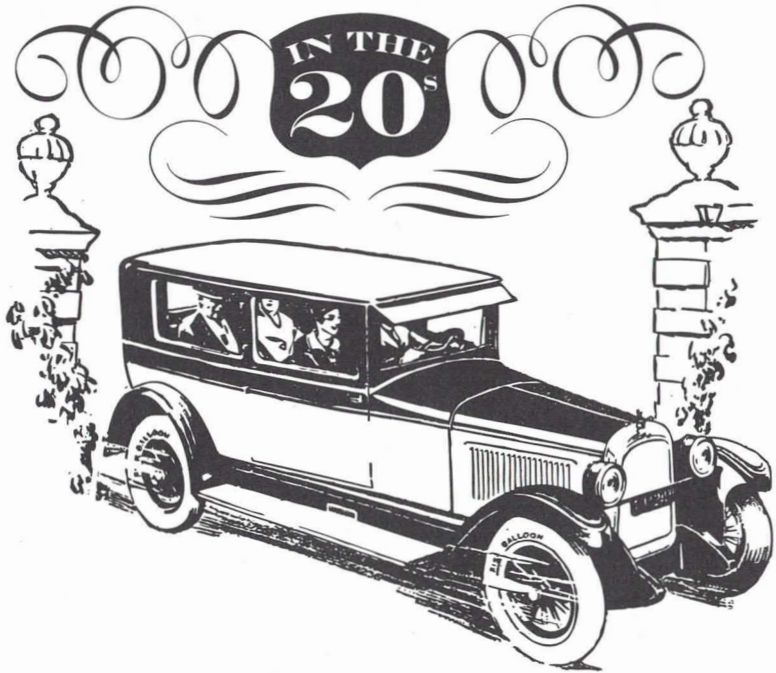


THE HERITAGE SOCIETY OF AUSTIN

TOUR  
NO. 15

# DUVAL

★ STREET ★



HERITAGE  
HOMES TOUR

MAY  
12  
10-6

MOTHER'S DAY WEEKEND



Take a swell trip back to a golden era when hep cats and their flapper ladies thought life was the cat's meow on this grand avenue. In the 1920s, the exclusive Duval Street neighborhoods were still on the outskirts of Austin. The Austin Country Club served as a magnet in attracting well-to-do families to the Country Club suburbs featured in this year's tour. Automobiles and the prosperity of the decade were also factors in the expansion of these fashionable enclaves.

The six elegant homes on this year's Heritage Homes Tour lie on and near Duval Street, just north of the University of Texas between Eastwoods Park and the Hancock Golf Course. There is now a rich variety of residential and commercial architecture in the Hancock, Eastwoods and North University neighborhoods, where simple bungalows and modest cottages nestle comfortably amongst grand mansions. Enjoy entry into some of the neighborhoods most elegant homes during this walking tour of six landmark properties.

## HISTORY OF THE DUVAL STREET NEIGHBORHOODS

Some of the neighborhoods' most handsome residences date back to the Teens and Twenties, when the area was still on the outskirts of town. Between 1880 and 1920, though Austin's population tripled to 34,876, the city moved from the fourth largest city in the state to the tenth – due in part to the loss of the Austin's dam on the Colorado River in 1900, and the flourishing oil business and industry in other parts of the state. Most roads in the Hancock and Eastwoods neighborhoods were still unpaved, but automobiles were becoming popular, having first appeared in Austin by 1910.

*LEWIS HANCOCK* (1857-1920), founding father of the Hancock neighborhood, was the son of San Jacinto Battle veteran George Hancock. Lewis graduated cum laude from Harvard Law School and in 1882 became vice president, later president, of the newly formed State National Bank, known as Bremond's Bank. He inherited his father's store at Sixth and Congress in 1879, and sold the lot to Scarbrough's in 1905. Lewis served as mayor from 1895 to 1897, and built the 1896 Hancock Opera House.

