

Simmons-Maxwell Home

607 Pearl Street, Denton, Denton County, Texas

Historical Narrative researched and written by Kathleen Barnett for Texas Historical Commission Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Marker, Denton County 2016

I. Context

In 1913 the City of Denton had become a bustling community with a population of nearly 5,000, more than tripling the population since 1880.¹ The community was centered around the town square with its beautiful limestone courthouse built in 1896 and flourishing businesses. The square's establishments included the Wright Opera House, Exchange National Bank, First National Bank, Denton County National Bank, the Clyde Hotel, and multiple jewelry, hardware, real estate offices, attorney offices, grocery stores, and drug stores.² Close to the square there were over a dozen churches, two railroads and two colleges.³ In May 1913, the *Denton Record-Chronicle* posted an article entitled "Old Carroll Homestead Sought for Park"

"At the request of J.R. Christal, J.C. Coit and other interested Denton citizens, A.N. (A.A.) Greene Jr. of Dallas has agreed to set a price for the sale of the old homestead of the late Judge Carroll, which he owns.

The site at the northwest corner of West Oak Street and Carroll Avenue is one of the prettiest in the town with a grove of native shade trees and the north end includes several hundred meandering feet of the Cottonwood Creek. The group hopes to make the land the beginning of a municipal park system.

The tract runs from Oak back to the town limits. If enough funds cannot be raised to purchase the entire tract, the group hopes to purchase that part up to Congress that is east of John B. Denton Street."⁴

However, A. A. Green and Arthur Emery decided to develop the land and subdivided the property into lots. On July 24, 1913, they recorded a map and plat of the Carroll Park Addition to the City of Denton and dedicated the streets and alleys on the map and plat of the Carroll Park Addition to the City of Denton.⁵

In 1914, James Wiley Simmons, a prominent civic leader and Susan Speed Gregg Simmons, granddaughter of Darius Gregg, decided to sell their home on West Oak Street, where they had lived since 1904⁶, and build a home in the new Carroll Park Addition. The Simmons' new home was constructed in the Arts and Crafts Mission style, which revived traditional artistic

craftsmanship with themes of simplicity, honesty, function, harmony, nature and social reform; it differed greatly from the Victorian homes on Oak and Hickory Street.

II. Overview

James Wiley Simmons (1883-1943) was born on December 6, 1883⁷ in Ruston, Louisiana. His grandfather, Asa Bailey Simmons (1816- 1884), was born in Georgia but moved to Louisiana in 1849. The 1860 census of Jackson Parish, Louisiana shows that he was a wealthy landowner but lost all his property after the Civil War.⁸ Jesse A. Simmons (1844- unk), son of Asa B. Simmons, was a life-long planter and had accumulated a plantation of 500 acres raising principally corn and cotton. Jesse A. Simmons also owned a large general merchandise store in Vienna, Lincoln Parish, Louisiana. James Wiley Simmons was the ninth of ten children born to Jesse and his wife Mary Malone. Between 1888 and 1900 the family relocated to Fannin, Texas⁹ and joined their extended family who had settled in Denton and Tarrant Counties.

Susan Speed Gregg (1884-1958) was born July 4, 1884¹⁰, the oldest of three children born to William Bowen Gregg and Emma Belle Mounts of Denton, Texas. James Wiley Simmons and Susan Speed Gregg were married on February 15, 1904.¹¹

On December 23, 1904, James and Susan purchased lot #150 on W. Oak Street¹² and built their first home, directly across the street from the Evers home, which was built in 1903. In 1908, the Simmons filed an Affidavit of Homestead, stating #150 Oak Street had been their home for four years.¹³ A Mechanics Lien recorded in 1910, states a two story home was to be built on the land by George Harris for \$4,350.00 and was to be completed in one hundred days.¹⁴

With the opening of the Carroll Park Addition, J. W. and Susan decided to sell their home on Oak Street and build a new modern home. On December 10, 1914, James Wiley Simmons and Susan Speed Gregg Simmons purchased Lot 7 and part of Lot 8, Carroll Park Addition, from J.T. Campbell and Mrs. Mary Campbell.¹⁵ On December 18, 1914, they purchased Lots 4, 5, and 6, Carroll Park Addition from A.A. Green and Arthur Emery.¹⁶ The home was built on Lot 6 looking over their gardens to the east. To the west of the property was the site of John B. Denton College, soon to become Denton High School. Since 1926, the legal description of the property has remained as twenty feet off the East side of Lot 8, all of Lot 7 and thirty feet off West side of Lot 6.¹⁷

