



TIME TO DO THE LAUNDRY Part I

In Garland's early years, doing laundry was believed to be "women's work." It was one of a long list of daily tasks that included cooking three meals from scratch on a cast iron stove, cleaning house, mending clothes and caring for the family.

American Nathaniel Briggs patented the earliest "washing machine" in 1797. It consisted of a tank with a hand-operated lever to move the clothes around, along with a wringer. By the 1890s, machines were improving.

In 1900, J.M. Naylor & Son, a store on the Garland square that sold Garland cast iron stoves and Sherwin-Williams paint, was carrying a line of washing machines made of wood or galvanized steel, plus wringers and washboards.

"Taking in washing" for others was one of the few ways that women could make money at home, though it was difficult and low paying.

In 1901, *The Garland News* asked for locals to help a destitute family. The request read:

"Mr. Warren is a consumptive (*a term for wasting diseases like tuberculosis*) invalid confined to his bed. Mrs. Warren takes in laundry work and does what she can to earn a living. The aged parents of Mr. Warren and three children are to be provided for, and our charitably inclined people should look after them."

Garland's population was 819 in 1900, and there were no commercial laundries. Starting at that time and for the next 30 years, Garland's residents either washed their own items or took baskets of laundry to local shops. Those companies did not wash clothes and linens on-site but sent them to out-of-town laundry facilities. The finished baskets of laundry were returned in two or more days.



Various barber shops, clothing stores or local men were agents for Sherman Steam Laundry, McKinney Steam Laundry, National Steam Laundry, and later Leachman's Dallas Steam Laundry, Ideal, Acme, Troy and American Laundry companies.

Over the years, laundry services using those companies were offered by Green's Barber Shop, Skipwith's, Talley & Allen's City Barber Shop, H.L.

Erwin's Shaving Parlor, E.C. Allen's Sanitary Service Shop, J.C. Armstrong & Son's Drug Store, J.T. Brannon and Coomer & McAlpine at the Crossman Building.



Throughout America's cities, a steam laundry was the alternative to doing laundry at home until the 1930s when home electric washing machines became more common. The laundry used a large boiler to clean clothes with steam power and to run the clothes presses.

Sherman Steam Laundry was reportedly the second steam laundry in the state of Texas. It was originally located at the south side of Sherman's Courthouse Square and used a large boiler to clean clothes with steam power and to run the clothes presses. It later moved to a new and improved building with high ceilings, fans and open sides.

There, men washed the clothes, and women ironed them with 20-pound irons. The cost to have shirts ironed was 10 cents. Removable collars or cuffs were 30 cents per dozen. National Steam Laundry took over the Sherman plant when the Sherman Steam Laundry moved.

Walter McCallum, Dave Grubb open Garland Pantatorium

Encouraged by *The Garland Daily News*, there were several attempts over the years to build a truly local laundry,

In 1901 Charles McCarty opened a laundry at the Ryon corner building, advertising:

"Bring your work along or call me up, Phone 33, and I will call for it. Will wash and iron or do "rough-dry" washing. Keep your money in Garland."

The building was one of the last existing original buildings of the town of New Duck Creek and was once the offices of Ryon Brothers, druggists. Before McCarty opened his business there, it had briefly

been a tenpin bowling alley, and gambling was said to be its income source. The McCarty laundry was also a gamble that failed.

In January 1915, Dave Eil Grubb & Walter S. McCallum bought the J.W. Wood tailor shop and created the Garland Pantatorium Club to offer a bargain. Two dollars a month got customers discounts on daily shoeshines and suits pressed twice a week.

"Boss" McCallum's *Garland News* ad January 29, 1915, said:

"If it was something to eat you would jump at it. Take it any way, by joining our club right away."

They became agents of the National Steam Laundry and claimed they would call for and deliver laundry at any time. A month later, McCallum had bought out Grubb and ran this ad:

"Now I am the whole cheese."

By May of that year, despite McCallum's newspaper advertisements and Dollar Day promotions, the Pantatorium Club disappeared. Grubb, however, ran a tailoring business on East Harbison St. (now State St.) and later worked with J.A. Alexander.



Tornadoes bring out Dallas company's kindness

In May 1927, devastating tornadoes hit Garland and surrounding towns. American Laundry of Dallas offered to provide free laundry service to clean all the clothing and other items scattered during the storm. The company volunteered to launder the clothes, collected the items and returned them for placement in the windows of the Hudson & Davis company. There, residents could identify their belongings.

