



Urban archaeology

Beneath the paint, hidden history

Robert Smith is attempting to recreate Downtown Garland's architectural history, not to restore it as it actually was.

"I guess you could call me somewhat of an urban archaeologist," he says.

His latest project is in progress at 507 State Street on the north side of the Square, where layers of paint have been removed to reveal the original 1918 brick facade of the building.

He recently purchased that building and the one that adjoins it at 509 State St.

Workers now will take away brick where original window transoms were located and restore that area, rework the awning and construct a new decorative wood store front that Smith says "will be sensitive to the period, but not necessarily what was there originally."

Smith, engaged in commercial and residential real estate and investment businesses, is a Garland native who is fascinated with the city's history, particularly the Square and its evolution from an agricultural and livestock trading place in the late 1800s to the more formal business area surrounding the central square which developed through the 1920s and later.

The two buildings now undergoing renovation are not Smith's first adventure in "urban archaeology." Three years ago he finished his first restoration on the west side of the Square in the building he owns at 107 North 6th Street, now housing the Generator Coffee Shop.

(Please see **THE WAY** on Page 5)



507 State Street, right, before removal of paint layers, and, above, original brick work exposed and with decorative white border as it might have looked in 1918.



INSIDE: Author donates Landmark articles on early settlers
New map locates Embree, Duck Creek districts

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Some early Garland settlers

Subjects of articles written by Betty Roberts and published in The Garland Daily News, 1980-1981, and donated to the Landmark Society by Mrs. Roberts.
(SEE OPPOSITE PAGE)

1. **J. D. Alexander Family**
2. **John Lair Anderson Family**
3. **William Lair Anderson Family**
4. **Carl Axe Family**
5. **Beaver and McCallum Families**
6. **The Bechtol Family**
7. **The Coldwell Family**
8. **The H.B. Coyle Family**
9. **George Wilson Crossman**
10. **John Tom McCallum**
12. **The Monroe Family**
13. **Thomas Jefferson Nash**
14. **Thomas Fletcher Nash**
15. **The Nickens Family**
16. **R.S. Pickett Family**
17. **Routh Family**
18. **William Sachse**
19. **The Strother Family**
20. **J.S. Wallace Family**
21. **C.A. Weaver**
22. **The M.D. Williams Family**

Family history articles rediscovered

If you asked her, she could write a book.

In fact, three decades ago Betty Roberts wrote a series of stories about early Garland settlers that she thought might one day be collected and published as a book. But, Fate, as it often does, intervened.

The family profiles the school teacher had been writing as short articles for the *Garland Daily News* in 1980-'81 ended when the editor left the newspaper.

The writer put aside the research she had done for future stories and, as time went on and she became involved in other activities, the articles were forgotten. . . until earlier this year, when Michael Hayslip, curator of the Landmark Society, stumbled upon them as he was searching *Garland Daily News* archives while working on another project.

At Hayslip's prodding, Mrs. Roberts produced original copies of the published stories — 22 of them, and offered them to the Landmark Society for its history collection.

With the help of volunteer typists, the articles could find a place on Landmark's website.

A school teacher in the West Texas town of Rotan (Fisher County) where she grew up, Mrs. Roberts came to Garland with her husband, Gerow, in 1966 when he was offered a job with Texas Instruments. They met at Abilene Christian University where both were band members. She taught in private schools for a time, then joined the Garland School District in 1969 as an English teacher at South Garland High School, where she taught for ten years. She later taught at East Texas State University, Eastfield and Richland Community Colleges, and Amberton University.

Her interest in Garland history was spurred by an early neighbor, Rachel Anderson Monroe, then in her 80s, who told Mrs. Roberts stories of her ancestors and their lives in Garland. Later, when Mrs. Roberts was working on advanced degrees at East



