

# MOUNTS-WRIGHT HOUSE

*Historical narrative written and researched by  
Bill and Rose Benton for Texas Historical Commission  
Recorded Texas Historic Landmark Application  
Denton County, 2016*

## **I. CONTEXT**

The Mounts -Wright House located at 403 Mounts Avenue in Denton, Texas, represents the influence that the Mounts and Wright families had on the development of business, education, social activities and religion in Denton, Texas, and to the development of the town itself from its establishment as the county seat in 1857. The house and property transitioned from the Mounts to the Wright family as a continuation of heirs and inheritance within a family tree that continued through four generations.

The Mounts-Wright House is situated at the northwest corner of Mounts Avenue and Haynes Street, and its recorded history originates with the first instrument of conveyance of the land in 1839, from the Republic of Texas to William Neill for receipt of 640 acres of land<sup>1</sup> as payment for services in the Texas-Mexican War of 1836<sup>2</sup>. Robert W. Woodruff acquired 100½ acres from this original 640 acre Neill tract in 1855<sup>3</sup>. In the fall of 1856, it was decided to relocate the county seat of Denton County to a tract of land donated by Mr. Woodruff, William Loving, and Hiram Sisco in order to obtain a more centralized location. The town was to be called Denton, after John B. Denton<sup>4</sup>. Among the first businessmen to leave the former county seat of New Alton and move his business to one of the new town lots in Denton was W. H. Mounts<sup>5</sup>.

Upon the death of Robert Woodruff, the remainder of his land was divided into lots and sold in December of 1858. One of these lots, Lot 14, was purchased by Joseph Bledsoe<sup>6</sup>. The majority of this land of Lot 14 would soon become the Mounts' 15 acre family farm and homestead, and would later be divided further into city lots in the Mounts Addition and the Mounts 2<sup>nd</sup> Addition.

For a decade after its founding, Denton County was on the northeast Texas frontier. Cattle and horses ranged on the unfenced prairies. Residents were engaged in ranching and subsistence farming. Various members of the Mounts family were involved in ranching in the early days of Denton County. W. H. Mounts had a stable and was known to have fine horses<sup>7</sup>.

As surveys were granted and lots were divided, farms and ranches began to dot the landscape in the land surrounding the new county seat of Denton. Cabins and farmhouses were built to house the residents of the new town of Denton early on. After purchasing Lot 14, Joseph Bledsoe built a house on this land<sup>8</sup> sometime between 1859 and 1860. He is noted as a resident of Collin County when he sold the property to Emily Noble Mounts (1806- late-1860s), on March 23, 1861<sup>9</sup>.

The Mounts family was important in the early commerce of the developing town of Denton. Denton grew from a frontier town, incorporating as a City in 1866. The first railroad, Texas & Pacific Railway, came to Denton in 1881, linking Denton to major cities, promoting Denton's role as an agricultural trade center<sup>10</sup>. Farms and ranches became profitable and merchandisers and bankers advanced the business community. Denton's Courthouse square became a focal point for business. In addition to W. H. Mounts' early mercantile establishment on the square, Mattie Mounts bought the Ox Tread Grist Mill just north of the square in 1865<sup>11</sup>.

W. H. Mounts' business ventures continued through at least the 1860s and 1870s and were nationwide in scope<sup>12</sup>.

W. H. Mounts served during the Civil War from 1863 to at least March of 1864 in Co. D, McCord's Frontier Regiment Texas Cavalry<sup>13</sup>. He entered as a Private and later served as a hospital Steward<sup>14</sup>.

Fraternal organizations were the social networking equivalent of the mid-1800s. In 1861, The Royal Arch Masons No. 80 was organized, and W. H. Mounts and W. C. Baines were charter members. W.H. Mounts joined the IOOF No. 82, originally formed in 1859, after the group's reorganization in 1866<sup>15</sup>. In January, 1869, he was installed as an officer of this organization<sup>16</sup>.

The Mounts family was very influential in the establishment of religious worship and education in Denton. Mattie Mounts, was a charter member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and her father, Rev. John Haynes, was one of its original pastors<sup>17</sup>. Mrs. Mounts later established the first Sunday School in Denton which was multi-denominational<sup>18</sup>. Mattie Mounts also taught private school in her home and on South Elm Street, and her daughters, Sena and Alice Mounts, were among Denton's early public school teachers.

