

[1] RAILROAD MUSEUM & PARK, 1ST ST. & MAIN The first railroad depot was built in Smithville in 1887, burning a few years later. In 1893, the MKT completed its tracks linking Houston with Smithville. The second depot was built in 1895 at the “Y” in the tracks further west. The large Railroad YMCA building was from 1899 to 1926. The Smithville Railroad Park is on land donated by the railroad and contains the Chamber of Commerce building and Railroad Museum. A small depot moved to the park from nearby West Point. The cupola on the gazebo, which is on the site of 1909 depot, came from Smithville’s 1916 City Hall.

[2] BELT’S BARBER SHOP, 106-108 MAIN In 1905, Belt’s Barber Shop, was known for its opulence. The other half of the building was a restaurant and later the Cue Club beer parlor.

[3] POLANSKY BROS. MEAT MARKET, 110 MAIN Built in 1895, by 1909 Edward and Marie Polansky had a bakery here, and their sons operated Polansky Bros. Meat Market & BBQ. By 1929 “Grocery” had been added to the name. After 1946, the building housed either a grocery and/or BBQ owned either by Mikeska or Charlie Ebner’s family until it closed in 2003. Now it’s a local community theater, “Playhouse Smithville.”

[4] HANSEN’S BAKERY, 112 MAIN 112 and 114 are identical buildings with lapped brick facades. Built in 1895 as a grocery store, by 1909 this was a restaurant. The post office was here in 1911, going through four postmasters until 1920, and once having been robbed. Other businesses in the divided building have included a bakery, barber shop, watch repair, septic service, needle craft shop, religious bookstore, and two antique shops. It has now returned back to a bakery.

[5] SMITHVILLE CIGAR STORE, 114 MAIN The second of two identical buildings was the Smithville Cigar Store in 1895. From 1910 to 1925, the building housed a saloon, a shoe shop, a dry goods store and the shop of A.C. Wrede, Jeweler and official railroad watch inspector. In 1925, the building was divided for a barber shop, a cleaning and pressing establishment, a veterinary clinic, a beer joint, and then became the Liberty Café. [1951-69].

[6] MCCASKILL BUILDING, 116 MAIN Built in 1897 by K.H. McCaskill, a local blacksmith, several grocery and general stores have occupied the first floor with its unusual recessed entry. The second floor was used by The Smithville Times [1897-1905] and as lodge rooms for the Masons, and the Oddfellows & Rebekahs [1897-1985].

[7] MCCASKILL BUILDING, 104-106 E. 2ND ST. K.H. McCaskill also built this small building in 1895 with used brick from an earlier building in town. Thus, the materials in this building are thought to be the oldest in the Commercial Historic District. It housed boarders until 1905 when Marie Polansky opened a small bakery and grocery store downstairs. The first

floor was divided in 1934 for small businesses such as the City Shoe Shop, located here until 1970.

[8] JANEK MOTOR CO., 108-110 E. 2ND ST. This large, triple-day building with checkered brick facade was built in 1903. Large businesses which operated here include a harness shop, the farm implement shop of Smithville Furniture Co., the Janek Motor Co., Smithville Cleaners and Laundry, the Smithville Produce Co., a 7-Up distributorship, and a bakery which was closed for a week during World War II due to a sugar shortage. This was the “Temptation Nation Employment Agency” in the 1997 movie *Hope Floats*.

[9] PINES HOTEL & CAFÉ, 113-117 E. 2ND ST. This large 1910 hotel building was built by the Hill family to accommodate railroad workers and traveling salesman. It included a 16-car garage on the first floor. On the west side of the building, in the single-story café, Dan Rather spoke to the Lions Club in 1967, before the hotel closed in 1968. The café became “Honey’s Diner” in the movie *Hope Floats*.

[10] YERGER HILL & SON, 200-202 MAIN This 1898 building, with two storefronts, was the home of the Hill family’s large hardware and eventually dry goods business that started at Alum Creek in 1875 under the name of Yerger, Hill & Son. The Bank of Smithville started here in 1895 before becoming First Safe Bank and moving across the street when the Hills opened their dry goods store in the space. In 1913 Yerger Hill had his exterior storefronts remodeled with black “mirror” tiles, plate glass windows, and tiled entries showing the name of the business. The interiors still have their pressed metal ceiling and skylights. In 1997, the corner building was the photo shop in *Hope Floats*.

