



TIME TO DO THE LAUNDRY Part II

Do it yourself washaterias

In Fort Worth in 1934, C. A. Tannahill opened the very first modern “washateria.” When most people could not afford electric washing machines during the Depression, Tannahill rented out use of the company’s four machines by the hour, and people took wet washing home to dry.

On Oct. 12, 1935, Mrs. Ellis (first name unknown) of Irving opened the new **Helpy Selfy and Cash and Carry Laundry** in the Armstrong building, just east of the *Garland News* office.

A newspaper reported: “The laundry plant will be open for inspection, and on the opening date anyone desiring to try out the new equipment may do their laundry free of cost. The Helpy Selfy laundry plan has been worked very successfully in other sections of the state, and Mrs. Ellis stated Tuesday, “that it will be of great convenience to those who do their own work of this nature, as only the latest type of equipment has been installed, and much lifting of the work is eliminated under the new plan.”

A little over a year later in December 1936, Eunice Hutson of Garland bought the Helpy Selfy Laundry, and the name changed to **Sunny Day Laundry**.

Eunice, her sister Mabel and brother Juel ran it, and they later established substations at



Roof of Smith's Laundry floated off walls during Duck Creek flood in 1949. Smith stood east of the Garland Ave. bridge over the creek.

Centerville, Rose Hill, Rowlett and Sachse. They offered pickup service at each location on Tuesdays and delivery to each on Thursdays.

“The ladies are offering to shoulder the burden of all wash day worries,” the news article said.

If they wanted to do the wash themselves, Sunny Day customers could also do their own “helpy selfy” laundry at 35 cents per hour.

Smith Washateria in Duck Creek Shopping Village was east of the Garland Avenue bridge over the creek. The roof of the washateria floated off the walls during a flood, and it flew across the road. The flood claimed the lives of four people.

Bell Cleaning and Laundry was originally at the corner of State and 8th streets in 1956. It had been offering services for Dallas customers for 29 years



GHS Debs march by Bell Cleaning & Laundry in Labor Day Parade - Photo from Landmark Society collection

and in 1956 offered the same laundry service to Garland citizens. Ray G. Chandler was its first branch manager, and they offered a \$50 government bond as a prize at its opening. The winner was Dorothy Lee Clark of 1521 Dent St. A second location opened later at First St. and Broadway Blvd. By 1960 Bell had 50 locations in Dallas County.

Engleman Washateria at 1628 Kingsley Road opened July 2, 1951. It offered Help Yourself Service, Wet Washes and “Plenty of Hot Water.”

Return of Helpy Selfy

After the end of World War II, in April 1946, H.H. Talley was searching for secondhand Maytag washing machines. Such machines were rare when manufacturing was just returning to producing

consumer goods instead of military needs. He opened **Talley’s Helpy Selfy Laundry**, also known as Talley’s Washateria, in the 100 block of Haskell Drive.

The Talley laundry made national news with a feature “Washateria Style” in the June 1946 issue of *Country Gentleman Magazine* (1852-1955). This publication was an American agricultural magazine that had focused on farming, but by the time of this issue was reporting on businesses of interest to farmers. Later, *Country Gentlemen Magazine* merged with *Farm Journal Magazine*.

The magazine article reported: Talley’s Helpy Selfy Laundry – Mr. and Mrs. Talley bought an old laundry “to learn on” then opened a laundry in a new concrete building that opened in 1946. There were six washtubs arranged on either side of a

wide central aisle. "While a customer sorts her wash, an attendant fills the first tub and machine with hot water. As this batch goes through the wringer into the first rinse, another batch is being soaked. When the last batch is in the machine, the attendant prepares the first tub with bluing."

Customers sat in a waiting room with chairs, a water cooler, clock, telephone and registry desk to sign in. They paid 40 cents an hour to do laundry.

The article continued: "Wartime curtailment of commercial laundry service brought many new customers, like the wealthy woman who has a wonderful time doing the wash while the maid she brings with her stands by and watches."

Friends would meet there to do laundry together, like they were having a party. Out of town visitors stopped in with laundry loads, and some potential laundry owners visited to see how a successful "washeteria" was run."

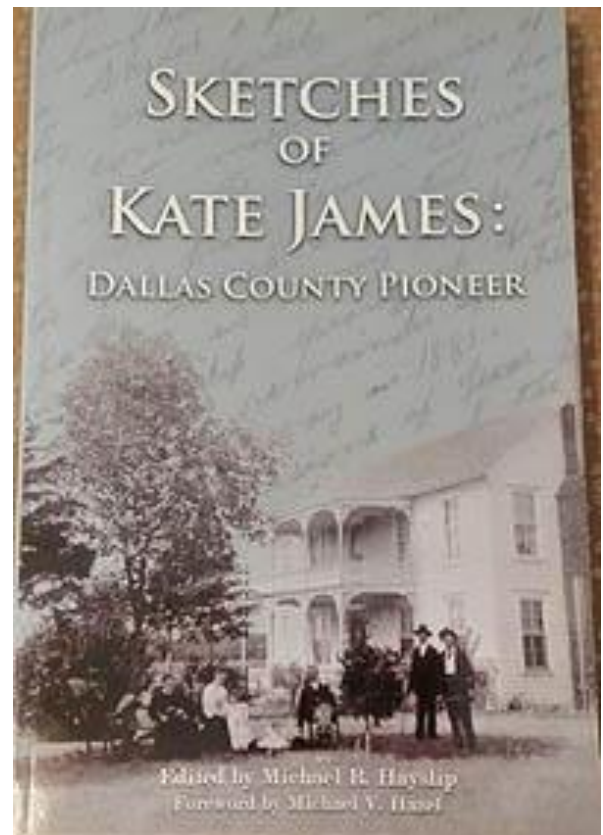
By the 1950s, Garland had all the options for laundry, and in-home washers and dryers were common. A variety of laundromats and laundry companies are still in business in Garland.