Prime Denton residential real estate in the 1870s began close to the Square, filling present day Elm and Locust Streets north and south with early pioneer families. At that time, West Oak Street was a dusty road linking Denton to Decatur. It would soon become Denton's preferred residential area with the construction of several fine homes by leading Denton citizens. Dr. Curvier Lipscomb purchased the first lot in 1874 from William H. Mounts, building a family home at present day 802 West Oak Street (now demolished)<sup>19</sup>. In 1883, Jessie and Addison Graham, early Denton merchants, built a home in High Victorian Style, dubbed the 'house of

seven gables' at present day 700 West Oak Street (now demolished). In 1886, Annie and Robert C. Scripture, merchants at the Scripture building on the Denton Square, built their home at present day 819 West Oak Street. The Raley family built their home at present day 801 West Oak Street in 1895. Priestly Lipscomb, Dr. Lipscomb's son, built a home for his bride at present day 918 West Oak Street in 1895. Otis Graham built the Queen Anne style home at present day 723 West Oak Street in 1898<sup>20</sup>.

In 1898, Martha Elizabeth (Mattie) Mounts, built the house known today as the Mounts-Wright House. Her husband WH Mounts had passed away in 1889. She contracted with J.B. Wilson as contractor for the sum of \$1800.00. The construction of this new house followed after the original Mounts home burned about 1893. The original Mounts house faced south and was at the end of a road on the hill near the present Mounts-Wright house. Mounts Avenue was originally a road leading to the house from Oak Street. Mattie Mounts lived in the house until her failing health forced her to move in with her daughter Emma and her husband Dr. Cuvier Lipscomb on Oak Street. Mattie died in 1914 and her heirs deeded the home to her daughter Sena Mounts Wright.<sup>21</sup>

W. H. and Mattie Mounts had 8 children, 4 boys and 4 girls. One of the daughters was Sena Alleen Mounts born in 1875. Sena Mounts married William Wesley (WW) Wright in 1896 at the Mounts Family home. W.W. Wright was the son of a prominent Denton County rancher William Crow (WC) Wright. WC Wright constructed the Wright Opera House on the northeast corner of Denton square in 1900 and still stands today.

WW Wright grew up in Denton and was involved in several organizations. In 1894 he was secretary/treasurer of the Denton Gun Club which was a division of the Texas Volunteer Guard, and locally called "The Owsley Rifles", a social, civic, and military organization. He was

a member of the Denton Football Team in 1895. WW Wright was listed as an assistant cashier at Denton County National Bank in 1893 and served as textbook librarian and accountant at North Texas State Teachers College for many years. Sena Mounts Wright was a 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade teacher at Robert E Lee School in 1893-94. Mrs. WW Wright belonged to the pioneer Ariel Literature Club, was a charter member of the Denton PTA, one of the first Girl Scout Commissioners in Denton and vice regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Sena Mounts Wright created a hand drawn map of Denton County in 1936 for the Texas Centennial celebration showing early settlements, with dates, trails, schools, native wildlife, and streams and creeks. The map is still displayed at the Denton Emily Fowler Library. Both WW and Sena Wright were charter members of the Denton County Historical Association. WW and Sena Wright had 5 children. All lived and were raised at the Mounts-Wright House. Sena Wright died in 1952 and WW Wright continued to live at the house until his death in 1959.<sup>22</sup>

The Mounts-Wright house became the property of WW Wright's 5 children, Eulallie Pittman, Alleen Bounds, Mary Elizabeth McCarroll, Noble Mounts Wright, and William Crow Wright. In 1983 the house was purchased and renovated by Bill and Linda Benton. Bill and Linda had two children that were also raised in the Mounts-Wright House. In 1991, the Mounts-Wright House was annexed into the Oak-Hickory Historic District.

## **II. OVERVIEW**

The Mounts family has been traced back to 1800 in Fredrick County, Virginia. Genealogy records indicate that the Mounts family is of French descent<sup>23</sup>. Providence Mounts married Emily Z. J. W. Noble on May 7, 1822. They resided in Virginia where their third child, William Harry Mounts, was born on April 2, 1833. Sometime after 1850, presumably after the

death of her husband, Emily Mounts and her family moved to Denton County, Texas<sup>24</sup>. The Republic of Texas' Secretary of War, A. Sidney Johnston, issued certificate #9324 on November 30, 1839, as a land grant to William Neill in the future region of Denton, Texas<sup>25</sup>. The William Neill Survey of 100 ½ acres came out of this grant<sup>26</sup>, and the land on which the Mounts-Wright House sits came out of this original survey. Like many deed descriptions in those days, it was platted out referencing blackjack and post oak trees as well as “a pile of stones from which a double elm [grows]” along the lines of surrounding surveys<sup>27</sup>. William Woodruff had acquired this portion of the Neill survey in 1855<sup>28</sup>.