Having become interested in golf while traveling in Scotland, he organized the *AUSTIN COUNTRY CLUB* in 1899 and served for 20 years as its president. In 1913 the Austin Country Club expanded its nine holes to 18 on land east of Red River. Governor Pease's daughter Julia was one of the first lady golfers. Former caddie *HARVEY PENICK* began his professional career here at the age of 18 in 1923. Several prominent national figures were early members of the club, including *T.W. GREGORY* and *DAVID HOUSTON*.

The oldest home on the tour, and the first house built in Sidon Harris' College Court Subdivision, is a 1912 Craftsman Bungalow, the *ETTLINGER HOUSE*. It is surrounded by a number of historic bungalows and Victorian homes built between 1912 and 1930. The Grooms Addition's 1913 *FINCH-KRUEGER HOUSE*, also on the tour, is one of the most intact Prairie School houses of the period in Austin.

In 1926, on 20 acres of land purchased from the Hancock Estate, Lutherans built *CONCORDIA*'s first building, Kilian Hall, in a modified Mediterranean Romanesque style. Concordia would serve first as a boys' high school, then a junior college, currently Concordia University, and is shortly destined to become an urban mixed-use development.

Cotton broker *EDGAR PERRY* built his Italian Renaissance villa in 1928 at 41st and Duval, near the site of an old limestone quarry he converted to a terraced sunken garden. The Perry Estate, a National Register property, is currently home to two schools. Other wealthy Austinites were drawn to the area soon after Perry built his mansion. *TOM MILLER*, Austin's mayor from 1933-49 and 1955-61, lived on nearby Park Boulevard.

In 1927, the Cashway Bakery and Grocery was established in the red brick building still standing at 40th and Duval. By 1935, the Checker Front grocery, a butcher shop, barbershop, beauty salon, and service station were located on 43rd just west of Duval, a corner that still thrives with small, local businesses.

The City purchased the golf course in 1946. In 1962 the back nine holes were sold and the land converted to Austin's first mall, the *HANCOCK SHOPPING CENTER*. The present Hancock Recreation Center and adjacent Hancock Golf Course continue to serve Austin residents.



## JACOB & BERTHA SCHMIDT HOUSE 712 SPARKS

OWNERS: EDYTHE SCHMIDT MICHEL AND BOOKA MICHEL BUILT: 1924

This handsome Colonial Revival house was built in 1924 for Jack Pillow, who was the cashier of the Calcasieu Lumber Company, founded by William S. Drake in the 1880s. The company was a driving force in construction during Austin's early developing years and built many of the homes in this area. Pillow and his wife and family lived in the home until 1930, when unfortunately, Mr. Pillow was found to



have embezzled a large sum of money from his employer. One result was that he had turned over to the Calcasieu Company his car and the equity in his home. In October of that year, Drake sold the property to Jacob and Bertha Schmidt, whose family still occupies the house.

Jacob Schmidt was one of Austin's earliest and best-known retailers. His is a typical success story, beginning with his birth in 1889 in Hungary, immigration to the US in 1907 and eventual arrival in Seguin. At age 18, he began peddling dry goods to farmers and ranchers in central and south Texas from a covered wagon drawn by two mules, the goods being supplied by retailer in Seguin who was a resource for several peddlers. It was in Seguin that he met Bertha Yahr and they were wed in 1912. He opened his first store in 1915 and subsequently opened stores in several small towns. In 1930, they moved to Austin and opened Jacob Schmidt Department Store on East Sixth Street. The first Yaring's (derived from Bertha's family name, Yahr) opened on Congress Avenue in 1936. Two generations of Jacob and Bertha's descendants ran the Yaring's stores for another 60+ years. The Schmidt family have given much to the Austin community, donating to many causes such

as the Mexi-Arte Museum, the new Children's Hospital, the Long Center for the Performing Arts and the Jewish Community Center. After Bertha Schmidt's death the house was a rental for about ten years, until it was acquired by granddaughter Edythe Schmidt Michel and her husband, Robert in 1998.

Stylistically the Schmidt House embodies virtually all the characteristics of Colonial Revival design, with its side-gabled gambrel roof and rectangular plan. It is typically symmetrical and features paired 6:6 windows on the first floor and single 8:8 windows above. Note the enclosed sunporch on the right and open veranda to the left of the dwelling's central block. The property also includes a carriage house with private quarters upstairs. The grand live oak tree in the front yard is estimated to be about 600 years old.