The Simmons family hired an architect to build their home in a style differing from the Oak Street homes and reminiscent of Susan Simmons's Texas heritage. It is speculated that the architect they hired was Harold Vandervoort Walsh, who was a recent graduate of Columbia University. On January 25, 1915, *The Denton Record Chronicle* reported the following:

“J. W. Simmons received today from Architect Walsh the plans and specifications for his new home, contract for which will be let in the near future. The new residence will be the one of the handsomest and most modern in Denton and will be built on the Carroll addition on a lot fronting on Pearl Street, just north of the J.B. Farris home.”¹⁸

The 607 Pearl home was built on a hill within walking distance of the square. The home's red brick front porch transitions into a curvy red brick walkway. The walkway ends at street level after descending a set of rustic, yet majestic, native stone steps. At its entry, the driveway is lined with five-foot tall sandstone rocks which taper in size to ground level at the rear of the house. The exterior of the Simmons-Maxwell home is representative of the Arts and Crafts Mission style and is inspired by the stucco coated adobe architecture of the Southwest. The asymmetrical home has thick masonry walls covered with stucco and a Mission-shaped parapet¹⁹ on the roof with a small arched window.²⁰ The roof has widely overhanging eaves supported by forty-one decorative corbels with acanthus leaves. The oversized, exquisitely-crafted hemlock front door has a beveled glass window, fortress style mortise lockset and brass mail slot. The door is recessed behind an arch with a sculpted surround. Identical leaded glass windows gracefully flank each side of the front door. Between the first and second floor a decorative 12-inch low-relief panel surrounds the house. The windows on the front of the home are casement window to allow northern cooling breezes to flow into the rooms. The east side of the home has a thirty-foot by twelve-foot sunroom with large arched windows. The west side of the home has a side entrance which is accessible about $\frac{3}{4}$ up the driveway. The long driveway leads to a detached garage, which has a raised wood floor. The south side of the home has an entry into the kitchen; on the southeast corner there is an open porch which also leads to the kitchen, dining room, and sunroom through double-sash French doors. Above the kitchen was a sleeping porch; sleeping in fresh air in either a covered or screened room was the ultimate step toward communing with nature and improving one's health.

Through the front door is a large foyer with warm-toned wood wainscoting and moldings, built-in bookcases with glass doors, and a welcoming large brick fireplace. The oversized front door has a courting room on one side and a coat closet on the other; both contain leaded glass

windows. The front staircase has carved wood panels and leads to a joint stairway landing, which showcases eight-foot casement windows. The foyer opens to the living room through eight-foot pocket doors with float glass panes.

The focal point of the living room is the inviting brick fireplace. The fireplace stood for security, nourishment, communication, comfort and a gathering place where family and friends could share their troubles and their joys.²¹ On the north side is a built-in window seat with bookcases on each side and three casement windows above to illuminate the room. The floors are white oak with long leaf pine run underneath. Wood beams highlight the ceiling and dark wood board-and-batten wainscoting capped with a horizontal plate surround the room.

The living room flows into the large dining room through another set of eight-foot pocket doors with float glass panes. The wood beams and board-and-batten wainscoting are also in the dining room. The original alabaster white light fixture provides light, as do the five-foot casement window and eight-foot double sash French doors leading to an open porch. Both the living room and the dining room open into large sunroom through two more sets of double sash French doors.

The sunroom measures twelve by thirty feet and originally looked down over the gardens on the east side of the home through the expansive arched windows. The floor has single cut boards of white oak and slants to the east toward a gutter that runs the length of the room. The walls are smooth stucco with board-and-batten wainscoting under the four windows. A double sash arched doorway leads to the open porch.

The kitchen was designed as the heart of the family's daily life and includes a breakfast nook placed under a window, and entry into the open porch, dining room and hallway. The original back porch has been enclosed and is now the laundry area.

Across from the dining room, through yet another pocket door is a guest bedroom with full bath. Down the hall is the back staircase that joins the landing accessed by the front staircase which leads to the second floor -staircase. The landing is lit by an original light fixture, which matches the fixture found in the dining room. Between the front and back staircase is a short hallway leading to the entrance to the basement, a half-bath, and the side entrance with beveled glass door and a covered porch.