Printed in the May 27, 1927, issue of *The Garland News* was the following note of gratitude:

“Garland as a community appreciates this move by this company. We feel that when the great amount of clothing and household linens that have been found and brought to the produce house are cleaned and identified, one of the biggest problems will have been solved.”

American Laundry of Dallas returned huge bundles of clean laundry. Unfortunately, very few of the items were usable because of damage done by the tornado. Still, Garlandites who found their belongings received comfort from having some of their possessions back. They appreciated the kindness of American Laundry and its local representatives, Alexander & Coldwell.

Alexander Brothers offers pickup and delivery

In 1909, Alexander Brothers, whose slogan in newspaper ads was “stylish wear for men from head to foot,” began offering a wagon for picking up and delivering laundry work from homes in 1909. Two baskets per week, Monday and Wednesday, went to the Acme Company in Dallas. The company changed names between 1909 and 1925, from Alexander Brothers to Alexander, Blackburn & Todd to Alexander and Handley.

By 1915 Alexander Blackburn & Todd boasted a “shiny new laundry wagon” to pick up and deliver laundry, but the company still sent its work to Dallas, now to Sherman Steam Laundry. It also created the Hoffman Club giving discounts on suit pressing and shoe-shining to members, as the Pantatorium Club was also doing. Alexander and Handley experimented with a laundry service and hoped to justify a truly local laundry.

They announced, “Let us be your washer woman” and patrons were finding it more satisfactory than hiring “wash women.” The local laundry never materialized.

Bob Gray leaves the laundry business for law enforcement

Alexander sold their laundry department in 1929 to Bob Gray, who had previously worked with Alexander.

Gray claimed to have been in the cleaning business in Garland since 1912. His first shop was in Cole and Davis (currently the Boogie Nights store on the

downtown square). He operated cleaning establishments and tailoring services in his tailor shop just opposite the State National Bank. As with other Garland businesses, his shop did not do laundry on the premises but sent it to a Dallas laundry company.

Gray advertised that wet weather made laundry work at home difficult, but he was there to help as the local representative of American Laundry Service. Laundry could be washed, dried and ironed or just washed, “rough dried” and returned for customers to iron themselves. He also offered moth-proofing and dry cleaning, with dressing rooms for “unclothed” customers to wait while their suits were spot-cleaned and pressed.

His newspaper ads were chatty and amusing and obviously effective as his shop was a success for several years. As his 1930 newspaper ad said:

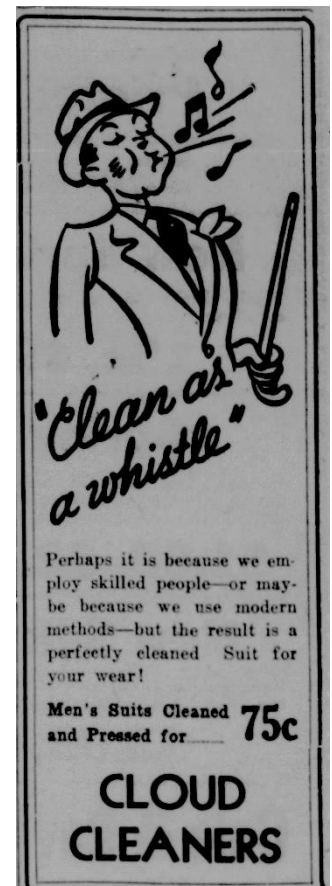
“Isn’t it a fact that most men would pay twice what laundry is worth to keep their wives’ dispositions sweet?”

Gray had been a permanent fixture in the Garland cleaning business until he was assigned to be deputy sheriff under Dallas County Sheriff Smoot Schmid in early January 1933 when he had to sever connections with his previous business. He first put the shop under the management of Glenn Byrd AKA “Geeby” and C.W. Gray, Bob’s cousin.

Two months later, Cloyse Cloud bought Gray’s tailor shop and combined it with his own, naming it Cloud Cleaners. He advertised it as the successor to Gray.

Because of the effects of Garlandites’ credit problems due to the Great Depression, the store went to a strict cash only policy in June 1934.

