



A STORE'S STORY

Roach Feed & Seed Company is one of Garland's oldest businesses, a favorite trading place for Garland residents, old and new, for generations.

Adapting from decade to decade to changing times, yet retaining its basic staple of feed and seed (and its charm), it has been anchored at its location on East Main Street since 1933, under family ownership for most of that time, and then to a trusted partner, before finally being sold.

Mike Hayslip recounts the colorful story of this Garland institution, beginning on **Page 5**.

IN MEMORY OF A BOY, A GARLAND PARK

Ricky Oden's death 55 years ago was first for U.S. Little League

It was a typically warm Texas summer evening; the temperature had slipped a bit from its high of 100 degrees on that June 29 evening in 1956, after the fading sun floated below the horizon.

A noisy family-and-friends Friday crowd half-circled the baseball diamond at Cole Park, off Miller Road between Saturn Road and Fifth Street, watching a West Garland Little League game between Temco and

Garland Shopping Center, the second game of the night. Eleven-year-old Rick Oden of Temco, batting in the third inning with his team behind 3-2, suddenly collapsed when hit
(See TODAY, Page 3)

LANDMARK MOURNS WEBSITE CREATOR

HOWALD LAUNCHED MUSEUM'S PAGES IN 2005

Randy Howald, who bravely fought for months against the cancer that had invaded his lungs last November, succumbed to the disease on July 21. He was 57.

Randy created Landmark's informative website in 2005 and had been its webmaster since then, gradually adding to its value as the organization's researchers funneled information and photographs to him. The subject of a feature story in *On-Track's* April-June quarterly edition, he maintained other websites as well, but was most proud of the "Texans in the Civil War" website which he originated, maintained and for which he did years of research.

He was a musician as well, expert on guitar and drums. In his youth, he performed with a band that appeared in several Dallas clubs. In earlier years, he had been a Little League coach and a Cub Scout leader.

"Randy never felt sorry for himself, and he fought hard and with courage," said his wife, Sarah Jane.



Randy Howald

Other survivors are two sons, Brian and Joseph Howald; his mother, Betty Jean Howald, a former director of the Landmark Society; a brother, Larry William Howald, and two sisters, Karol Heitshusen and Kathy Monahan.

Memorial services were held on July 31 in Richardson. The family requested that memorial gifts be made to their favorite charities.

Applebee's calls on Landmark for photos

Applebee's first Garland restaurant, which opened for business Labor Day, has a theme tied to historic Garland, enhanced by photographs from the Landmark Society.

Mike Hayslip, Landmark's vice president for development and museum affairs, said that Applebee's purchased several photographs from the museum's extended photo library.

A photo mural of historic Garland greets visitors on a wall at the main entrance of the restaurant at 1440 Eastgate Dr., near Saturn Road at LBJ Freeway (IH635), near Furr's Fresh Buffet.

Landmark Society Garland

P.O. Box 462232 (Mail)
Garland TX 75046-2232
200 Museum Plaza Dr. (location)
Garland TX 75040

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Joann Nelson

nelsonpj@flash.net

VICE PRESIDENT

Development/Museum Affairs

Mike Hayslip

hayslip@onlinetoday.com

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

Debbie Goldin

RECORDING SECRETARY

Wylene Taft

TREASURER

Mary Dingle

madingle@earthlink.net

CURATOR

Bill Dickson

edickson@sbcglobal.net

DIRECTORS

Janice Black

Claude Doane

Bob Compton

Editor, ON TRACK

Bob Dunn

Jay Jones

Pete Nelson

Florence Stone

Chuck Cabaniss (emeritus)

Today, Rick Oden Park is for many sports

Facilities include six ball fields, tennis courts and playground-picnic area

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by a pitched ball. A newspaper account the next day said the boy "was struck on the back of the neck." Rick's father, Jack Oden, a co-manager of the Temco team, and others rushed to the boy's aid, and he was taken to a Garland clinic, then transferred to St. Paul's Hospital in Dallas.

The game was called a few minutes later, and people in the crowd, after a time, left the park.

On Sunday, July 1, 1956, *The Garland News* reported that the injured boy was unconscious and in critical condition. He died later that day.

Marvin Bradford of San Antonio, a regional director of Little League Baseball, told *The Garland News* that Oden's death was the first recorded of a United States Little Leaguer resulting from an injury on the field. He said that some time earlier a Canadian boy had died of a head injury inflicted by a thrown ball while running between bases. Following national Little League rules, young Oden wore a protective helmet at bat, but the ball struck him in the neck below the helmet.

