

On The Vine

GRAPEVINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*MAIN STREET, GRAPEVINE, TEXAS.
Looking north from Post Office.
C. J. WALL, Publisher.*

Main Street - Grapevine, Texas. Looking North from Post Office

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A photograph commissioned by businessman C. J. Wall was turned into postcards to be sold in his drugstore in the first decade of the 20th century.

WHAT A NEWLY DISCOVERED PHOTOGRAPH REVEALS...

Enlarging Our Understanding of Early Downtown Grapevine

"Every picture tells a story" an old song tells us. The right picture can tell many stories indeed. We are still enlarging our understanding of local history, even with an image familiar for over a century. It happened like that just weeks ago. The stories start on the next page...

A SNAPSHOT IN TIME...

Pinning down details of Main Street of the early 20th Century

The earliest known picture postcard of Grapevine is a tinted view looking north on Main Street, taken from what would now be roughly the intersection of Main and Franklin. A mix of familiar and unfamiliar buildings line the unpaved dirt road. A horse and cart stand idle on the west side, while a poster mentioning “November 11” is plastered onto a building on the east. The town looks empty. One such postcard, now in SMU’s archives, was mailed in 1908. It is a fascinating but frustratingly fuzzy image.

The lack of detail is due to primitive printing processes and the snapshot size of the image. However, at September’s GHS meeting, longtime member Tommy Simmons presented Larry Groebe with two old photographs from his family collection. to the GHS. It was immediately evident that these were the actual original photographic images used for two early Grapevine postcards, right down to the inscriptions evidently inked by hand by druggist Clifford Jenkins (“C. J.”) Wall himself.

Larry immediately scanned and restored the images in high resolution. Now it is possible to zoom into tiny portions and reveal a wealth of details the fuzzy postcard prints had hidden, bringing early 20th-century Grapevine to life.

The first mystery is “when was this taken?” The “November 11” broadsheet at the far right edge is our clue. Although the postcard cropped out the edge of the image, the original photo reveals a title: “Ten Nights in a Bar-Room”, “J. H. Boyer’s famous show.” Ten Nights in a Bar-Room was an 1854 novel preaching against the evils of drink which became the second most popular fiction book of the Victorian era (eclipsed only by “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”) Like “Tom,” it spawned theatrical adaptations well into the 20th century, and even later movie versions. Touring theatrical companies hitched private rail cars to trains and traveled the country for months or even years performing the play. In the first decade of the 20th century alone at least half a dozen companies were crossing Texas and delivering the drama. An “advance man” would travel ahead of the show, putting up lithographed posters and priming the local newspaper with advance publicity. The train would stop in the town, the company would pitch the tent and perform that night, then take it down again and move on to the next burg the next day.

The November 9, 1907, issue of *The Grapevine Sun* confirms that J. H. Boyer’s theater troupe was arriving on Monday, November 11, to stage their version of “Ten Nights in a Bar-Room.” The company consisted of “25 high-class artists,” a steam calliope,



and a troupe of “educated Russian Poodles.” Boyer’s group performed “ten-high-class specialty” acts in addition to the main play. For a small town, this would have been a special one-night-only event. The next night, Boyer’s players, poodles, and calliope would perform all over again in Carrollton, just up the Cotton Belt tracks. *The Carrollton Chronicle* reviewed that performance, singling out the entertaining Russian Poodles and the calliope, while noting the play was much improved over a version performed on Thanksgiving Day two years earlier. That edition had also played Grapevine to a small audience on a bitterly cold and windy November evening the day before.

Now we can conclusively date the photo to first week in November 1907. The *Sun* was at the time full of two-line advertisements announcing that “The Picture Man is here to-day. Give him a call and have those pictures made. Now is the time.” The Picture Man is not named, but it might have been C. L. Turney, a Grapevine resident with a photography studio for several years, who had decamped to the soon-to-be-state of Oklahoma in January 1907. He return to Grapevine few more times, advertising his picture-taking services on each of these occasions. It seems that C. J. Wall, noticing an active new nation-

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East Side, West Side...

wide craze for sending postcards, could have employed him to take a few promotional images of the newly incorporated town. By late March 1908, an advertisement in *The Grapevine Sun* announced “We have several local Post Card Views. City Drug Store.”

Knowing when, where, why, and even perhaps who took the picture, what else can the magnifying glass and computer pixels reveal to us?

As we examine the photo from right to the left, it’s evident that the east side of Main is substantially less developed than the west. A culvert there evidently filled regularly with water after rains, judging from the wooden walkways that have been built over it. In contrast, the west side boasts a few concrete sidewalks. The building with the theatrical posters is boarded up, but a very tall and dangerous-looking ladder is nailed to it. The ladder leads nowhere, making it’s use hard to imagine. Given how high it climbs, perhaps it was used by the town’s 13-man volunteer fire crew to determine in which direction a blaze might be spotted, or as a weather lookout.

Two buildings further north, a one-story wooden office is the earliest home to **The Grapevine Sun** newspaper, years before it moved into a brick edifice on the west side of Main. Just north of that is a handsome two story brick structure, probably replaced by the Masonic lodge about ten years later. Two men can be seen relaxing on its front porch, one of them prefiguring the pose of the bronze “Sidewalk Judge” statue that now amuses visitors in front of the 1991 Wallis Hotel building.