At the top of the second floor staircase is a wide hallway that runs north-south to the bedrooms and sleeping porch. At the south end of the hallway is a double sash French door opening to the original sleeping porch, which is completely surrounded by windows so that fresh, "healing" air could circulate freely. This room also has a gutter that runs the length of the south wall. In the northeast corner is the master bedroom with a fireplace and three large windows. It has a pass thru bathroom to the master study which also has three large windows. A double sash French door leads from the study to the sleeping porch. At the north end of the hall is a second full bath. The northwest corner is a second bedroom and a double wood door linen closet. The southwest bedroom also opens to the sleeping porch through a double sash French door.

A finished attic or playroom with half bath is accessible from a third floor staircase, accessible from the second floor hallway. From the attic windows there is a view of downtown Denton and the Courthouse on the east, and a view of the school to the west.

Susan Speed Gregg Simmons

The Simmons family had three children: James Albert, William Gregg and Susan Jane. Susan Speed Gregg Simmons's roots go back not only to the Texas Revolution, but also to the American Revolution. In 1963, William Gregg Simmons applied for an Application for Membership in the Sons of the American Revolution.²²

Susan Speed Gregg Simmons was the daughter of William Bowen Gregg (1849-89), the only son of Elias "Darius" Gregg. Darius Gregg (1804-1870), the grandfather of Susan Speed Gregg Simmons, came to Texas in 1827. Darius Gregg, a Dewitt Colonist,²³ joined the Texas Army on October 5, 1835 and fought in the Texas War for Independence under Capt. John York's Company. He participated in the Grass Fight and the Siege of Bexar in 1835²⁴, the fiercest battle of the Texas Revolution. He fought in the "Battle for San Antonio" in December 1835.²⁵ For his service, Darius Gregg received a Bounty Warrant of 540 acres in Falls County; he received a Donation Warrant of 640 acres in Polk County for participating in the Battle of Bexar. He was issued one-third league of land in Harris County on February 1, 1938. After the war he resided in Houston, Texas and worked as a district surveyor for the Buffalo Bayou, Brazos and Colorado Railroad, the first railroad to operate in Texas. As he travelled throughout the State of Texas for the B.B.B. & C.R.R. he chose and acquired what he determined was the

most desirable land in the state. Gregg describes his land in Denton County in a letter of October 25, 1868.²⁶

“Denton County is 180 miles from Bryan in the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. The cross timber passes through the center of the county. The timber land is generally poor. The prairie land is very rich soil.”

“I have between fifteen and twenty thousand acres of choice lands I will consider selling to \$2.00 an acre, one-half in hand, the balance in 12 months bearing an interest of 10 per cent per annum.”

“I selected these lands in person some fifteen years ago when most of the land was vacant and I consider it choice land.”

In 1852, Darius Gregg established the 20,000 acre Gregg Ranch (THC Marker Gregg Ranch, 1973 #2279)²⁷ in Denton County, on which is placed a Texas Historical Marker. Although he used Houston as his address throughout his lifetime, he often went to Denton to escape the heat and humidity.

Darius Gregg gave acreage for the building and support of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Houston and donated land to the Masonic Collegiate Institute of Anderson. He was a charter member of the Masonic Grand Lodge, the first Masonic Lodge in Texas. In 1860, he gave J.L. Lovejoy power of attorney to sell 640 acres of land in the Denton County acreage for building the Methodist church in Denton. He was one of the founders of the Shearn Church in Houston and Gregg Chapel in Houston is named for him. At the time of his death on March 28, 1870, Darius Gregg had property in Denton, Bell, Comanche, Harris, Polk and McLennan counties.²⁸ Darius Gregg is buried in the Glenwood Cemetery in Houston and a historical marker is at the grave site.²⁹ (THC Marker Darius Gregg, 1973 # 10673)

On April 30, 1840, Darius Gregg married Susan Speed Bowen (1824- 1853) in Grimes County, Texas. Susan’s father was William Russell Bowen (1787-1855) who joined the Texas Army in their struggle against Santa Anna in October 1835. William Russell Bowen fought with General Thomas Rusk and received eight and one-third labors of land Certificate #109 in Montgomery County. During his lifetime he was acquainted with John James Audubon and listened to Andrew Jackson tell his tales of adventure when he came to visit.