Their newspaper ad explained:



“The change is being made to allow us to cut operation costs and pass a decided saving on to our customers...OUR CALL FOR AND DELIVERY SERVICE WILL BE MAINTAINED AND ALL WORK CASH ON DELIVERY.”

Cloud Cleaners ran this ad Aug. 11, 1933:

“No increase - suits and dresses cleaned and pressed only 75 cents, same as Dallas prices.”

Cloud Cleaners had a display of Willilam (Bill) Holford's collection including actual Texas longhorns. Visitors who had never seen such an animal marveled at them.

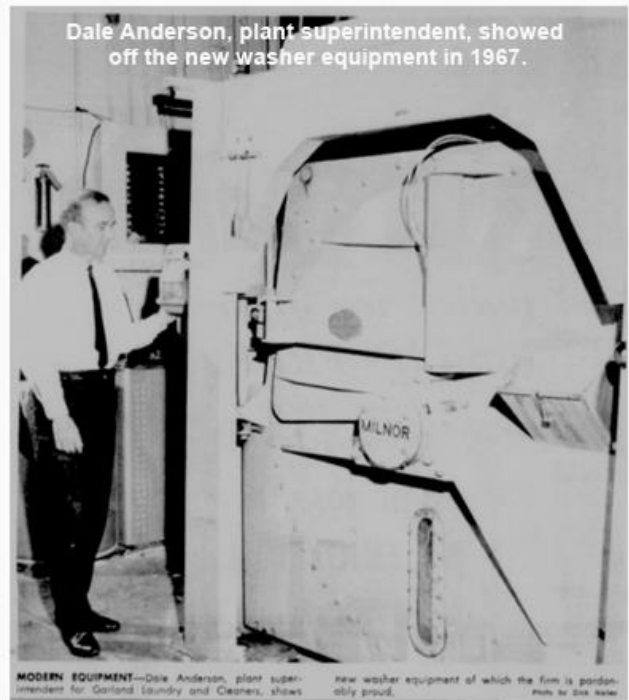
By January 1939, Cloud Cleaners closed, and McClain's Radio Shop moved into that space.

Return of Bob Grey and new Garland Laundry

After he was no longer deputy sheriff, in 1946 Gray got back into the cleaning business, buying the Grubb and Gray Cleaners, 608 Bankhead, and renaming it Gray Cleaners. Reminiscing about his career, he recalled that after WWII one customer left \$5,500 worth of war bonds in one pocket and that another customer Jim Jackson had left his farm's entire payroll money in his suit. “We let him sweat for it a little” before letting the customer know,” he said.

In 1947 Gray sold his cleaning plant to four men who planned to open a laundry in Garland. The men were Charles B. Allard, H.B. Allard, K.N. Waller and Cloyse Cloud. The name was Garland Laundry and Cleaners.

Construction began on the new laundry and cleaning plant in June 1947. The plant was to be eighty by ninety feet and located between Points Service Station and the Crenshaw Animal Hospital on North Star Road at the intersection of Bankhead highway. The building was modern, with a glass front of peach and grey, was walled inside with buff glazed tile, and had an exterior finish of light tan brick. With its modern fixtures, it would house the laundry, dry cleaning and fur storage department.



Cloud was a lifelong Garland resident who had worked for Gray. Other principals came from Commerce, and Allard already owned laundry companies in Commerce and Gainesville. Though eventually operating neighborhood branches, a new main plant was built on the west side of 14th St. at present Garland Ave. opposite the T Junction with Bankhead (present Main Street). Garland Laundry handled residential and industrial accounts, like that of the new nearby Kraft plant. The opening was celebrated May 20, 1948. By the 1960's, Garland Laundry and Cleaners had nine locations. R.R. Willis, its new owner, was national president of the American Institute of Laundries and past president of the Texas Laundry and Dry Cleaners Association. The company boasted six two-way-radio-equipped delivery trucks, a far cry from the early days when laundry was delivered by horse-drawn wagons.

More laundry businesses open in Garland

In March 1923, *The Garland News* editorialized that “Garland should have a laundry. Enough work goes out of town every week to support one. We have the water and everything else needed to make a laundry a success, and our people believe in wearing clean clothes.”

