



## City of McKinney Historic Building Marker Application

Submit the completed application to the following address:  
City of McKinney, Planning Department  
221 N. Tennessee Street, McKinney, TX 75069

### I. Applicant Information

Date of Submittal March 12, 2024

Name of Applicant Kelsey Larson

Address 416 West Virginia St., McKinney, TX 75069

Telephone [REDACTED]

E-mail Address [REDACTED]

### II. Owner Information (If different from Applicant)

Name of Owner - same -

Address - same -

Telephone ( )

E-mail Address

### III. General Building Information

Name of Building Henry C. Miller House

Address of Building 416 West Virginia Street, McKinney, TX 75069

Date of Construction Known 1913 or Circa

(If not known provide approximate date Circa )

Architect/Designer

Builder/Contractor William J. Higgins

Architectural Period/Style Craftsman mix

Legal Property Description of Current Location (Lot and Block Numbers)

McKINNEY OUTLOTS, LOT 597

Does the building remain on its original site?

☒ Yes

☐ No (specify original location)

Indicate the original and adapted uses of the building.

Original Uses		Adapted Uses	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agriculture _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Commerce _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Commerce _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Education _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Government _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthcare _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthcare _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Industrial _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religious _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residential _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Residential _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Social _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Social _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation _____

#### IV. Architectural Description

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##### A. Physical Characteristics

	Original 1	Current 2
Number of stories	_____	_____
Orientation	South	South
Floor Plan		
Open plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
L-plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modified L-plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Center passage plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2-room plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T-plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shotgun plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asymmetrical plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Roof Type		
Gable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Hipped	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Flat with parapet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mansard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

**B. Materials** (Please check all that apply)

	Original	Current
Construction		
Frame	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Solid Brick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Solid Stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Foundation		
Pier and Beam	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concrete	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Concrete Masonry Units	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Exterior Wall Surface		
Siding (specify type)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> wood
Stucco	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Brick	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Windows		
Wood Sash	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Aluminum Sash	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Single-hung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Double-hung	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Casement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fixed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Awning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hopper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sliding	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Roof Materials		
Shingles (specify type)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> composition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> composition
Tile (specify type)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Slate	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Metal (specify type)	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> _____	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Primary Exterior Color	white	white
Secondary (Trim) Color	white	white

## 1. Supporting Documentation

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Please attach the following information. All written documentation should be double spaced, 12 point-font, justified.

### A. Alterations

List any known changes or modifications made to the property throughout its history.

### B. Historical Figures/ Historical Information about individuals who are associated with the property.

List any historical figures associated with the property. Provide names and occupations.

### C. Property Ownership

Legal description of property with a location map as well as a list all known owners of the property. Include original owner and subsequent owners.

### D. Tenant History

List all known tenants of the property throughout its history.

### E. Narrative History

Attach a narrative explanation of the chronological and historical development of the property. (See attached example.) The above information should be included as part of your narrative.

### F. Drawings

- Provide a sketch of the current site plan. Include the proposed location of the historic plaque.
- Provide a sketch map indicating the nominated property and any related sites.
- Copies of Sanborn Maps <sup>TM</sup> showing the house's relationship to other homes and the footprint of the house

### G. Photographs

Historic

- Provide at least one historic photograph of the property.

Current

- Provide at least one current photograph of the property illustrating in its surrounding context. For example, photograph the streetscape in which the building is included.
- Provide at least one photograph of each side of the building.

### H. Additional Information

Provide any additional information that supports the application. This may include copies of architectural drawings, letters, oral histories, newspaper/magazine articles, etc.

### I. References

Attach a list of the books, articles, Sanborn Maps<sup>TM</sup>, newspapers, and other sources used in preparing this form. (See a list of possible references after the signature page.)

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The Historic Preservation Advisory Board requests that all plaques be mounted on the front façade of the approved building within thirty (30) days of receipt.

Permission of owner for plaque placement ☒

Applicant Signature

Owner Signature

City of McKinney  
Historic Building Marker Application  
(Supporting Documentation)

**Henry C. Miller House**  
416 West Virginia Street



**A. Alterations & Construction**

The Henry C. Miller House, is the result of construction that began in 1913. The house has undergone three major alterations to create the structure as it is today. The home was originally constructed as a one-story, five-room home on a pier-and-beam foundation. That house had a hipped roof and a recessed front porch. In the 1920s, a second story was added that included a bedroom and a sleeping porch. In 1941, the house was again altered. This time the sleeping porch was enclosed and a broad, concrete porch was built onto the house. Above the porch, the roof was supported by iron columns with wrought-iron railing running between them.

The house remained unchanged until 2020. That year a builder purchased it, remodeled it, and resold it the following year. The builder made substantial changes to the home, including adding new rooms to the second floor and the rear of the house. The kitchen and baths were updated and the dining room enlarged. The iron columns on the porch were changed to Craftsman Style square, wood columns to better express the period in which the home was built. The grouping of the second floor windows was also changed to reflect this. Despite these changes, the home still retains its original one-over-one sash windows. Much of the original pine and oak flooring remains in the house along with some door hardware. The plank wallboard has been exposed in some rooms for decorative effect. The signature of one of the home's early carpenters can be seen written on one of the boards.

These changes over the past century have created a home whose architecture is an eclectic blend of styles and influences. However, the end result is a home whose form fits the neighborhood while also being unique.

### **Anticipated Needs**

The current owners have no plans to expand or otherwise remodel the house. However, should repairs be necessary, it is their intention to preserve the historic nature of the house.

## B. Historical Figures

### **James H. Merritt (1881-1949): Early Property Owner**

James H. Merritt began his career as a McKinney dry goods merchant and later moved to banking. In 1937, he was elected director of the Federal Reserve of Dallas and went on to serve as its Chairman for six years.

Born in McKinney, James was the son of Capt. William W. Merritt and Jennie Compton. During the Civil War, James' father served under General Joseph Shelby's command, which was based in Arkansas and responsible for raids into Missouri. Following the war, Capt. Merritt settled in Collin County and was elected County Sheriff in 1874. He later served four years in the Texas Legislature.

James had four brothers and a sister. His brothers Robert and Eder were partners in a law firm in the mid-1910s until the late 1920s. James' sister Minnie was the wife of Harry Q. Smith, founder of Smith Drugs.

In 1898, James graduated from McKinney College Institute, a preparatory school that once existed at the corner of Board and Foote Street where the Arbors Off the Square apartment block now stands. Following graduation, James continued his education at the McKinney Business College established by Prof. Newton Richardson Stone. The school was an early success when it started in a house on West Virginia Street. Within four years of the school's inception, it trained over 400 young men and women to become bank tellers, stenographers, and bookkeepers. In response to the college's growth, in 1904 Professor Stone leased the third floor of a newly erected building just north of the Masonic Temple on Kentucky Street. As a student in the school's formative years, James Merritt landed a clerical position with W.S. Knight Dry Goods located on the south side of the McKinney Square.

James quickly rose through the ranks to become Store Manager. In 1910, James lived on Tucker Street with his sister Minnie and brother-in-law Harry Q. Smith<sup>1</sup> who was part owner in the drug store begun by his father Benjamin M.E. Smith in 1881. Just west of the Smith house was the home of cotton dealer William Hynds, his wife Eudora, and their only daughter Rosabel. In 1911 at the age of 30, James married Rosabel Hynds, his next-door neighbor.

<sup>1</sup> The 1910 Census erroneously indicates that Harry Smith home was on Lamar Street.



In 1912, James purchased the store he managed and change the name to J.H. Merritt Dry Goods. He was also an investor in the Smith Drug Store and active in the Chamber of Commerce, the Lion's Club, and the Rotary Club.

In 1928, James sold his dry goods business to his competitor who changed its name to the McKinney Dry Goods Store. Around that same time, James became president of the First National Bank of McKinney as the U.S. economy was sliding toward the Great Depression. While James was president, the bank merged with the Collin County National Bank in 1932. As a part of the merger, James voluntarily retired to give attention to his agricultural and other business interests. However, he continued to be one of the bank's major stockholders.

In 1937, James accepted an appointment to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas by its Board of Governors. The Bank is one of 12 Districts making up the Federal Reserve System. The District Banks are responsible for facilitating transactions between commercial banks and providing monetary policy input to the Board of Governors in Washington, D.C. James Merritt was appointed Chairman of the Dallas district the following year. He served six years while continuing to live in McKinney.

James and his wife Rosabel had one child, James H. Merritt, Jr. The younger James Merritt received an undergraduate degree from T.C.U. and a Master's degree in Business from Harvard in 1941. James, Jr. went on to become an agent for the FBI at Binghamton, New York. He left the FBI in 1952 and followed a career in banking in Dallas until his retirement in 1982.

In 1949, James Merritt, Sr. died at the age of 68 of heart disease. His wife Rosabel died less than two years later. They are both buried in the Pecan Grove Cemetery.

The City of McKinney honored James Merritt's lifetime of civic contributions to the City by naming the City's first Public Housing Project after him. The 86-unit complex known as Merritt Homes at 1200 N. Tennessee Street was built on 9.5 acres of land originally owned by Mr. Merritt but sold to the McKinney Housing Authority by his heirs.

#### **William Robert Abernathy (1876-1940): Property Owner & Landlord**

William Robert Abernathy was a lawyer and member of a family of influential lawyers. Today, the McKinney law firm known as Abernathy, Roeder, Boyd & Hullett can trace

its roots back to 1877 when its founder, William M. Abernathy, opened his office on the McKinney Square.

William Robert Abernathy was born in Holly Springs, Mississippi in 1876 to parents William M. Abernathy and Lucy Roberts. The senior William served as a courier in the Confederate Army and is credited with delivering the last dispatch that passed between Generals Lee and Grant that detailed the terms of Lee's surrender.

Shortly after William's birth, his parents and uncle left Mississippi for McKinney where his father and his uncle Mercer began the law firm of The Abernathy Brothers. The new firm had its offices on the southwest corner of the McKinney Square in a newly completed, three-story building owned by Isaac D. Newsome. The brother's partnership continued until Mercer was elected County Judge in 1888.

In 1892, when the young William R. Abernathy was serving as City Attorney, he joined his father's firm. When the elder William Abernathy passed away in 1911, his son continued to office in the same building. The original three-story building was torn down in 1927 and replaced with the two-story building that now houses the Spoons Restaurant. In 1938 William R. Abernathy bought the building from the Newsome estate to become the owner.

The well-established, well-connected Abernathy name afforded the Abernathy lawyers several high-profile cases. In 1903, William R. Abernathy assisted in the prosecution of a Mexican national who murdered McKinney resident Dr. R.D. King while he was on a visit to Oaxaca, Mexico. Another case in 1915 involved representing Cheeves Brothers & Company in the aftermath of a building collapse of the McKinney Square that killed eight people in 1913. In 1922, William's cousin Jewell Abernathy represented accused murderer Ezell Stepp who was charged in the murder of farm-worker Hardy Mills. Mr. Stepp ended up being sentenced to hang. The hanging was Collin County's last legal hanging.

William was civically active, participating in many organizations, including being a charter member of the McKinney Rotary Club, a volunteer fireman, past Master of the McKinney Masonic Lodge, City Hospital board member, and leader in the St. Peter's Episcopal Church. He also served as a Sergeant in the Spanish-American War.

In 1905, William R. Abernathy married Ozella Perry, daughter of Thomas C. and Sallie Perry. William and Ozella had two children, William Perry and Margaret. The Abernathy

family lived on North College near West Virginia Street for many years, but in 1919 William had a home built at what is now 211 North College Street. The extended Abernathy family maintained homes near each other. William's father lived at 507 West Virginia. William's sister Frances lived in the house across the street at 504 West Virginia. William and Frances owned property east of there. In 1913, they contracted with W.J. Higgins to build them a rent house at 416 West Virginia.

In the summer of 1940, William R. Abernathy underwent surgery that he never recovered from and died in early July. Services were conducted in his North College home with Rev. William J. H. Petter of McKinney's St. Peter's Episcopal Church officiating. Interment was made at Pecan Grove Cemetery. William Robert's pallbearers included some of the most prominent residents of McKinney, including Alfred M. Scott, Henry W. Warden, Gibson Caldwell, A.H. Eubanks, Wallace Hughston, Thomas F. Craig, F.R. Pope, and F.D. Perkins.

### **Henry Carmack Miller (1889-1955): Home Owner**

Henry C. Miller served as Mayor of McKinney for a single term beginning in 1921 when he was only 32 years of age making him the youngest mayor in the state of Texas at the time.

Henry Miller was born in the town of luka in the north east corner of Mississippi in 1889. His parents were Louis Miller and Susan Carmack, both of that state. When Henry was one year old, the family moved to Farmersville, Texas where he was elected Justice of the Peace in 1890.