Also around this time, general dissatisfaction had grown with the present location of the county seat at New Alton. The water situation had been poor from the beginning, and many citizens wanted a location nearer to the center of the county. An election was held on the first Tuesday of November, 1856, to decide the location of the new county seat, and it was decided that the town would be located on a tract of 100 acres donated by Mr. Woodruff (20 acres), William Loving (40 acres), and Hiram Sisco (40 acres)<sup>29</sup>. William Woodruff, one of the town site donors, was said to be one of the surveyors of this original platting<sup>30</sup>.

In 1858, to settle her husband's debts at his death, William Woodruff's widow, Louisa E. Woodruff, subdivided his remaining acreage, about 75 acres, into 14 lots. Lot 14 of 18.9 acres was purchased by auction “at the Court House door” on December 7, 1858, by Joseph Bledsoe (1827 - c.1906)<sup>31</sup>. He built a house on this land between 1859 and 1860<sup>32</sup>. Bledsoe hailed from Kentucky and Missouri and was schooled as an attorney. Before establishing his practice, he accepted a position as chief engineer of the Texan Emigration and Land Company in which he spent a year surveying the Peters Colony beyond the frontier on the upper Brazos River. Bledsoe moved to Austin to practice law where he married Miranda Sneed, the daughter of Judge Sebron

Graham Sneed, in 1857. In 1858, he brought his practice to Denton and became a leader of the secession movement. He moved to McKinney in 1860 prior to the outbreak of the Civil War<sup>33</sup>. Mr. Bledsoe sold the house and property on March 23, 1861, to Emily Noble Mounts<sup>34</sup>. This house faced south toward what is today Oak Street and appears on the 1883 "Birds Eye View of Denton" map drawn by Augustus Koch<sup>35</sup>. The road leading north off of Oak Street to this house later became Mounts Avenue<sup>36</sup>.

Emily Noble Mounts' son, W. H. Mounts, and others associated with him, were instrumental in helping to establish and advance the business and government of early Denton. For about six years prior to 1857 the county seat of Denton was at New Alton<sup>37</sup>, where W. H. Mounts operated a store which sold general merchandise. In the new county seat of Denton, the first city lots were auctioned on the coldest day in local memory of January 10, 1857<sup>38</sup>. The west side of the square filled up quickly, and Mr. Mounts was among these first business owners in the new town, where he established Baines & Mounts on the west side of the square in the third building from the south<sup>39</sup> with his business partners W. C. Baines and J. H. Mounts<sup>40</sup>. Their store burned July 21, 1860, along with much of the west side of the square in a devastating fire believed to have been arson, but which was never fully solved. Baines & Mounts had twenty-five kegs of black powder in it which exploded, scattering fragments of hardware and the building across the square. Their loss was estimated at \$20,000 at the time. Suspiciously, other fires occurred that same day in about ten other area communities within hours of the Denton fire, and at the time they were thought to be the act of abolitionists<sup>41</sup>.

Martha (Mattie) Elizabeth Haynes (1838 - 1914) came to Denton County from Mississippi in 1860 with her family. She was the fifth child of Rev. John Haynes and Catherine Bell. Mattie Haynes' maternal grandfather was the Rev. Robert Bell, who was the first

missionary to the Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians in Mississippi<sup>42</sup>. J. W. Gober, a Master Mason originally from Georgia, came to Denton County in 1853 and moved his family to the south side of Clear Creek one and one-half miles south of Sanger in 1857<sup>43</sup>, where he built a private schoolhouse for his children about 1860<sup>44</sup>. He engaged Mattie Haynes as teacher in his school<sup>45</sup>. On September 27, 1862, Miss Mattie E. Haynes married William H. Mounts<sup>46</sup>. W.H. and Mattie Mounts had eight children; Robert Noble Mounts, Ena Mounts, Emily Bell Mounts, Sena Alleen Mounts, William H. Mounts Jr., Providence Mounts, John Haynes Mounts, and Alice Naomi Mounts.

The Mounts family was instrumental in the religious development of Denton from its earliest days. In November, 1862, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was organized in Denton with about six families. It was one of the earliest churches established in Denton and among its charter members was Mattie Mounts<sup>47</sup>. The Presbyterians met in the Masonic Hall on South Elm Street, as did the Methodists and Baptists, the other two organizations in Denton at this time. The third original pastor was Rev. John Haynes, Mrs. Mounts' father<sup>48</sup>. There were no church buildings in Denton prior to the 1870s<sup>49</sup>. The Cumberland Presbyterians were the first religious organization to build their own church in Denton, in 1871. It was located at the corner of Oak Street and Bolivar<sup>50</sup>. W. H. Mounts negotiated the purchase of this land along with Thomas E. Hogg, the brother of the governor<sup>51</sup>. The first Sunday School in Denton began in the spring or summer of 1868 and was organized by Mattie Mounts. It was a Union Sunday School which included children of the Baptists, Christians, Cumberland Presbyterians, and Methodists. This continued until the various churches opened their own Sunday Schools in the mid-1870s<sup>52</sup>. The Rev. John Haynes was a minister for sixty-seven years<sup>53</sup>, and Haynes St., which runs beside the Mounts-Wright House, was named for him<sup>54</sup>.