William Russell Bowen was a strong adventurous man but it must have been difficult for him to live in the shadow of his father, Captain William Bowen (1742-1804) and his grandfather

General William Russell (1735-1793).³⁰ Captain William Bowen married Mary Henley Russell, daughter of General William Russell in 1777.

General William Russell was an American Revolutionary War officer and a prominent settler of Virginia. William Russell was educated at the College of William and Mary and his second wife was the sister of Patrick Henry. Russell was present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. During this time, he was brevetted to the rank of Brigadier General, commanding the 5th Virginia Regiment, until it was disbanded on 15 November 1783. He also aided in drafting the Declaration of Independence.³¹

William Bowen Gregg (1850-1889), the only son of Darius Gregg, after graduating from college in Nashville, Tennessee and marrying his first wife, Pattie A. Gregg (1853-1879)³² moved to Denton to manage the Gregg Ranch. After the death of his first wife, he married Emma Belle Mounts (1865-1957), daughter of W.H. Mounts, on July 4, 1883. Emma was noted for her beauty and musical ability and often played the guitar for the cowboys on the ranch during the evening.³³ William and Emma had three children, Susan Speed Gregg (1884 - 1958), Mary Catherine Gregg (1885-1978), and William Bowen Gregg II (1888-1921).

Notorious outlaw Sam Bass worked for William Mounts, father-in-law of W.B. Gregg; Bass also worked on the ranch.³⁴ Gregg raised registered race horses, the most famous being Conn Noble. A frequent summer visitor to the Gregg Ranch was Robert Swift of the well-known meat packing family.³⁵

W. B. Gregg inherited most of his father's Denton County land in 1870 and continued to manage the ranch until shortly before his death. In 1888, W. B. Gregg moved back to Houston in hopes that the climate would improve his health, but he died a true Texan on June 1, 1889.³⁶ He left specific requests in his will³⁷ (dated February 11, 1889) regarding his wife, children, and vast property holdings. He requested to be buried in Glenwood Cemetery, Houston, Texas and to have the remains of his father, mother, sisters, brothers and infant child reinterred in the Glenwood Cemetery. He bequeathed to his wife, Emma, 155 acres located one-half mile west of Denton in the E. Puchalski Survey, along with all improvements and all household and kitchen furniture. He appointed Dr. Cuvier Lipscomb (1840-1915) to be the executor of his will and custodian of his three small children, ages four, three and two.

On March 26, 1890³⁸, less than a year after the death of W.B. Gregg, Dr. Cuvier Lipscomb and Emma Bell Mounts Gregg were married. Susan Speed Gregg Simmons and her two siblings inherited a large estate and when they became of age, Susan Simmons and her sister turned their part of the ranch into farms and grew cotton and wheat. Susan also raised Shropshire sheep for many years. Her brother, William B. Gregg II, continued utilizing his land as a working ranch for many years.³⁹

Susan Speed Gregg Simmons, her sister Mary Catherine, and brother William B. Gregg II conveyed two parcels of land to Mrs. Emma B. Lipscomb, as a symbolic gesture of their love and affection. The first being 164 acres of land in the E. Puchalski 1/3 league survey, Vol 00091, Page 136 of the Real Property Records of Denton County, Texas.⁴⁰ The second being a lot on Mount Street as recorded in Vol 00103, Page 249 of the Real Property Records of Denton County, Texas.⁴¹

James and Susan Simmons were prominent citizens in the City of Denton and were active in many civic and social organizations. James was a member of the Masonic Lodge, a charter member of the Denton Chamber of Commerce⁴², a member of the Rotary Club⁴³, a member of the City of Denton Board of Equalization⁴⁴, City of Denton Tax Deputy⁴⁵ -and was on the executive committee of the Denton Golf Club.⁴⁶ James Simmons stated his regular occupation to be stock-farms, or planter by trade. However, during World War I he was appointed a Secretary of the National War Work Council of the Young Men's Christian Association. His service was with the troops of the American Expeditionary Force in France.⁴⁷

Susan Simmons was active in the 1923 Bridge Club, the Ariel Club, the City Federation of Women's Clubs, and the Shakespeare Club. Using her home on Pearl Street, Susan Simmons hosted a Complimentary Tea for the ladies during the 43rd Annual Texas Press Association, which was held May 11-13, 1922 at the new College of Industrial Arts auditorium.⁴⁸

Susan and James entertained in their home and invited guests from Denton, as well as friends from across the country, oftentimes having 60 to 70 guests.⁴⁹ Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Northen of Galveston were guests of the Simmons family in October 1921.⁵⁰ Mrs. Northen was the daughter of W.L. Moody, Jr.; she inherited the bulk of the Moody Foundation and holdings in Galveston, Texas.⁵¹ In 1938, the Simmons family decided to move to Corpus Christi to be near their daughter⁵²; they sold their Pearl Street home to E. C. Northen.