There were other family members involved in elected public service. Henry's uncle (the brother of Henry's mother) was Edward W. Carmack who served as a U.S. Senator from Tennessee before losing his re-election in 1907 to his arch-rival the Tennessee Governor Malcolm Patterson.. A dispute arose between the two men which resulted in a gunfight that killed Carmack. Two of Patterson's advisors were subsequently charged with murder.

Henry was educated in the Farmervilles public schools before attending Burleson College in Greenville. After graduation, he pursued the study of law at Texas State University (now University of Texas), graduating in 1913.

Upon graduation, Henry came to McKinney to work for the law firm of brothers Robert

C. Merritt and Eber W. Merritt. The Merritt family was prominent in McKinney with some of its members serving as sheriff, state legislator, attorney, and Federal Reserve director. In December of 1916, Henry was appointed to the position of Justice of the Peace, filling the vacancy left by the previous office holder who resigned to pursue a higher office.

Henry's term was cut short due to World War I. In June of 1917, Henry resigned his office in order to join the Army. He trained in San Antonio as a member of Co. C, 315 Field Signal Battalion, 19th Division. He sailed for France in June of 1918 and saw service in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives. Following Germany's surrender, Henry spent six months in Germany as a member of the Army of occupation, eventually landing back in the U.S. on July 1, 1919.

The rest of 1919 was a busy one for Henry. At the end of July, he rejoined the Merritt and Merritt Law Firm. In October, he bought a house west of the McKinney Square at what is now 416 West Virginia Street. And, in November, he married Grace Cameron.

Grace was born January 19, 1891 on the family farm two miles northwest of McKinney. Her parents were Franklin B. Cameron and Mary Graves who was the daughter of pioneer settler Isaac Graves. Grace was educated in McKinney and in 1913 was a founding member of the a 16-member ladies social group known as the Entre Nous Club. The club was made up of women from prominent McKinney families, including Abernathy, Dowell, Finch, Largent, and Stiff. The club was dedicated to the "improvement in knowledge and culture." One of the club's accomplishments was raising \$50 for the creation of Finch Park.

Even though Henry Miller had once served as Justice of the Peace, he was not particularly interested in politics. However, he was a member of the group that called itself the Non-Partisan Association for Mayor of McKinney. The group was established to support a candidate to run against the re-election of Mayor Henry Finch and Commissioner Sam Massie. On a night in February of 1921, a couple of hundred members met to make nominations. Many names were offered including Henry Miller's. However, each declined the nomination, including Mr. Miller who in turn nominated Col. J.L. Doggett. Confusion ensued and it was suggested that the meeting adjourn until the following night. The motion was met with a loud chorus of nays. Captain Tully B. Lucas who supported Miller encouraged members to insist that Miller accept the nomination, which they did. Eventually, Miller was persuaded to accept. The McKinney Courier-Gazette reported:

*In a brief speech of acceptance he voiced his appreciation of the confidence bestowed, declaring that it was an unexpected honor; that he had not sought the place nor had no idea it would be tendered him when he came to the meeting. However, he asserted that he knew a few things – that “he knew he had sense enough to be Mayor of McKinney.” He might not be able to convince the people of his desire and ability to serve them, but that he would put forth his best effort in that direction.*

With 1126 votes cast, the April election saw a record number of ballots cast for City offices. The “Non-Partisan” candidates beat their opponents by nearly two to one. In the first few months of his administration, Henry Miller paved three and a half miles of roads and saw to the construction of a \$30,000 municipal pavilion at South Johnson and Davis Streets where the McKinney Municipal Court building now stands. Henry served as Mayor for a single term, deciding to not to run again in 1923.

Following his retirement from politics, Henry continued to manage his land abstract company on East Louisiana Street evaluating deeds and trading in real estate. In 1935, he became the McKinney City Attorney, a position he held for more than a decade. In 1947, Henry’s health forced him to request a six-month leave of absence from his City duties at the age of 58. However, he never fully recovered nor returned to his position. Over the next several years, Henry was treated periodically for diabetes and hypertension.

In his “retirement,” Henry was able to continue a light work load in his abstract business due to his son Louis joining the firm. During Henry’s career as an abstractor, he established a substantial portfolio of properties in Collin County. One such property, lay five miles west of McKinney. This property was chosen by the Humble Oil and Refining Company for a test drill for oil. Drilling began in June of 1953 and ended seven months later at a depth of 11,000 feet when no oil was found.

Following Henry’s retirement from the City Attorney position his wife Grace remained socially active with the Entre Nous Club of which she was once a President. She hosted many meetings of this club in the family home at 416 West Virginia Street. She also looked after the couple’s two children Louis and Mary. Louis was born in 1922, Mary in 1925. Both children graduated from McKinney Hight School. Mary received a BA in business from North Texas State University. In 1955, she married Harold “Shorty” McKinney and moved to Dallas where she lived most of her life.

Louis received a B.S. Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas in 1948

after returning from military service. Louis began his career with the Texas Highway Department and later in 1953 joined his father Henry in the McKinney Abstract Company. In 1960, Louis was elected to the McKinney City Council representing District 3 in the new council form of government that included a Mayor and six council members. In 1963, he ran for Mayor and won becoming the second time in McKinney history that a father and son both served as Mayor. The only other time that has occurred was when Tom Perkins, Jr., the son of newspaper editor and former Mayor Tom Perkins, Sr., defeated Louis Miller's re-election in 1965.

Henry Miller died on June 28, 1955 at the McKinney City Hospital. His funeral services were held at the First Methodist Church with interment at Pecan Grove Cemetery. Among his pallbearers were Add G. Wilson, Scott Abernathy, and James Merritt. His honorary pallbearers included several doctors who tended to him over the years, members of his church, and husbands of the women of the Entre Nous Club.

Grace continued living in the family home on West Virginia Street for another 15 years, hosting her beloved club. In 1970, she sold the house that she had lived in for 51 years and moved to a Ranch Style house on Finch Street. Grace died of a stroke in 1977 at the age of 86. Her funeral service was performed at the First Christian Church with interment at Pecan Grove Cemetery next to her husband Henry.

### **William Jordan Higgins (1850-1927): The building contractor**

William J. Higgins, or Jordan as he was called, was a prolific building contractor who erected scores of homes in McKinney at the beginning of the Twentieth Century. He is best known for his Foursquare Style homes and the church he built at Foote, Texas that is now part of the Chestnut Square Historic Village.

Jordan's obituary, as it appears in the *McKinney Courier-Gazette*, states that he was the son of Phillip Nolan Higgins and Mary Elizabeth Culwell of Eureka Springs, Arkansas. However, census records from the time suggest Jordan's father's name was William. Despite this inconsistency, around 1859 when Jordan was nine years old his family was among a group of families who left Arkansas for Texas. Jordan's mother died soon after the family arrived in Parker County, Texas. When the Civil War began, Jordan's father, along with two of his teenage brothers, joined to fight for the Confederacy. All three died during the conflict. The remaining orphaned children went to live with their Culwell relatives in the Weston community a few miles northeast of McKinney.

In 1875, Jordan married Georgia Ann Bates in Collin County. Georgia was the daughter of John C. and Eliza Bates who arrived in Collin County in the early 1840s. In the early 1880s, Jordan and his wife settled on a 120-acre farm about four miles east of McKinney where for several years he made a living selling firewood he cut from his land. The couple had five children, four girls and a son. Only three children, Katie, Lizzie and Mattie, lived to maturity.

Toward the turn of the century, Jordan turned from farming to the building trade. One of his first contracts mentioned in the newspaper was for a home in McKinney in 1895 for bookkeeper Cliff Emerson on Church Street. Another appeared in 1903. That one states that "Wick Graves has let the contract for an eight-room, modern cottage with all conveniences" to be built on North Bradley Street.

Jordan became a popular builder, erecting homes for some of McKinney's most influential citizens. During his three decades in the trade, he constructed rent homes, barns and commercial structures in Collin County. The local newspapers credited him with over 36 private residences in McKinney. Perhaps the best known of his works is the Baptist Church he built in 1908 for the Foote community (where Virginia Parkway and Ridge Road now intersect). In 1993, this structure was moved from its original location to become the chapel that is now part of the Chestnut Square complex.

Many of Jordan's homes followed the simple Foursquare Style, but he also excelled at building larger, more elaborate homes. A good example of one of his larger homes is the one he built early in his career for grocer W.T. Brooke (608 W. Hunt St.). Jordan built homes not just for the wealthy but for a variety of clients. In 1921, he erected a home for 64-year-old Charlie Smith, a Black carpenter. The *McKinney Courier-Gazette* describes:

*Contractor W.J. Higgins has just finished up a splendid six-room frame bungalow residence on West Standifer Street for Charlie Smith, colored. It is one of the best, if not the best, homes owned by a colored person in our city.*

In 1917, North Texas Methodist Church officials selected Jordan to be the contractor for a new parsonage for the Church's Presiding Elders. Jordan had a deep, historical connection to the Methodist Church. His mother was related to Rev. John Wesley Culwell who founded the first Methodist Church in Collin County in 1846.

Among the many mentions of Jordan in the local newspapers, few dealt with his



private affairs. One that did was a published in February of 1921 that describes a fire that occurred at his home on South Parker Street. The fire destroyed the house and all of its contents. Jordan estimated the loss at about \$5,000. Another article appeared in November of that year announcing the death of his 71-year-old wife Georgia following a six-year illness. Her brief obituary reveals the respect and esteem her community held for her. Her service was lead by Rev. J. Sam Barcus of the Methodist Church at Denton, assisted by the local Methodist pastor Dr. J.L. Morris. She is buried at the Pecan Grove Cemetery.

The aging Jordan continued his carpentry trade in the years following his wife's death. His contracts at this time focused on barns, rent houses and rural homes. A school house he built at Clear Lake is perhaps his last major project. Toward the end of his life, he became affectionately known as "Uncle Jord" around McKinney.

Jordan died in 1927, shortly after undergoing an operation to treat a serious undisclosed health condition. His death came as a surprise since he had been active in his business immediately after his operation. His funeral service was conducted at the family residence at 705 North Benge Street. Interment followed at the Pecan Grove Cemetery where he was laid to rest beside his wife. Among his active pallbearers were Walter B. Wilson, the publisher of the *McKinney Courier-Gazette* and plumber Andy C. Rogers.



## C. Property Ownership

**Address:** 416 West Virginia Street, McKinney, Texas 75069

**Legal Description:** McKinney Outlots, Lot 597

Purchase Date	Seller	Buyer	Book/Page
Apr. 28, 1841 <sup>1</sup>	State of Texas	William Davis	
Sep. 6, 1850 <sup>2</sup>	State of Texas	William Davis	J / 459
Apr. 29, 1857 <sup>3</sup>	Matthew R. Parrish	Benjamin M.E. Smith	K / 376
Jan. 6, 1912 <sup>4</sup>	Harry & Clarence Smith	James H. Merritt	196 / 350
Dec. 12, 1912	James H. Merritt	William R. Abernathy, et al.	199 / 68
Oct. 1, 1919	William R. Abernathy	Henry C. Miller	224 / 131
Oct. 26, 1970	Grace C. Miller	Paul & Patricia Cude	768 / 0365
Mar. 14, 1995	Paul & Patricia Cude	James & Jo Ellen Monzel	
Jun. 8, 1998	James & Jo Ellen Monzel	Pho Tam Pacific	
July 30, 2020	Pho Tam Pacific	AM Interiors	
Aug. 4, 2021	AM Interiors	Kelsey Larson	

<sup>1</sup> This is the date the Republic of Texas granted William Davis 3,129 acres of land.

<sup>2</sup> This is the date the State of Texas granted William Davis a patent affirming his ownership

<sup>3</sup> Matthew R. Parrish acted as an agent for William Davis.

<sup>4</sup> Harry and Clarence are heirs of Benjamin M.E. Smith

## D. Tenant History

Same as owner 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.

In the beginning, a small town called Buckner was the seat of the new county. However, the 1848 Texas 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 Collin County's new seat.

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 donating this property, he was deeded three lots within the new town site. This 120 acres became known as the McKinney Original Donation and was divided into 87 blocks that were to be sold to finance the City of McKinney. As a side note, shortly after donating the land for a new city, William sold his newly deeded lots and abandoned his wife and child in McKinney and headed to California to search for gold. Records indicate that William and Margaret were married for only a few years following the donation. By early 1859, William was married to a different woman named Sarah (a.k.a. Sallie).

