James Webb Throckmorton and the Throckmorton Statue

Guy Giersch, Historic Preservation Officer
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James Webb Throckmorton

- Born in 1825 in Sparta, Tennessee
- Settled in McKinney in 1848
- Doctor, then Lawyer
- Texas House of Representatives, 1851-57
- One of eight delegates to vote against succession in 1861, but served as a Brigadier-General in the Confederacy
- Negotiated a number of treaties with Indian tribes
- Following Civil War, elected as delegate to Constitutional Convention of 1866
- Inaugurated as Governor in 1866
- Removed from office in June 1867 by Federal Government for not advancing the articles of Reconstruction, in particular the Fourteenth Amendment
- Returned to McKinney and resumed his law practice
- Elected to Congress in 1874 and 1876, and from 1882-1886
- Lifelong bout with kidney disease, but suffered serious injuries from a fall in March 1894 and passed away in McKinney on April 21. Buried at Pecan Grove Cemetery
Throckmorton Statue

- Placed on northeast corner of courthouse square in 1911
- Pompeo Coppini – Sculptor
- Discussion of a statue began in late 1890’s after Throckmorton’s death
  - Throckmorton Camp of the United Confederate Veterans appointed a committee in 1904
  - Federated Women’s Club of McKinney took over fundraising and management
  - United Daughters of the Confederacy joined fundraising efforts in 1910
- The Collin County Courthouse no longer serves as the courthouse, but as the McKinney Performing Arts Center, the centerpiece of the Historic McKinney Cultural District
Discussion and guidance

▪ Is there additional history about Throckmorton and/or the statue that you have?

▪ Are there additional resources that you would like Staff to research?
Monuments, Memorials, and Artifacts

Mark Doty, Assistant Director of Planning
What are monuments, memorials, and artifacts?

- Public art with a political and social purpose
- May function as a receptacle for emotion and public grief (war memorials, in particular)
- Commemorate events or experiences of the past, but are intended for posterity by their durability and permanency.
Types of monuments and memorials

- Statuary of a specific person celebrates the vision, leadership and civic convictions of a specific person.

- Less-specific statuary or monuments commemorate events and/or the experiences of many (think of the Vietnam War memorial, or a statue of a generic soldier).

- Some more recent monuments present a counterbalance to the views and/or narrative portrayed by older monuments or memorials.
History and recent trends

- Early American monuments were often unfinished or took a long time to complete

- Recent trends in monument design resist the ‘traditional’ interpretation of memorials

- Remaining at street level, not larger than life, inviting to visitors, encouraging leaving of artifacts

- Light projections, temporary installations, living memorials
The dedication of Confederate monuments and the use of Confederate names and other iconography began shortly after the Civil War ended in 1865. But two distinct periods saw significant spikes. The first began around 1900 as Southern states were enacting Jim Crow laws to disfranchise African Americans and re-segregate society after several decades of integration that followed Reconstruction. It lasted well into the 1920s, a period that also saw a strong revival of the Ku Klux Klan. Many of these monuments were sponsored by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The second period began in the mid-1950s and lasted until the late 1960s, the period encompassing the modern civil rights movement. While new monument activity has died down, since the 1980s the Sons of Confederate Veterans has continued to erect new monuments.

*This chart does not include monuments or other symbols for which the dedication dates are unknown. The hollow circles indicate the dedication dates for symbols that now have been removed from public spaces.*
In conclusion

- History is comprised of both facts and the interpretation of those facts.