The Mounts' involvement in business continued beyond Baines & Mounts. In the early 1860s, an ox-tread grist mill was built just north of the square on the west side of North Elm Street. In 1865, the mill was purchased by Mattie Mounts. Although the mill was small and likely not in operation very long, it was apparently Denton's first industrial venture<sup>55</sup>. Even in these early times, W.H. Mounts' business ventures stretched far beyond Denton. A letter dated September 16, 1868, from a Denton County citizen to a friend in Arkansas stated, "W. H. Mounts is on his way to New York to buy goods and will go by way of New Orleans, Galveston, and Houston"<sup>56</sup>. By 1870, W. H. Mounts was apparently in business with a new partner, and their store, Billy Mounts and Stephens, was still located on the west side of the square<sup>57</sup>.

W. H. Mounts served during the Civil War in Co. D, McCord's Frontier Regiment Texas Cavalry<sup>58</sup>. He entered in February, 1863, as a Private and served until at least March 1, 1864, when the unit was transferred to the service of the Confederate States. He also served as a Hospital Steward<sup>59</sup>. W. H. Mounts' commander, Colonel James E. McCord, was appointed a ranking officer of the Texas Frontier Regiment in 1862. Its original purpose was for the protection of the Indian frontier of Texas. It remained under state control until 1864<sup>60</sup>. Colonel McCord has a Texas Civil War Memorial historical marker, Marker Number 5083002523, in Coleman, Coleman County, Texas<sup>61</sup>.

On April 6, 1867, Emily Mounts sold the house she purchased from Joseph Bledsoe with about "15 acres more or less" for two-hundred dollars to her son William H. Mounts<sup>62</sup>. This became known as the Mounts farm, the Mounts homestead, and in some accounts, Mounts Hill<sup>63</sup>. The Mounts farm extended by one account to within a few hundred yards of the square, and W. H. Mounts grew cotton<sup>64</sup> and had fruit orchards behind the house down the hill to the north<sup>65</sup>. The Mounts farm was actually about half-a-mile to the west of the square, and at the time was

said to be far out in the country<sup>66</sup>. W. H. Mounts also had a stable and kept horses which were known to be of high quality<sup>67</sup>. The outlaw Sam Bass worked on the Gregg Ranch as well as for Mr. Mounts<sup>68</sup>, and Bass once stole a horse from his stable to obtain a better mount to aid in his escape plan<sup>69</sup>.

Denton was already well known for its focus on education by the early 1870's<sup>70</sup>, and the Mounts family was included prominently in its development. At least fifty teachers were teaching privately in Denton prior to the first free public school in 1884. One of these was Mattie Mounts, who taught on the west side of South Elm Street and at her home on Mounts Avenue<sup>71</sup>. She later opened the first kindergarten in Denton in September, 1892, in the southern part of town<sup>72</sup>. Sena Mounts, taught third grade in the public school during the 1893 - 1894 school term, and taught intermediates during the 1894 - 1895 term<sup>73</sup>. Alice Mounts also taught in the Denton public schools<sup>74</sup>.

About twenty years after Denton was organized, Texas cattle began pouring into northern markets. Prior to that, there were few cattle west of the ninety-ninth meridian, making Denton instrumental in the westward expansion of the cattle industry<sup>75</sup>. Around 1880, Robert Mounts, along with Frank A. Tompkins and several other young men, rode horses to Mexico and rounded up wild mustangs. They drove them back to Denton to the Gregg Ranch and broke them to use at the ranch<sup>76</sup>. Darius Gregg (1804 - 1870) was a surveyor and had been paid in land deeds. He was one of the founders of the Republic of Texas, and started the ranch consisting of about 15,000 to 20,000 acres northwest of Denton between 1850 and 1853. In 1868, he described the ranch land as, "No better country for cattle, hogs, horses, and sheep in the state, no better grain-growing country". Darius Gregg's son, William Bowen Gregg (1849 - 1889) inherited most of his father's Denton County land in 1870. He operated the ranch in the 1870s and 1880s<sup>77</sup>.

On July 4, 1883, William Gregg married Emma Belle Mounts (1865 - 1957), second child of William and Mattie Mounts<sup>78</sup>. She was known for her beauty and musical ability, and often played guitar for the cowboys on the ranch in the evenings<sup>79</sup>. In 1887, Emma Mounts bought a strip of land off the southern end of the Mounts estate. She set aside the forty foot wide strip for Mounts Street<sup>80</sup> which was later renamed Gregg Street. This street is on the south boundary line of the Robert Mounts House.

