

Sandwiching in History
Mosley Wilson Hardy House
2400 S. Broadway, LR
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By: Rachel Silva



Intro

Hi, my name is Rachel Silva, and I work for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program. Welcome to the April Sandwiching in History tour of the Mosley Wilson Hardy House! I'd like to introduce and thank Anne and John Jarrard for allowing us to tour their beautiful home.

The Hardy House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 as part of a thematic nomination including almost 150 properties entitled, "Structures in Arkansas Represented by the Charles L. Thompson Design Collection." The English Revival-style house was designed in 1921 by well-known Little Rock architects Charles L. Thompson and Thomas Harding, Jr.

S. Broadway Neighborhood

Little Rock experienced rapid population growth in the 1880s—the city's population nearly doubled between 1880 and 1890 (went from 13,138 to 25,874). Public utilities were introduced during this period—things like sewage and drainage systems, the widespread installation of piped gas and water, telephone service, electricity, and the paving of downtown streets with cobblestone—all of these luxuries came to Little Rock in the 1880s. And the city's built environment began to reflect this prosperity with the construction of high-style homes and public buildings (Arkansas School for the Blind—no longer extant—and Pulaski County Courthouse).

Little Rock expanded immediately to the south, east, and west of the original city plat to take advantage of the available flat land. William Savin Fulton, Arkansas's last territorial governor and later a U.S. Senator from Arkansas, owned 240 acres in what is now the Governor's Mansion Historic District. About 1840 Fulton built his retirement home, "Rosewood," on the current site of the Governor's Mansion. According to family lore, Fulton died unexpectedly in 1844 while sleeping in a freshly painted room at Rosewood—the story goes that he inhaled the paint fumes and died from asphyxiation.

Fulton's widow sold part of the property in 1869 to the State of Arkansas for the establishment of the Arkansas School for the Blind. In 1872 a large portion of the Fulton Estate was subdivided as Fulton's Addition, which extended down to 23rd Street. The remainder of the Estate going south was divided up into 10-acre tracts and given to his heirs. One of these tracts, roughly bounded by 23rd Street, half-way between Broadway & Spring, Roosevelt, and Arch, was subdivided on June 9, 1890, as the E. W. Gibbs Addition. But in 1913 most of the addition was still undeveloped. Many of the homes in the 2400 block of Broadway were built between 1915 and 1930. The Hardy House was constructed in 1921 on lots 15 & 16 in block 2 of the Gibbs Addition (property extends into part of lot 14 as well). The lots were unoccupied before this house was built.

[“Rosewood” was eventually torn down and replaced by buildings for the Blind Institute, which, in turn, were demolished in 1948 to make way for the new Arkansas Governor's Mansion. The Arkansas State Legislature created a Governor's Mansion Commission in 1947 to secure a site for the official home of the state's governor. The commission chose the site at 1800 Center, and the mansion was completed in 1950.]

In the 1920s, the southern end of Broadway Street, which was also known as “Broadway Place,” was part of a popular neighborhood called the “fashionable south side.” In the early 20th century, Broadway was surfaced with gravel and from about 20th down to 27th Street, it had a grass median with a fountain. Broadway was paved in the mid-to-late 1920s and lost its median.

The 2400 block of Broadway was all residential until about 1960. There were 5 homes on the west side of the street and 5 homes and one empty lot on the east side of the street. Interestingly, architect Thomas Harding, Jr., (who designed this house) lived across the street at 2425 Broadway. Sadly, the homes on this block began disappearing in 1959, starting with the home on the NW corner of Broadway

and Roosevelt (where KFC is now). The homes on the east side of the 2400 block were razed about 1960 to make way for a series of grocery stores and other businesses, including Weingarten's Super Market, Katz Drug Store, Dollar General, Food City Grocery, Alps Market Grocery, and Save-A-Lot.

Thompson & Harding

Charles L. Thompson (1868-1959) created the most influential architectural firm in Arkansas during the early decades of the 20th century. Thompson's firm designed a wide variety of buildings, from residences to churches to commercial buildings to courthouses. The firm also mastered a vast array of architectural styles. The firm was based in Little Rock; therefore, much of its work was completed in central Arkansas, but the Thompson firm was commissioned for projects throughout the state.

Thompson had several partners over the years, one of whom was Thomas Harding, Jr. Harding was hired to work as a draftsman in 1898 when he was only 14 years old. Like Thompson, Harding had no formal architectural training; he had natural talent and acquired his education through experience and reading. Harding's father, Thomas Harding, Sr., was also a well-known LR architect (he designed St. Andrew's Catholic Cathedral and First Lutheran Church). Thompson gradually delegated more responsibilities to Thomas Harding, Jr., and soon he was put in charge of many residential projects. In 1916 Harding became a partner in the firm. Thompson and Harding worked together until 1925, when Harding went out on his own. Thomas Harding, Jr.'s son, Thomas Harding, III, was the famous pinhole photographer.

[Thompson's firm continues today as Cromwell Architects Engineers.]

