

The Allen-Scofield Home

1502 W. Virginia Street

McKinney, Collin County, Texas

Introduction: Early Settlement in McKinney

McKinney is located in North Texas, central Collin County. McKinney has always been blessed with its rich soil, Wilson Creek, and the East Fork Trinity River. During the mid 1800's, McKinney experienced migratory waves of immigrants and Americans from east of the Mississippi River. The reasons for populating McKinney were numerous: the gradual quelling of the Native American Indian threat, government land grants, the opening of Texas ports on the Gulf of Mexico, the invention of barbed wire, the railroad, etc. In the 1840's, the recently created Texas Legislature mandated that all county seats had to be located within three miles of each future county's center. Hence, in Collin County, what is now McKinney had been selected as one of two possible sites. In 1848, the Texas Legislature named both Collin County and McKinney after Collin McKinney who had recently signed the Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico. McKinney was subsequently designated as the county seat for Collin County.[1] It would be another twenty-five years before McKinney's commerce hub would be able to expand exponentially via the railroad. McKinney was serviced by a number of railroads: the Houston and Texas Central Railroad in 1872, the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad

in 1881, and the Texas Electric Railroad from 1908 thru 1948. McKinney became a thriving and progressive city within North Texas And Collin County.[2]

The Allen Family in Texas

Walter Clarence Allen (b. 11 April 1853) originally lived near Moscow, Fayette County, Tennessee. He was the son of Edmund L. and Rebecca (Smith) Allen. Upon the untimely early death of his father, Walter Clarence assumed the role of his deceased father, helping to look after his mother, seven brothers, and seven sisters. In 1883, the family moved to Texas and, after having lived in Dallas for one month, he and his family moved to McKinney. He later married Elizabeth (Lizzie) Cummins (b. 23 August 1861) in 1888.[3] Lizzie had been born in Grapevine, Texas, the daughter of John Randolph and Elizabeth (Sweat) Cummins. She had moved to McKinney at the age of three in an ox wagon.[4]

Walter Clarence was one of McKinney's best mule men. He remained in the mule business for many years, in partnership with Jesse Shain, a well-known McKinney business man and capitalist.[3] Their partnership operated under the name of Shain and Allen Mule Barn. Meanwhile, Lizzie served as the homemaker, giving birth to four children: Lucille (b. 1889), Helen (b. 1891), and the twins, Elizabeth and Walter Clarence Jr. (b. 1897).

The Allen Family: 26 E. Short Street, McKinney

In November, 1888, Walter Clarence and Lizzie bought a small, two room home, located at 26 E. Short Street (BLK 25-Shorts-McKinney) near, or on, what is now Finch Park. They purchased the property from Sallie E. and J.A.L. Wolfe.[5; 6] The birth of

Lucille in 1889 and the subsequent birth of her three siblings necessitated a newer, larger residence.

The Allen Family: 1502 W. Virginia Street, McKinney

In July, 1904, Walter Clarence purchased property located at 1502 W. Virginia Street (Lots 3 & 4 BLK 4 Waddill, McKinney) from George S. Morris.[7] Having been in the mule business with Jesse Shain for many years, in 1904, Walter Clarence sectioned-off each of their two rooms which had been their home on E. Short Street. He proceeded to move the two rooms, via mule, to their new location at 1502 West Virginia Street. Walter Clarence and Lizzie, in late 1904, completed building their new, enlarged two-story home on Virginia Street, having used the two rooms from E. Short Street as the “core” of their new dwelling.

The original, enlarged home consisted of a traditional Victorian downstairs with a center hallway, kitchen, bedroom, dining room, parlor and sitting room. The upstairs included a hallway and two bedrooms. There was a cistern of the rear of the house for water, though initially, there was no indoor plumbing. Walter Clarence planted four sycamores in the front yard along Virginia Street, in honor of his children. One of the trees died and had to be removed in 2004.