After the death of J.W. Simmons in 1943⁵³, Susan Simmons returned to the Denton she loved:

“‘Denton climate, where I was born, seems to agree with me.’ Said Mrs. J. W. Simmons, former resident, who has returned here to make Denton her home. ‘I have gained 14 pounds since I came back home. That Corpus Christi climate just didn’t agree with me, and I am mighty glad to get back to the home town I never wanted to leave.’ ”⁵⁴

Northen - Greer- Wallis

In 1943, Mr. Northen sold 607 Pearl Street to Eva N. Greer, a family friend.⁵⁵ One year later on September 2, 1944, Eva N. Greer sold the property to C.E. Wallis for \$8,250.00⁵⁶. Charlie Edward (C.E.) and Clara Drue Baker Wallis resided at the home with their five daughters, many of whose husbands were serving in World War II. Clara Drue Baker Wallis was a member of the pioneer Baker family of Denton County. Her great grandmother, Melvina Doyle Baker, helped to settle the Flower Mound community and homesteaded 192 acres in 1847.⁵⁷ During the time the Wallis family lived in the home, they made a second kitchen in the upstairs sunroom for the convenience of the daughters.⁵⁸

The Maxwells

Colonel Frederick W. Maxwell (1897-1971) and his wife, Alice "Louise" Matthews Maxwell (1897–1980), purchased 607 Pearl Street for \$16,000.00 on January 24, 1948.⁵⁹ Frederick Ward Maxwell was born in Macomb, Illinois and moved to Athens, Texas in about 1910.⁶⁰ Alice Louise Matthews Maxwell was born in Dublin, Texas in 1897, and was a tenth generation American through the Matthews lineage.⁶¹ The Matthews Memorial Methodist Church in Fort Worth was named in honor of her father Rev. W.H. Matthews.⁶² The Maxwells married in 1920 and had four daughters: Anne, Elizabeth, Mary and Sally, all graduates of Denton colleges⁶³.

The Maxwells made a number of renovations to the home to keep up with the newest technology and products that were available after the war. They removed the old coal furnace and replaced it with individual room gas heaters. They renovated the kitchen and installed the popular mid-century metal cabinets and covered the wood kitchen floor with linoleum. The canvas and wallpaper were removed and the shiplap walls in the upstairs, kitchen, and hallways were covered with sheetrock and painted. In the attic, the small window in the parapet was

replaced with a whole house fan. The bathrooms were modernized and a bathroom added to the downstairs guest bedroom.

Colonel F.W. Maxwell, a supply officer in France during World War I, was the first ROTC commandant in the Fort Worth high schools. He and his wife moved to Denton in 1939 where he served as commander of the Civilian Conservation Corps⁶⁴. In 1944, Colonel F.W. Maxwell was assigned as an officer of an infantry unit in the 99th Division and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. On the same day and in nearly the same location that Colonel F.W. Maxwell was wounded in Belgium, the majority of 150 captured Yanks were ruthlessly slaughtered by their German captors. The Colonel's unit narrowly escaped the same fate. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, Combat Infantry Badge, two Belgium Fourragures, and two Italian decorations.⁶⁵

Following WWII, Colonel F.W. Maxwell was supervisor of the American POW camp in Wurtzburg, Germany and served on the Staff of General Lucius Clay. He then moved into the Frankfurt Headquarters of the European Command. Mrs. Maxwell and two of their daughters joined him in 1946-47 and immediately began to help displaced persons, many of whom had no country left.⁶⁶ He commanded a reserve officers unit in Dallas from 1948-1950. He served as the chief of the Osaka District of Procurement (1950-1952) and directed the buying of anything any division of the Army needed. He stated that he and his department spent between five and ten million dollars per month supplying the Army. Colonel F.W. Maxwell stated:

“We bought steel, textiles or anything else that was needed. Our purchases in Japan were from civilian contractors and companies.”

