

EDMUNDSON - EXUM - HOOKS - GABRIEL HOUSE

A deed dated July 6, 1904, describes a parcel of land bought by W. E. Edmundson from C. C. Aycock and his wife Addie, located on the southeast corner of Wayne and Pine Streets. This was a year or more before Mary Barnes and Willie Edmundson married. After they married, they moved into a house on this corner, but Martha, daughter of Mary and Willie, does not think the house was new at that time.

Martha Edmundson Smith (Mrs. John Ed Smith), one of four children was born in the house in 1914 and lived there until she was 14 years old. The other children -- Willie Wright (born in 1909), Thomas Woodrow (born in 1912), and George Edward (born in 1920) were also born in the house. Martha recalls that the house appeared different from the way it appears today (1991) both outside and inside.

On the outside of the house there was a porch that extended all the way across the front and halfway the length of the house on the Pine Street side. A wooden fence surrounded the house, which was not underpinned, on three sides. At that time there was a cotton patch on the northeast corner of Wayne and Pine. To the east of the house was a small house, still standing, owned by J. C. ("Jess") Taylor.

Behind the house there was ample room for Willie to keep a team of horses, a cow, and some chickens. There was a family garden between the Edmundson house and a home facing South St., where Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Strickland lived. Later that house was owned by the Gilbert Winders family, followed by Christopher Glenn Aycock and his wife, Ruth Smith Aycock.

On the inside of the Edmundson house, a hall ran the entire length of the house from the front door to the back porch. A hand pump on

the porch furnished the household water. The porch area, when the Exum family bought the house later, became the room on the back that is now enclosed by windows.

In 1914 water and electric lights were not yet in all the Fremont homes. While Martha was living in the home, between 1914 and 1928, these two conveniences were added. Street lights were also erected. That exciting event inspired the neighborhood adults to visit under the street lights during the warm seasons and the children to play there. A ditch running along Pine Street also made playing outside interesting day or night. Violets were a common sight along the drainage ditch.

The furnishing of water by the town around 1919-20, which replaced water from individual wells, made life considerably easier. A bathroom was added to the house and water supplied to the kitchen in approximately 1921. Martha remembers that her mother washed clothes in a large black iron washpot in the yard. To make washing a little more pleasant, her father would go to Will Barden's Service Satation to buy her mother a candy bar to enjoy when she stopped to rest. The service station, on the corner of Wayne Street and Highway #117, was built on the site of a hotel operated by Mrs. Minnie Bunn Yelverton which burned. Martha remembers that the fire was fought by a bucket brigade with water from neighboring wells. Mr. I. Frank Yelverton ("Chubby") happened to be passing the hotel, noticed the fire, and ran down the block shouting "Fi-yer! Fi-yer!"

After her husband's death in 1928, Mrs. Mary Edmundson decided to sell the house and move to her farm property on what is now Highway #117. The Exums bought the house November 30, 1931. Mr. Claude Dickinson, a Fremont builder, was employed by the new owners, John Burt Exum, Jr., and May Rose Exum, to make the house suitable for them and their four

children (Anne Mae, John Burt III, Charles Royall, and Jean Rose).

On the outside, the big front porch was replaced with a small entrance porch, and a porch large enough to enjoy sitting on was placed on the east side of the house.

The long hall inside was partially removed to make the living room and the dining room more spacious. An upstairs was created with two bedrooms, each with closets, the bedrooms being separated by a hall and storage closet at the top of the stairs. There was enough space left for a great deal of storage. I can remember clothes drying; a bag made of cotton hanging on a small pole (an old broom handle perhaps), slowly dripping syrup for apple jelly; and no-longer-needed family trunks in the area. The "plunder room," which my family called it, was a favorite place to play, with its discarded magazines, household items, and old clothes.

The house was my home from the time my family moved in until it was sold following the death of May Rose Exum in October 1975. It was sold to Curtis Hooks and his bride, who had married the same month Mother had died. When Curtis Hooks and Betty moved from Fremont, they rented the house until Michael and Patty Gabriel bought it on September 29, 1989.

Early history of house furnished by Martha Edmundson Smith and Anne Exum Hinnant, written by Anne Exum Hinnant in August 1990.