William H. Mounts died in 1889, but his wife Mattie continued to live in the family home until the house burned in the early 1890s<sup>81</sup>. On March 26, 1890, Mattie's daughter Emma remarried to Dr. Cuvier Lipscomb<sup>82</sup>, a prominent Denton physician. His family had come from Mississippi, and in the spring of 1870 he came to Denton County from Tarrant County. He was described as a "finished gentleman" and a welcome citizen to Denton<sup>83</sup>. Dr. Lipscomb had his office in the back of his son's drug store on the west side of the square<sup>84</sup>. Emma Mounts Gregg Lipscomb was a very wealthy young woman when she married Dr. Lipscomb<sup>85</sup>, and they built a beautiful Victorian home on West Oak Street. The Dr. Cuvier Lipscomb home was at 802 West Oak<sup>86</sup>, and Mounts Street, later renamed Gregg Street, ran behind their house.

On May 25, 1898, Mattie Mounts executed a mechanics lien for "a two-story frame house of 8 rooms", to be built from plans she provided by J. B. Wilson, contractor, for the sum of eighteen-hundred dollars<sup>87</sup>. This house, known as the Mounts-Wright House, now stands at 403 Mounts Avenue.. On October 12, 1897, Emma Mounts and her husband sold a lot from the land she purchased from her father's estate to their son Cuvier Lipscomb, Jr. for \$800<sup>88</sup>. Cuvier Lipscomb, Jr. in turn sold the lot to Robert and Nannie Mounts on August 20, 1898, for the same \$800<sup>89</sup>. This is the lot where the Robert Mounts House is located which is the architectural twin of the Mounts-Wright House. It is believed that these two houses were built at the same time by

the same builder, J. B. Wilson, due to this mechanics lien and the similarity of their architecture. In a newspaper ad dated February 18, 1897, J. B. Wilson and Bro. was promoting their new lumber yard near the square on North Locust Street. J. B. Wilson operated his new business with his brother, A. M. Wilson. The ad indicated that the yard was stocked with a complete line of long-leaf pine lumber, shingles, sash, doors, and paint, and claimed to be a first-class lumber yard<sup>90</sup>.

After Mattie Mounts death, the Mounts-Wright House at 403 Mounts Avenue, was deeded to her daughter Sena Mounts Wright and husband William W. Wright. Mattie had moved in with her other daughter, Emma Lipscomb on West Oak Street, as Dr. Lipscomb could better take care of her there. She died in that home on January 14, 1914, after a lengthy illness<sup>91</sup>.

The Wright family was important in the days of Denton County's early cattle empires and the Wrights owned the "Chain 7" brand known for good horses. William Crow (WC) Wright was educated at McKenzie College founded by John B. Denton's widow and her second husband. WC served in the Confederate Army in Madison's calvary and fought in 22 battles. After the war he came to Denton County. He organized a border company for protection against Indians and participated in the last big Indian fight in 1878.<sup>9293</sup>

In 1869 WC Wright married Julia A. Gober, daughter of John W. Gober, who was in the 9<sup>th</sup> Texas Calvary in the Civil War. For a while they lived on a ranch near Denton and later established a stock farm on 16,000 acres of farming and grazing land near Bolivar, northwest of Denton. His ranch of horses was the largest in the Southwest. Although he was not very interested in town property he built the W.C Wright Opera House on the northeast corner of the Denton square which opened February 14, 1900. Wright bought the old Denton courthouse and

used the brick for the new opera house. WC Wright was one of the pallbearers when John B Denton's remains were reburied on the courthouse lawn.

WC and Julia Wright had 7 children. The oldest son was William Wesley (WW) Wright. WW Wright grew up in Denton and worked as a cowboy on his father's Chain 7 ranch. After attending Southwestern University in Georgetown he went to work in the Denton County National Bank in 1892. WW was a city alderman when many of Denton's first city improvements were launched including first street gradings, sewage disposal system, and electric street car system. He was a member of the early day National Guard company, town band, and the IOOF lodge. WW Wright worked for a quarter of a century at North Texas State Teachers College as textbook librarian and accountant. He walked from his home to the college, walked home for lunch, and back home in the evening.<sup>94</sup>

WW Wright married Sena Alleen Mounts in 1896 at her family home. They lived on the Wright ranch until moving to the Mounts-Wright house when her mother, Mattie Mounts died. WW and Sena had five children; Mary Elizabeth, Alleen, Noble, William Crow, and Eulallie Carruthers.