[11] DR. HOCH’S CLINIC, 204-206 MAIN This building was also built by the Hill family about 1900. A grocery store and restaurant occupied the two storefronts until 1944 when Dr.Hoch opened a clinic in 204 Main. Dr. Thomas took over the clinic in 1952 and called it the Smithville Hospital. Law offices of Robert Ferman and Yerger Hill were later housed in 204 Main, and several pharmacies were at 206 Main from 1934 to 1991.

[12] CHANCELLOR’S DRY GOODS, 216 MAIN Built in 1863 by J.H. Chancellor, his dry goods business was located here until 1957. “Buster Brown,” promoting the children’s shoes of a St. Louis company, visited the shoe department in 1915. The store features an elegant staircase leading to the mezzanine and the store originally boasted detailed brick and iron work.

[13] HILL BUILDING, 218 MAIN This building was constructed about 1895 by prolific local builders Turner & Son. It housed the Rabb & McColium furniture store and undertaking parlor until 1907, followed by the J.M. Moffitt’s variety store. Beginning in 1930, a series of drug stores,

City Drug Co., Milze Drug Store, and Crow Pharmacy were here. The upper floor provided office space for attorneys, dentists and physicians who dropped prescriptions down to the drugist through a hole in the floor.

[14] TEXAS THEATER, 300 MAIN One of the two three-story brick buildings, this one was constructed in 1907 for the furniture store of Rabb & McColium, on the first floor, and their undertaking business on the second floor. For years, an unclaimed embalmed body was kept in a coffin on a display in the upstairs funeral parlor. Local boys used “the mummy” to scare newcomers. A hardware store and a meat market have also been located on the lower floor. In 1930, the Texas Theater opened, and a movie house survived here until 1970. The rear of the building facing Third Street (now Loop 230) was office space from 1910-1962.

[15] MASONIC TEMPLE, 301 MAIN Houston architect George E. Dickey designed this three-story all-brick building for the J. Nixon Masonic Lodge. Completed in 1903, the structure was once the tallest building in Bastrop County. The second floor rooms were offices, and the first floor was occupied by John Haynie’s grocery store [1905-1930], a furniture store, an auto supply, and clothing designer Patricia Wolf. The second and third floors are now used as loft apartments – a popular new trend on Smithville’s Main Street.

[16] DICKSON BUILDING, 219 MAIN This building was designed by George F. Cook and built by J.B. Garrett in 1896 for H.J. Dickson. A local radio station transmitted from the second floor in the 1930s, and a number of drug stores have been here including Trousdale’s and Smith’s. The north side of the building has a mural of a locomotive, one of several fine murals in the Smithville downtown area. Lyndon Johnson was once visiting Smithville when he complained of stomach pains. The soda jerk at Trousdale’s Drug Store gave him a bottle of Pluto Water [an antacid]. However, Mr. Johnson was later taken to Austin for an appendectomy.

[17] GINDLER’S DEPARTMENT STORE, 211-215 MAIN What appears to be one large building is really three smaller ones. 213 and 215 Main are two-story buildings constructed in 1895. A dry goods store, a furniture company and the Green Lantern Dance Hall were here prior to 1932 when the United Gas Co. took over the buildings and the single-story building at 215. Gindler’s Department Store was located here for 25 years.

[18] POWELL BUILDINGS, 207-209 MAIN These two buildings were constructed about 1895 and were often used for one business. The Falkenberg Drug Store was located here from 1918 until the 1950s. C&C Electric and the Sears Catalog store occupied the building until 1980, when Western Auto moved here. The upper stories still have the original brick detail.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# STROLLING TOUR OF HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

CONTINUED FROM PRIOR PAGE

[19] RAGSDALE’S, 205 MAIN Built in 1895, this building housed the tailor shop and clothing store of J.B. Johnson from 1898 to 1919. The building was then purchased by Charles Ragsdale for his jewelry business, which was started in the Powell Building in 1913. He was the official watch inspector for the MKT Railroad. The second floor was used by IOOF in 1895. Ragsdale’s daughter operated the business until it closed in 1996, and until then, Ragsdale’s was Smithville’s oldest retail business.

