



THE HAEDGE HOME, built about 1892.

THE HAEDGE HOUSE

By Jimmie Rene Ogg

An abstract of titles to a piece of land is an impersonal history of the land, telling who bought it and sold it through the years, but almost nothing about the buildings on it or about the persons who lived on it. The Haedge House in the accompanying picture has such an impersonal history told in its title instruments-but what a world of living has taken place there!

Some one hundred twenty years ago the land where the house stands was a little bit of a very large tract patented to Jared E. Groce by the General Land Office of Texas. Three years later a two thousand acre part of the patented Groce land was sold by R.R. Peebles and his wife, Mary Ann Groce Peebles, to J.W. McDade. On the same day it was sold, the townsite of what would become Hempstead was laid out and the

Hempstead Town Company formed. Also on that day R.R. Peebles was empowered to sell lots and/or blocks in the townsite and perfect the titles to them.

The townsite, when completed, was beautifully platted. Numbered streets were run north and south, and named ones were run east and west. Each block was to be 250' X 250', with a line of partial blocks extending along the north and south borders of the site to cover the two thousand acres. There were to be ten lots in each block, each lot having a fifty-foot frontage and a dept of 125 feet, extending back to a twenty-foot alley running north and south through the center of the blocks. Lots on the west side of the blocks were numbered one through five and those on the east side were numbered six through ten. On the townsite plat the place where the Haedge house stands is in Block Number 451, and the whole block or any of its ten lots were offered for sale along with all the other lots and blocks in the site.

I have not found who the purchaser, or purchasers, of the block may have been, but deed records show that in 1892 Block 451 was deeded to C.S. Cameron. Persons still living can state that thenceforward until 1950 members of the Cameron family lived there. They had a substantial, L-shaped house made of the good lumber that could be obtained in those days before the forests were depleted. Although it was a town place they had stables, a milk cow, a garden, and set out the live oaks that are there now. If houses can remember there must be memories within those walls now covered up almost entirely of the active, public-spirited Camerons when they lived there and participated in the social, political, and religious life not only of Hempstead but of all Waller County.

By the time the house was sold in 1950 by Luther Cameron, a bachelor son, it had grown old and tired looking. William and Blanch LeRoy who bought it, immediately went to work to make the place theirs indeed as well as by title. Mr. LeRoy was a vocational agriculture teacher in the Hempstead school, and an unpaid landscape artist for the entire community.

This latter was the kind of work he really enjoyed. Blanche was a homemaking teacher before they moved to Hempstead, and in her courses for this profession she had studied art and design, and in addition she was an artist born. Hence the Cameron house was a challenge to both of them.

They began a program of rejuvenation of the place, from top to bottom and inside and out. Changes were made in the arrangement of the interior: some windows were closed or moved; walls were taken out or walls were put in, with the furniture being moved and tried in different places to help them decide what changes to make; in this way some rooms were enlarged or made smaller or reshaped; some new windows were put in to let in more light for the dark places; and fresh, warm but muted colors were added.

Outside Mr. LeRoy took on the whole block as his project. He cut out the dead limbs of the trees, pruned and shaped the shrubs and put in new ones. He and Mrs. LeRoy went together into the surrounding countryside and brought back native plants and shrubs that had not been used in yards before in this area and set them out in groupings that were effective. And finally he laid down his masterpiece—a patio designed with differently shaped slabs of concrete which he mixed and poured himself into forms he had cut and fitted. Then they planted narrow bladed grass in the divisions, the only problem with this being that the grass grew so fast it had to be hand cut very frequently.

Mrs. LeRoy began teaching in some of the schools on a cooperative basis, and in her spare time she earned a degree and certificate in library science and became a librarian. With all their school work and restoring and rebuilding their home they both found time to be active members of the Methodist Church, Mr. LeRoy being the choir director and Mrs. LeRoy singing in the choir, and both helping in keeping the church and grounds in good condition.

In 1962 the LeRoys sold the place to Mr. J.L. Shiver and his wife Pauline Mendel Shiver. The Shivers had

two active young sons, James and Joe Ed. Mr. Shiver had been a farmer and stockman, but when they moved to Hempstead he went to work in the Waller County Road and Bridge Department. In 1965, however, Mr. Shiver could no longer resist the desire for returning to farming and working livestock, and when they found a place they liked they returned to a farm and sold their place in Hempstead. The two sons both bought trucks and went into hauling. As time went on they were able to buy more trucks for which they hired drivers. Joe Ed remained single and made his cross country hauls alone, but after James married he and his wife formed a trucking team, one driving as the other rested. They belonged to an organization of trucking teams which has its own publication, and upon occasion there have been stories in it about the Shiver team.