It is believed that the original five inch width heart-of-pine flooring from 1888 still exists in two of the rooms while the remaining rooms have the three inch width heart-of-pine flooring used in 1904. Identical and symmetrical roof lines also indicate that these two rooms were original to Short Street. It should also be noted that these two rooms have split pane windows while the rest of the house does not.

The Allen family continued to live on W. Virginia Street until 1977. Walter Clarence passed away in 1927. As communicated in his obituary, the character of his business testified to his honesty and to his respectful, courteous attitude toward everyone with whom he came in contact. He was unpretentious and had a wonderful heart.[3] Chronologically, Lizzie continued to run the household until her death in 1956. Her twin daughter, Elizabeth, passed away in 1936 at the young age of thirty-nine and there is very little information available with regard to her personal life.

As in the case of Walter Clarence Sr., Walter Clarence Jr. (Cy) helped his mother, Lizzie, run the household at 1502 W. Virginia Street. Cy was, for many years, a sales manager at the Men's Store, located on the East side of the downtown square, next to Smith's Drug Store. The oral histories reflect that Cy was well liked, personable, and always well dressed, including a tie. He was not one to sit idle but rather would walk the square and spend a fair amount of time at the Northside Pharmacy, picking-up the latest news tidbits. He typically would walk on Virginia Street from his home to the Men's Store on the square.[8]

There were several times in the late Summer/early Fall when Cy would burn leftover garden vines and corn stalks from his garden, located on the west side of his 1502 W. Virginia house and bordering the east side of Graves Street. Occasionally, the smoke from the fire would blow from the north, directly into Jean Cook's freshly hung laundry. Under the circumstances, Jean would make Cy well aware of her displeasure with the situation.[9]

Sheriff Terry Box who lived his early years on the west side of Graves Street, discussed Cy Allen's west side garden ritual each Spring. The ritual was, in effect, the

garden's "start-up" process each year whereby, an Afro-American farmer would come from east McKinney with his mules and fully till all of the garden's soil. Sheriff Box also made reference to the chicken coop in the rear of Cy's back yard.[10] It is no wonder that the 1502 W. Virginia Street home has been referred to as a "Victorian farmhouse".

Lucille and Helen, Cy's two sisters, lived at the house with Cy and their Mother, Lizzie. Little is known with regard to Helen's life. However, it has been recounted by B.J. Cope, at one time McKinney's City Manager and Postmaster, that Lucille was his middle school teacher and that she was an outstanding educator.[11]

Lizzie passed away in 1956. It should be noted that she had been a member of the First Christian Church since she was seventeen years of age. She was the oldest member of the Church at the time of her death.[4] The three remaining Allen children continued to live at the 1502 W. Virginia address until their deaths during the 1970s.

From what can be determined there was minimal physical change to the 1502 W. Virginia Street home during the Allen tenure from 1904 through part of 1977. Unfortunately, no pictures of the house can be found prior to 1977. Electricity and plumbing had been added during the years. Helen Hall relates that electricity initially arrived in the downtown area around 1900. However, it is doubtful that electricity got to 1502 W. Virginia Street until some time between 1910 and 1920 as the home was located at the outskirts of town. Plumbing was not available until the 1930's so it is feasible that this was about the time that the bathroom would have been added at the northeast corner of the first floor.[12]

Subsequent Family Improvements: 1502 West Virginia Street, McKinney

The Allen family descendants sold the home to David and Dottie Lackie in 1977. At the time, the Lackie's goal was to always update a residence, sell it, and move-on to another home. During their years in the home, they added decorative ceiling tiles to the parlor and dining room. They eliminated a center hall cross wall, thereby being able to extend the staircase to a direct, straight, descend scenario rather than the previous staircase which had a ninety-degree turn for its bottom three steps, toward the middle of the center hallway. This construction opened-up the entire center hallway from front to back. The Lackies also updated several ceiling light fixtures with other period pieces as Dottie was quite good with interior design. Finally, they installed early period cabinetry, utilizing bead board material.[13]

