

## Homes of History: Worsham home still stands 90+ years later

Written by By Ava Barlow, Staff Writer

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Feb. 17, 2011 - In 1917, James Earnest (J.E.) and Maud V. Henry Worsham began building a four-room house on one of two dirt roads that led from Leonard to Bonham, which is now FM 1553. The house was a basic house with two bedrooms, a living/dining room, and a kitchen without running water. There was a smokehouse located off the southeast corner of the house, a chicken coop and outhouse located out away from the house; so far out that one hoped to not have to use it during the night. The house also had wood burning stoves in two rooms with connecting ventilation to the outside and the walls were made of one by twelve planks. As was natural for an old farmhouse, the rooms were connected one to another throughout the house, so there was little to no privacy.

The Worshams had five children raised on a farm north of Leonard and built this house new in 1917. Their children were Vera, O'Dell, Alvin, Eunice Noreen - who is buried in Grove Hill Cemetery- and Orbreal. The house had at least two rooms added during the time it was owned by the Worsham family. This house was a big step up for J. E. and Maud as they began married life in a two-room house in the middle of a cotton patch located across the road from their new house.

The Worshams lived in the home for 33 years with their heirs probably living in the house in later years. J. E. Worsham served as a Fannin County Commissioner in the 1920's.

In 1952, Guy and Jewel Robinson bought the now six-room house and moved in with their six-year-old son, Boyd. Boyd remembers his mother using a black cook pot out in the yard for washing clothes, a crank telephone mounted on the wall, a party telephone line with a two ring indicator for the Robinsons and the kitchen had running water via an electric pump mounted on the well. Boyd also remembers having to visit the outhouse for the first year they lived in the

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house until his father turned a small storage area into an indoor bathroom. The house now had two bedrooms, a living room, dining room and a kitchen with the added bathroom.

During the late 1950's and early 1960's Boyd also remembers his mother loading up the dirty clothes and going to Nolen's Washateria in town instead of using the wash pot method and having to crank the roller to squeeze the water out of the clothes. He also remembers his mother making homemade soap and during the late 1960's his father made a bigger and better bathroom. A long time after Boyd married his wife, Nancy, his parents built onto the back of the house a larger den and dining room - circa 1996-97. There was also a place on the back porch for a washing machine.

The Robinson's sold the house to Rex and Vickie Clark in 1998-99 and Rex made the back add-on into a master bedroom with his and her closets, a large bathroom with a place for the washer and dryer and a small hall separating the bedroom from the bathroom. Other changes he made were a hall through the middle of the house so that each room opened into the hall and you didn't walk through rooms to get to other rooms. He added closets to rooms and put sheetrock throughout the house. Clark also tore down the lean-to garage and used the wood from the garage to build a split rail fence around the front yard. He removed the cement steps on the front porch and replaced them with wooden steps and built a wider sidewalk out to where Grove Hill Road ran by the place. He also put new decking on the front porch.

Jim and Lee Ann Thomas own the house now, and have since 2005. They keep several horses on the place and enjoy the peace and tranquility it has to offer. The house no longer sits on the road - due to construction through the years on FM 1553 - but is easily visible from the farm to market.

Former occupants of the home, Boyd and Rex, were talking and confirmed that the pond on the place has never gone dry.