In 1965 Mr. M.C. Haedge and his wife, Evelyn Mittanck Haedge, with some misgivings but encouraged by some of their friends in the Methodist Church-among these being the Connetts, the Linams, and the Gruners who had all visited with the LeRoys and enjoyed the visits-decided to buy Lots One, Two and the north part of Three from the Shivers.

Mr. and Mrs. Haedge were born in Austin County, grew up there, fell in love and married there and planned to stay there, and wanted it just that way. Mr. Haedge was an employee in the construction department of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company. They owned a home near Kenny and their three children, Ronald C., Janis Evelyn, and Alan Thomas, were born in the home county.

Life was moving along smoothly and contentedly for them all in 1964 when opportunity, or fate, or something else quite unexpected, knocked at their door. The position of Repeaterman for Southwestern Bell in Hempstead opened up. Since it was an advancement Mr. Haedge bid on the job and was employed-and away went the old way of living, for the new job required that the Repeaterman live in the town where he was to work. At first they rented a

house in the country near the town for they could find no vacancies in the city; later a house in town became vacant, and they rented it. But the Haedges were not the renter kind of people, so they began looking for a place to buy.

They moved into the Cameron-LeRoy-Shiver house December 31, 1965, and were on hand to greet little 1966 the next morning. They were a working family and it was not long before they rolled up their sleeves and were ready to begin work to give their new home the Haedge touch.

Some of the walls were moved to enlarge rooms, and new rooms were fitted in here and there, seeming to be kind of odd ideas when the work was in progress, but looking just right now that they are completed. Bathrooms were added in addition to the ones already there. The kitchen is near the front of the house and the windows are on the south, giving a good view of the south yard. Furniture was moved about several times when they were deciding how to arrange the rooms, one moving problem being where to put the piano. This was solved by making a narrow room running along the west front and placing the instrument in the south end, an arrangement that seems to be just as it should be. They bought a fireplace unit, and Mr. and Mrs. Haedge installed it themselves and did the brick work around it. Throughout the house, warm, soft, deep colors were used, lending it a cheerful relaxing atmosphere.

Outside the grounds have again been cleaned and tidied. The Haedges have cultivated the shrubs. Ronald poured concrete in the spaces between the patio slabs, filling them not quite up to the level of the slabs, and while the concrete was still soft he pressed bright colored pebbles-now it is no longer necessary to clip the grass in the dividing spaces.

Mrs. Haedge is a teacher's aide in the Hempstead schools, and Alan Thomas is a high school student there. Ronald graduated from the high school here several years ago, and has graduated from the University of Texas at Austin. He is married to Debbie

DeGough Haedge, who is a graduate of the University, and the two are now working in Austin. Janis is a junior at the University. Now there is just one other member of the family to be accounted for, who comes home to the Haedge place for the weekends, balancing on her hind feet and waving her front paws in the air and with her little friendly dog smile, letting visitors know that-as far as she is concerned-all's right with the world.

Today the Haedge house is good to look at and pleasant to be in. The grass is green and well cut. The big liveoak trees with their tassel-like blooms and little new leaves form a lacy frame about the white house with its soft yellow entrance. It is strong and solid, its line still straight and true, a house permanent but changed. It fits into its surroundings as if it belongs with them, and all these features only time and planning and T.L.C. could have produced. And withal it is as dignified as its decades have made it, but as modern and young in spirit as is this spring of 1976.

Based on information provided by Mr. and Mrs. M.C. Haedge.

THE PAULINE AND FRANCES HAMMERLING HOME

By Mavis Godkin Peterson

In Brookshire, Texas, on Block 22, Lots 18, 19, and 20 at 1015 Bains Street, is the home that was built for Pauline and Frances Hammerling. Erected in 1912, the builders were Joe Smith and his brother Charlie. Lumber from the Joe Smith Lumber Yard, which was then located just across the street from the homesite, was used in the construction. Most of the timber in the house was longleaf pine-the best grade available.

The house faces east and has two stories with seven large rooms. High ceilings help to keep the house cool in summer. A large entrance hall with a staircase is