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The east side of Main Street, facing north, November 1907

JOIN US FOR FOOD, FELLOWSHIP, AND LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT HONORS ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3

Two Inducted for their Longstanding Main Street Businesses and Commitment to Town History



Margaret Hardin graduated from Grapevine High School in 1975, and soon began working for Pat Vandeventer and Martha Cody at City Florist. In 1980 she became sole owner, attending classes to become a Texas Master Florist. At that time City

Florist was the second oldest business on Main Street. She sold City Florist in 2017, when she had already begun working for the Grapevine Convention & Visitors Bureau, focusing on helping make Grapevine a Christmas destination.

Margaret is a member of the Bay View Club, past member of the original Grapevine Merchants Association, past member of the Grapevine Chamber of Commerce, and a member and past Board member of the Grapevine Historical Society.



Debi Meek grew up in Irving, Texas, but for more than 33 years, has worked on Grapevine’s Main Street at Bermuda Gold & Silver at 404 S. Main. The jewelry store opened in August 1983 & she came on board in January 1992. Ten years later, she went from store manager to owner. In July 1998, Mike & Debi purchased the historic Grapevine Home Bank building, built in 1900 and filled with a fascinating and colorful history.



She served on the Historic Downtown Grapevine Association for over 17 years, a vital role in Grapevine’s becoming a prime destination for tourism. Debi is a member of the Grapevine Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Women’s Chamber, She Leads Texas, and the Grapevine Historical Society.

PURCHASE BANQUET TICKETS NOW AT GRAPEVINEHISTORY.ORG!

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Long-lost original Main Street image shows forgotten businesses

In the far distance on the east side stands the city's original 19th-century commercial lodging, the multi-story **Central Hotel** (later known as the Baker Hotel), its handsome turned wood columns and balcony flanked by trees and wagons out front. Another block north is what looks like a house, while a man appears to be walking his horse down the center of Main Street towards the camera.

In the photograph, the town's west side thrives with more activity than the east. In the distance, part of a sign is visible which suggests the location of D. D. Wall's **City Restaurant and Meat Market**. Horse-drawn wagons (no one in Grapevine owned a car yet; that would come the next year) are parked beneath a tangle of modern telephone poles and wires. In 1907, Grapevine was approaching 200 telephone subscribers.

The entrance to the **Farmer's National Bank** faces the camera in the building (now somewhat modified) that Holy Grounds occupied until this year. Nearer to us, **Yates Dry Goods** and **Jenkins General Store** occupy the part of the block which is now home to Dino's restaurant and Kilwin's ice cream shop.

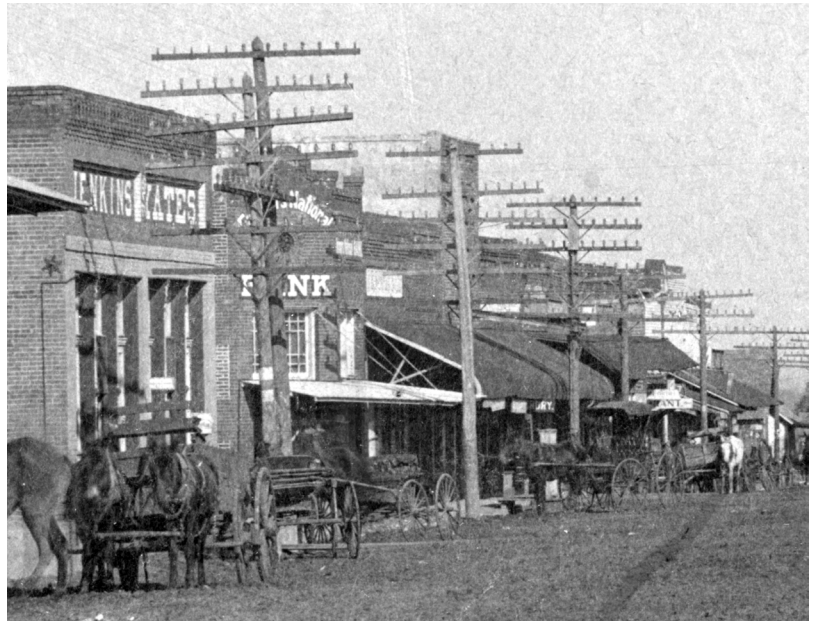
Closer to the camera, Worth Street intersects Main, and can we see part of the distinctive facade of the **Grapevine National Bank**, built in 1900 and today one of downtown's most historic surviving structures. Two men are just visible standing at its entrance.

At least four or five business hug the left edge of the photograph, a jumble of signs and awnings. These brick buildings have all made it to the twenty-first century unscathed, although one -- the **City Drug Store** (from which the post card would be sold) -- had a second story added in the spring of 1908. When J. T. Lucas & Son moved into that building in 1916, they installed an elevator for taking goods upstairs. This was

handy, as those goods included coffins for their growing funeral business.