The 87 blocks of the Original Donation were further divided into smaller lots, it was the job of the County Commissioners to sell these lots to buyers. In 1857, drugstore owner Dr. Benjamin M. E. Smith paid \$450 for four lots in the western portion of Block 51 of the Original Donation. After the death of the doctor in 1886 (and his wife five years later), these lots, along with ownership of the drugstore, were handed down to his three children, Harry, Clarence, and Flora. Flora and her husband James Shrader built a house on one of the lots. The other lots were developed into rental properties years later. These lots in the western portion of Block 51 are not included on Sanborn Insurance maps before 1902. However, the 1902 and 1908 maps show a modest residential structure on the lot that is now known as 416 West Virginia Street.

In December of 1911, brothers Harry and Clarence Smith, who managed the Smith Drug Store on the east side of the McKinney Square, encountered financial difficulties and were forced to declare bankruptcy. Strapped for cash to pay their creditors, the brothers needed to sell some assets if they wanted to keep the family business. Fortunately for them, Harry's wife was Minnie Merritt, sister of department store owner James Merritt and County Judge Robert Merritt. James and Robert were able to purchase 73 acres of farmland and several city lots owned by the Smiths for the below-market price of \$500. This was nowhere near enough money for the Smiths to escape bankruptcy. However, the Merritt brothers invested \$15,000 of their own money to secure an ownership stake in the Smith Drug Store. The Merritts would go on to sell their newly acquired properties at market rates while earning a profitable return from the drug store they now owned. It was business sense like this that helped James Merritt get an invitation to join the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas Board of Governors in 1937.

In 1912, James Merritt sold the three-lot tract on West Virginia Street that he acquired from the Smiths to attorney William R. Abernathy and his brother-in-law wholesale pickle-salesman K.D. Thompson for \$2,250. The property was across the street from the Abernathy family home where Mr. Abernathy's mother still lived. Mr. Abernathy and his brother-in-law held the West Virginia Street property as an investment from 1912 until 1919. Around 1913, the partners updated two of the westernmost properties with new homes, hiring carpenter William J. Higgins as the contractor.

William J. Higgins was a popular builder of wood-frame homes in the American Foursquare style. He built many single-story homes for clients who used them as rental properties. He also built some for himself. It is known that Mr. Abernathy hired him to build a six-room house for his in-laws Thomas and Sarah Perry at 414 West Louisiana Street in 1916. Several of the homes Mr. Higgins built in McKinney share footprints similar to the home at 416 West Virginia. These homes followed the American Foursquare style with a square footprint, hipped roofs, and a centrally located dormer.

In the summer of 1919, attorney Henry C. Miller returned home from World War I. Henry had been a Justice of the Peace before the war and was looking forward to resuming his law practice. Upon his return, William Abernathy helped out his old friend Henry by selling the western portion of his property (418 West Virginia Street) to him for \$500 cash plus a \$2,500 note. Five days later, Henry Miller was able to sell the house to monument dealer William Pruett for \$500 and a \$3,000 note. In a separate transaction, Henry Miller purchased the lot at 416 West Virginia Street just east of Mr. Pruett's to keep for himself.

In 1921, Henry C. Miller was elected Mayor of McKinney and served a single two-year term. During his term, he and wife Grace welcomed a baby boy named Louis into the family and Mary two years later. It was likely the Miller's growing family that motivated them to add a second floor to the house sometime in the mid 1920s. This second floor consisted of a bedroom and a sleeping porch. In 1941, Henry remodeled the house again. This time he added a generous front porch supported by iron columns that spanned the width of the house. He also enclosed the second floor sleeping porch. These alterations ignored the home's original architecture.

Henry and Grace lived together in their home until Henry's death in 1955. While widowed, Grace saw her son Louis grow up, go to war, and become a civil engineer. And, in 1963, he was elected Mayor. Mary continued to live at 416 West Virginia Street until selling it in 1970.

The Miller's house changed ownership two more times without any major alterations. However, in 2020 a builder purchased the home with the intention of remodeling and selling it.

The builder added rooms to both floors and updated the kitchens and baths. The builder retained a few historic details as accents to the modern interior. The exterior was transformed too. However, the changes to the exterior, particularly the front, were made with the intent to return the home to an aesthetic that better expressed the date of its original construction. This is apparent in the new spacing of the second floor windows and the square Craftsman-like columns of the porch. Though the home remains an eclectic mix of historic styles, the restored home complements the architecture of the surrounding neighborhood while being the historic home to two McKinney's mayors.

## F. Drawings

### 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 associated with his contribution to Texas independence.



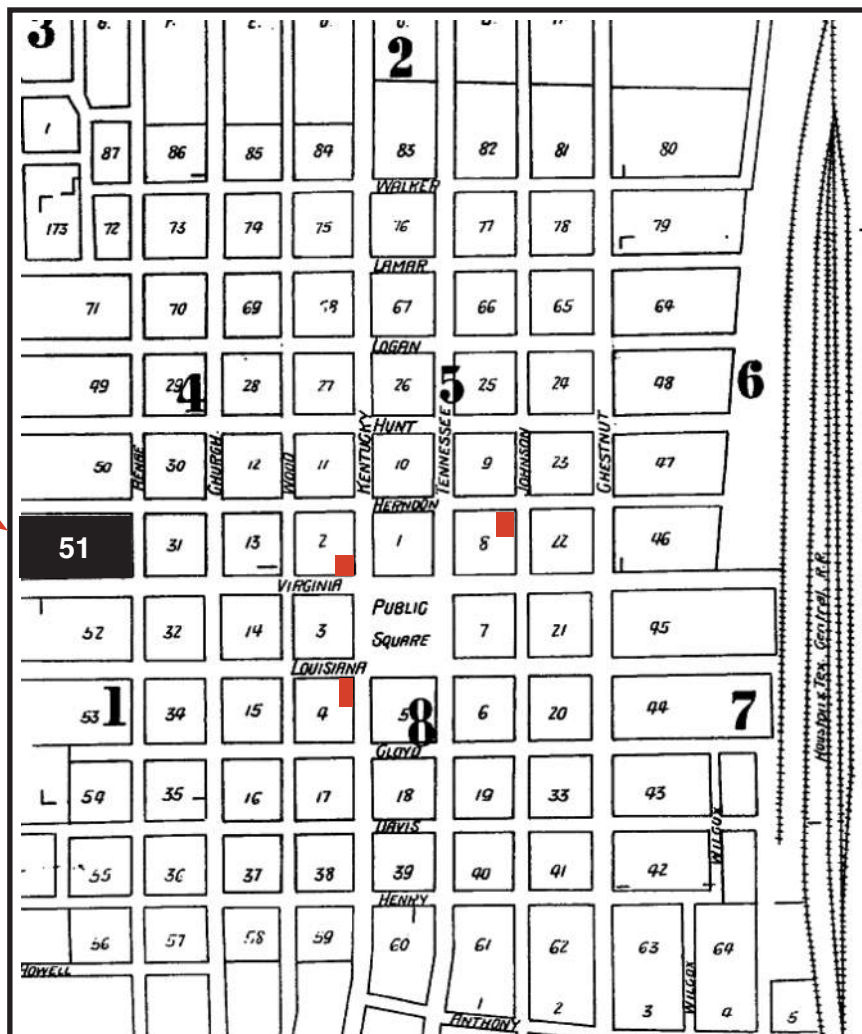
This grant became known as the Davis Survey and amounted to 3,129 acres which encompassed the site chosen to be the County Seat of Collin County. William Davis donated 120 acres of his land to the County Commissioners to be used to create the town of McKinney. The legal description of properties which were a part of this donation include the words "McKinney Original Donation." The photo below shows the Davis Survey and the McKinney Original Donation (outlined in blue) overlaid on a map of McKinney's downtown area.





# McKinney Original Donation

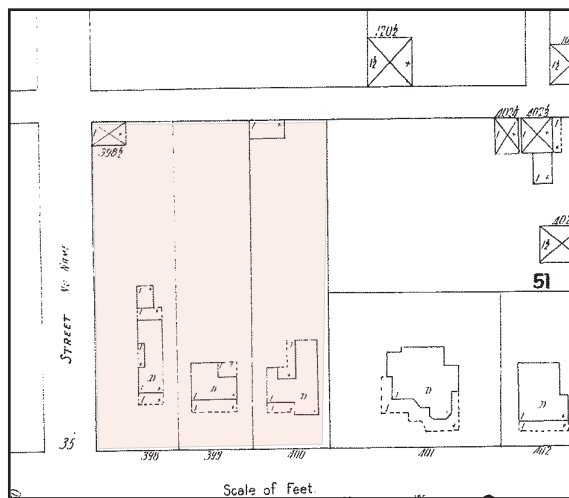
The western end of Block 51 of the original donation of land by William Davis is the site of the Henry C. Miller House.



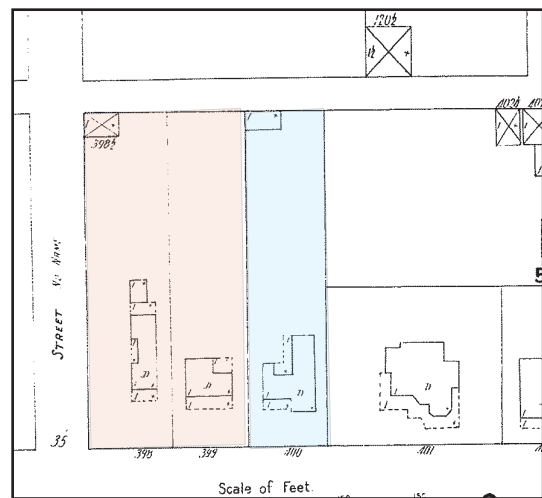
In 1849, William Davis and his wife Margaret donated 120 acres of his 3,129 acre headright grant to become McKinney, the new Collin County seat. Commissioners J.B. Wilmeth, J.M. McReynolds, and John Fitzhugh instructed George White and Ethelred Whitely to lay out the new town. Mr. Davis' donation was divided into 87 blocks and became known as the McKinney Original Donation (shown in shaded area). The 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.

# Sanborn Maps:

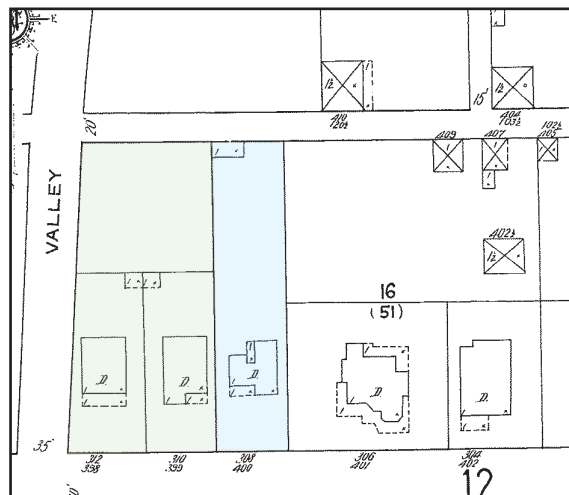
1912



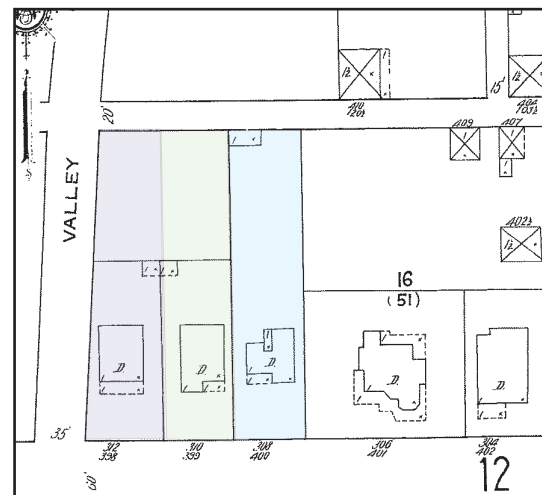
1913



1919



1919



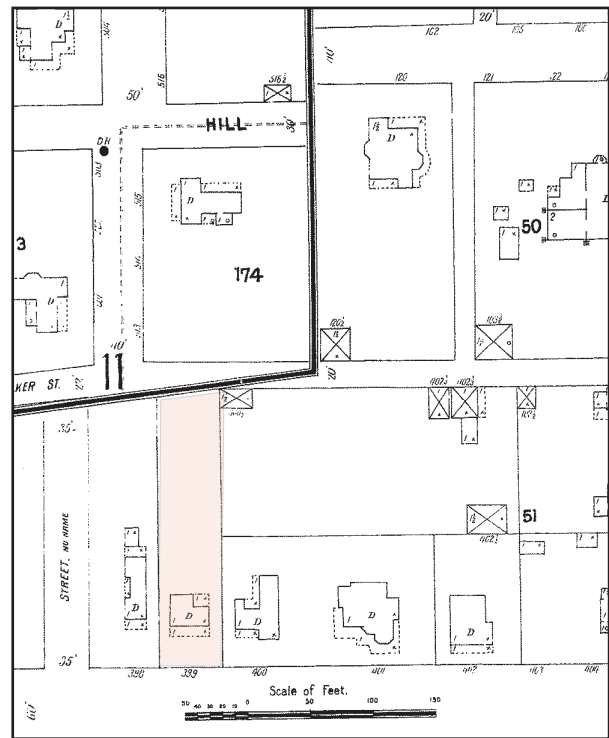
W.R. Abernathy  
Henry C. Miller

T.B. Lucas  
W.W. Pruett

The original houses on these three lots were built when the Smith family owned the properties. In 1912, W.R. Abernathy, along with brother-in-law K.D. Thompson, purchased three lots from J.H. Merritt for \$2,250. In 1913, Abernathy and Thompson sold the easternmost lot to T.B. Lucas for \$1,500. In August and October of 1919, the partners sold the western two lots to Henry C. Miller for a total of \$6,250. Miller kept the center lot for himself but sold the westernmost lot to W.W. Pruett in 1919 for \$3,500.