William (Bill) and Linda Benton purchased the Mounts-Wright House in April, 1983, and began restoration and renovations before moving in that fall. Linda passed away in 2011. Bill and Linda had two children, William Langley and Bailey Anne that grew up in the house. Bill married Rose Ann Bruce in 2014 and they currently live in the Mounts-Wright House. Bill and Linda were among the three original petitioners to first apply for the inclusion of the Mounts neighborhood into the Oak-Hickory Historic District in Denton and it was annexed into the Oak-Hickory Historic District along with the C. L. Oliver House and the Robert Mounts House to the south.

The Mounts-Wright House is an example of a Queen Anne style home which is in line with the other Denton homes of the period. It has also been described as Folk Victorian Farmhouse and Mixed Victorian styles. It features a veranda porch across the front that wraps around each side of the house. The house is sheathed in clapboard lap siding and has subtle jig-saw ornamentation in the porch arches with sawtooth details above the second floor angled corner windows. Eastlake lathe, gouge and chisel work is found in the front door and stair balusters. The staircase features two landings with ninety degree turns. The floors inside are heart pine and the interior walls are covered in shiplap. The house features a 12/12 hipped roof with three cross gables covered in fish-scale shingles and a second-floor porch with straight shingle detail. The house has an asymmetrical floor plan with a stairway ascending to the second floor from the left side of the central entrance hall. There is a signature diamond window on the lower stair landing at the front of the house next to the front door that is a visual focal point.

Many local streets still bear the names of the Mounts family and other families associated with them. There is Mounts Avenue, and the former Mounts Street which was later renamed Gregg Street for Emma Belle Mounts' first husband William Gregg. Haynes Street is named for Mattie Mounts' father, the Rev. John Haynes, and runs perpendicular to Mounts Avenue between the Robert Mounts House and the Mounts-Wright House. Alice Street is named for Alice Mounts, and Sena Street and Alleen Street are named for Sena Alleen Mounts. Gober Street is named for J. W. Gober, one of Denton County's early pioneers and the employer of Miss Mattie Haynes (Mounts). Crow Street is named for Crow Wright, Sena Mounts' father-in-law.

### **III. SIGNIFICANCE**

The Mounts-Wright House was built by Mattie Mounts in 1898 after the original homestead burned a few years earlier.

The Mounts family came from Virginia to Denton County in the 1850s and was very important to the development of early Denton. The Mounts farm of about fifteen acres included the land where the Mounts-Wright House and Robert Mounts House sits, and the original homestead was at the top of the hill to the north facing West Oak Street. The drive to that house became Mounts Avenue.

W. H. Mounts, was a businessman, farmer, and landowner, and was one of the first business owners to bring his business to the new county seat of Denton from New Alton in 1857. His wife, Mattie Haynes Mounts, formed the first Sunday school in Denton in 1868 and opened the first kindergarten on South Elm Street in 1892. Mattie Mounts father, Rev. John Haynes, was the third pastor of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, the first organization to build a church house in Denton in 1871. The Mounts family donated a site on the Mounts farm to the City of Denton for one of the first water standpipes and in exchange the city provided free water to the family. Sena Alleen Mounts Wright was an early school teacher and charter member of the Denton PTA. She was active in many early Denton social and religious organizations including The Ariel Literary Club, the Presbyterian Auxiliary, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Denton Garden Club. Sena Wright enjoyed map making and created a Denton County illustrated map in 1936 for the Texas Centennial that still hangs in the Denton Public Library. Sena Alleen Mounts married William Wesley Wright whose father was WC Wright.

The W.C. Wright family was one of Denton County's pioneers, Indian fighters and prominent ranchers. W.C. Wright built the WC Wright Opera house on the Denton square and a stately home on Oak Street just beyond the city limits that he called "Boscobel". They owned and operated a 16,000 acre ranch north of Denton that was known for fine horses. W.C. and Julia Wright's son, W.W. Wright worked at the Denton County National Bank for 5 years and for most of his career, 1918 – 1943, at North Texas State Teachers College as textbook librarian and accountant. He was a city alderman when Denton, a city of several thousand, began its first important civic improvements including street grading, sewage systems, and electric streetcars. WW and Sena Wright were charter members of the Denton County Historical Association and collected valuable records and historical materials used in the NTSTC museum.

Many of the Mounts and Wright family members are buried in IOOF Cemetery in Denton. WC Wright constructed a family mausoleum there that was completed days before his death.

## IV. DOCUMENTATION

---

<sup>1</sup> Republic of Texas Deed Record, Denton County, DR/0000A/363, view July 9, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.tshaonline.org/supsites/military/l/barrth9l.htm>, view July 9, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> McCormick, Edna Haynes, *William Lee McCormick a Study in Tolerance*, Dallas, Texas: The Book Craft, 1952, Page 110-111.

