

HISTORY & FOLKLORE



1825 TRINITY STREET, AS IT APPEARS TODAY

From the Liberty County Historical Commmission Walking Tour –

Bailey’s Corner 1825 Trinity Street

James Washington Bailey (1866-1924) was a prominent physician around the turn of the twentieth century. Dr. Bailey came to practice medicine in Liberty in the early 1890s as the discovery of oil in this area created a boom town in Liberty. He married Lilla Lee Finley (1871-1926) in the home of her uncle, W.S. Partlow, brother to her mother. The Baileys had five children: Maud, Sunshine, James Jr., A.B., and Mozelle. Dr. Bailey

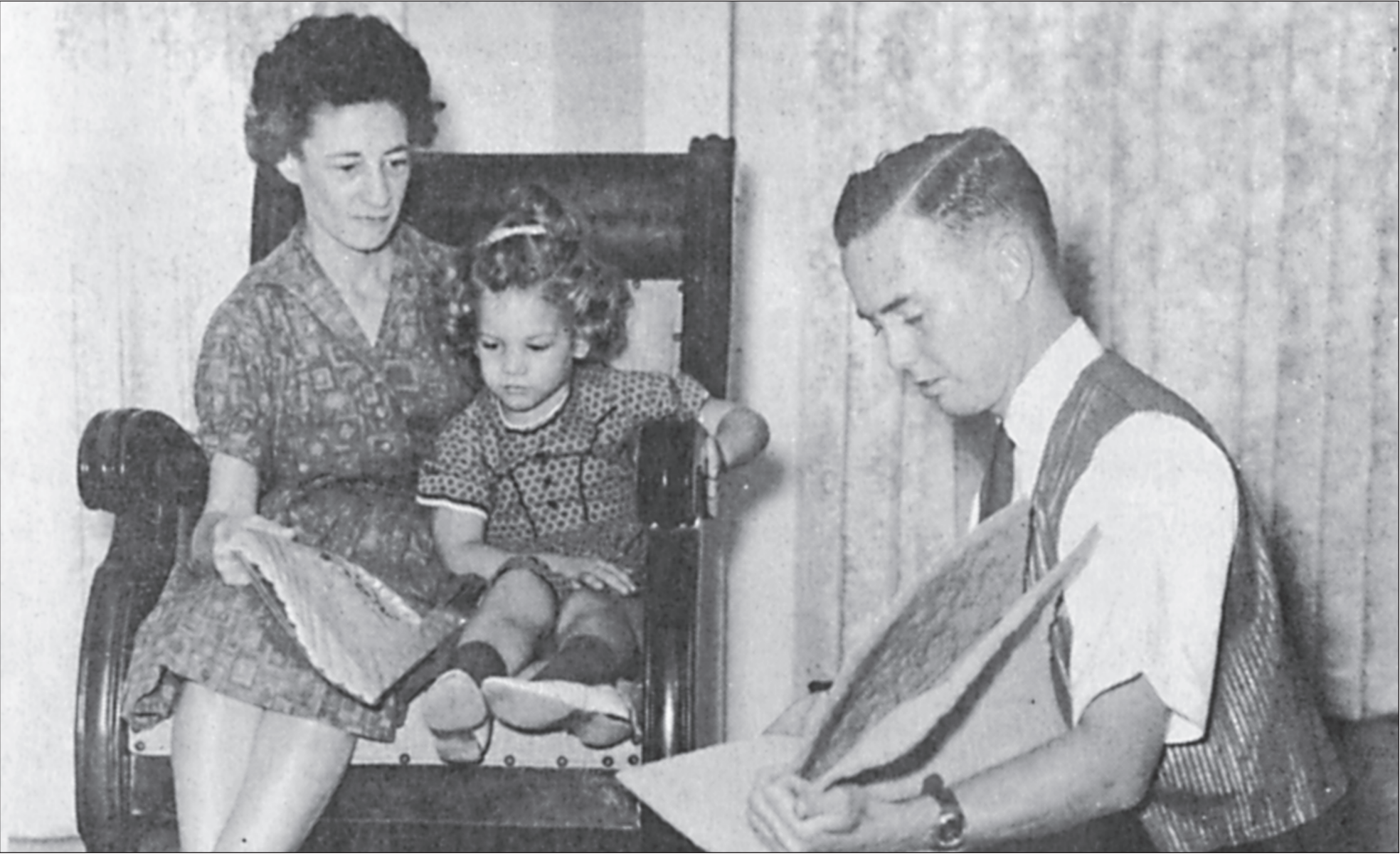
was well-loved and well-respected by the community as he made many house calls, saw patients day or night in his own home and served the county during times of pandemic, plague and poverty. He was active in county Democratic Party activities and Woodmen of the World, a fraternal organization. In 1896, the Baileys purchased the lot at the corner of Trinity and Travis, which likely had both buildings on it. The residence is known

locally as the Bailey-Chambers House. On the corner stands a building known as “Bailey’s Hall” built with two stores. The first floor of Bailey’s Hall provided space for the offices of early doctors, lawyers, and journalists in Liberty. A large hall on the second story was used for public meetings, plays, orchestras, weddings, and seasonal parties. In 1898, the Baileys sold the property, including the two-story building and cottage next door, to Ophelia Green who had the second story

removed because she found the various social activities too disruptive. Mrs. Green’s daughter, Myrtle, married T. Jeff Chambers, editor of The Liberty Vindicator. The young couple lived in the cottage and the corner one-story building became the newspaper office with adjacent offices housing a dentist and various attorneys. After an absence of nine years, the Baileys returned to Liberty County, living near Lilla’s parents in the area known as “Inside Prairie” near Hardin.

Bailey was practicing medicine, farming and served as postmaster in the nearby community of Walter. He also owned a drugstore in Hull. In 1914 tragedy impacted the Bailey family with the commitment of Lilla to the State Insane Asylum in Terrell, Texas. She was found to be of unsound mind and suffering from delusional psychosis at age 43. Her illness was both a sorrowful and financial burden on Dr. Bailey and her family as

their assets and properties had to be sold to maintain Lilla at the asylum. Dr. Bailey died in 1924 at the Carr Hotel in Hull. The Vindicator extolled his virtues stating “He had a world of friends. His goodness, his charity and his service will be missed.” Lilla died in 1926 still confined to the asylum. However, their memories live on in Liberty through Dr. Bailey’s dedicated medical practice, and the vivid stories of so many grand nights passed at Bailey’s Hall.



From Illustrated Press of Liberty County, Thursday, October 27, 1963 –

Mary Jane (Hartel) Ripkowski and daughter Jo Beth see the carpet samples shown to them by Mike Bledsoe, Sears representative here, from which the carpet in the beautiful new home of the Herman Ripkowskis was chosen. The colonial style home is located on Milam in Liberty.



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