It is interesting to see how in 1907 City Drug Store and **Parlor Drug Store** stood next to each other. That arrangement did not last for long. In 1909, Dalton Austin sold the Parlor Drug Store to the Rainwater brothers, who sold off his remaining drug inventory to Mr. Wall, then pivoted to become a soda fountain and sweet shop called the **Olympia Confectionery**.

Just north of the Parlor Drug store is **Turnage Brothers Groceries**, which had opened in 1900 in the newly built Bank building. O. P. Turnage remained an important grocer in Grapevine until 1916.



The 300 block of Main Street's west side, facing north in November 1907



Main Street's west side, 400 block, as photographed in November 1907

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A two-horse wagon with its wheels caked in mud obscures the final shops in the image. Some claim it was George Bushong's team and wagon, although he had died in 1905. A sign hanging behind the wagon advertises **S.W. Anderson's Dry Goods** store. This is odd, because newspaper accounts indicate Mr. Anderson had shuttered his business four years earlier and moved to Dallas. What might be behind it is the **Bon-Ton confectionery store**, where you could pop in for a cold soda or an ice cream float. *The Grapevine Sun* never mentions such a store by that name, but does list a combination confectionery and tailor shop owned by D. E. Stimson in 1907. Perhaps he is the gentleman seen dimly next to the Bon-Ton sign. If so, a small "laundry agency" sign suggests Mr. Stimson cleaned clothes as well as altered them.

All these details of Grapevine life are exposed at last in the original 1907 photo - quite literally a snapshot of a thriving North Texas farming community brought to light on a sunny November day. In the nearly one hundred and twenty years since that moment, innumerable businesses have come and gone. But in the outline of the buildings there is a continuity and a history that the city was able to preserve -- one that has made it the destination it is today.

--Larry Groebe



A SECOND POSTCARD IMAGE FROM 1907

The view of Grapevine at home

To spotlight and promote Grapevine's growth in the fall of 1907 -- the town had only been formally incorporated earlier that year -- Clifford Jenkins Wall commissioned at least two postcards. One showed the business district. The second was published as a "Birds Eye View, Residence Portion" and the original photographic image of this has been in the possession of Tommy Simmons' family for decades.



Looking at the photograph today, it's challenging to connect it to the Grapevine we are familiar with. It was evidently taken from the roof of the two-story brick building in downtown's east side, with the camera aiming his lens northeast. The empty yard in the foreground is roughly where Esparza's restaurant and all its parking sit now. The dirt road that starts from the left front is Worth Street. Worth Street meets Smith Street in the background. The residential district doesn't extend



any further east - there's no Dooley Street yet, although there does appear to be one new house being constructed near the top right side of the image. After that, there is nothing but farmland and prairie as far as the eye can see. The absence of mature trees is also strange to our modern eyes.

At the photo's far left side you can spot the then-new (1905) First Baptist Church sanctuary, a prominent town landmark which stood until 1957. First Baptist Church still occupies the same grounds today, albeit in much enlarged and modernized facilities.

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A Closer Look at Grapevine's 1907 "Residential District"

The photo drops little hints about small town life in 1907. Picket fences divide each yard. Homes sport multiple chimneys for heating, and (viewed under extreme magnification) they also have multiple lighting rods. In one back yard a housewife has hung her



washing, while the next-door neighbor has piled up a large amount of winter firewood. A well, complete with chain and bucket, sits behind a third home, while someone has dumped a dining table in the backyard of yet another. Most residences include outbuildings, functioning no doubt as both privies and storage.

Of the nine or so houses in this image, three are still standing in 2025. The oldest is at 210 Worth Street: a residence from about 1888, seriously damaged by fire in December 2020, but



The Lucas House still stands at 221 Worth Street

soon reopening as **Housewife Rebellion** wine tasting room. Only the roof is slightly visible behind some trees in this photo. At the far right, a Queen Anne-style cottage at 405 Smith Street was built in 1899 for Earl Yates and his bride Katie Estill. Finally, in the center of the photo, with its dark roof outlined in a light metal trim, the Wingate Lucas home still holds forth at the corner of Worth and Smith. Everything else you see on those streets today has either been built or replaced since the photographer snapped this detailed view in November 1907. That should not surprise, since Grapevine is now about 75 times bigger than it was 120 years ago.

--Larry Groebe



*October 27, 7 PM / The Vine Arts & Events Center, 225 W. Worth St.
Scott Blackerby Welcomes You to Leonard Texas*

**Leonard Texas, 60 miles northeast of Grapevine...
a town that *still is* like Grapevine used to be.**

A vintage Main Street... A history shaped by railroads and agriculture since the 19th century... A community whose life mirrored Grapevine's for many decades.

Though Leonard is currently home to only around 2,000 residents, it boasts an active preservation and historical movement. Scott Blackerby of the Leonard Preservation League introduces us to the community, and how Leonard is choosing to honor its history while facing its future.

The Grapevine Historical Society • P. O. Box 995 / Grapevine, Texas 76099-0995 • grapevinehistory.org

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A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supported by tax-deductible memberships and contributions. Become a member!

Join The GHS' Facebook Group - search for "Grapevine Historical Society" and read all about it!