<sup>4</sup> Bridges, C.A. *History of Denton, Texas, From its Beginning to 1960*. Waco, Texas: Texian Press, 1978, Page 68.

<sup>5</sup> Bridges, Page 75.

<sup>6</sup> County Deed Record, DR/0000D/213, filed 01/08/1859, Denton.

<sup>7</sup> Gard, Wayne, *Sam Bass*, University of Nebraska Press, 1969, Page 175.

<sup>8</sup> McCormick, Page 79

<sup>9</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 0000D Page 216, filed 04/02/1861, Denton.

<sup>10</sup> Bridges, Page 170.

<sup>11</sup> Bridges, Page 87.

<sup>12</sup> Bates, Edmund Franklin, *History and Reminiscences of Denton County*, (Denton, Texas: McNitzky Printing, 1918), Page 374.

<sup>13</sup> National Park Service Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database, <http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=7847FABC-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>, accessed July 27, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.fold3.com/>, accessed July 27, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Bridges, Page 104.

<sup>16</sup> Bates, Page 382.

<sup>17</sup> McCormick, Page 81.

<sup>18</sup> Bridges, Page 105-106.

<sup>19</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 00042 Page 520, filed 07/30/1892, Denton.

- 
- <sup>20</sup> Deed Records, Denton County.
- <sup>21</sup> Notes from conversations with Susan Simmons Hall and Patsy Light – Granddaughters of WW and Sena Wright, 1/9/96 Private collection of William Benton
- <sup>22</sup> Newspaper obituary from Patsy Light family records, granddaughter of WW Wright (date missing but about October 25, 1958, date of WW Wright death)
- <sup>23</sup> Mounts Family Genealogy record, private collection of Brian and Vicki Morrison.
- <sup>24</sup> Mounts Family Genealogy record, private collection of Brian and Vicki Morrison.
- <sup>25</sup> Republic of Texas Deed Record, Denton County, DR/0000M/288, Denton, view July 9, 2015.
- <sup>26</sup> McCormick, Page 110-111.
- <sup>27</sup> Republic of Texas Deed Record, Denton County, DR/0000A/363, view July 9, 2015.
- <sup>28</sup> McCormick, Page 110-111.
- <sup>29</sup> Bridges, Page 67-68.
- <sup>30</sup> Bridges, Page 70.
- <sup>31</sup> County Deed Record, DR/0000D/213, filed 01/08/1859, Denton.
- <sup>32</sup> McCormick, Page 79.
- <sup>33</sup> Thomas W. Cutrer, "BLEDSOE, JOSEPH," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbl21>), uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association. Accessed July 09, 2015.
- <sup>34</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 0000D Page 216, filed 04/02/1861, Denton.
- <sup>35</sup> Koch, Augustus. "Bird's Eye View of Denton", Denton County, Texas : 1883 / drawn by Augustus Koch., Map, 1883; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph2467/> : accessed July 29, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting UNT Libraries, Denton, Texas.
- <sup>36</sup> Letter, Susan Simmons Hall (Robert Mounts' grand-niece), July 1990, Private Collection of Brian and Vicki Morrison, Denton.
- <sup>37</sup> Bridges, Page 60.
- <sup>38</sup> Bridges, Page 71-72.
- <sup>39</sup> Bridges, Page 74-75.

---

<sup>40</sup> McCormick, Page 77.

<sup>41</sup> Bridges, Page 92-93.

<sup>42</sup> “John R. Haynes: 1798 – 1895, Cumberland Presbyterian Minister”. Accessed July 31, 2015.  
<http://www.cumberland.org/hfcpc/minister/HaynesJR.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Bates, Page 85.

<sup>44</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), July 11, 1925.

<sup>45</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), January 15, 1914.

<sup>46</sup> WikiTree: Martha (Haynes) Mounts. <http://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Haynes-332> Accessed July 31, 2015.

<sup>47</sup> Bridges, Page 105.

<sup>48</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), “Presbyterians Sell Early-Day Church; Erect New Structure”, Sat, Nov 8, 1941, Page 3.

<sup>49</sup> McCormick, Page 81.

<sup>50</sup> Bridges, Page 153.

<sup>51</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), “Presbyterians Sell Early-Day Church; Erect New Structure”, Sat, Nov 8, 1941, Page 3.

<sup>52</sup> Bridges, Page 105-106.

<sup>53</sup> “John R. Haynes: 1798 – 1895, Cumberland Presbyterian Minister”. Accessed July 31, 2015.  
<http://www.cumberland.org/hfcpc/minister/HaynesJR.htm>

<sup>54</sup> Hall letter, 1990.

