

Homes of History: Evans home stands after 90 years

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer
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June 16, 2011 - The modern looking pink brick house that stands on the corner of Poplar and Mulberry is in reality a home that is close to 90 years old, but has undergone several phases of improvements over the years.

Archa Dee and Pansy Adline "Dollie" Evans built the home for their large family and farmed the land around it. The house was originally a two-story frame structure with four bedrooms upstairs and three bedrooms downstairs, enough to sleep their enlarging brood of children. The downstairs also had a living room, formal sitting room, kitchen, formal dining room, a foyer with the stairs and double fireplace with one chimney and a two-car garage - but no bathrooms. French doors separated the foyer from the dining room.



There was a large barn behind the garage area and they farmed about 75 acres in the vicinity of the house. The house has been known by all to be a very sturdy structure.

Their children were Lewis Albert, Mary Alice, Royce Othel, Geneva, Glendal D., Ruth Katherine, Juanita, Thresia "Baby" Lou, Mac, Kenneth and Clifton. Nine of these children graduated from Leonard High School. Glendal died as an infant and Juanita was killed at four years of age in front of the house when a delivery truck from Bonham left the road and hit her. She died two weeks later from her injuries.

The Archa Evans family was very civic minded with Archa serving as Mayor of Leonard for a term and also served on the LISD school board for several years. His youngest son Clifton also

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served the City of Leonard as Mayor and takes care of the Leonard Cemetery.

Clifton remembers that during his junior year at LHS his father had the top floor and large porch removed from the house. He also had it bricked and added two bathrooms. This was during 1954 - 55 and Evans used a contractor by the name of Hightower. The house is still a pier and beam structure, but looks like a modern brick home. Before he did the remodel on the house, in early 1950's, Archa had enlarged the two-car garage into a three-car garage so son R. O. could use it to make seat covers and run his upholstery business after he returned from the war.

Many family reunions were held at the house, including a 50-year anniversary and a 70-year anniversary for Archa and Dollie. The younger siblings felt that the top floor was removed to prevent the older married siblings from coming back home. The Evans were married 71 years when Archa died on Jan. 22, 1982. Dollie died Sept. 25, 1986.

The Evans estate sold the house to Ronnie and Jo Edna Cooper on Oct. 2, 1987, who made several changes. They laid ceramic tile in the kitchen, painted the kitchen cabinets, remodeled one of the bathrooms, applied wall paper to the dining room, installed new carpet, added central heat and air, sold the barn, and painted the original pink brick to gray. The house came with a full city block when the Coopers bought it and Ronnie built another house on the south end of the block (College St.), which he sold. He continued and built two more houses, each one being sold before his family occupied them. The block includes eight houses now, excluding the Tom Hymer home, which was the only other structure on the block in 1986. Ronnie also sold land for the car wash and all the land the eight houses are built on as well as the domino hall.

Jo Edna sold the home to Richard and Rita Johnson in January of 2008. They painted it with a pink, beige and black color scheme and then sold it to Bill and Patsy Luther on Nov. 4, 2008.

The Luther's reside in the home now and have installed laminate flooring, remodeled both bathrooms, replaced the ceramic tile in the kitchen, removed the black grout in the backsplash on the kitchen and replaced it with white, re-carpeted the bedrooms, installed all new windows, removed five layers of wallpaper in the dining room and discovered a trap door to the underneath portion of the house. Luther concurs that this home, like most of the homes built in the early 1900's (around 1920 for this one), were built with solid board walls, which makes the simple task of placing a nail in the wall impossible.

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Pictured is (above) the home of Archa and Dollie Evans in its original state, and (below) the home today, not even recognizable as the same structure.