The Michels have replaced the roof and updated the home's mechanical systems. When old linoleum was removed from the kitchen floor, the original long-leaf pine sub-flooring was found intact. They have refurbished the gardens as well and added a pool.

—Marty Moulthrop

## WORRELL-HARRIS-ETTLINGER HOUSE 3110 HARRIS PARK

OWNERS: DAVID SPRADLING & LISA HARVELL BUILT: 1912

In the first decades of the twentieth century, as Austin was growing beyond the original city plat and when such neighborhoods as Hyde Park and Fairview Park were already popular, attorney and land developer Sidon Harris looked to the hilly, wooded area on the east side of Duval Street, where he laid out a new subdivision, College Court. It was composed of 70 lots and its proximity to the University of Texas

made it immediately desirable for professors and staff. There were not yet city zoning laws, but buyers had to agree to a set of restrictions, such as: "Structures of less value than \$3,000 for one story or \$5,000 for two story cannot be built".

Harris sold the first three lots to Steven Worrell and his wife, Kathleen in 1912, and they immediately proceeded to hire A. W. Johns to build a one-story bungalow for \$2,452. Only a year later, Worrell accepted the position as the first dean of the Texas Western College School of Mines & Metallurgy in El Paso (now UTEP) and sold the house back to Sidon Harris. Harris and his family lived in the house until it was sold in 1919 to Hyman J. and Rosebud Ettlenger for \$4,000. Dr. Ettlenger served as chairman of the math department at UT for over 50 years and founded programs to promote math and science to students all over Texas. He was a strong leader in Austin's Jewish community and even found time to referee football games for the University. Rosebud Ettlenger served as president of the University Ladies' Club and was active with AAUW and other organizations. She had a degree in botany and helped design the landscaping plan for their home, using a



wide array of plants. The stone wall was built around the property by Dr. Ettlenger to keep the cows out of Rosebud's garden.

Born of the Arts and Crafts Movement at the turn of the last century, the Craftsman Bungalow style, of which this house is an ideal example, was at one time hugely popular in the United States; however, this shingled version is quite unusual in Austin. The Worrell-Harris-Ettlenger House features many well-known characteristics of the Craftsman style, beginning with its rustic, natural setting. The original plan consisted of two bedrooms off a central hallway, with the front room, dining room and kitchen on the other side of the hall. The unique exterior is composed of shingled siding, deep eaves and exposed-timbered knee braces.

The Worrell-Ettlenger House has been recognized by the City of Austin and the National Register of Historic Places as a historical landmark. It also received an Award of Merit for Restoration from the Heritage Society in 2005. It is currently "starring" in an episode of HGTV's "If Walls Could Talk."

—Marty Moulthrop



## BEN BARKER HOUSE 3215 DUVAL ST.

OWNERS: KATE MONAHAN AND MICHAEL MULLER BUILT: 1921

Coupland, Texas, native Ben M. Barker and his wife, Lucile Taliaferro Barker, built this beautifully proportioned red brick home on the north side of the city in 1921. Ben Barker had come to Austin in 1904 and taken a job as bookkeeper for the University of Texas. By 1910 he owned an automobile dealership, which was in business until 1951. Barker served on the City Council and was president of the Chamber



of Commerce. He retained his affection for the University and worked tirelessly to expand it. The Barkers' residence was designed by prominent architect (and neighbor) Hugo F. Kuehne, whose own home was on the northeast corner of Duval and 32<sup>nd</sup> Sts. After Lucile Barker's death in 1963, her son Stephen and his wife, Nancy, resided here for almost twenty years. In 1982, when the vacant house was about to be demolished, several neighborhood associations objected and were able to obtain a restraining order at the eleventh hour. Local businessman and antiquarian Whit Hanks then bought the house, but the demolition company had already removed and sold the doors, windows, chandeliers and other items. Hanks let it be known that he would like to buy back any fixtures that came from the house and, fortunately, was able to reacquire the original door and window trim. Hanks and his family moved in and began restoring and remodeling the house, using his large and varied collection of antiques. A couple of years later they permitted it to be used as a decorator's showhouse, raising funds for Hospice Austin.