[20] FIRST STATE BANK, 201 MAIN The original red brick building was built in 1902 for First State Bank which had been organized across the street in 1895. Doctor’s offices were located on the second floor, along with an operating room. In 1950 the bank took over a single-story building at 203 Main, which had housed the Trousdale & Son Drug Store.

[21] MARHILL’S 111-117 W. 2ND ST. Five one-story brick buildings, typical of business blocks in Smithville, were built after 1900 just off Main Street. Various businesses have been here including a bank, grocery stores, dry good stores, a bakery, an undertaking parlor, and one of the early post offices.

[22] EAGLESTON’S SALOON, 119 MAIN This building was constructed in 1888 for Sass Grocery. By 1890, it was Edward H. Eagleston, who some now call the “Donald Trump of Smithville” since he had such widespread land and business interests. With the advent of prohibition, the building again became a grocery, and eventually Shirocky’s Grocery in 1934.

[23] CITY DRUG STORE, 117 MAIN Constructed in 1889 as a meat market, by 1909 a grocery had been added to this building. After 1915, the Falkenburg Drug Store moved here followed by the City Drug Store until 1932. Various businesses filled the space until 1995 when the building became the Back Door Café.

[24] BOLLIER’S DRY GOODS, 115 MAIN Built prior to 1891, this 1-1/2 story brick building with a mezzanine was constructed as the Lone Star Saloon. The medallion is a representation of the official portrait of Thomas Jefferson Gazley, the first known settler in the community. Several businesses, including the Bank of Smithville and a drug store were here before Dessie Bollier had her dry goods and clothing store for 30 years.

[25] CITY GROCERY, 113 MAIN The grocery store buildings at 113 and 111 Main St. are nearly identical, and probably built by the same contractor. Built about 1905, City Grocery was located here until the 1970s.

[26] BOCK’S GROCERY, 111 MAIN Built in 1909 for a meat market, L.C. Bock bought the market in the 1930s to open a Red & White store which closed in 1964.

THANKS TO OUR PHOTOGRAPHERS!	
“Antiques in Smithville” by Richard Haas	“Katy Railroad” by Elaine Nimmo
“Antiques Downtown” by Richard Haas	“Historic Marker at City Hall” by Fran Hunter
“Heritage House Museum” by FranLan Multimedia	“History Beneath It All” by Courtney August
“Historic Churches of Smithville series” by Fran Hunter	“Remember When” by Nichole Mignone

CREATED IN COOPERATION WITH  
THE SMITHVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## HISTORIC TOURS Smithville, Texas



www.smithvilletx.org  
100 NW First St., Smithville TX 78957  
512-237-2313  
chamber@smithvilletx.org

SMITHVILLE  AREA  
Chamber of Commerce  
& VISITORS CENTER



# RIDING TOUR OF SMITHVILLE, TEXAS

We hope you enjoy this snapshot of some of the many beautiful homes that Smithville has to offer. We tried to include architectural styles and examples of the various builders working in Smithville during its period of greatest growth, 1887 to 1930. As you follow the guide, we hope you look at the other fine homes that have made Smithville a special place to live for over 125 years.

Thank you for visiting Smithville, a extraordinary American small town.

## [1] CHANCELLOR HOUSE, 201 RAMONA

J.H Chancellor had this brick Mediterranean Villa style home, built on “Romona” St. in 1909 to replace a frame home. The staircase was modeled after the stairs to the mezzanine in his store downtown. The first home in Smithville to have a coal-burning convection furnace, Dr. Stephen’s clinic was here from 1941 to 1966. Smithville’s first two story brick home, it is now a bed and breakfast and home to numerous MKT Railroad artifacts. A Texas Medallion is in the yard.

## [2] POWELL HOUSE, 207 RAMONA

This home was built in 1888 for Joseph and Mary Ann Clegg by Thomas & Tucker. The house was then purchased by John H. Powell, a local physician who added a south wing about 1900. Five milk cows grazed on nearby lots so the children of Smithville would have fresh milk. An extensive remodel in 1940 filled in many of the porches. A Texas Medallion is on the porch.