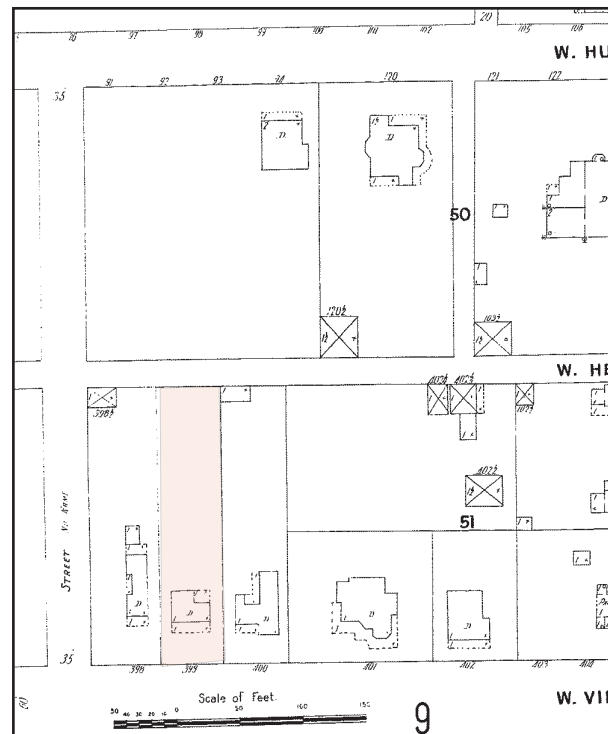
The series of Sanborn Insurance maps on the following page indicates that a house existed at 416 W. Virginia Street in 1902 when the Smith brothers owned the property. However, between 1908 and 1914 the home's footprint was enlarged. In the 1920s when Henry C. Miller owned the property, a second floor with a sleeping porch was added. In 1941, Mr. Miller enclosed the sleeping porch and added a front porch supported by iron columns. This 1941 version of the house is not shown on any Sanborn maps. However, it can be seen in a 1985 photo.

The 1902 Sanborn map shows a structure at what is now 416 West Virginian Street. This house was built when druggist Benjamin Smith owned the property. The house that Dr. Smith had built is likely similar to the one shown in photo below, This house on Oak Street was built around 1895.



1902

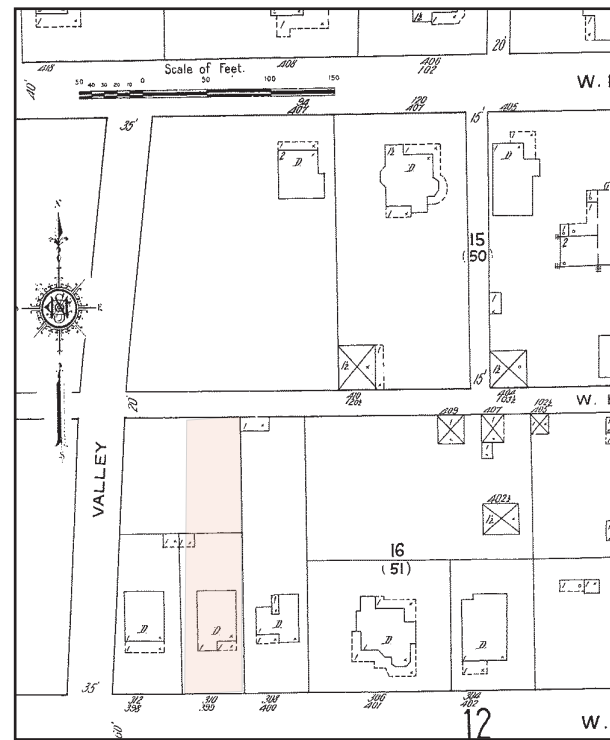
The 1908 Sanborn map shows the same structure on the map.



1908

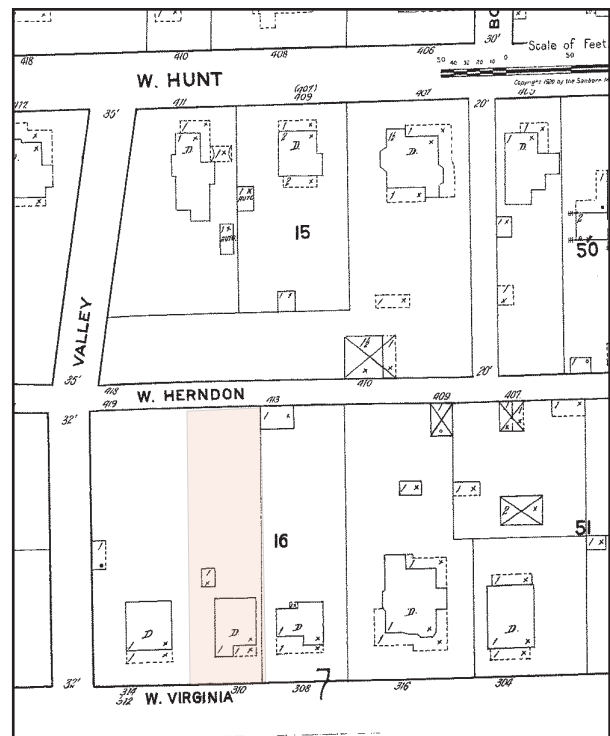


The 1914 Sanborn map shows the house that William Abernathy hired W.J. Higgins to build in 1913. Mr. Higgins built several homes like these in McKinney for clients who used them as investment property. The photo below shows a "Higgins House" at 1002 Tucker Street.



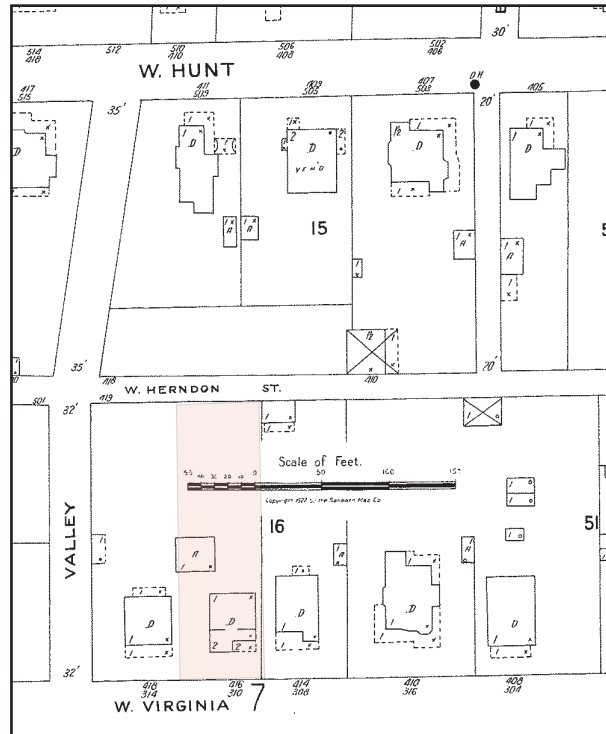
1914

The 1920 Sanborn map shows the house unchanged from the 1914 map and is the house that Henry Miller purchased in 1919.



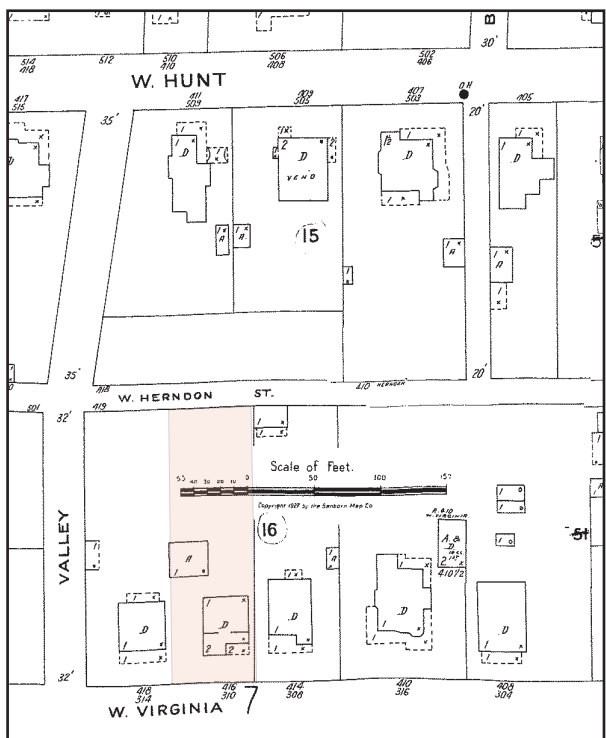
1920

The 1927 Sanborn maps shows the house after Mr. Miller added a second story to his house. It is not known exactly when this occurred but the sketch below approximates what the house would have looked like.



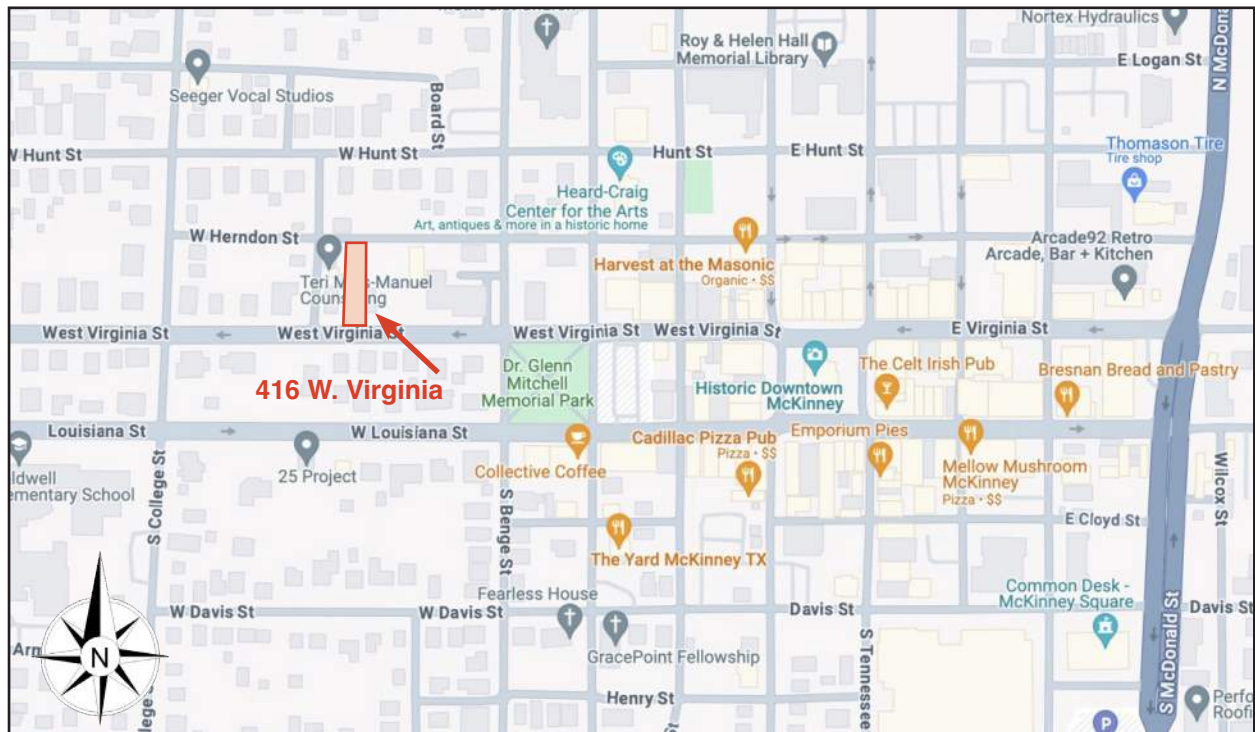
1927

The 1927+ Sanborn map is the same as the 1927 map. Often, the "plus" maps included new structures from surveys done years later, sometimes up to the 1950s. This map does not. The photo below shows what the house looked like after Mr. Miller remodeled the house in 1941. This version of the house remained unchanged until 2021.