In 1953 he was assigned as Procurement Officer for the armies stationed in Europe. Mrs. Maxwell and daughter Sally joined him in Bremerhaven.⁶⁷ While accompanying Colonel F.W. Maxwell on his deployments, Mrs. Maxwell and her daughters became avid collectors of high-quality, decorative arts and souvenirs from all over the world. They filled their home with the priceless European souvenirs⁶⁸ which included over fifty pieces of Meissen ware from Germany, a large grand piano, crystal, all types of chinaware from each country, a beautiful gold clock, a piece of marble from Mussolini's fireplace, and a tile block from Goering's bathroom.⁶⁹ Mrs. Maxwell tried to obtain souvenirs that were representative of each country they visited. Upon their return to Denton, the Maxwells opened their home to the Denton High School Parent-

Teacher Association Home and Garden Pilgrimage as a fundraiser, displaying their collection of souvenirs.⁷⁰

The Maxwells were active in the community even though they travelled the world extensively. Colonel F.W. Maxwell was a member of the Kiwanis Club, The Rotary Club, the Wesley Foundation of the First Methodist Church, officer of the Denton Knife and Fork Club, a President and founder of the City of Denton American Association of Retired Persons, editor of the Denton County GOP newsletter, and member of the Chamber of Commerce. He was often interviewed and was often requested as a speaker on the past and current affairs of the nation.

Mrs. Maxwell was a member of the Circle of Women's Society of the First Methodist Church, the Denton Garden Club, the Women's Shakespeare Club, the Builders of Power Class of the First Methodist Church, the Laff-a-Lot Club, the Benjamin Lyons Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution⁷¹, and was on the board of the Fairhaven Home for the Elderly.

Mrs. Maxwell completed over sixty speeches on international relations to women's clubs across the state to gain sponsorships for displaced persons.

"Of the 1600 displaced persons in Texas, 1000 have come through sponsorships obtained by Mrs. Maxwell. She represents Women's Shakespeare Club, Denton County Federation of Women's Clubs, and Second District of Texas."⁷²

In 1947 she spoke to the Denton Kiwanis club describing the hardships and sufferings of the German people after the war:

"America is now an example to the whole world and her conduct and thinking must be on the basis of humanity. The future of all European countries is important to each other and important to the United States."⁷³

In 1958, Mrs. Maxwell was awarded the Red Cross Top Service Award as she had started serving with the Red Cross in 1918 at Camp Bowie and had served all over the U.S., Europe and Japan for forty years.⁷⁴

The Maxwell's daughter Sally was an accomplished vocal musician, opera singer, and graduate of North Texas State College (now UNT); she travelled the world with her parents and taught voice in Osaka after the war. In 1960 she died tragically and The Sally Maxwell Sharples Memorial Scholarship was established in her memory. The scholarship is still being awarded by the University of North Texas (UNT) College of Music. Daughter Elizabeth Maxwell is a

graduate of Texas Woman's University (TWU) and received her Doctorate of Education in 1974. She was the supervisor of Oklahoma State University's English Education until 1990. Daughter Ann attended TWU and graduated from the Arts Students League in New York. Daughter Mary is a graduate of NTSC and resides in Houston, Texas. A copy of Mary's painting of 607 Pearl Street, completed circa 1965 is included in the Appendix.

In 1980, the current owners purchased the home from the Estate of Mrs. Louise Maxwell. The owners raised eight children in the home. The renovations completed by the current owners include replacing the metal kitchen cabinets with Arts and Crafts style wood cabinets, removing the linoleum and installing a wood floor, and updating the bathrooms and plumbing. The upstairs windows in the sleeping porch were replaced for the safety of the children. A central heating unit was installed in the basement and the existing coal furnace vents were used with additional floor vents added, as needed. A roof was placed over the south porch enabling the family to enjoy the porch during the summer. A half bath was added to the paneled and carpeted attic playroom.

III. Significance

J. W. Simmons and Susan Gregg Simmons constructed their home in 1915 in the Arts and Crafts Mission style, which differed greatly from the homes on Oak Street. From its stucco exterior with forty-one decorative corbels and Mission-shaped parapet to its open floor plan with white oak flooring and warm wood wainscoting, the home is still a one-of-a kind example of expert artistic craftsmanship. Its original splendor has been largely preserved over the years.