Architecture

The firm of Thompson and Harding designed the Hardy House in 1921. It represents a unique subtype of the English Revival style—its false thatched roof was designed to mimic the picturesque thatched roofs of rural England by applying modern roofing materials over rolled eaves. The roof was originally covered by wavy cedar thatch shingles but was replaced with synthetic shingles sometime before 1989 (some of the original shingles remain on the garage and on the back dormer above the kitchen). Mosley Hardy chose the English Revival design to indulge his wife after a trip to England.

[Most English Revival-style houses have an asymmetrical façade with multiple front-facing cross-gables and a prominent chimney, but this house features a symmetrical façade with a recessed central bay and elaborate cast-stone door surround; however, the front door is set inside a rounded arch, which is a trademark of the English Revival style.]

Hardy Family

Mosley Wilson Hardy was born on October 18, 1879, in Heard County, Georgia. He graduated from the University of Alabama and moved to south Arkansas about 1904. Hardy managed a cotton seed oil mill in Camden and invested in nearby timberland. Oil was later found on his land, which made him a considerable amount of money. He moved to El Dorado, where he engaged in the banking and insurance business. Hardy was an organizer and a member of the first Board of Directors of the First National Bank of El Dorado and served as its president for several years. About 1914 Hardy moved to Little Rock and continued in the insurance business. He eventually became a senior partner in the insurance firm of Hardy & Company. But he was best known as the founder and president of the American Grocery Company, which by the late 1920s operated 20 branches around the state. Hardy was also involved in a variety of other industrial enterprises, such as the Acme Brick Company (he was VP) and the Cross-Johnson Lumber Company.

Mr. Hardy was a member of the First Presbyterian Church, served as president of the Little Rock Country Club, and was a member of the City Planning Commission. He was also a 33rd degree Mason. He and his wife, Corrine McCombs Hardy, had three children: William McCombs Hardy (b. 1/3/1915), Robert “Bobby” Lamar Hardy, and Frances Hope Hardy (twins born 2/6/1927).

Tragically, in 1929 M. W. Hardy suffered severe head injuries in an automobile accident. He spent three months at Johns Hopkins hospital and returned to his home in Little Rock on his birthday, October 18. Mr. Hardy died on Wednesday, November 13, 1929, almost one month after his 50th birthday, after a long fight to regain his health. At the time of his death, the *Arkansas Gazette* referred to him as “one of the leading businessmen of Arkansas” and “one of Arkansas’s wealthiest citizens.”

His widow, Corrine “Coco” Hardy, remained in the house and raised the three children, who were 14 and 2 (twins) at the time of their father’s death. As executor of the estate, Coco managed the family’s properties and business interests. She

lived here until her death in 1976. Coco's eldest son, McCombs Hardy, kept the home furnished for the next 10 years, hoping that a family member might eventually move back to Little Rock (from NYC) and care for the property. He eventually decided to sell, and John and Anne Jarrard purchased it in 1989.

Albert Broadous was employed by the Hardy family from the late 1930s until his death in 1999. During the years after Coco Hardy's death, Albert (who had been the housekeeper) took care of the house, and even after the home was sold out of the Hardy family, they kept him on the payroll.

Important to point out that John Jarrard is a well-known restoration architect and still practices at 1700 Spring Street in Little Rock. In addition to being the Jarrard's home, Anne Jarrard has an event business here—The Manor House is available for weddings, receptions, parties, luncheons, etc.

House details

- Almost 8,000 square feet
- 2 stories plus full basement and small apartment in attic
- Dark brown brick was made especially for the home by the Acme Brick Co., where Mr. Hardy was VP
- Wood used in home was supplied by Cross-Johnson Lumber, where Mr. Hardy was on the board of directors

- Original oak floors
- Original plaster throughout, except ceilings
- Original molding and picture rail
- Paint colors—originally light green with gold flake stripes on molding & rest of house was “pumpkin cream”—Jarrards went back with period appropriate colors & wallpaper
- Wall sconces original & some original fixtures throughout (crystal chandelier, but in different location)
- 3 fireplaces
- Radiators enclosed in cabinetry and window boxes

- Living room—antique valence—brass on wood frame. Mrs. Hardy's gold drapes were restored.

- 2 porches on first level—south-facing porch with French doors and north-facing screened porch

- 3 bedroom suites upstairs (we will not go upstairs)
- Dining room—original white wooden valence and brass curtain tie-backs (rosettes)
- Butler's pantry/breakfast room
- Service stairway
- Kitchen—original elements include exhaust hood over stove and medicine cabinet
- Garage/chauffer's cottage with 1-bedroom apartment upstairs—also designed by CT and TH but built a little after the house, ca. 1924
- Walled formal garden with many original plantings, including most trees, Carolina jasmine, azalea, camellia, ivy, and others
- Driveway enters back yard through original gate off 24th Street and runs under original porte-cochere to garage/chauffer's cottage
- Garden paths are original--exposed aggregate concrete, which was chosen to emulate English gravel paths
- North side gate and fence are original to house but remaining fence around east side of house is antique fence purchased by Mrs. Hardy (is this the fence salvaged from a Crittenden County homestead and installed by 1937??).

Thank you for coming!

Next tour is May 11 at the Cole-Rainwater House at 712 Ash St. in Hillcrest.