## [3] CCC FIRE STATION, 105 4TH ST.

This natural stone fire station, circa 1933, was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps with stone quarried for the building from “The Hill.” It served the Smithville Volunteer Fire Dept. until 1985 and was remodeled for a police station, the current use, in 1989.

## [4] YOUNG HOUSE, 403 RAMONA

Built in 1929 for the Mark Young family, this Italian Renaissance home replaced a log cabin that burned in 1928. This style features classic columns on the porch and hipped roof. A large cistern from the cabin is still located under the living room.

## [5] JONES HOUSE, 407 RAMONA

The Jones family purchased the one-story home on this large lot and remodeled it into a two-story house. A remodel in 1929 added the columns to the front porch and enclosed the exterior back stairs. The interior has two fireplaces and four brick flues. In 1983, it was purchased from the Jones estate and underwent months of repairs, keeping many of the original features.

## [6] HAYNIE HOUSE, 500 RAMONA

Built in 1890 by Y.D Taylor for J.F. Burleson, this home is a Folk Victorian farmhouse. For 75 years, it was the home of John and Belle Wilkins Haynie, a prominent local merchant. The home has had several additions and updates. This six-room corner house sits over the old well, just outside the original kitchen.

## [7] CROCKETT HOUSE, 601 RAMONA

This Folk National style house was built in 1897 by V.S Rabb for H.M. and Kitty Buford People. The house was purchased by Charles Ragsdale in 1951 and was the home of his daughter until she passed in 2013.

TURN RIGHT ON 6TH STREET,  
THEN LEFT ON MAIN STREET AND TURN AROUND  
AT THE COLORADO RIVER.



THE FIRST BRIDGES ACROSS THE COLORADO RIVER were here at the end of Main Street. A 1900s steel bridge with a wooden floor was destroyed by flood waters in 1913. The second steel bridge was damaged by a bulldozer in the 1940s and a pontoon bridge erected by the Army Corps of Engineers. The second steel bridge was demolished in 1950, after which a reinforced concrete bridge was built at its present site on Hwy. 95.

## [8] WILLIAMS HOUSE, 704 MAIN

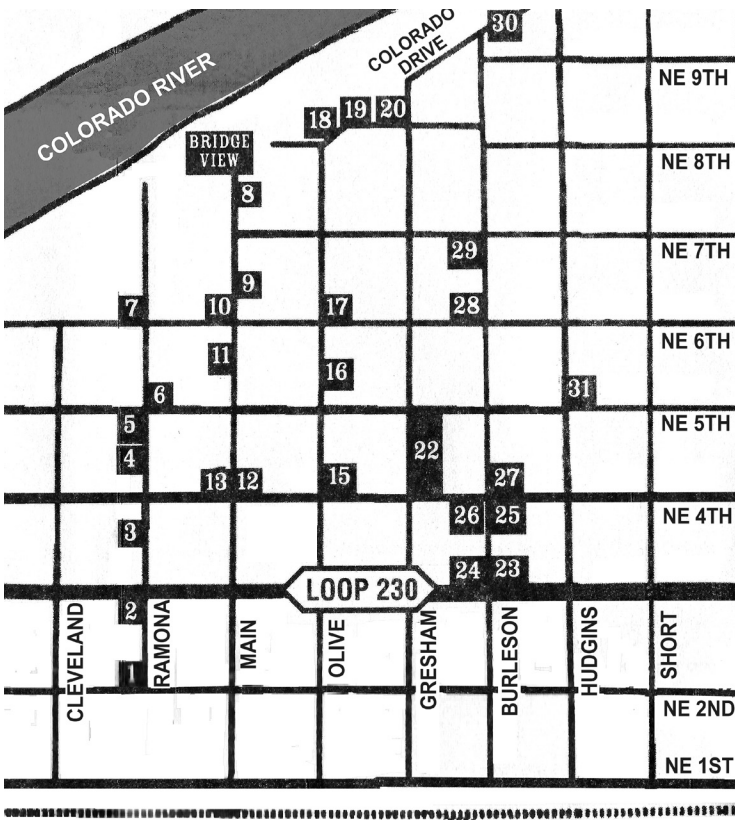
Built in 1905, this Queen Anne style house originally had four bedrooms. During World War II, the upstairs front porch was enclosed for a fifth bedroom. These rooms were rented to military families from Camp Swift. The house is on the site of Smithville’s original one-room schoolhouse built in 1885.