Perhaps Kuehne's most successful residential design, this home has been called the finest example of Georgian Revival architecture in Austin.

It exhibits many characteristics of this style and features a classically proportioned central portico of four Ionic columns, dentil detailing, and a graceful elliptical fanlight above the front door, along with side lites. The home contains about 5,000 square feet of living space, plus detached servants' quarters. It was acquired by the present owners in the early 1990s and they have repainted the interior; added a pool and upgraded the landscaping on the 1.3 acre lot. With the exception of the kitchen, the house retains its original hardwood floors and woodwork. Even the attic features original floors of pine, as well as woodwork and built-in shelving.

Of further historical interest is the fact that the Barker House sits on a portion of the land acquired in the 1870s around 32<sup>nd</sup> and Duval by Joseph W. Hennig and his wife, Susannah Dickinson, who, with her daughter Angelina, was allowed to leave The Alamo in 1836 by Santa Ana prior to the fateful battle. The Hennigs are known to have lived in the area until Susannah's death in 1883.

—Marty Moulthrop

## WILLIAM L. STARK HOUSE 3215 FAIRFAX WALK

OWNERS: LYNN BLAIS AND JUDGE GUY HERMAN BUILT: 1928

In 1924 a new subdivision was platted in the burgeoning area just east of Duval by William L. Stark. Stark had been manager and part-owner of the Driskill Hotel since 1907 and had become prominent in both the political and business communities in the city. He and his family built their home, the first in the Stark Subdivision, in 1928 over the foundation of an old stone house and remained the owner until the mid-1940s. Stark actually only lived in the house until 1930 when he and his family moved back into an apartment at the Driskill. He continued to entertain at the house until he sold it.

This is a Colonial Revival residence with brick exteriors, period gable returns, an arched doorway surround with elliptical fan light and quoin details on the corners, all characteristics of this popular style. During the 1928 remodeling of the Driskill, Stark obtained various fixtures from the hotel, including eight coal-burning fireplaces, one of the original hotel staircases and some trim-work, all dating back to the construction of the hotel in 1886, and installed these items throughout his home. The two-story irregular L-plan appears to have been modified in 1938, when Stark removed the two outside gables, raised the slanted second floor roof to make it more upright and replaced the two double hung windows below the gables with large size wide casement windows. These changes to the second floor of the house provided additional living space and made the upstairs a lot cooler

The home retains its original long-leaf pine floors and original woodwork and fixtures. There are some areas with original oak flooring, as well.



When the current owners acquired the house in 2006 they began restoration of the second-floor south porch. The original railing had been removed but, happily, several of the balusters were found in the garage and new ones were replicated. One of the original balusters was installed along with the replicas to create the new balustrade. In addition, many original window screens made with long-leaf pine were found, refurbished and installed. It had been thought that prominent Austin blacksmith Fortunat Weigl crafted the ornamental iron fencing and front gate to the Stark home along with the other ornamental ironwork; however, the owner says that the gate and fence were made by the Stewart Ironworks Company from Cincinnati, Ohio with the garden railings and the window box iron works being crafted by Weigl. Stewart Iron Works is still in business and the owner has installed additional fencing in the same pattern along the creek-side property line.

The sensitive modifications and restoration work on the Stark House will undoubtedly allow this handsome home to enhance the neighborhood for generations to come.

—Marty Moulthrop



## FINCH-KRUEGER HOUSE 3300 DUVAL

OWNERS: SUSAN PRYOR AND RICHARD BONER BUILT: 1913

This remarkably intact dwelling was built for Howell Mallory and Mary Stanley Finch in the newly developing North University Neighborhood in 1913, when Austin was a burgeoning city of about 30,000. The Finches previously resided in the West Campus area, which was even then having growing pains, and so they decided to purchase ten lots in the fledgling Grooms Addition for \$6,000 to accommodate



a new home. According to family tradition, the house was designed by a Falls County architect named Glass and the plan was thought to be based on that of their earlier home on San Antonio Street. The Finches had three sons, one of whom, Professor Stanley Phister Finch, served as Chairman of the Department of Civil Engineering at UT for a time. Not much is known about Howell or Mary Finch; Howell Finch's obituary indicates that he came to Austin about 1882. City directories list his occupation as "traveling salesman"; however, obviously they were people of substantial means.