- “A monument is not history itself; a monument commemorates an aspect of history, representing a moment in the past when a public or private decision defined who would be honored in a community’s public spaces.” - American Historical Association
Discussion and guidance
THROCKMORTON, JAMES WEBB (1825–1894). James Webb Throckmorton, governor of Texas and Congressman, the son of Susan Jane (Rotan) and William Edward Throckmorton, was born on February 1, 1825, at Sparta, Tennessee. One of eight children, Throckmorton spent the first eleven years of his life in Sparta, where his father practiced medicine. In 1836 Dr. Throckmorton moved his practice to Fayetteville, Arkansas. Shortly thereafter his wife died. In 1840 he married Melina Wilson. The next year he visited Texas and purchased land near the East Fork of the Trinity River in Collin County, two miles northwest of the site of present Melissa. Later that year he moved his family to their new home. Less than a year later he became ill and died. Following the death of his father, Throckmorton spent a year helping his family settle in their new home. After assuring his family’s safety, he left Texas to study medicine with his uncle, James E. Throckmorton, in Princeton, Kentucky. He remained in Kentucky until the outbreak of the Mexican War. He returned to Texas and volunteered for military service. He joined Capt. Robert H. Taylor’s company as a private in February 1847. He served less than three months in the field, however, as he became ill, apparently the first sign of a kidney disease that would haunt him throughout his life. Because of his medical training he was reassigned as a surgeon’s assistant in Maj. Michael H. Chevallie’s Texas Rangers. During the war, either as a soldier or surgeon, Throckmorton served at Monterrey, Saltillo, and Buena Vista. Because his health did not improve he received a medical discharge on June 8, 1847, and returned to his family. Following his recovery, he left Texas in early 1848 to marry Annie Rattan in February in her native state, Illinois. The couple returned to Texas that year and built a home just outside McKinney, where Throckmorton began his medical practice and fathered the first of ten children. Throckmorton quickly established himself as one of the prominent members of the community. He invested in real estate, read law, promoted education, and participated in church affairs. His interest in education led him to financially support the establishment of the Mantua Seminary, seven miles north of McKinney. Although a successful doctor, Throckmorton found the practice of medicine personally distasteful. He dissolved his medical practice and became a partner in the law firm of R. DeArmond and Thomas Jefferson Brown. A lifelong interest in politics persuaded Throckmorton to consider running for political office. He inherited his party loyalty from his father, a Whig of the Tennessee school. In 1851 he was elected to the first of three terms as representative of the Twenty-fifth District, which included both Collin and Denton counties. As a member of the Texas House of Representatives from 1851 to 1857, Throckmorton helped to negotiate a settlement of disputed land titles of early Texas settlers, especially those involving the Peters colony. As chairman of the Internal Improvement Committee he advocated land grants to establish public free schools and the construction of a statewide railroad network. In 1857 he was elected to the Texas Senate. He entered the chamber as a Democrat, the party he chose following the dissolution of the Whigs in the mid 1850s.

Throckmorton's party loyalty was soon put to the test. In the 1857 gubernatorial election he supported Sam Houston and unionist sentiment against states'-rights Democrat Hardin R. Runnels. Houston lost but successfully challenged Runnels in 1859. That same year Throckmorton won reelection. The state senator from McKinney became a political advisor to the governor and Houston's ally in attempting to restrain the forces within Texas who favored secession. Throckmorton's attempt to organize a state Union party attracted few supporters, and he watched helplessly as the events between 1859 and 1860 precipitated the crisis of 1861. He refused to concede, however, and was one of only eight delegates to the 1861 Secession Convention who voted against Texas withdrawal from the union. Shortly after the secessionist vote, Governor Houston received a note from the Lincoln administration suggesting that if Houston wished to organize a resistance group within the state, the president would provide military support. Houston called those closest to him and asked their advice. Throckmorton argued against taking action,
concluding that the young state might not survive a civil war within its borders. Houston agreed and shortly thereafter retired from office. Although he fought for two years against secession, Throckmorton was one of the first men in Collin County to join in the defense of his adopted state. He helped organize over 100 men into the Company of Mounted Riflemen from Collin County in May 1861. The company secured forts Wichita and Arbuckle on the frontier. Following the dissolution of the company in August, he joined the Sixth Texas Cavalry, participating in the battles at Chustennallah and Elkhorn. He also saw action in Mississippi but was forced to resign and was discharged from service on September 12, 1863, because of his recurring kidney problem. He served in the state senate in 1864, representing Collin and Grayson counties. In December 1864 he was commissioned brigadier-general of the state's First Frontier District. The following year Gen. E. Kirby Smith appointed Throckmorton Confederate commissioner to the Indians. He successfully negotiated a number of treaties with tribes on the frontier, who nicknamed him "Old Leathercoat."