J.H. Nelson announced in March of 1929 that he was opening a home laundry in the old Merrill

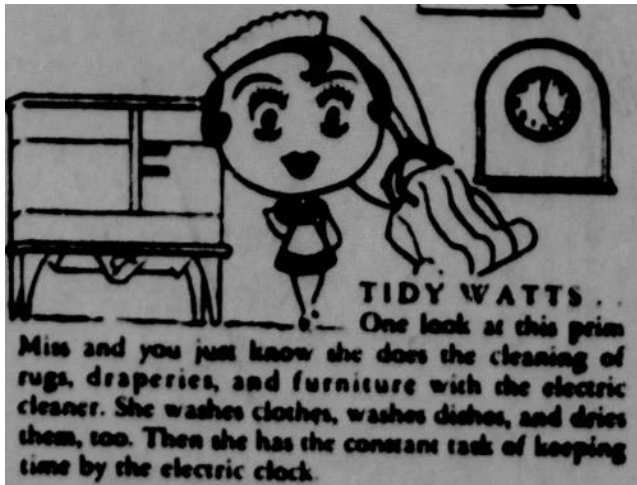
House in South Garland. He offered washing only, or both washing and ironing. They would call for and deliver laundry.

By the late 1940's, Garland had its share of laundry services.

Mark Montgomery Laundry and Cleaners was an early tenant of Garland (Skillern) shopping center. The phone number was BR-1-7676.

Washing done by Garland women

Through all these years, women in Garland homes were doing their own laundry.



In the early 1930s, Garland Municipal Utilities and Texas Power and Light Company were promoting home washing machines using "cheap electricity."

Garland Utilities said in 1931:

"The smallest item in the monthly household expense is the electric bill. Ten cents a day was the average electric bill of residential customers last year – less for electricity than the average family spends for candy, soft drinks or the movies."

Laundry soap was often a top item in Garland grocery store ads. Cotton clothes instead of fancier fabrics were promoted because they could simply be tossed into the home washing machine, ready to wear again.

Garland women were also "taking in laundry" when times were bad. It was a way to make a little money for the household.



During the Great Depression, 1929-1939, newspaper ads for laundry work increased, including ads from Mrs. J.W. Ogle, Mrs. K. Pilliod, Mrs. J.T. Grisham and Mrs. Hawkins near Katy Depot. Mrs. Haynes offered home laundry work, washing quilts for 20 cents and blankets for 15 cents.

But during the Depression some could still afford to hire help, as evidenced in newspaper ads like the one in August 1936:

"Wanted – Neat white woman to do laundry work. Phone 140"

The most moving story was in the *Garland News* in 1927. An ad read:

"LAUNDRY WORK – I am prepared to do family or other washing promptly and at reasonable prices...I need the work and will appreciate it. Can give references. Will call for work if sufficient number of customers justifies. Mrs. Harry Grimes, on Elmo Ryon farm, east of Garland."

An editorial revealed the story behind the ad:

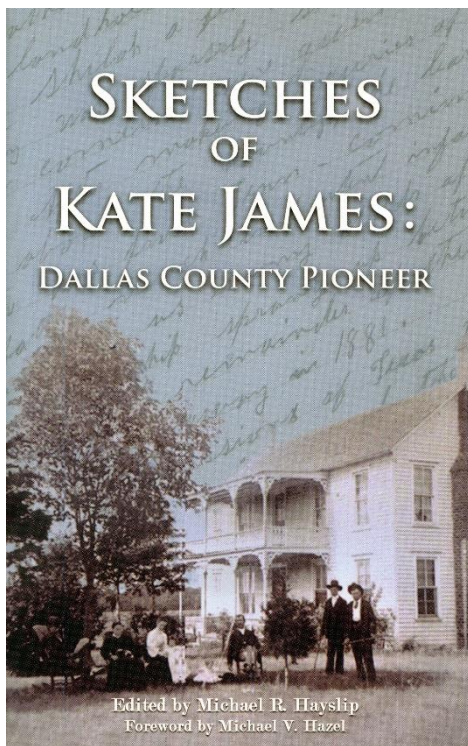
"DESERVING – The wife of a war veteran is advertising for washing in this issue of the News. Her husband was shell-shocked and wounded so

seriously in the World War that he is unable to do hard work, though making an effort and doing all he can. He was a member of the "Lost Battalion" and suffered a thousand deaths in the fight for freedom. This woman is doing her part for helping to make a living for the family without asking for charity. Her request for work should be responded to because such cases are rare and deserving. The women of Garland can make her independent by giving her the work she is asking for, and while getting value received be doing a worthy act. We believe they will."

