

HISTORY OF THE EDGE-DUPUY HOUSE

by Lillian H. DuPuy

circa 1984

The Eugene Edge house, 508 East 30th Street in Bryan, Texas, recognized as one of the noteworthy old homes, was constructed between November 15, 1901 and March 10, 1902.¹

The purchase of the lot by E. H. Edge from Lila and C. A. Adams is recorded in Vol. 25, page 155 of the Brazos County Deed Records for a price of \$475.00. It was stipulated in the deed that a narrow street would separate the two properties and would never be closed. That street, now two blocks long, is known as Hill Street.²

Mr. Edge was one of the early business men of Bryan. He was a registered pharmacist, but he and Mr. Sam Wilson, who was employed by a clothing store, decided to open a typical rural dry goods store, serving a small town and the rural area, and known as Edge's and Wilson's. In 1907 Mr. Edge gained control of the store and it was renamed Eugene Edge's. He installed all new fixtures from leading manufacturers and introduced a large inventory of Ladies' Ready-to-Wear, bringing in a milliner to manufacture hats. He also established a Ladies' Lingerie and a Foundation Department. In 1912 another ready-to-wear store, named Edge's, was opened on the same block and Mr. Edge renamed his store "Edge's on the Corner."

¹ Date of construction and identity of the contractor, Mr. Charles Jenkins, as well as materials used, was established through records at Parker Lumber Company, now owned by Mr. Durwood Thompson.

² Copy of Deed Record attached.

In 1932 Mr. Edge took his son, Charles H. Edge, in as a partner and enlarged the women's-wear area. He renamed the store "Eugene Edge and Son," remodeled the building and installed new fixtures. Also, at this time, he installed a Revolving Charge Account, the first home-owned store to do this.³ The store prospered.

Mr. Edge took semi-retirement in the early forties, and the operation of the firm passed to his son, Charles H. Edge. However, Charles H. Edge entered the Navy in June 1942, forcing his father back into the business for the next four years. Mr. Edge died in February 1954 and the operation was carried on as a single unit until 1958, when Eugene Edge III came into the business as a partner. In 1957 the store was closed for four months for a complete renovation. Although the store's volume increased immediately, reaching 50% by 1961, Eugene Edge III withdrew to further his college education and entered the teaching profession at the college level.

In 1961 Irvin A. Carroll was employed as Manager and purchased the business in 1971. In August 1981 he sold it to two couples, Diane and Carroll Sandel and Danny and Sherry Robertson. It continues to go by the name of "Edge's" and is a thriving and successful business.

The home has eleven rooms, including the lower and upper halls, and has two bathrooms. Mr. Charles E. Jenkins, a prominent builder in Bryan at the time, planned the Victorian house and supervised the construction. Wrap-around galleries at both the first and second stories are the only ones remaining in Bryan. They extend for 30 feet, from the front entrance to the projection of the dining room. Everything was planned quite meticulously by Mr. Jenkins.

³ Information regarding the Edge business received from Charles H. Edge.

When Mrs. Edge asked about closets, he said, "You will not need them, as wardrobes and armoires will be quite adequate."

Cypress was used on the exterior surface. The porch flooring was one-inch tongue-and-groove cypress. Sixteen round cypress columns support the first and second level wrap-around galleries. Ornamental mouldings used over the entire house were milled and hand-carved to match. The stairway with three landings is of the same design and size, from the first floor to the attic, and can be seen in its entirety from the first-floor front hall. A stained glass window is at the first landing.

Heart pine, stained walnut, was used in the interior of the house with the exception of a cabinet fireplace in the rear double parlor. This is an outstanding feature of the house, being of very fine quarter-sawed oak. When it was refinished in 1945, the refinisher said it was the finest piece of oak he had ever seen. All other woodwork in the downstairs is in the original walnut finish. It is 8 ½ feet high, with two sets of columns dividing the upper and lower levels. A mirror, 42"x27", fills the space between the columns. There is a fireplace in the bedroom above, which is decorated with the same mouldings and trim, as the other parts of the house.