## [9] COX- HYSON HOUSE, 602 MAIN

This Neoclassical house was built in 1908 for John Cox and features Ionic columns on the wraparound porch. During the early 1900s the upper floor was rented to railroad men. During World War II these same rooms on the second floor were rented to military families from Camp Swift. The house was donated to the Smithville Heritage Society in 1976 by Cox’s grandson, Floyd Hyson and his wife Lucille. The Society did extensive renovations and now uses the house as a museum. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## [10] JONES – RAGSDALE HOUSE, 601 MAIN

This simple Folk Victorian home was built in 1885 for G.W. Jones, Jr., who owned a downtown drug store. Charles E. Ragsdale, one of the first jewelers, bought the home in 1919.



## [11] FRIEDRICH BOARDING HOUSE, 505 MAIN

Built about 1890 by Whit Turney, this is a simple Neoclassical house. Due to its size, it was used as a boarding house for many years and is now a bed and breakfast.

## [12] U.S. POST OFFICE, 400 MAIN

This vault-style Post Office building, built by the W.P.A., opened on March 1, 1938. Lyndon Johnson dedicated it the following Sunday. A mural titled “The Law - Texas Rangers” was painted in 1939 by Minette Teichmueller of La Grange, one of only six women who painted Texas post offices.

## [13] YERGER-HILL HOUSE, 401 MAIN

This 1887 home has a Texas Medallion. John Yerger and son-in-law, John W. Hill, opened the town’s first department store, established the first bank, and erected this and other homes. It was originally a plain saltbox type building with six rooms and six fireplaces, heated with coal from a mine at Sayers. A kitchen and bath were located in a separate building. The home was expanded in 1900 with an upper front balcony, and a wide concrete veranda with graceful Ionic columns.

TURN LEFT ON LOOP 230,  
THEN LEFT ON OLIVE.

## [15] FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 400 OLIVE

The Methodist Church was organized in Smithville in 1888. The first church on this site was built in 1912, but it burned ten years later. The current structure, of Romanesque Revival design, was built by Olin Fite in 1923. A Texas Medallion is on the grounds.

## [16] D.O. HILL HOUSE, 502 OLIVE

This decorated Folk National house was built north of the Colorado River prior to the Civil War by D.O. Hill. In the late 1880s, the house was ferried across the river to its present location. Reconstruction was completed in 1891 with the addition of a kitchen and second story. The slave quarters, located north of the house, also came across the Colorado. House has a Texas Medallion.

## [17] SAUNDERS HOUSE, 600 OLIVE

Large homes of the Queen Anne style are more common in Smithville than the cottage form. This beautifully restored house was built in 1899 by V.S. Rabb for W.J. Saunders, and still displays all the decorative and colorful elements of this style.

TURN RIGHT ON 8TH STREET

## [18] MCCOLLUM-CHAPMAN-TROUSDALE HOUSE, 201 E. 8TH ST.

This large Neoclassical-style home was built for J.H McCollum in 1908. McCollum was the local undertaker, buggy and carriage maker and had a large store on Main Street. In 1917 Dr. Philip Chapman and his wife, Mamie Trousdale Chapman, purchased the home. The home was inherited in 1952 by nephew, Gordon Trousdale, and is now the home of his son. This house was used in 1997 in the movie *Hope Floats*.

## [19] TROUSDALE HOUSE, 203 E. 8TH ST.

Jim Gray Trousdale had this large red-brick Craftsmen bungalow constructed here in 1925 so he and his wife, Clara could live next door to his sister, Mamie Trousdale Chapman. Their granddaughter still lives here. This fine example of brick craftsmanship is one of the anchors of Smithville’s residential historic district.

## [20] MURRAY BURLESON HOUSE, 205 E. 8TH ST.

This large Victorian home was built in 1899 by T.S. Hodges for Murray Burleson on 3 acres along the Colorado River. He was a town founder, farmer, politician, and real estate broker, who sat on the first City Council. Cypress and curly pine were used for the floors in the house which has 7 fireplaces and 23 rooms.