1927+



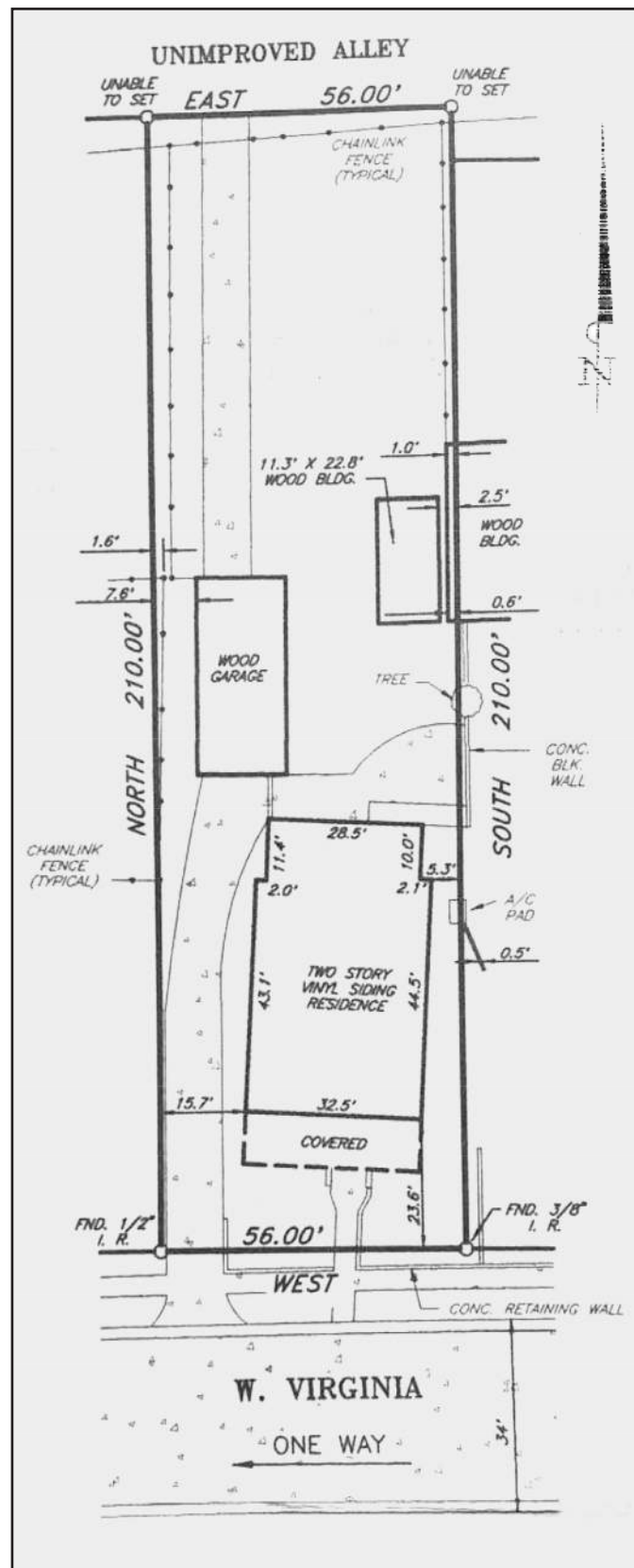


The map above shows the neighborhood around 416 W. Virginia Street. The aerial photo below shows the immediate neighborhood near the intersection of W. Virginia and N. Benge Streets.



# Site Plan for 416 West Virginia Street, 2020

Kelsey & Amanda Larson, owner



## **Legal Description of 416 W. Virginia Street**

A tract of land situated in William Davis Survey, Abstract Number 248, City of McKinney, Collin County, Texas, and being the same tract of land (commonly known as Outlot 597) described in a deed filed for record at County Clerk's Instrument Number 95-0024348 of the Deed Records of Collin County, Texas, and being more particularly described by metes and bounds as follows:

Beginning at a 3/8" iron rod found for the Southeast corner of the tract of land herein described on the North right-of-way line of West Virginia;

Thence West, along the aforementioned North right-of-way line, 56.00 feet to a 1/2" iron rod found for the Southwest corner of the tract of land herein described;

Thence North, 210.00 feet to the Northwest corner of the tract of land herein described on the South right-of-way line of an unimproved alley;

Thence East, along the aforementioned South right-of-way line, 56.00 feet to the Northeast corner of the tract of land therein described;

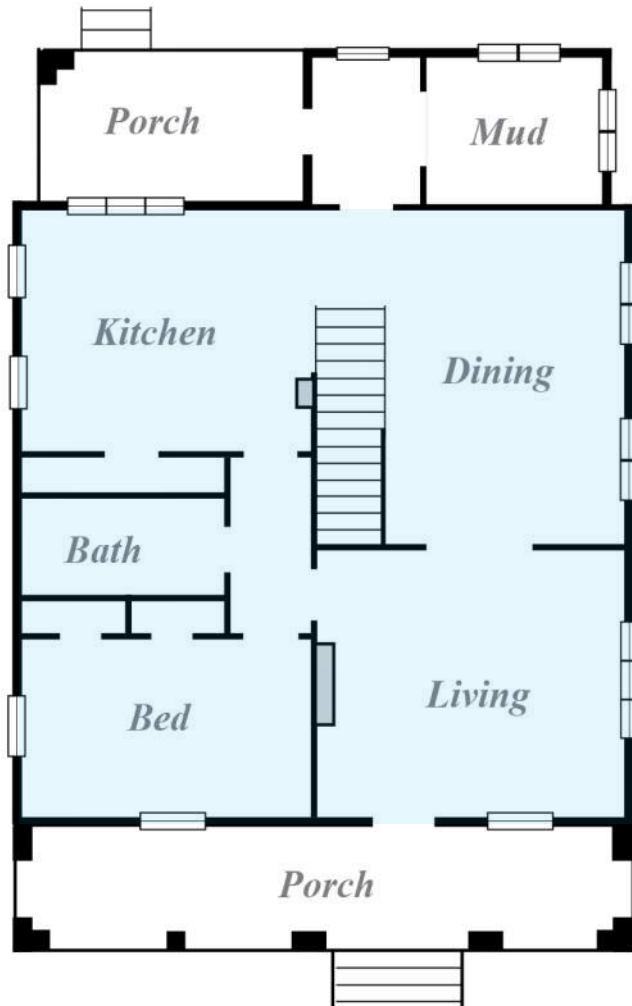
Thence South, 210.00 feet to the point of the beginning.

Said tract containing 11,760 square feet of 0.270 acre, more or less.

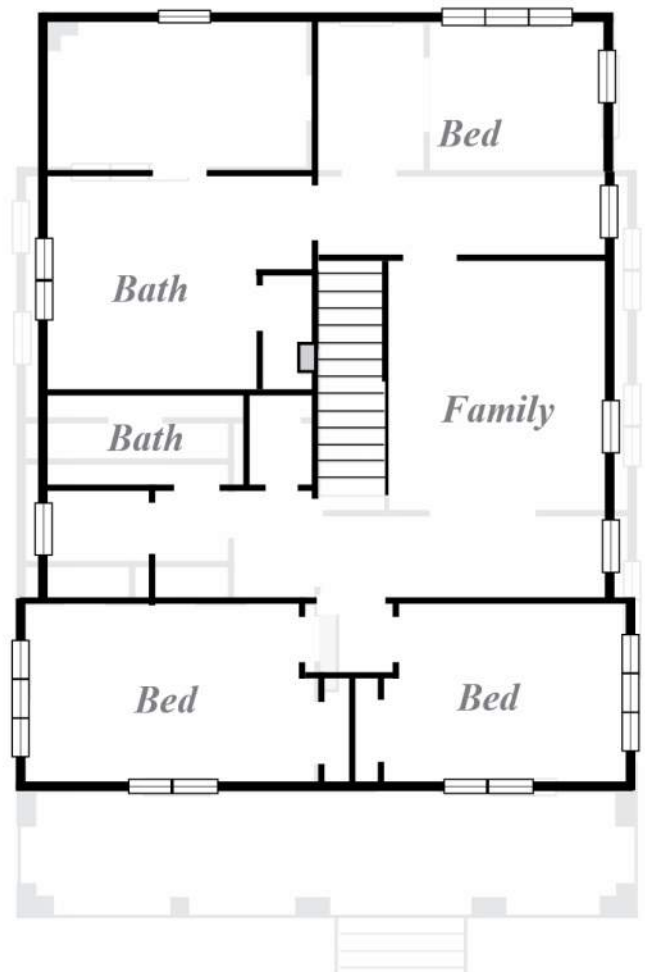
## Floor Plan: 416 W. Virginia Street

*This plan shows the Henry C. Miller House in its current configuration. The shaded portion indicates the foot print of the original structure in 1913.*

First Floor



Second Floor



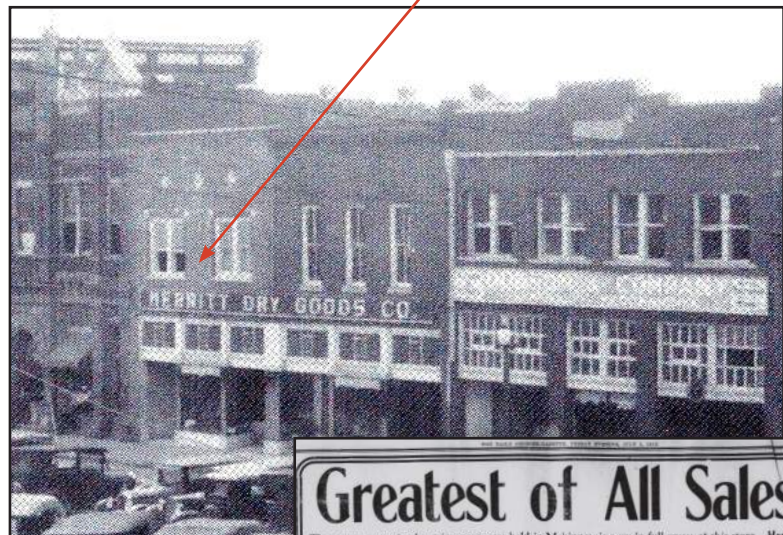


## G. Photographs



*James H. Merritt*  
(1881-1949)

**James H. Merritt**, the younger brother of Robert C. Merritt, graduated from the McKinney Collegiate Institute in 1898. Following graduation he began working for W.S. Knight Dry Goods on the south side of the Square. He quickly rose in the ranks to become the store manager. In 1910, he left the store to pursue other interests. However, a year later, he returned to manage the store. When the store went bankrupt in 1912, Mr. Merritt purchased the failed company and continued to run it for the next 16 years. The above below shows the J.H. Merritt Dry Goods sign spanning two buildings.



*First National Bank Building*



**James H. Merriit** left his dry-good business around 1928. The next year, he became president of the First National Bank (left). In 1936, Mr. Merritt was appointed to the board of directors of the Dallas Federal Reserve.

# Greatest of All Sales!

The greatest genuine bargain event ever held in McKinney is now on full swing at this store. Having purchased the W. S. KNIGHT \$200,000.00 Bankrupt Stock at 60c on the dollar, we are in position to make many and will go lower than any goods store in North Texas. Never before in the history of McKinney has a store sold so many goods in so short a time. Prices are doing it.