The house was one of several Edwardian-era homes built along Duval Street with substantial size and parklike settings, indicating an Austin link with the American Country House movement. Stylistically, it can be labeled a Prairie School variant. It is a large buff-brick residence with red tile roof and features high quality workmanship inside and out. When it was built, the Finch-Krueger House contained very up-to-date mechanical systems, including a central vacuum system, a staff call box, speaking tubes, central heating, many wall sconces, built-in cabinetry and

book cases, and elegant but simple oak and mahogany woodwork.

The second owner was Judge Charles G. Krueger, who purchased the house in the early 1940s from the widowed Mary Finch and lived here with his wife, Nora, for many years. After a career as a lawyer and county judge, Krueger was appointed to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, where he served for seventeen years. After the deaths of Judge and Mrs. Krueger, the house remained empty and deteriorating for several years. Many assumed that the vacant structure with its large lot would be eventually demolished for construction of apartments. Happily, the Finch-Krueger House was acquired in the early 1990s by Richard Boner and Susan Pryor, who have overseen its restoration. All mechanical systems have had to be updated, as well as plasterwork and some exterior trim. Few alterations have been made inside the house since the Finches' era; the fine woodwork is intact and original doors, fireplaces, flooring and light fixtures (originally gas) remain. The kitchen has been updated and new cabinetry installed.

—Marty Moulthrop

## STANLEY AND EMILY FINCH HOUSE 3312 DUVAL

OWNERS: JIM STEINBERG AND SHERE ABBOTT BUILT: 1928

The Finch House is considered to be one of the finest local examples of Colonial Revival architecture, which dominated American residential architecture in the post-World-War-I era. Stanley Phister Finch was raised in the home at 3300 Duval (the Finch-Krueger House, also on today's tour) and in 1927, his newly widowed mother gave to Stanley and his bride, Emily, a portion of that property

as a wedding gift. Finch was a UT graduate and a professor of engineering. He taught there from about 1910 until 1952 and was one of the original members of the Graduate School faculty. His wife, Emily Rice Finch, was the daughter of Judge Ben Rice of the Texas Court of Civil Appeals. Emily became a prominent civic leader and was a founder of the Junior League of Austin.

Finch commissioned his UT colleague, Raymond Everett, to design the new home. Everett was also a longtime faculty member at the University, where he taught freehand drawing, painting, clay modeling and architectural history. Everett began design work on the Finch House in 1927 and construction was completed in June 1928. The house cost \$13,500 to build.

The house remained in the family until it was acquired from Emily Finch's estate in 1995 by Barbara and Larry DiDonato. In 1999 it was designated as an Official Texas Historical Landmark by the Texas Historical Commission. The house was sold in 2005 to Jim Steinberg and his wife, Shere Abbott, who reside in the



home with their two daughters. As both Jim and Shere are associated with UT, the house maintains its longtime ties to the university.

The Finch House exhibits many features of the Colonial Revival style, such as the symmetrical façade, featuring a wide front door with side lights and graceful fanlight above. The first and second-floor windows have working louvered shutters.

The Finch House is arguably one of Austin's more notable and intact residences of the 1920s. The DiDonatos and the Steinbergs have taken care to make structural and other old-house repairs with an eye to preserving the patina of this neighborhood gem. To assist them in ensuring that upgrades remained true to the structure's past, the Abbott/Steinbergs hired Joe and Janis Pinnelli, of J. Pinnelli Co., widely recognized restorers of some of Austin's oldest houses, to oversee the renovation.

—Marty Moulthrop

TOUR  
NO. 15

# DUVAL

\* STREET \*



PLEASE REMEMBER WHILE INSIDE THE HOMES:  
NO SMOKING, NO FOOD OR DRINK, NO PHOTOGRAPHY, NO STROLLERS