--Written by Carlotta Barnes

Copies of ads in text above and photo of Dale Anderson are from past editions of *The Garland News*.

Watch for Part II of *Time to do the Laundry* in the fourth quarter edition of *On Track*.



Kate Jones James was 3 years old when she and her siblings and parents came to Texas in a covered wagon. They arrived in Texas in November 1855 and soon settled in the area that would later become Garland.

When James was 76, W.A. Holford, editor of *The Garland News*, asked her to record her memories for a series of articles.

James' recollections described life in the area before the birth of the City of Garland. The articles were later published in book form, *Sketches of Kate James: Dallas County Pioneer*.

The following summarizes some of the family's hardships before and after their arrival in Texas as well as the reasons behind their move from Tennessee to Texas.

ROBERT & MARTHA JONES BRING FAMILY TO TEXAS

Kate James' father, Robert Degge Jones (1812-1881), was skilled in several areas. He played flute and taught singing when he was young, and he also apprenticed as a cabinet maker. Jones then became a successful saddle maker. When he made enough money to start his own business, he moved to Tennessee and did just that in 1836. Once his business became successful, Jones married Martha Eliza King (1820-1859) in 1840, and the couple started a family.

"He often spoke of how happy he was with fortune smiling on himself and his family," Kate wrote of her father in *Sketches of Kate James*.

Then bad luck befell the family.

"In an evil hour he went security for a merchant, a supposed good friend, who absconded and left the entire indebtedness for Father," Kate wrote.

The creditors demanded payment, and Jones lost everything. It was then that he decided to move his wife and nine children to Texas for free land. It took him a few years to save money to buy a wagon and horses, but the family of 11 set out for Texas in September 1855. Along with the family, there were the horses, Charlie and Trim, and two dogs, Pilot and Turk, who followed behind the wagon.

Martha was a beautiful woman with dark hair, brown eyes and rosy cheeks. She grew up in a wealthy family and came from noble lineage.

Kate shared that her mother was a devout Christian who passed those beliefs to her children. She taught them the importance of keeping with

Christian values and obeying the Ten Commandments. Kate added that her mother was strict about keeping the Sabbath and being honest.

The family's new life was not ideal. There was no social life and no churches, and Martha died the same year as giving birth to her 11th child.

"My mother endured it for four years, she tried to be brave for her family's sake but in four years, she sickened and died," Kate wrote.

The family believed that their mother had died of a broken heart as there had been a drastic difference between her life as a child and as an adult.

Kate described the death of her mother as the "darkest hour" of their lives, as the 11 children were very nearly orphans. Their father had almost lost his hearing, and they were far away from friends and relatives.

They lived at the western edge of the Duck Creek Community on land bordered by present Miller and Forest roads between Shiloh and Jupiter roads. Below is a list of the children of Martha Eliza King and Robert Degge Jones. The first nine were born in Tennessee before the family made the move to Texas.

- James William – born 1841
- Ellen Mildred – born 1842
- John Thomas – born 1844
- Joseph Alexander – born 1846
- Mary Elizabeth – born 1847
- Horace King – born 1846
- Martha Katherine – born 1851
- Lucinda Ann – born 1853
- Amanda Florence – born 1855
- Robert Henry – born 1857 (in Texas)
- George Washington – born 1859 (in Texas)

--Written by Kim Everett

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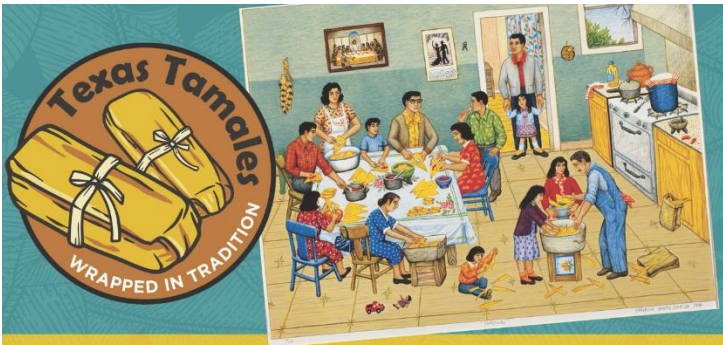
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