**The Great Sale Will Continue Until All Spring and Summer Goods are Closed Out.**

<b>10c Lawn 5c</b> 1000 yds. Dress Ties, 5c value 10c. Extra 10c. Extra value 10c. Extra 10c. Extra	<b>10c Garters 10c</b> Best quality. Extra. Children and men's.	<b>10c Vests 5c</b> 400 yds. Ladies' nightgowns, 1000 yds. 10c. value each.	<b>10c Lawn and Gaiters 3-1-2c</b> 1000 yds. Dress Ties, 5c value 10c. Extra 10c. Extra
<b>5c yd</b>	<b>10c</b>	<b>5c</b>	<b>3-1-2c</b>
<b>\$2.50 Parasols \$1.65</b> Ladies' fine Parasols, 1000 yards, 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>8-1-2c Petate 5c</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>Kinnies 10c</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>50c Silk 95c</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
<b>\$1.65</b>	<b>5c</b>	<b>10c</b>	<b>95c</b>

## BANKRUPT PRICES MEAN A GREAT SAVING TO YOU ON A NEW SUIT OR PAINTS

<b>\$1.75</b> Boys' 6-7 Knickerbocker suits	<b>\$3.75</b> Men's \$8.50 suits, cut to	<b>\$6.00</b> Men's \$12.50 suits, cut to	<b>\$7.95</b> Men's \$11.50 suits, selling at	<b>90c</b> Youth's \$1.50 Pants, pair	<b>\$1.95</b> Men's \$2.50 Pants, pair	<b>\$3.15</b> Men's \$4.00 Pants, pair	<b>\$5.25</b> Best \$1.25 Pinchcock Wash Pants
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<b>Big Shirt On Sale</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>Big Shirt Sale</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>\$1.35</b> Hosiery Special Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>\$1.35</b> Lace Curtains Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>5c</b> 50c Work Shirts 20c Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>5c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>10c Canvas Gaiters 20c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>10c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>39c</b> 39c Work Shirts 20c Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>39c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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## GREAT SALE MEN'S, LADIES AND CHILDREN'S SHOES AND SLIPPERS

<b>25c</b> Children's white slippers, sizes 11 to 12, 10c. value, pair	<b>25c</b> Children's white slippers, sizes 11 to 12, 10c. value, pair
<b>\$1.45</b> Ladies' fine slippers, assort- ed, values up to 2.50, on sale	<b>\$1.45</b> Ladies' fine slippers, assort- ed, values up to 2.50, on sale
<b>\$1.95</b> Boys' fine slippers, assort- ed, values up to 2.50, on sale	<b>\$1.95</b> Boys' fine slippers, assort- ed, values up to 2.50, on sale
<b>\$1.95</b> 400 pair Men's \$2.50 Oxford, out- on table, values of 10c. -	<b>\$1.95</b> 400 pair Men's \$2.50 Oxford, out- on table, values of 10c. -
<b>\$1.95</b> 200 pair Men's \$4.00 shoes, out- on table, values of 10c. -	<b>\$1.95</b> 200 pair Men's \$4.00 shoes, out- on table, values of 10c. -

<b>Sample Straw Hats</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>50c Shirts 25c</b> 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>HALF USUAL PRICE</b> 50c Underwear 30c	<b>25c</b> 50c Shirts 25c
--	------------------------------

<b>39c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>85</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
---	--

The Knight stock will be closed out at Bankrupt Prices, which are the lowest prices ever made in McKinney.

# W. H. MERRITT

Buyer of the W. S. Knight Bankrupt Stock

South Side Square, McKinney, Texas

<b>39c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>85</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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<b>39c</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value	<b>85</b> Ladies' fine work shirts, 1000 yds. 10c. value. 10c. value
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William Roberts Abernathy (1876-1940)

## The Abernathy Family

*In 1876, two brothers William M. and Mercer G. Abernathy came to McKinney from Holly Springs, Mississippi and formed the law firm of Abernathy Brothers on the site now occupied by Spoons Cafe.*

*During the Civil War William M. Abernathy was a courier for Robert E. Lee and probably transported the last dispatch that passed between General Lee and General Grant regarding the surrender of the Confederate Army.*

*Mercer G. Abernathy shared a practice with his brother until Mercer was elected County Judge in 1888. He later rejoined the practice after nearly a decade as Judge. The two brothers had children who eventually joined them in the practice. One of those children was **William Roberts Abernathy**, who became one of the wealthiest men in Collin County.*

*When William M. Abernathy passed away in 1911, his son William Roberts Abernathy continued to office in the building owned by the Newsome family. The building was razed in 1926 and replaced with the building that now occupies the lot. W.R. Abernathy continued to be a tenant in the new building. When the new building was built, its owner William B. Newsome, placed a stone inscription on the building bearing the Newsome name. However, William R. Abernathy purchased the building in 1938 and renamed the building with an "Abernathy" inscription cemented over the name of the previous owner. Around 2011 the stone bearing the Abernathy name broke off unexpectedly from the building to reveal the Newsome name.*



*The photo above was taken around 1908 and shows William M. Abernathy, father of William Roberts Abernathy, with four of his grandchildren. From left to right: Mary Frances Thompson (1902-1089), William Perry Abernathy (1906-1953), King Daniel Thompson, Jr. (1907-1992) and Lucy Ozella Thompson (1903-1997).*

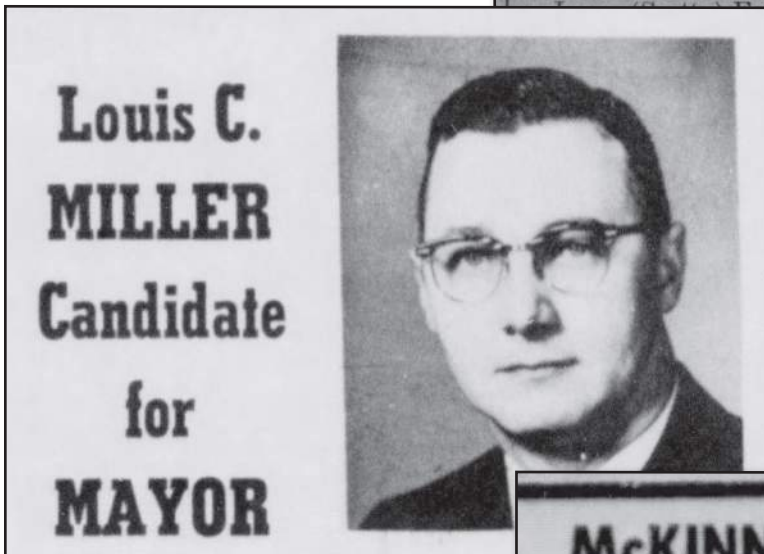
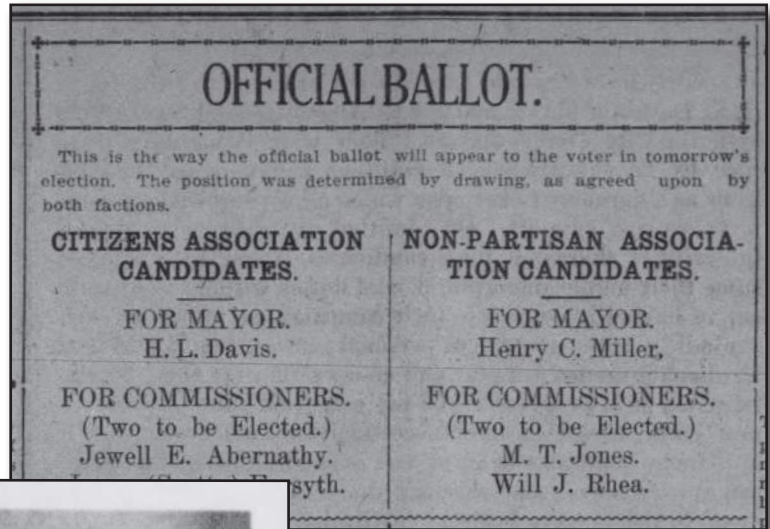




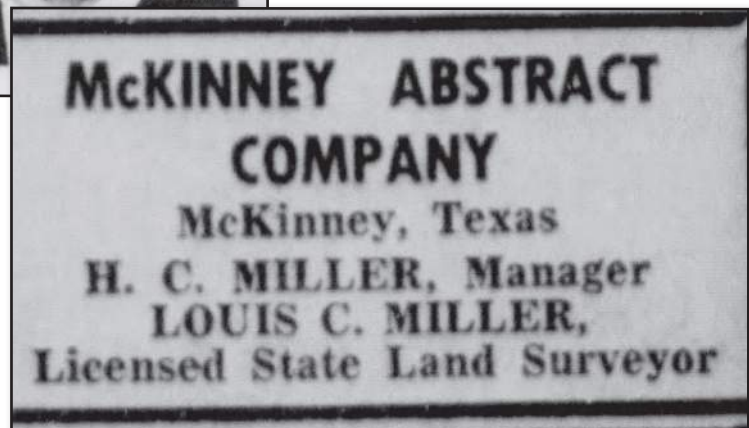


*Henry Carmack Miller  
(1889-1955)*

**Henry C. Miller** was appointed to office of Justice of the Peace when Albert M. Wolford resigned the position in 1916. Henry resigned in 1918 in order to join the army during WWI. Though he was not particularly interested in politics, in 1921 he accepted the nomination and support of the "Non-Partisan" party in his bid for Mayor. He was elected by a wide margin but only served one term.



**Louis C. Miller** received an Engineering Degree from the University of Texas in 1948. He served on the City Council from 1960 to 1965, three years as Council Member and two years as Mayor.



Henry began working for the McKinney Abstract Company in 1920s and by 1924 he owned the company. His son joined him in 1953. When Henry died in 1955 Louis continued to run the company for the next 55 years.

# Pecan Grove Cemetery

*This map of Pecan Grove Cemetery in McKinney shows the final resting places of key people associated with 416 West Virginia Street.*



*Dr. Benjamin M.E. Smith  
(1816 - 1886)*



*James H. Merritt  
(1881 - 1949)*



*Henry C. Miller (1889 - 1955)  
Grace (Cameron) Miller (1891 - 1977)*

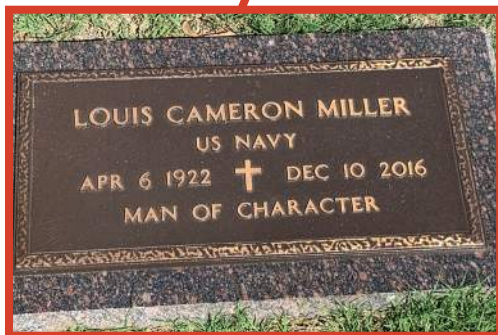
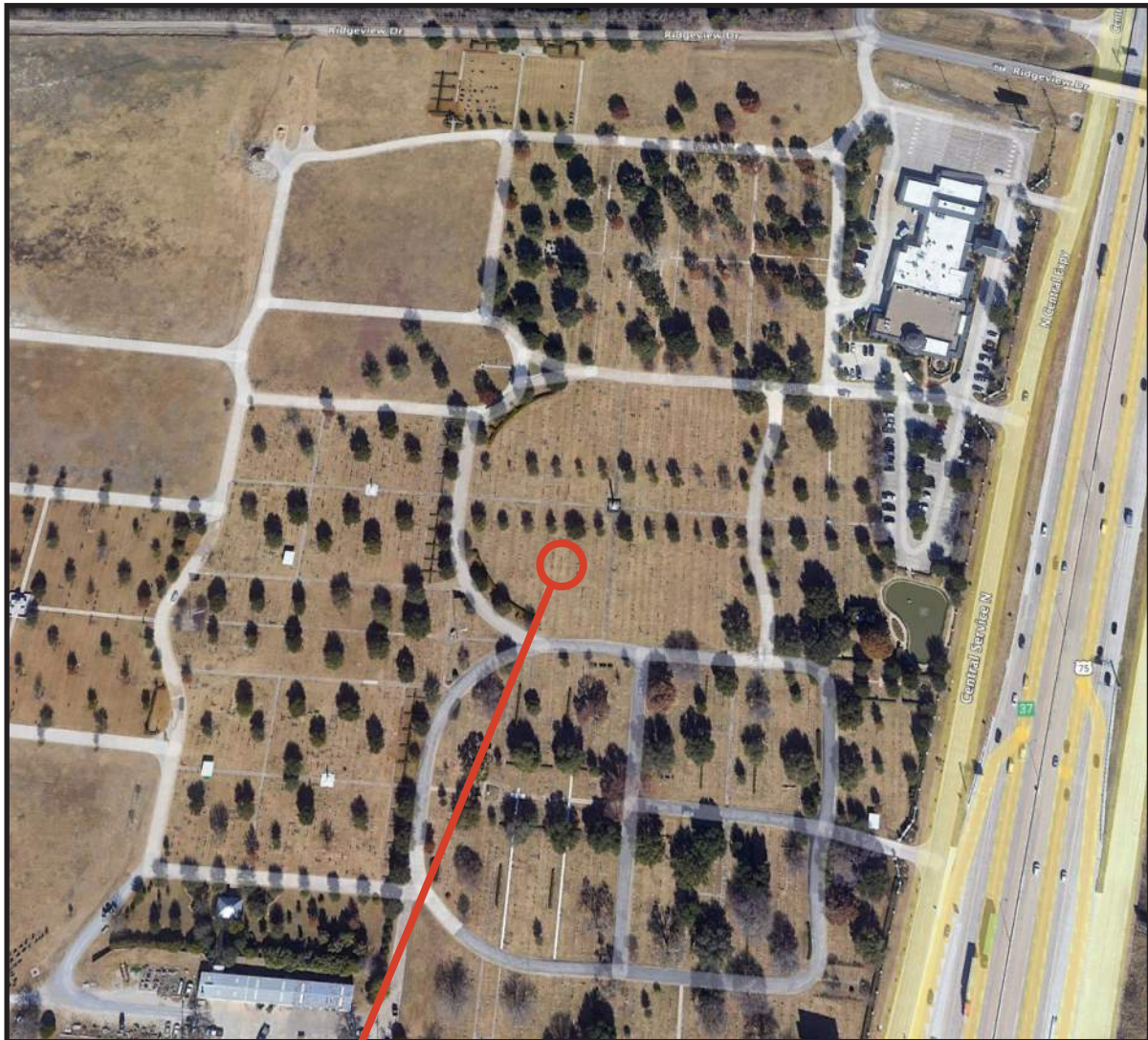