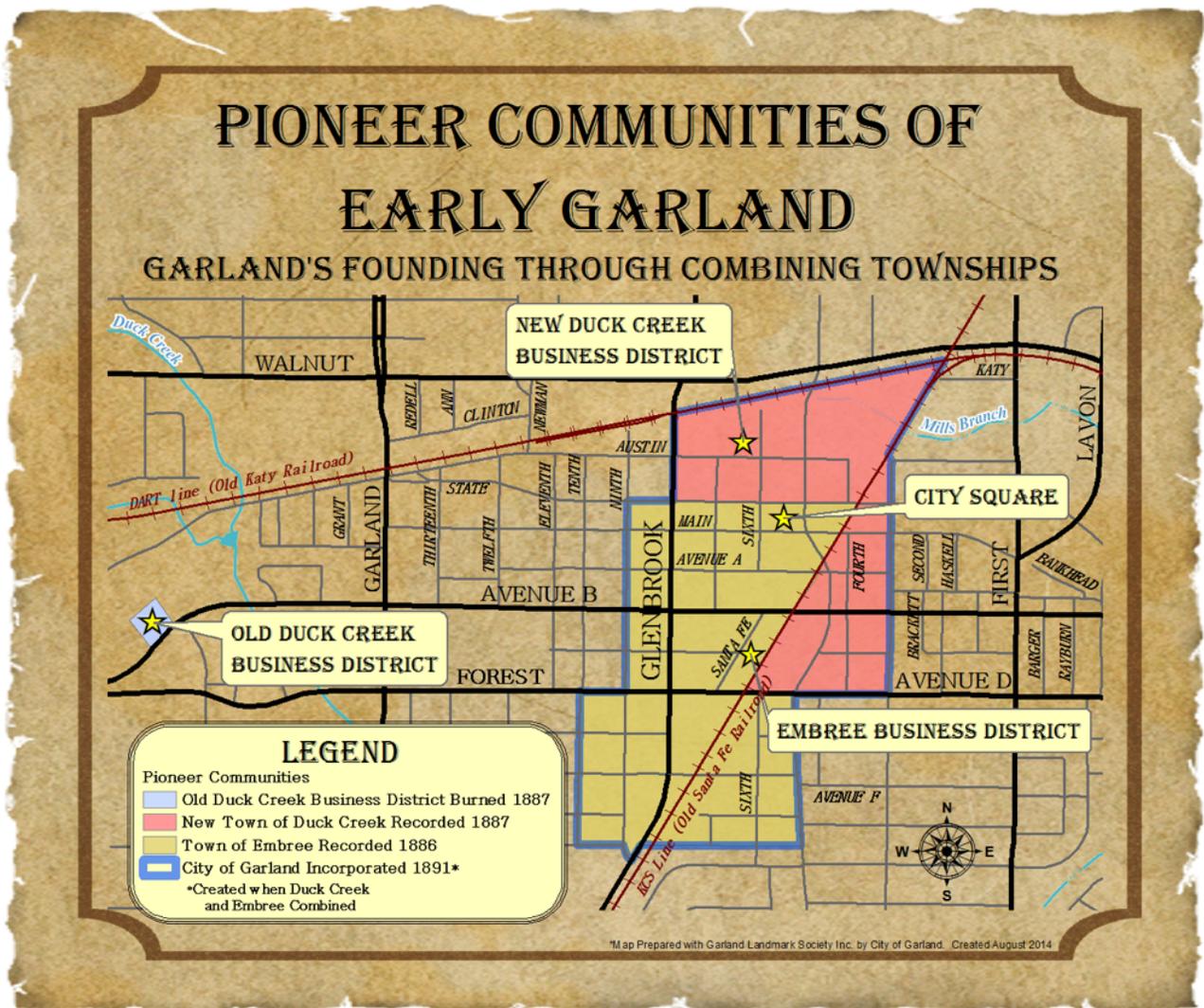
Betty Roberts

Texas State University, she wrote of the Monroe family, and her professor, impressed, urged her to continue her work.

Inspired, the teacher researched materials in Garland's Central Library, the extensive genealogical section of the Dallas Public Library, and interviewed descendants of early families.

She submitted the stories to the *Garland* newspaper, which suggested the series. Much material had to be omitted in the published articles because the brief space allotted required minimal word count. "I learned there is a great deal of difference in academic writing and newspaper writing," she said.

Her natural curiosity and friendly manner make her an engaging conversationalist. It has stood her in good stead for her busy life since she retired from teaching five years ago. She and her husband are devoted members of the Church of Christ and are active in the Orchard Hills Neighborhood Association. In addition, she represents District 5 on the Citizens Environmental and Neighborhood Advisory Council, which recommends new environmental and neighborhood projects to the city.



Embree, Duck Creek, Garland: Then and now

This color graphic, prepared by City of Garland with the aid of Garland Landmark Society, shows historic areas of the city within a map of the downtown area as it is today. The old Duck Creek Business District, at left near present-day Forest Lane and Duck Creek, was destroyed by fire in 1887 and later relocated to area at top just north of the Square. The Embree Business District was south of the Square near present Avenue B. The towns of Duck Creek and Embree resolved their differences and joined in 1891 to become the city of Garland. (See Landmark website at www.garlandhistorical.org for more information on Garland and area history.

The way things were. . .



Garland Landmark Society

The Square, in early 1930s, looking northeast. To the left is the north side of the Square, where 507 State, last building on right, stands beside 509 State, building with the awning.

(Continued from Page 1)

When that project was complete, Smith says he thought “it would be incredible to one day see the entire Square returned to its original corbelled brick design.” But he has since altered his thinking somewhat.

“The story of our town as seen through the Square does not simply start and end in the 1900s. Over the years, the Square has evolved just like the rest of our town. So now, I’m asking myself ‘what do we preserve?’ I think we preserve the place where the community was born and trace its history as businesses flourished and moved on.”

Smith sees that every building on the Square in some fashion represents the 20th Century. He believes that each decade should be embraced to tell the story of individual buildings surrounding the Square.

“It’s the beginning of our town, and it’s still viable,” he points out. “While the Generator building may be considered by some to be an act of preservation, it’s actually the first reconstructed building on the Square in the 21st Century.”

At 507 and 509 State Street where reconstruction is underway, Smith sees all kinds of possibilities.

At 507 State, there’s no roof, he points out. “One can look through the temporary

window and imagine the possibilities, which are truly endless. It’s uncharted territory once you step into the existing shell. The brick wall on the left was constructed in 1904, the one on the right in 1918. Both are different and have different mortar compositions, which makes the puzzle that more enticing.”

Next door, at 509, there are different challenges. Its front was remodeled in the 1940s, brick corbelling partially removed and the rest covered by plaster.

“I immediately removed the front interior, exploding the walls. To my surprise, the original 1904 tin ceiling was exposed. The building tells a wonderful story of the evolution of the Square through the decades. On the outside, you are looking at the 1940s, and once inside, you are back in the 1900s. Our goal will be to continue to expand the 1940s facade theme, but to restore the interior to the 1900s.”

When the projects are completed, who will the contemporary occupants be?

Smith doesn’t know yet. But he has had a number of interested parties suggesting a variety of uses — retail, service, office, residential.

Whatever comes, it will represent the next step in an ongoing history.

Garland Landmark Society

Heritage Crossing

393 N. Sixth Street
Garland TX 75040

Depot Museum and the Rail Car are operated by the Garland Landmark Society,
a non-profit and volunteer organization.

Website: www.garlandhistorical.org

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