

The Tragedy of T. Bryan McGee

Minnie McGee and her husband Bryan were prominent members of the Coppell community after the turn of the century. Minnie was a descendent of the Bullock family and was remembered for riding her horse side saddle and for working as a teacher in town. Fewer memories of Bryan remain, and in many recollections he is merely referred to as “Minnie’s husband.”

After Minnie and Bryan married, the two operated a drugstore and soda fountain that sat on Coppell Rd. Resident Pete Wilson recalls that the building was still standing when he was young. In a footnote to Historical Society records he described the store.

“It was an elaborate building, with large plate glass windows on either side of double doors, with some stained glass surrounding the plate glass,” Wilson said, “It was quite a long building with a high ceiling. It had steep concrete steps in the front.”

One day in 1918, Bryan was working in the store when a CO2 canister at the soda fountain exploded. According to recollections by resident Mildred Cherry, the explosion was so great that it decapitated Bryan, sending his head rolling across the drugstore floor. There is some reason to doubt the veracity of these grisly details, as they are not from an eye witness account, but it is certain that Bryan was killed in the explosion.

Minnie would go on to live another 56 years after her loss. Today, the two are buried side by side in the Coppell’s Historic Bullock Cemetery.