*William R. Abernathy  
(1875 - 1940)*



# Ridgeview Cemetery

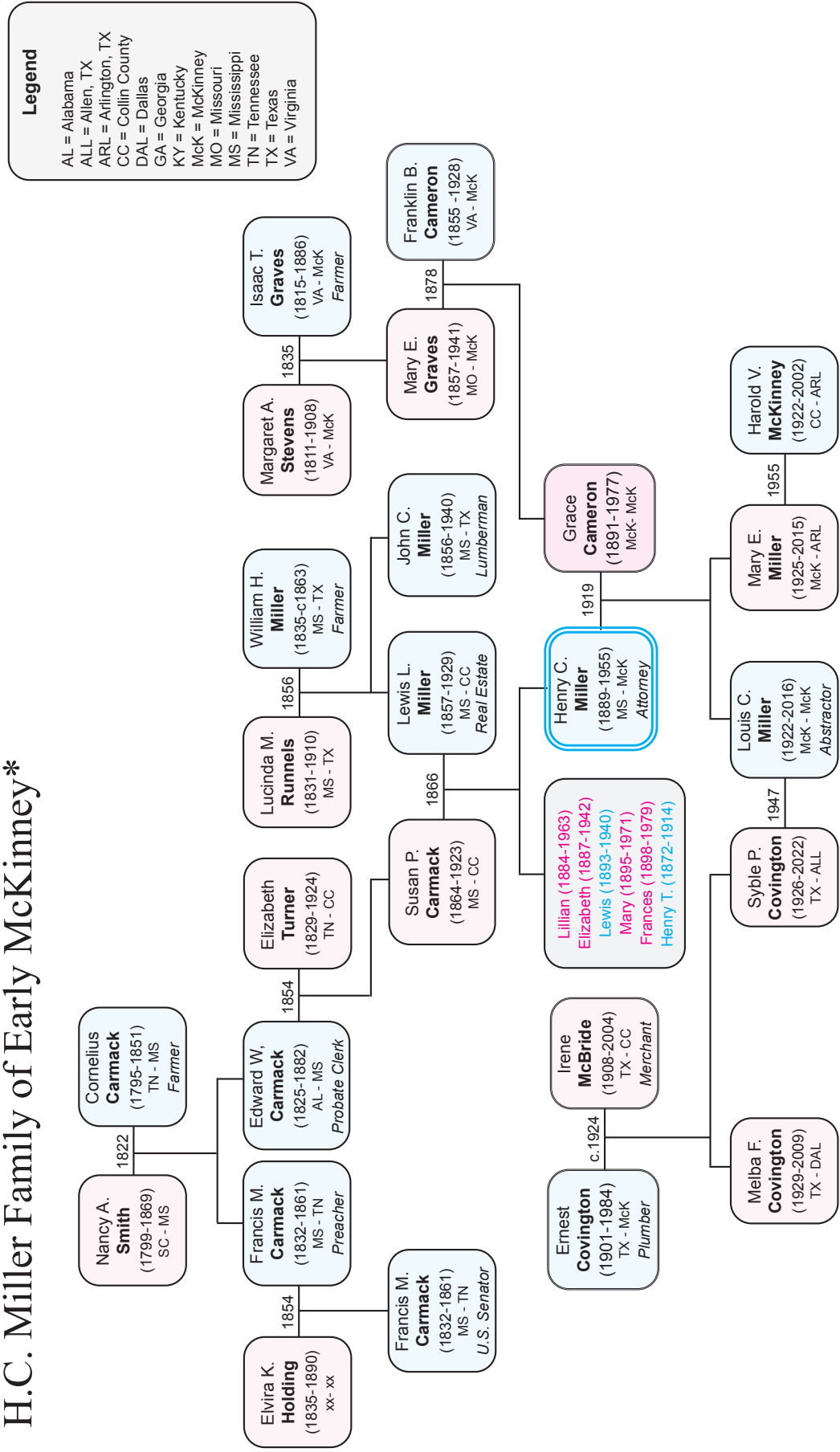
*This aerial view of Ridgeview Cemetery in Allen shows the final resting place of the son of Henry C. Miller, Louis C. Miller, who grew up in the family home at 416 W. Virginia Street.*



*Louis C. Miller (1922 - 2016)*

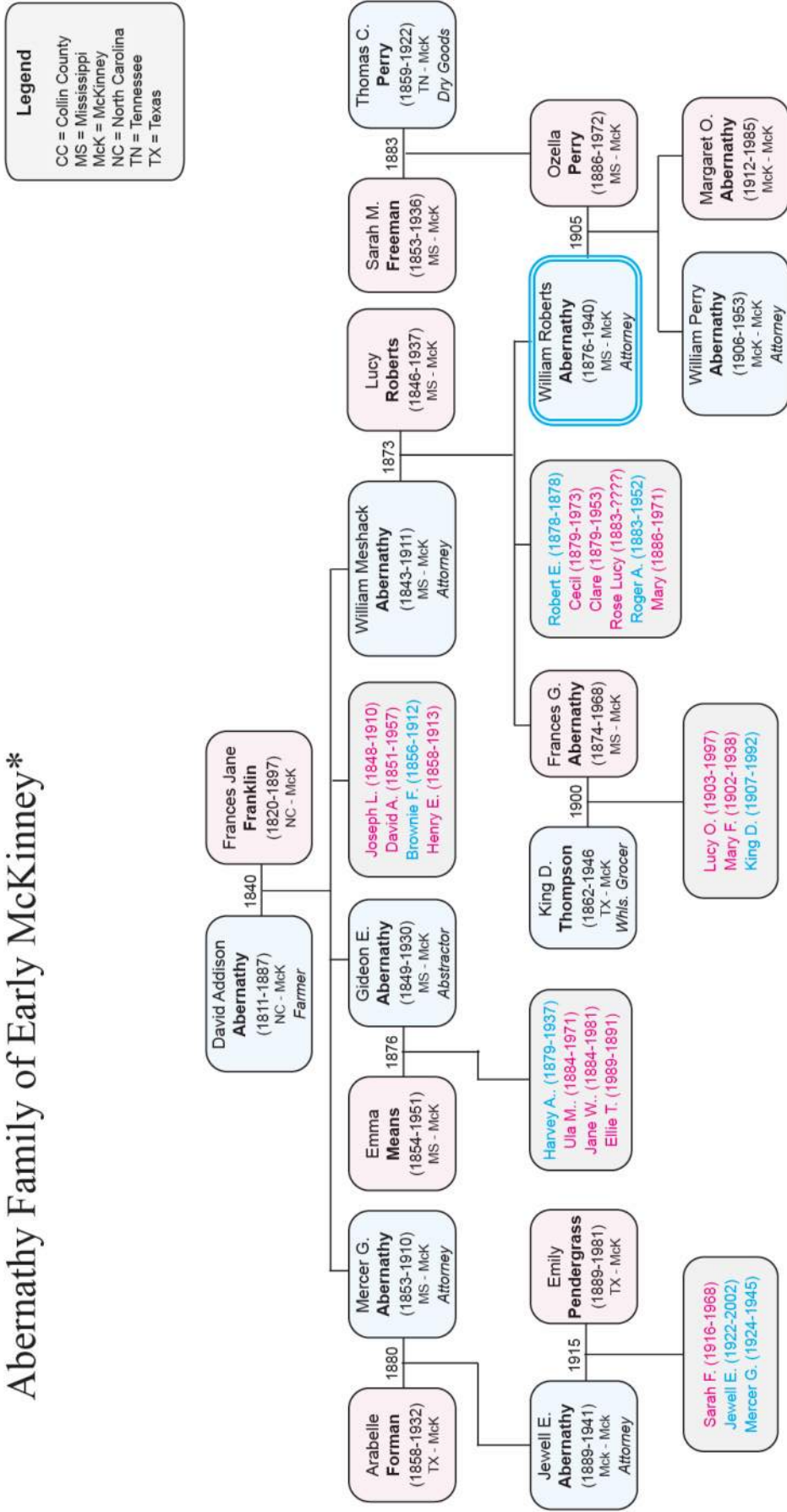
H. Additional Information

H.C. Miller Family of Early McKinney\*



\* Not all family members are included.

# Abernathy Family of Early McKinney\*



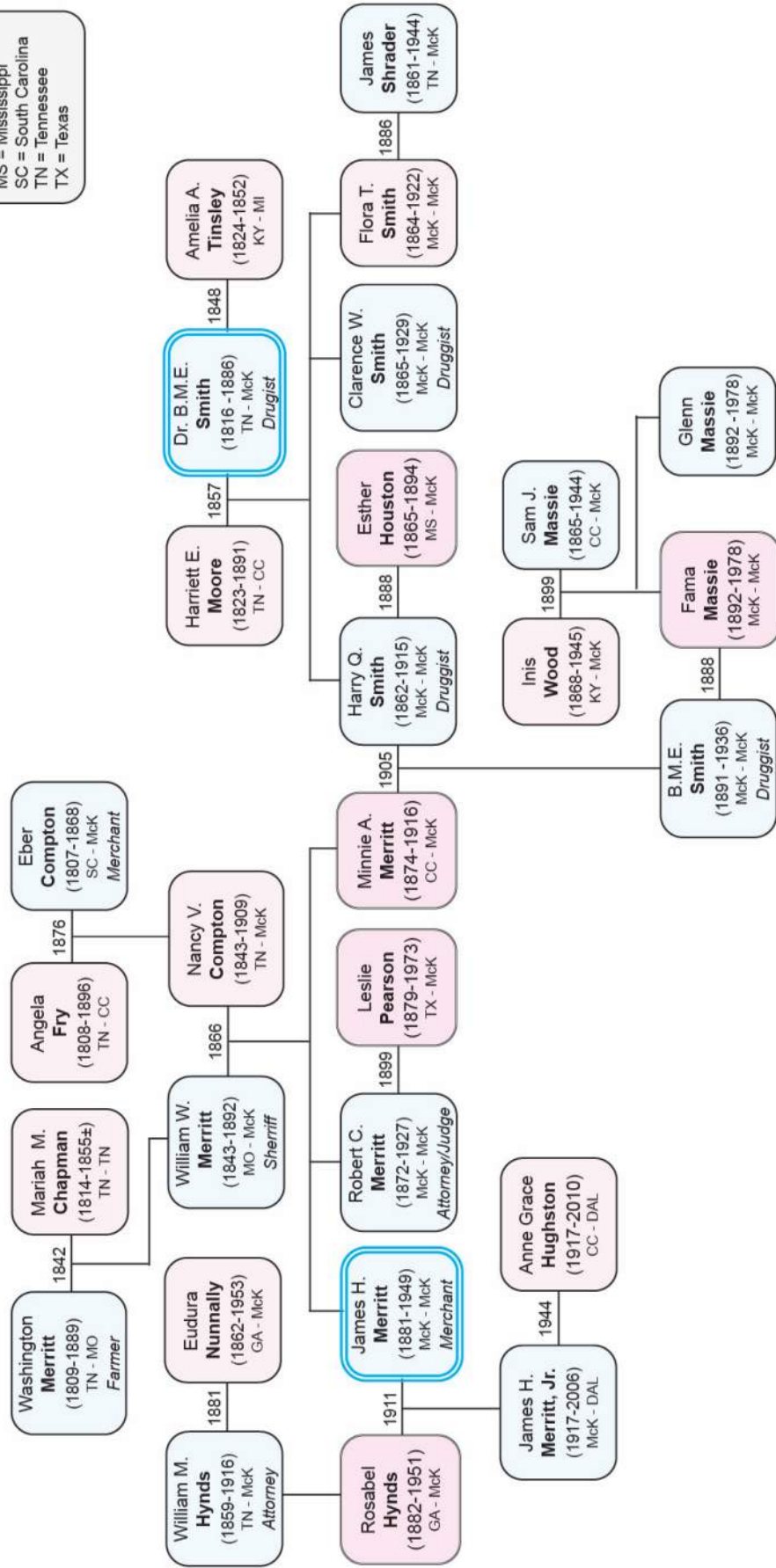
\* Not all family members are included.