TURN RIGHT ON GRESHAM STREET

## [21] THREE DELIGHTFUL VICTORIANS, 506, 504, AND 500 GRESHAM

Built in 1898 by Joesph Cook, in 1896 by the Turney Bros, and in 1905 by V.S. Rabb, these three Victorian cottages are fine examples of the work originally done in Smithville and have been beautifully restored.



## [22] CENTRAL SCHOOL, 400 GRESHAM

This lot was conveyed to the Smithville School District by the City in 1903, and the two-story Colonial Revival style building was completed in 1908. The all-brick building is over 13,000 square feet, with 13 classrooms, a performance auditorium on the second floor and a basement.

TURN LEFT ON LOOP 230 ON BURLESON

## [23] FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, 300 BURLESON

The church was founded in 1871 at Pea Ridge, just off FM 535, and moved into Smithville in 1889. The first church in town was erected in 1896 on a lot donated by the Smithville Town Company. This Neoclassical church was built by Olin Fite in 1925.

## [24] MARY WILKES NICHOLS ART CENTER, 301 BURLESON

Built in 1905 for the Nichols Family, this 2-1/2 story Craftsmen-style home was bequeathed to the city as a visual arts center. The home was stuccoed in the 1930s and is now the home of the Lost Pines Artisans Alliance.

## [25] HILLARD-SHADE HOUSE, 304 BURLESON

This Neoclassical home was built in 1910 for the Hillard family. The exterior is cypress and the floors are long-leaf pine. In 1940, the home was purchased by the Shade family and the original wooden porch was replaced with concrete.

## [26] IVY HOUSE, 307 BURLESON

A Neoclassical-style residence was built about 1900 for the Ivy family. The fine board, teardrop siding and pyramid roof are typical of this style.

## [27] FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, 401 BURLESON

The church was organized in 1896 and this lot was donated by the Smithville Town Company in 1898. The Colonial Revival chapel was built by the Turney Bros. in 1903. It was the first public building to have electricity in Smithville. The original wooden steps were replaced with concrete in the 1930s. The building has a Texas Medallion.

## [28] VASTINE BUESCHER HOUSE, 601 BURLESON

In 1897, three Buescher brothers, Emil, Oswald, and Hugo came to Smithville. They built and operated a cotton gin and electric power plant, laid out water lines and a sewer system for the City, and donated much of the land that is now Buescher State Park. This Neo-Classical home was built in 1910 by the Turney Bros. for Emil Buescher. The home includes a cypress exterior, its original slate roof and a corbelled chimney.

## [29] ALFRED BUESCHER HOUSE, 607 BURLESON

Built in 1912 for Alfred Buescher, son of Emil, this Craftsmen is the first bungalow structure in Smithville. The home was 1.5 stories with seven rooms and pine flooring. A remodel and a two-room addition were designed by Roy L. Thomas in 1944.

TURN RIGHT ON COLORADO.

## [30] RABB HOUSE, 401 COLORADO

The Rabb family received a large land grant in Fayette Co. in 1823. V. Sullian Rabb, Jr. came to Smithville to run his father’s lumber company. He married Lillian McCollum, daughter of J.H. McCollum. In 1912, Mr. Rabb built this large Queen Anne home for his family. The house has Ionic columns on a two-story wraparound porch. Hudgins St. has many examples of Mr. Rabb’s work. A Texas Medallion is on the porch.

## [31] NEELY HOUSE, 501 HUDGINS

This Queen Anne style house was built about 1897 by V.S. Rabb. The home was built on two of four lots purchased from Murray Burleson’s Smithville Land Company by Etta and P.A. Neely. Mr. Neely had been a conductor on the Taylor, Bastrop, & Houston Railroad, which became the Missouri, Kansas, & Texas in 1886.

## [32] FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 306 HUDGINS

This church was organized in 1892. Built in 1894 on a site given by the Smithville Town Company, the first was a wood frame building. This brick structure was completed in 1924 by Olin Fite.



[20] MURRAY BURLESON HOUSE