, a sister of James W. Throckmorton. Later the family moved back to his farm. During the Civil War he was a member of Captain R. W. Carpenter's Company in Martin's Regiment. After the war he moved to Plano where he opened a lumberyard in 1872. This business was moved to McKinney in 1881 and the firm later established other lumberyards at Melissa, Anna, Princeton, and Allen. Mrs. Nancy Wilcox died in 1878 and he died on March 1, 1912. His children were George W., Frank E., J. H., Arthur, J. M., Mrs. S. W. King, and Mrs. Fred Bush.

WILCOX LUMBER COMPANY AMONG OLDER CONCERNS

—
WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1881 AND
NOW HAS FOUR GOOD
YARDS.
—

The Wilcox Lumber Co. has had a continuous existence in Collin county since May 31st, 1881. It was founded by J. M. Wilcox, whose first location was a piano. This was perhaps 1873 or 1874.

After being in McKinney three years the firm name was changed to J. M. Wilcox and Son and Geo. Wilcox taken into partnership. Some years later Frank E. Wilcox was admitted to the firm but withdrew when elected to the legislature. He is now one of the leading lawyers of North Texas and holds the position of Judge of the Fifty-ninth District, composed of Collin and Grayson County.

The name of J. M. Wilcox and Son was retained until 1912. Mr. George Wilcox has been active as manager of this concern for a long term of years the business has grown under his management until it is today one of the strongest in all the country. His counsel is sought in many instances where the best interests of the town and community are discussed. He is a member of the Chamber of Commerce, being on the Committee of Factories of that organization and is vice-president of the city school board.

At one time the site of their yard was about where Fryer & Goustred's grocery store is now located on East Louisiana Street. Their office was for awhile about where John Green conducts the grocery adjoining S. J. Massie. A very disastrous fire did considerable damage to their stock in 1895.

This firm has kept abreast with the times in the selection of their lumber and other things for sale. They have at all times a complete stock of whatever may be needed in the line of building material. They carry and recommend Upson Board and handle Harrison's Town and Country paints.

They have yards at McKinney, Princeton, Melissa and Allen and from these various yards are able to supply their patrons quickly with whatever may be needed.

Service is their slogan and has been since the business was founded by J. M. Wilcox some fifty years ago.

*Courier-Gazette
22 Sept 1921*

PRETTY HOME WEDDING

Contracting Parties Among Most Popular In The City.

One of the most prettily appointed weddings of the season was solemnized Wednesday afternoon at 5 o'clock at the home of the bride's mother, Mrs. J. M. Wilcox, on South Wilcox street, at which time Miss Eddie Wilcox was given in marriage to Fred Bush of this city. Rev. E. B. Fincher, pastor of the First Presbyterian church in a very impressive manner, befitting for the occasion, pronounced the words that made this young couple husband and wife, which is the most sacred and divine relationship on earth.

The ceremony was witnessed by only the immediate family and intimate friends of the contracting parties. Refreshments were served after which the newly wedded couple left on the 5:30 H. & T. C. train for Galveston and other south Texas points where they spent a week or ten days.

The groom is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Price Bush of Allen, at which place he was born and reared. He is one of the county's most industrious and energetic young men. For the past two years he has resided in McKinney, and is a member of the firm of Hunter & Bush owners of the North Side drug store.

The bride is a daughter of Mrs. J. M. Wilcox of this city. She was reared in McKinney and is one of the most popular young ladies of this city. She is a good Christian woman and has a large circle of friends who wish for her a long and happy wedded life.

After their visit to south Texas, the newly wedded couple will return to McKinney where they will continue to reside. The editors of this paper join the many friends of Mr. and Mrs. Bush in wishing for them peace, happiness and prosperity.

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