# Merritt/Smith Family of Early McKinney\*

## Legend

CC = Collin County  
DAL = Dallas  
GA = Georgia  
KY = Kentucky  
McK = McKinney  
MO = Missouri  
MS = Mississippi  
SC = South Carolina  
TN = Tennessee  
TX = Texas



\* Not all family members are included.

## Current Photos (2024)





## Interior & Details



*Front Door and Living Room*



*Stairs between Dining Room and Kitchen*





*Kitchen*



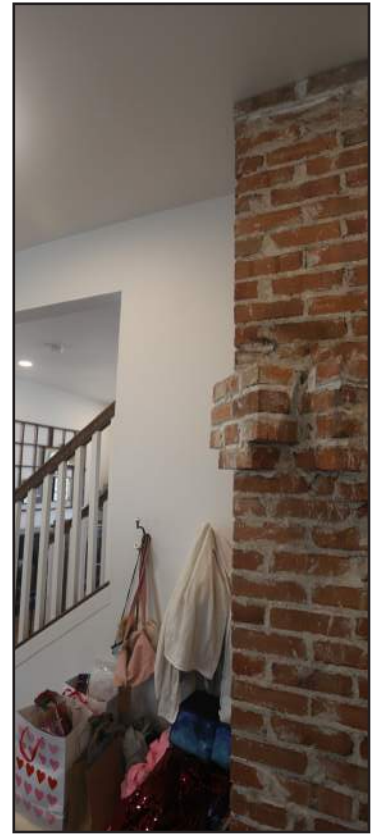
*Second Floor Bedroom*



*Dining Room*



*Original Hearth and Oak Flooring*



*Exposed Brick Flue*



*Wood Beams Re-purposed for Ceiling Detail*



*Original Pine Flooring*



*Original Door Knob on Closet*



*During the 2020 remodeling of the house two signatures were discovered on a plank that was later re-used in a ceiling. Neither of the signatures, Arthur Wheel(?) and Arthur George, can be positively connected to historical persons.*



*Original One-Over-One Sash Window*



*Original Wood Plank Used in Second Floor Bedroom*

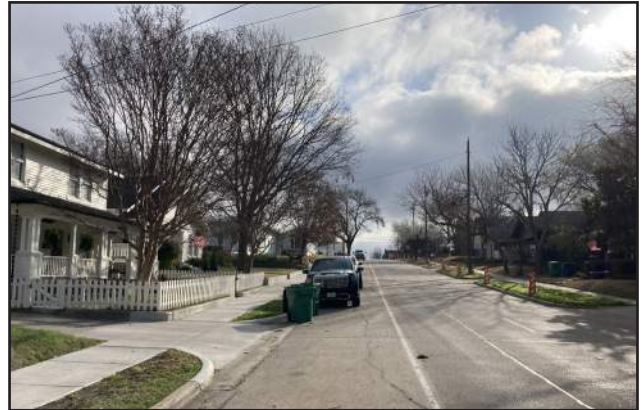


## Neighborhood Context (2024)

### 416 West Virginia Street neighborhood context



*View looking West on West Virginia Street*



*View looking East on West Virginia Street*

### Homes near 416 West Virginia Street



*504 West Virginia Street*



*407 West Virginia Street*



*418 West Virginia Street*



*413 West Virginia Street*



## Evolution of Architectural Style

The first decade of the 20th Century witnessed a huge shift in architectural styles. This shift paralleled the cultural shift that saw improving labor conditions and a growing middle class that had enough money to spend on property and homes, modest though they may be. This new culture had little affinity, for the older aesthetic which valued ornamentation and grandiosity. This change is clearly apparent in the architecture of McKinney.

### Queen Anne Style

Before 1900, the preferred style was what we now call the Queen Anne Style. This style is characterized by complex gabled roofs, asymmetry, turrets, and an abundance of elaborate ornamentation. Locally, the Aron House at 523 W. Hunt Street exhibits this architectural vocabulary.

### Prairie and Foursquare Styles

Just before the 20th Century began, however, new architectural forms offered by the Prairie and Foursquare Styles began appearing in home construction. The Bristol House at 508 Tucker Street was one of the first homes in McKinney to incorporate the deep eaves, hip roofs, and the sprawling geometry these new styles offered.

The Heard-Craig House at 205 W. Hunt Street designed by Dallas architect J.E. Flanders incorporates many of these new forms into a home that is still essentially Queen Anne but mimics the symmetry of the American Foursquare Style (eg. 801 N. Church St.). Five years later, Flanders moved closer to creating a pure Prairie Style home when he designed the J.R. Brown House at 509 N. Church Street.





By the early 1900s, not all builders and clients were ready to abandon the old, familiar style and the prestige it conveyed. This resulted in many homes becoming an eclectic mixture of new and old styles.

McKinney builder W.J. Higgins built the Brooke House at 608 W. Hunt Street in 1910. It appears that neither the builder nor the client was ready to embrace the “modernness” of Flander’s design. Instead, the Brooke house preserves the gabled pavilions and proportions of the Queen Anne Style while adding sprawling porches on the first and second floors. The result is a marriage of different styles with a practical solution to ventilation.

The Davenport House which sits across the street at 613 W. Hunt Street was probably built by Higgins in the same year as the Brooke House. Higgins was an accomplished builder of American Foursquare homes and incorporated its boxy, pyramidal forms into many of the homes he built. The pavilion which had a gabled roof in the Brooke House now has a hip roof. Though Davenport house moves further away from the Queen Anne Style, the builder put an ornamental finial at the apex of the roof to remind us of the home’s (and the client’s) appreciation of tradition.

Elsewhere in McKinney, builders and clients were warming up to the new style. The home at 510 Foote Street, built for F.E. Wilcox in 1910, is decidedly in the Prairie Style with its wide eaves, square columns, and hip roof. Still, the window treatment lacks a complete expression of the style.

Finally, in 1911, J.P. Burrus spent \$30,000 on a house at 405 N. Waddill that was unabashedly in the Prairie Style. The Queen Anne vocabulary is completely gone. Thus, a new design paradigm became the mode of the day in McKinney.





### Arts & Craft Movement

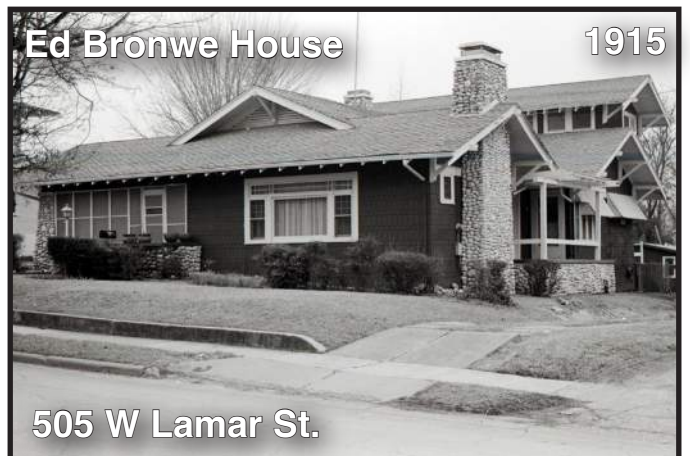
The Arts & Craft Style was another popular alternative to the Queen Anne Style. This style originated in England in the late 1880s and was espoused by social commentator John Ruskin and textile designer William Morris. The Arts & Craft movement emphasized natural, handmade elements. It was as much a style innovation as it was a social movement that regarded the craftsman as artist.

In America, the architectural firm of Greene and Greene was influential in this area, creating what is often called an American architectural masterpiece in the Gamble House in Pasadena, California in 1908. This style is characterized by broad, low-pitched roofs with extended eaves supported by exposed rafters. Stone, brick, and wood were used to a natural effect.

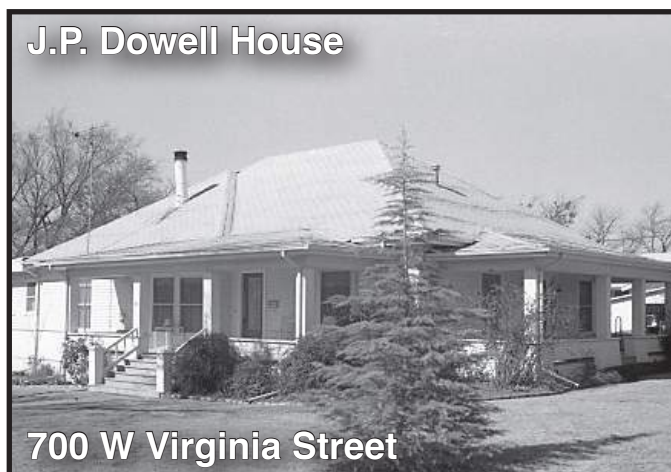
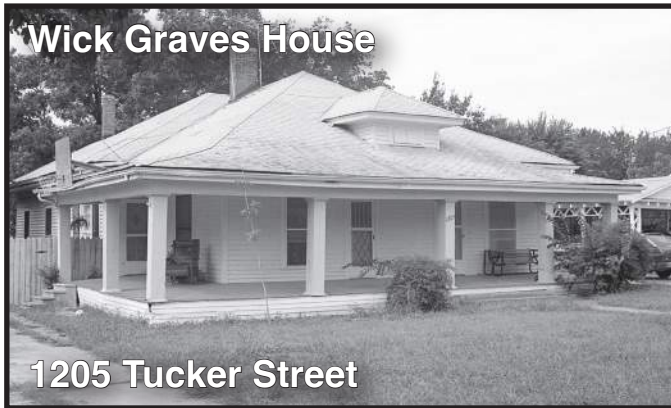
In McKinney, the Arts & Craft aesthetic is clearly evident in a house built by Mr. L. Caruthers in 1915 for grain dealer Ed Browne at 505 W. Lamar Street. This house utilizes the same architectural vocabulary expressed in its Californian predecessor.

### Other Styles

To a lesser degree, there are other early 20th Century architectural styles represented in McKinney's historic neighborhood. These styles include Classical Revival, Colonial Revival and English Cottage (see examples below). Though these homes are impressive, they did not enjoy the same popularity as the more "modern" looking Prairie and Art & Craft Styles.







## The Work of William J. Higgins

The pictures on this page are known structures built by William J. Higgins. He was born in Arkansas in 1850 and began his carpentry career in McKinney around 1900. He was a skillful builder of wood-frame homes in the American Foursquare style and applied its characteristics to nearly everything he built. His larger homes often have both Victorian and Foursquare elements in them.

Higgins is also known as the building of the Foote Baptist Church, which he built in 1908. This building was moved from its original location in 1994 to be a part of Chestnut Square Complex.

Higgins was a prolific and well-known builder whose death in 1927 was a surprise even though he was 77 years old.

### EXCERPTED FROM HIS OBITUARY:

*"William Jordon Higgins was born near Eureka Springs, Ark, March 23, 1850. His parents were Rev. Phillip N and Mary Elizabeth (Culwell) Higgins. His father was a local Methodist preacher.*

*When the deceased was only nine years old his parents left Arkansas for Texas. His mother sickened and died en route.*

*The father and his children settled at Springtown in Parker County, Texas, where they lived until the close of the Civil War, which during the conflict the father and two of his brothers all died. The deceased and his brothers and sisters then all went to their relatives in the Weston community about fourteen miles northwest of McKinney.*

*The deceased was married July 25, 1875 to Miss George Ann Bates, daughter of John C. and Elize Bates, a pioneer Collin County couple. Their marriage ceremony was performed by Rev. J.A. Moore, a Baptist minister who was a bother of the late Dr. W.T. Moore, former county treasurer of Collin County. Five children were born to their union.*

*The deceased was a citizen of a ruggedly honest type of character. For sixty years,*





Collin County has been his home. When he first engaged in farming, he opened up a farm about four miles east of McKinney, clearing the thickly wooded land with his own labor and marketed the cord-wood in McKinney. He later sold his farm to engage in carpenter work in McKinney at which trade he succeeded. He built many barns, residences, business houses in McKinney and different parts of the county.

He combined the virtue of industry, rugged honest, dependability and expenses in his work which all enabled him to succeed in life in a moderate business way. By his thrift and sound business judgment, he accumulated some city property and did his full share in a civic way as a citizen and property owner. He was considerate of the fights and feelings of others who's sympathy always went out in behalf of the sorrowing, the bereft, the suffering and the unfortunate.

His life was filled with many Kindly and tender acts prompted by a gracious, noble heart that moved his helping hand. Even when the shadows of death were eclipsing him, he fatherly advice to his children was not to weep but to live worthy, cheerful and honorable lives. He was prepared to meet his maker at judgment and confidently laid down the responsibilities or earthly living to take up the joys of his eternal home."

*McKinney Democrat-Gazette, July 28, 1927*