Following the Civil War Collin County voters elected Throckmorton as their delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1866. The convention was divided into three factions, secessionists, conservative union men, and radical unionists. Throckmorton, receiving the support of the first two groups, defeated the radical A. H. Latimer and became chairman of the convention. He presided over the writing of a new state constitution that provided limited civil rights to African Americans (they still could not vote) and refused to take action on the Thirteenth Amendment, arguing that the abolishment of slavery was already law. President Andrew Johnson accepted the Texas constitution, and state wide elections were held in June 1866. Politically ambitious and promised the support of both secessionists and conservative union men, Throckmorton entered the governor’s race. He easily defeated the radical candidate, E. M. Pease, by a margin of 49,277 to 12,168. Governor Throckmorton was inaugurated on August 9, 1866, and faced the difficult task of returning political, social, and economic stability to Texas while maintaining a semblance of order between former Confederates and former slaves. Political opposition from radicals, suspicion from federal military officers, violence against freedmen and Freedmen's Bureau agents, combined with his public repudiation of the Fourteenth Amendment and the emergence of Radical Republican power in Congress destroyed what little chance of success Throckmorton's administration might have had. Following the passage of the Military Reconstruction Act of 1867, which placed Texas under military command, the governor consistently clashed with Gen. Charles Griffin, commander of the Texas sub-district. Griffin demanded that the governor provide more protection for African-American citizens of Texas and publicly support Radical Republican policies. Throckmorton refused, stating that he had done all he could, given the powers of his office and that his state did not support the Fourteenth Amendment so that he, its governor, could not. Griffin appealed to Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, for Throckmorton's removal from office, which was ordered on July 30, 1867.

Prohibited from holding public office, Throckmorton returned to McKinney and resumed his law practice. He did not, however, remain silent. In summer 1870, along with former governors Andrew J. Hamilton and E. M. Pease, Throckmorton signed a public document circulated throughout the state that attacked the policies of Radical Republicans as dangerous threats to the civil liberties of Texans. Thus, although a private citizen, he was able to remain a public figure. With the passage of the General Amnesty Act of 1872, Throckmorton was able to return to public office. In 1874 he was elected to Congress from the state's Third District and reelected in 1876. Throckmorton concentrated his efforts on lobbying for education and federal support of railroad expansion. The latter concern reflected the interests of his employer, the Texas and Pacific Railway Company, which retained Throckmorton as an attorney. In 1878
the former governor made an attempt to return to that office but was defeated in the Democratic party state convention. Throckmorton returned to Congress in 1882 and was reelected in 1884 and 1886. His health once again forced him from public service. He declined to run in 1888 in order to recuperate. For a few weeks in 1892 Throckmorton actively sought support for another run at the governor's office. His lifelong bout with kidney disease, however, left him without the strength to endure another campaign. He retired from politics and returned to McKinney, where he was the receiver for the Choctaw Coal and Railroad Company. During a business trip in March 1894 Throckmorton suffered serious injuries from a fall. His fragile health was unable to recover from this accident, and he died at McKinney on April 21. The citizens of McKinney erected a statue in his honor that carries the inscription, "A Tennessean by Birth, a Texan by Adoption."

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The Throckmorton Monument: A Brief History
Tonya Fallis, City of McKinney GIS Dept
Oct 7, 2020 (Revised)

A monument to James W. Throckmorton (1825-1894) stands on the northeast corner of the town square in McKinney, Texas, facing the intersection of E. Virginia and N. Tennessee Streets. The marble statue was erected in 1911 at the historic Collin County Courthouse, which today is the McKinney Performing Arts Center.

Although widely reported to be a work of sculptor Pompeo Coppini of San Antonio, little direct evidence exists to support this connection. The link to Coppini appears in the 1996 book *A Comprehensive Guide to Outdoor Sculpture in Texas,* which repeated information from *The Architectural Heritage of McKinney,* published by the McKinney Owl Club in 1974. However, Professor Richard McCaslin, author of an upcoming biography on Coppini, reports that the statue lacks Coppini's style or signature, and is not mentioned in any of the sculptor's own records. In addition, McCaslin notes that no contemporary records exist linking Coppini to the statue, citing a 1911 newspaper article describing the sculptor as an artist from Waco. At this time, the sculptor of the monument remains unknown.