Preston Shugart, president of the West Garland Little League at the time of the accident, cancelled all games until Thursday after funeral services for Oden on Monday, July 2. The Rev. Henry Mood, pastor, presided at the services in the First Methodist Church where the Odens were members. A stained glass window in the church

memorializes the youth. He had been a fifth grade student at Williams Elementary School, and had played Little League baseball for four years, beginning in 1952, when his family came to Garland from Crockett. Garland's Little League had been organized the year before, in 1951.

The field on Miller Road where Rick Oden played was then known as Cole Park, a new diamond occupying part of eight acres designated for use by Little League. It was a section of a larger 31-acre tract given to the city by developer M.C. Cole in 1955.

A few months after that horrific accident, the park was renamed in memory of Rick Oden and is now one of the Garland Park and Recreation Department's largest and most popular parks; in the years since Oden played there, other facilities were added, more fields were built. Today six baseball and softball fields occupy the northern end of the park near Miller Road, and the southern end is devoted to tennis -- 13 lighted courts, and a tennis shop known as the Jack Coleman Tennis Center -- plus a playground and picnic area.

The park's southern end is at Briarwood and its northern end at Miller Road, and a narrow strip of green that is part of the park runs north of Miller Road between Glenbrook Drive and Edgefield almost to Cedar Drive.

(More Little League, Page 4)



Landmark member's search led to story

Research by Landmark member Bruce Davis was the inspiration for this month's cover story on Rick Oden.

Davis, a native of Garland, was curious about the boy who gave his name to 31-acre city park on Miller Road. As a boy, Davis himself had been a Little Leaguer.

So, he went through film files of the *Garland News* at Nicholson Library and found the story of what happened on that fatal evening of June 29, 1956, and sent his information to Mike Hayslip, Landmark's vice president of development and museum affairs.

Among those original newspaper accounts Davis found was a photo of the fatally injured boy. "He looked like a bright, sweet kid," wrote Davis. "The

story said he was struck in the 'back of the head' (which sounds much more deadly than getting hit 'in the neck,' as first reported."

Davis drove to Restland Cemetery to see Rick Oden's grave. "He is buried in the Acacia Lawn section (of the cemetery). . . . (I) saw his grave marker. . . nothing fancy. All it says is: 'Richard Roy Oden 1945-1956.' "

Hayslip thanked Davis for his research and for the curiosity that led him to it.

Many people, he said, come to Landmark with questions. "This may be the first inquirer who's followed through. This guy asks a question, and takes what we give him and fills in the blanks himself, and then provides us with his research."

Garland Little League, then and now

Garland Little League, largely through the leadership of Dr. Willard Brown, was organized in 1951 when the city's population was about 11,000. An array of county and city officials attended the opening game of the program in June 1951.

An instant success, the Garland organization in 1952 played host to Carl Stotz, founder and commissioner of Little League at a meeting that brought leaders of boys baseball from all over North Texas.

The Garland program, in those early days, was one of the most successful in the state. In August, 1952, Garland, only two games away from the national tournament, lost to Little Rock, Ark., in the Region 7 tournament. Houston later defeated Little Rock and went on to the national series in Williamsport, PA.

Today, Garland, with a population of more than 226,000, has three Little League organizations -- Garner, North Garland and South Garland -- with dozens of teams and hundreds of youngsters participating in several divisions of baseball, softball, and other sports.

The Museum

200 Museum Plaza
Downtown Garland

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

Hours of Operation: First and third Saturdays of each month, 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Off-hour tours available on request.

Museum Phone: 972-205-2996

(or) Joann Nelson, 972-564-1054

Admission: Free

Donations are encouraged



Membership

Memberships, renewable each January, are available at these rates:

Individual	\$15
Couple	\$20
Corporate	\$100

To join or renew, enclose payment with this information and mail to:

Garland Landmark Society
P. O. Box 462232
Garland TX 75046-2232

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Website

www.garlandhistorical.org

Roach Feed & Seed: A work in progress

By Mike Hayslip

Traditional as it feels today, Roach Feed & Seed Co. is the evolutionary result of multiple businesses adapting to change.

The store's genealogy traces to the Roach Grocery Company, which appeared on the south side of the square in 1920, when W. H. Roach and his son Haskell acquired the grocery operation of the M. D. Williams general mercantile store.

