

Crawford House

submitted by Louise Crawford Berry (June 9, 2015)

daughter of Hugh Crawford Jr.

Hugh Rankin Crawford was born Jan. 20, 1881, and graduated from Maryville College in 1903. He was a hardware merchant in Maryville (Crawford and Caldwell, a longtime fixture on Broadway across from the old Proffitt's store) and an Elder in New Providence Presby. Church. He also taught at Sunnybrook Chapel (an outreach, I think, of New Prov). In 1912 he married Nora Adeline Murphy (b. 7/27/1883) who also graduated from MC in 1906. She then was a missionary and teacher in Puerto Rico before returning to marry Hugh.

They had 4 children: my father, Hugh Jr. (b. 7/26/1913) and three daughters--Lillian McQueen (b. 9/7/1915); Ruth Lamon (b. 5/1/ 1918); Elizabeth Roper (b. 7/25/ 1926). All the children graduated from Maryville College. All are now deceased.

When his wife Nora died in 1939, Hugh's sister Jennie gave up her job as principal at Fort Craig Elementary to move in to her brother's home and take care of the children still there (Elizabeth and Ruth especially). She had been a 3rd grade teacher as well as principal. She had an apartment on High Street before moving across the field, so to speak, to her brother's home on E. Goddard. She was renowned in the family as a marvelous cook, especially her biscuits and rolls, and became a grandmother figure to my generation as we visited the home and celebrated holidays or spent rainy afternoons on the screened porch playing games together.

I have photos of the house in 1912 shortly after my grandparents purchased it. At that time it was a one story frame home; they added the second story at some point around 1917 based on photos of a pile of shingles that my father is sitting on. He looks to be around 3-4 years old. If you look closely at the house, you can even now see the joint where the second story was added. Besides a garage just at the end of the driveway (still there), there was also a chicken coop (still there) and a playhouse up toward the hedge by the old railroad bed (both now gone). It was a great place to visit, I thought, for there was a glider on the shady porch to while away hot afternoons, a parlor just inside to the right of the front door where the cedar Christmas tree was always placed and the somewhat challenging narrow staircase leading to the upstairs bedrooms. A curtain covered the entrance to the stairwell. I think Chick Bowman has carried on that tradition.

After all of the family members residing in the house had died, the family arranged for the house and land to be owned by Maryville College. I'm not sure about the sequence of what happened next, but I think the house was used as a residence for missionaries on sabbaticals as well as a dorm for students for several years before eventually being sold to regain its role as a private residence.