After several changes of ownership, Keith and Janice Andre purchased the home in 1993. They made several changes to the home including the removal of old burlap-type fabric walls in the two upstairs bedrooms and the replacement with dry wall. They also utilized two pot belly style stoves in the north part of the kitchen as well as in the southwest side of the front living room. On the eastern edge of the property, they were able to secure what had been Greer Street as their formal driveway, having resolved minor property-line issues with their neighbors.[14]

In 1997, the Andres sold their home to Janis and Scott Schubert. The Schuberts rewired the home, replaced much of the plumbing, and updated the heat/air ducts and their respective heating/cooling units. In addition, they converted the upstairs attic space on the west side to a master bedroom and bath while, at the same time, they replaced all of the kitchen cabinets. They also opened the enclosed back porch off the back of the

center hallway. Finally, they built a separate two car garage with interior walk-up stairs to an unfinished second floor, approximately fifteen-by-thirty feet, perfect for storage.[15]

The Scofield Family: 1502 W. Virginia Street, McKinney

The Schuberts sold the home to Clint and JoAnn Scofield in early 2004. Crème white picket fencing was added to the south and east sides of the rear property. The railing and gingerbread on the front and side porches were added in 2004. The trim detail was designed to match the original trim found on the west side of the house. In addition, detailed Victorian-style ceiling trim was added to both the dining room and the parlor. Knowing that Victorian rooms were small in size, the Scofields added a wall between the parlor and dining rooms, along with Victorian etched glass pocket doors. The realtor who represented the Schuberts during the sale of the house indicated that he used to play in the house when he was a child. He remembered a wall with “French doors” separating the rooms. Other key additions included two flueless fireplaces with Victorian style decorative tile, located in the dining and sitting rooms. The fireplace mantel in the dining room was purchased at an antique store in Round Rock, Texas. Also, the original fireplace used to be located in the northeast room. We believe the Shuberts changed the direction it faced as well as the mantel when they remodeled. Lastly a bathroom was added at the south end of the upstairs center hallway. The bathroom has bead board wall trim, period floor tile, a stain glass transom above the door, and a wash sink that was bought by the Lackies in 1977.

Future plans, to be completed in 2007 and 2008, include a fourteen-by-twenty one foot room off the rear of the kitchen along with an adjoining screen porch, approximately ten-

by-eighteen feet. The room addition will be very Victorian including salvage period flooring, period stained glass and ceiling fixtures. The overall objective is to make the addition totally “seamless” as if were original to the home from an interior and exterior perspective.

Friendly Spirits

Not withstanding, it is also important to note the presence of spirits in the 1502 W. Virginia Street home. Examples include folding panel doors simply, quickly, and deliberately falling off their tracks, and the kitchen radio being turned-on at night, typically between 2 and 4 AM, with excessive volume on station frequencies never utilized by the homeowners. Another example relates to one of our female houseguests commenting that she had had a friendly hand on her shoulder several times during the night and for us, as homeowners, not to be concerned as the spirit was determined to be gentle and friendly.[16]

A final incident occurred in October, 2007. Our Daughter-in-Law, Kendra Harrell, was sleeping in our upstairs “green room”. During the night, the room’s entry door was opened, exposing the hallway light. She initially thought that it might have been our cat coming into the room. However, she remembered that the cat was shut in the master bedroom and could not get out and the door had been securely closed that evening before she and Brad had retired. Moreover, the door mysteriously shut just as it had opened.[17] This happens to be the same room that the our friend had the “experience”. More food for thought!

Conclusion

The Allen-Scofield home has been well documented and preserved over the years. It represents an excellent example of Victorian period architectural components. The Scofields plan to continue to preserve the home for future generations.

Clint and JoAnn Scofield currently seek a City of McKinney Historical Marker. It is their intent to document the integrity of their home as a tribute and reminder to future generations as to the critical importance of preserving our common historical past.

References

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