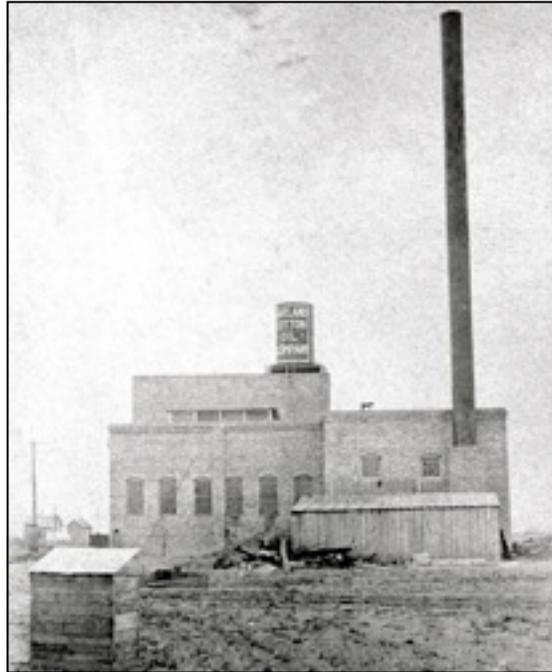
Williams wanted to concentrate on funerals and had recently purchased the burial aspects of the H. W. Jones Hardware Co. across the square. About the same time Williams' dry goods operation was sold to L. A. Powell, who would run that business for the next 30 years.

The elder Roach had been a local bank officer and partner in several business ventures, while the younger was recently graduated from Baylor University.

The times required tenacity, as America was working her way through Prohibition and the depression of 1920-21. By the end of WWI discharged soldiers had swelled the labor force, driving up unemployment.

To restore peacetime fiscal conditions federal spending had been slashed by 65% in one year. Annual inflation rates had topped 20% at the end of the war, but from their peak in June of 1920, the Consumer Price Index plunged almost 16% over the next

12 months. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 40%.



Landmark Society Photo Archives

Garland Cotton Oil Mill (about 1910), an early Roach enterprise.

Agricultural prices had also collapsed, but were beginning to show recovery spikes. Though small operators by today's supermarket standards, the Roaches were able to ride out price gyrations by making forward commitments for bulk quantities of staples.

Most of their customers lived directly or indirectly off the area's agriculture, so the Roaches sold merchandise on credit, "carrying" farmers between crop planting and harvest and — hopefully — settling accounts each year. Receipts and records of Roach

Grocery Company lay in recesses of a heavy safe the Roaches had acquired from the Anheuser-Busch, which was struggling to downsize itself and diversify its brewing operations during Prohibition's "dry" years. Local lore holds that the safe eventually cracked the store's wooden floor.

With little federal tinkering or rate cuts from the Federal Reserve, depression conditions soon abated, and most of the nation levitated into boom times of "the Roaring Twenties."

Through industry and sound management Roach Grocery shared in local prosperity which by 1926 had attracted an outlet of the national A&P Grocery chain. Selling on a "cash-and-carry" basis, A&P shouldered no customer financing costs, and the chain could purchase in even larger quantities than the Roaches. So, in the early years of the Great Depression, the Roaches redirected their retail grocery operation and climbed higher on the distribution chain.

Their new venture, Roach Feed and Grocer Company, would retail groceries, feed and other retail farm products while distributing wholesale grocery items to a myriad of small grocery stores in and around town. Local farmers would supply some of the merchandise for resale in small quantities.

(See A MOVE, Page 6)

A move to rail line, and first sale recorded

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Acting as their own contractors, the Roaches erected a tin-covered building on right-of-way leased from the Santa Fe railroad. Its floor, sturdy enough to support the brewery safe, stood at dock height, and a rail spur facilitated trades in bulk shipments. An intended opening date was challenged when the Roosevelt administration closed the nation's banks for a "holiday" inspection in April of 1933.

Although W. H. "Will" Roach was a long-time board member at the State National, then Garland's only bank, both directors and officers were

prohibited from making transactions until examiners could verify the institution's solvency. Fortunately, the bank was certified within two weeks, and construction proceeded.

A surviving cash journal reveals that O. C. Rudolph was the first employee hired, then Casey Hall, but restraint was required, as reliable employees cost up to \$8 per week.

The store's first merchandise sales entries were journaled in Haskell L. "Hack" Roach's enviable longhand for June 16, 1933: retail \$7.71 and wholesale \$59.90.

Life was good.

To be continued. . . .

This is the first of a two-part series by Mike Hayslip on the origins and progress of one of Garland's oldest businesses, from 1920 when W.H. Roach and his son, Haskell, established Roach Grocery Co. on Garland's Square.

Part II, in the next issue of OnTrack, will bring the story to the present day.



Garland Landmark Society
P.O. Box 462232
Garland TX 75046