<sup>55</sup> Bridges, Page 87.

<sup>56</sup> Bates, Page 374.

<sup>57</sup> Bridges, Page 126.

<sup>58</sup> National Park Service Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Database,  
<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=7847FABC-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>, accessed July 27, 2015.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.fold3.com/>, accessed July 27, 2015.

- 
- <sup>60</sup> <http://www.genealogy.com/forum/general/topics/civilwar/19697/>, accessed July 27, 2015.
- <sup>61</sup> [http://www.9key.com/markers/marker\\_detail.asp?atlas\\_number=5083002523](http://www.9key.com/markers/marker_detail.asp?atlas_number=5083002523), accessed July 27, 2015.
- <sup>62</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 0000D Page 217, filed 04/06/1867, Denton.
- <sup>63</sup> Bailey, John W., editor. *Denton County News*. (Denton, Tex.), Vol. 7, No. 26, Ed. 1 Thursday, October 27, 1898, Page 4, Newspaper, October 27, 1898; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph504031/> : accessed July 30, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Abilene Library Consortium, Abilene, Texas.
- <sup>64</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), “T. A. Robinson, Civil War Veteran, Tells of Pioneer Days Here”, Sat, Aug 15, 1925, Page 42. Accessed July 29, 2015.
- <sup>65</sup> Hall letter, 1990.
- <sup>66</sup> Bridges, Page 139.
- <sup>67</sup> Gard, Page 174.
- <sup>68</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), “Gregg Ranch”, Sun, Jul 4, 1976, Page 62, , accessed July 27, 2015.
- <sup>69</sup> Gard, Page 172-176.
- <sup>70</sup> Bridges, Page 157.
- <sup>71</sup> McCormick, Page 97.
- <sup>72</sup> Bridges, Page 216.
- <sup>73</sup> Bridges, Page 214-215.
- <sup>74</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle*. (Denton, Texas), Fri, Aug 25, 1944, Page 2, accessed July 28, 2015.
- <sup>75</sup> Cowling, Mary Jo. *Geography of Denton County*. Dallas, Texas. Page 24. The Portal to Texas History. <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph91043/>. Accessed July 30, 2015. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting UNT Libraries, Denton, Texas.
- <sup>76</sup> Hall letter, 1990.
- <sup>77</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle*. (Denton, Texas), Sun, Jul 4, 1976, Page 62, accessed July 28, 2015.
- <sup>78</sup> Mounts Family Genealogy record, private collection of Brian and Vicki Morrison.

---

<sup>79</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle*. (Denton, Texas), Sun, Jul 4, 1976, Page 62, accessed July 28, 2015.

<sup>80</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 00033 Page 32, filed 04/12/1887, Denton.

<sup>81</sup> Hall letter, 1990.

<sup>82</sup> Mounts Family Genealogy record, private collection of Brian and Vicki Morrison.

<sup>83</sup> *Denton County News*. (Denton, Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 41, Ed. 1 Thursday, February 9, 1893, Page 1, Newspaper, February 9, 1893; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph504103/> : accessed July 31, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Abilene Library Consortium, Abilene, Texas.

<sup>84</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), “First Lipscomb Won By Redhead”, Sun., Feb. 3, 1957, Page 45, accessed July 28, 2015.

<sup>85</sup> Hall letter, 1990.

<sup>86</sup> Deed Record, DR Vol. 00042 Page 520, filed 07/30/1892, Denton.

<sup>87</sup> Mechanics Lien, ML Vol. 00001 Page 185, filed 06/28/1898, Denton.

<sup>88</sup> Deed Record, Vol. 00067 Page 393, filed 08/23/1898, Denton.

<sup>89</sup> Deed Record, Vol. 00065 Page 284, filed 08/23/1898, Denton.

<sup>90</sup> *Denton County News*. (Denton, Tex.), Vol. 5, No. 42, Ed. 1 Thursday, February 18, 1897, Page 5, Newspaper, February 18, 1897; (<http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph505457/> : accessed July 30, 2015), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Abilene Library Consortium, Abilene, Texas.

<sup>91</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle* (Denton, Texas), January 15, 1914.

<sup>92</sup> *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Texas), December 7, 1946 article written by Alleen Wright Bounds and provided by Patsy Light from her family collection titled “Your Heritage”

<sup>93</sup> *Denton Record-Chronicle*. (Denton, Texas) date not noted, news article titled “Builders of Opera House, Patient Paid Wright in Land and Family Began Its Rise” provided by Patsy Light, great granddaughter of WC Wright from her personal family collection.

<sup>94</sup> Notes from Patsy Light, granddaughter of WW Wright, written to Bill Benton 1996, private collection of William Benton