The monument's history is well-documented in McKinney's local newspapers between 1898 and 1911. In 1898, only four years after Throckmorton's death, Russell DeArmond (1833-1906) created the Throckmorton Memorial Association. A lawyer and former Colonel in the Confederacy, DeArmond viewed Throckmorton as a mentor and close friend. The two were political allies as well as professional partners. As governor, Throckmorton appointed DeArmond as attorney for Collin County. Later, they worked together in the McKinney law firm of Throckmorton, Brown & DeArmond. DeArmond installed the granite base of the monument in 1899 with the same inscription present today. His leadership of the Monument Association waned in the following years, possibly due to failing health.

In 1904, the local chapter of the United Confederate Veterans, which called itself the "Throckmorton Camp," created a committee to manage the project. The UCV announced another leadership committee shortly after DeArmond's death in 1906. Despite this, fundraising and leadership lagged for several years. Between 1906 and 1909, McKinney newspapers regularly issued exhortations to the community encouraging them to complete the monument, which continued to remain an empty pedestal on the city square.

Funding for the Throckmorton Memorial came from a wide variety of sources during the twelve years of the project. The pedestal installed in 1899 was paid for by donations to the Throckmorton Memorial Association. Community fundraising efforts in the intervening years included musical concerts, school funding drives, and individual donations ranging from one dollar from a schoolboy to $100 from Congressman JW Bailey (4th Dist).
In 1909, the Federated Women's Clubs of McKinney took over leadership of the monument project. Known simply as Federated Clubs, this nationwide organization acted as an "umbrella" for many smaller women's clubs, including the Owl Club and Edelweiss Club. Women of the Federated Clubs worked to improve the quality of life in McKinney. They established McKinney's first library, lobbied for increased educational funding for women, and for women's right to vote. Like most women's clubs in the South, the Federated Clubs was an exclusively White organization, and leadership came from prominent women from "old settler" families.

Leadership of the Federated Clubs overlapped with that of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). The 1909 meeting where Federated Clubs assumed leadership of the monument project was hosted by Mrs. T.W. Wiley. At the time, Mrs. Wiley was president of both the Federated Clubs and the local chapter of the UDC. In 1910, the UDC joined fundraising efforts for the Throckmorton Memorial, which helped provide enough funding to complete the monument.
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The ladies of the City Federation of Clubs are entitled to and deserve a vote of thanks from the people of McKinney and Collin county for the completion of the monument for the late Gov. James W. Throckmorton. This monument not only commemorates the memory and esteem in which the late Governor was held, but will also be a memorial to the ambition, energy and ability of the ladies of this city.

The statue is of Italian marble, and is a well executed piece of work and while the people had to wait a long time for it, it was worth waiting for.

The monument is well set in a place where it will always command a good view from both the north and east sides of the square.

Quoting from Longfellow:

"The lives of great men all remind us.
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us,
Foot-prints on the sand of time."

To have lived in the memory of those we leave behind is not to have lived in vain, but to have so lived as to create, in the minds of those whom we leave behind, a sentiment for a public monument or memorial, is a greatness to which few of us can ever hope to attain.

Again, we say the ladies deserve a public vote of thanks for their efforts. When there are any more public monuments to be let in McKinney and Collin county, the McKinney Monument Co. desire to submit designs, specifications and prices.
The following program will be rendered at 6 p.m. July 4, 1911, on the east side of the court house, McKinney, Texas, when the ladies of the City Federation will present to the city the Throckmorton monument:

Music.
Invocation—Rev. W. P. Cloyd.
Music.
Music.
Presentation Speech—Chief Justice Tom J. Brown of Austin.
Acceptance Speech—Mayor J. L. Doggett.
Music.
GOV. JAS. W. THROCKMORTON
(Deceased)

The statue of Governor James W. Throckmorton erected by the Daughters of the Confederacy, which has stood on the northeast courthouse plaza for some twenty-five years, has been taken down and will be stored until the courthouse improvements are completed.

Governor Throckmorton was governor of Texas and a United States Congressman and resided in McKinney where he was one of the early barristers, in which profession he also gained statewide recognition. The McKinney Camp of Confederate Veterans was named after Gov. Throckmorton.