The Simmons and Maxwell families were prominent citizens in the Denton community, in Texas, and in the world. The ancestors of Susan Gregg Simmons fought in the American Revolution and her grandfather, Darius Gregg, was a hero in the Texas Revolution; he acquired over 20,000 acres in Denton County. J.W. Simmons was appointed to the National War Work Council of the Y.M.C.A.

Colonel F.W. Maxwell served in WWI and was wounded in WWII during the Battle of the Bulge; he was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Maxwell continued to serve in Europe and Japan after WWII and retired after 40 years of service to his country. Mrs. Maxwell was active in numerous civic organizations and completed over 60 speeches across the state on

international relations; gaining sponsorships for 1000 displaced war persons. She was awarded the top Red Cross service award for over 40 years of service at home and abroad.

The Simmons-Maxwell home was awarded a City of Denton Historic Landmark in 1981 and became part of the original Oak-Hickory Historic District in 1986.

IV. Documentation

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² Bates, Edward Franklin. *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*. Denton, Texas: McNitzky Printing, 1918; rpt., Denton: Terrill Wheeler Printing, 1976.

³ Bridges: 261.

⁴ Taylor, D.J. "Yesteryear 100 Years Ago," *Denton Record Chronicle* 19 May 2013. Print.

⁵ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 75, Page 171

⁶ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 109, Page 297

⁷ "Death Certificate of James Wiley Simmons." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 3 September 2015.

⁸ The Simmons Family of Lincoln Parish, Louisiana, Private Collection of Kathleen Barnett

⁹ "1900 United States Federal Census." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 11 October 2015.

¹⁰ "Death Certificate of Susan Gregg Simmons." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 1 September 2015.

¹¹ White, Diana Pearson and Vinita Bond Davis. *Marriage Index, Denton County, Texas 1895-March 1912*:147

¹² Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 90, Page 73 and 1910 United States Federal Census

¹³ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 109, Page 297

¹⁴ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 2 Page 330

¹⁵ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 137 Page 351

¹⁶ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 127 Page 235

¹⁷ Denton County Tax Roll 1946

¹⁸ "19 Years Ago Today," *Denton Record- Chronicle* 25 January 1934:2. Print.

¹⁹ McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. 16th Edition. New York: Knopf. 1984. Print.

²⁰ Denton County Tax Roll 1946

²¹ Turgeon, Kitty and Robert Rust. *Arts & Crafts*. New York: Friedman/Fairfax. 1997. Print.

²² "Application for The Texas Society of The National Society of the Sons of The American Revolution." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 19 August 2015.

²³ McKeehan, Wallace L. "Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas 1828." Tamu.edu. Web. 26 September 2015.

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- ²⁶ Odom, E. Dale and Mrs. Charles A. Hall. "Ranch Eclipses Days of Texas Founders." *Denton Record- Chronicle* 14 March 1976: 5A. Print.
- ²⁷ Lowry, Bullitt. *The Historical Markers of Denton County, Texas*. Texas: Terrell Wheeler Printing, Inc. 1980: 13. Print.
- ²⁸ Daughters of the Republic of Texas. "Darius Gregg.":115. Print.
- ²⁹ Texas Marker for Darius Gregg, THC Marker Darius Gregg, 1973 #10673.
- ³⁰ "William Russell Bowen." [Crystallmountain-aromatics.com](http://crystallmountain-aromatics.com). Web. 2 December 2014.
- ³¹ "General William Russell." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 19 August 2015
- ³² Mason, Ken and Christy. "Pattie A. Gregg." *Find a Grave*. 13 June 2002. Web. 10 Feb 2015.
- ³³ Odom, E. Dale and Mrs. Charles A. Hall. "Gregg Ranch" *Denton Record Chronicle*. 14 July, 1976: 6G. Print.
- ³⁴ Odom, "Ranch Eclipses Days of Texas Founders." 5A.
- ³⁵ Odom, "Gregg Ranch." 6G.
- ³⁶ Hague, Robert. "William B Gregg." *Find a Grave*. 28 Feb 2012. Web. 10 Feb 2015.
- ³⁷ "Last Will and Testament of William B. Gregg." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 3 September 2015
- ³⁸ "Texas Marriage Collection 1851-1900." *Ancestry.com*. Web. 26 September 2015
- ³⁹ Odom, "Ranch Eclipses Days of Texas Founders." 5A.
- ⁴⁰ Denton County Real Property Records, Volume 91, Page 136
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