In the dining room there is a 39-inch wainscoting, decoration at four-inch intervals with four inches of grooving.

There were transoms above the doors on the first floor which could be opened and closed with metal rods. This was an excellent device for cooling in summer, as were the four windows in the attic. In addition, for cooling, Mr. Edge planted large Elm trees around the house to protect it from the sun, and it seemed truly air-conditioned. A pecan tree planted at the same time is still living and producing. The glass transoms were removed by the present owner and the space filled with decorated sheets of walnut-stained plywood.

The kitchen is a large room, 14'x14'. There was a sink, only one small cabinet for storing dishes and a large pantry. Beaded ceiling, still intact, covered the walls. The large pantry has been converted into a breakfast room, and cabinets built above and on each side of the sink.

The house was built in "Horse and Buggy" days and there is a five-foot tree trunk of concrete at the front walk, with rings implanted to tie the horses. Also, a large cement stump simulating the stump of a tree was used when mounting a horse. They look so natural they are always thought to be real tree trunks.

A flat-roofed, one story, five-sided gallery with banisters is on the east side of the house; an ideal place to sit in the cool of the evening. A door opens from it into the back parlor and a window to the front parlor.

The Edge family lived in the house until August 1918, when Mr. Edge sold it to Col. John Wheeler. Mr. Edge built a much larger and more elegant home in the same neighborhood, about five blocks away.⁴ The sale is recorded in Vol. 72, page 259 of the Brazos County deed records, for the sum of \$1.00 and other considerations (the first eight notes for \$600.00 each and the last for \$700.00).⁵

Col. Wheeler was in the U. S. Armed Forces, coming to Texas A&M College (now Texas A&M University) to teach in the R.O.T.C. Unit. The Wheelers and their teen-age children enjoyed the house with numerous parties. It was during their tenure that a sleeping porch was

⁴ Elizabeth A. Bradley, close family friend of children in Wheeler family, gave this information.

⁵ Copy of Deed attached.

built above the five-sided downstairs porch. This was removed by the DuPuys, present owners, in order to put the house back in its original construction.

When Col. Wheeler was transferred, he sold the house back to Mr. Edge on August 22, 1935 for a sum of \$4250.00. This is recorded in Vol. 88, page 420, of the Brazos County Deed Records.⁶

On January 25, 1938 Mr. Edge sold the house to Mildred Eden for the sum of \$4250. This is recorded in Vo. 97, page 8 of the Brazos County Deed Records.⁷

Mildred Eden sold the home to her mother, Roxie Eden, on August 22, 1942. This is recorded in Vol. 10, page 459 of the Brazos County Deed Records.⁸ Roxie Eden immediately converted the house into three apartments. Few changes were made. Sinks placed on the walls were easily removed by the present owner, as well as make-shift a bathroom put in the back hall.

The venture was difficult for Mrs. Eden and she put the house on the market for sale. It was not purchased until March 1, 1943, due to the apartments and unattractive appearance. The fourth and present owner of the house found that nothing serious had happened to the structure, and it was purchased for \$4650.00 by Mrs. Lillian DuPuy. The transaction is recorded in Vol. 2, page 156 of the Brazos County Deed Records.⁹

⁶ Copy of Deed Record attached.

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The house has had only a few minor changes since it was built. Closets were added in the bedrooms. A door from the front hall to back hall was taken out, and a small bath and passageway was made from the back parlor to the dining room. In place of the large opening between the double parlors, closed by Mrs. Roxie Eden, a door was placed between the double parlors.

In December 1944, two rooms in the attic were finished with sheet rock and made into a small bedroom and bath for the owner's son.

In one of the deed records it is indicated that the house faces Monroe Street. In talking with the County Clerk and several long-time residents, there is no knowledge or evidence that 30th Street was ever named Monroe Street.