--Written by Carlotta Barnes

Pioneers persevered through hardships

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

Three years after Kate James' family's arrival in Texas, her father, Robert Jones, bought the land on which they would build their first home. Kate noted that she believed that the land sold for 50 cents per acre. The home consisted of "two log cabins and a lean-to."

Although it isn't certain what she meant by "two log cabins," it's generally believed to be two one-room cabins of the same size with an open passageway between them. The passageways were usually 7-14 feet wide with a single-gabled roof, the uses included cooking, chores and visiting.

The floors were made of large split logs, and once installed, they had to be scrubbed vigorously to smooth them. Kate explained that they used mops made by "drawing corn husks through holes in a section of plank, then applied ashes and hot water

to the floor.” The floor became smoother after repeated scrubbing.

All furniture was homemade, and every Saturday, the family moved it outdoors to clean it with soap, hot water and ashes. They also cleaned the floors and bedsteads. The women followed a long, complicated process to make lye soap, which was the type most used until the railroads came through the area.



G.W. & Kate James with daughter Lottie and son Horace. Photo from Landmark Society collection.

“Today, the housewife goes to the telephone and orders her soap, and it is delivered in neat bars without any worry on her part,” Kate wrote. By “today,” she referred to 1927.

For making fabric, they planted small amounts of cotton. The pioneers picked the seeds out of the cotton, carded it, and spun it into thread. Then, they wove it into cloth on a hand loom. They were then ready to make the family’s clothing. The fabric for winter clothing came from the wool of sheep they raised. It was carded by hand until a Mr. Coit

started a carding machine “somewhere northwest of where Richardson now (referring to Kate’s time) stands.”

Kate described how the family kept the fire going since they didn’t have access to matches. It’s quite a contrast to how everything works so easily today.

They covered the coals with ashes in the fireplace to start the next fire. If it went out, their father would use a flint lock rifle, have taw or other kindling ready, then put some powder in the gun pan. With the kindling held close, the trigger was snapped which ignited to cause the kindling to catch fire.

Coal had not yet arrived in the area, so the pioneers’ light was supplied by tallow candles and grease lamps.

For laundry, women used a battling stick as there were no washboards in the early days. They soaked the clothes and placed them on a bench where both sides were beaten with the stick.

When Kate’s mother died, her 16-year-old sister, Ellen, took over the cooking chores and the next oldest sister took charge of the younger children.

After Ellen’s marriage, Kate assumed cooking duties without having had any training. She was on her own to learn, and the family had a great laugh at Kate’s first attempt at chicken and dumplings, which ended with one big, solid dumpling.

It’s difficult to imagine a life like this today. In 2025, we live in already-built homes that we furnish by shopping at furniture and home decor stores until we find exactly what we want. Additionally, endless amounts of ready-made clothing are available. We even have the choice to go to stores or make purchases online. Everything we need nowadays is just a click away. We have gas fireplaces,

electricity, appliances like washing machines, dryers and ovens to make life easier. Tools are available for every imaginable chore. The difference is immeasurable, yet these pioneers endured.

Landmark in the community

The Garland Landmark Museum participated in the city's **Juneteenth Celebration** Saturday, June 14 on the downtown square. The museum's exhibit honored many of Garland's Black community leaders.

Volunteers made sure that visitors had Landmark fans to keep them cool. Numerous visitors commented about how they loved the exhibit and had plans to stop by the museum soon.



It was also great to see Gale Field's daughter who stopped by to take a picture of her dad's panel.

In addition, several people from Sims Chapel Church stopped by, and the museum is looking forward to exhibiting a panel at the chapel's upcoming 110th Anniversary.

Saturday, July 26, marked the first **Travels in History Lecture** at the newly renovated Central Library.

Thanks to the City of Garland and the library staff for allowing us to use one of the meeting rooms as the event has outgrown the museum!



Speaker Holly Stevens was amazing as always. We're fortunate to have Holly presenting the lecture series! She is a gifted speaker who engages audiences with interesting and entertaining subjects. For a time, she worked at the Landmark Museum where she enjoyed doing research.

Holly loves sharing information and noted that there is plenty of "weird history" to share. Her first public speaking experience was when she began teaching college in the late 1990s. Holly said that she honed her public speaking skills by teaching 18-23-year-olds who did not want to take her class!

The subject for the next lecture, scheduled for Nov. 15 at 4 p.m., is *Downtown Garland's Square of Change – Part VIII*.



We'll meet at the Landmark Museum (393 North Sixth St. in downtown Garland) for refreshments, then walk a short distance to the Central Library for the lecture.

The cost is \$10 for non-members, or attendees can join the

Landmark Society at the door for free admission. For more information, email Heritage@GarlandTX.gov or visit www.GarlandHeritage.com.

You are invited to share your history

If you are a Landmark Society member or friend – and you must be if you're reading this – you have history in your head that we would like to share with other members.

These memories might be of incidents, places, relatives, friends, teachers, merchants, religious leaders, farmers – all those who played a part in the daily life of the community.

These stories, when written with corresponding letters or photographs, combine to represent the tapestry of Garland's past from which we can all learn. We encourage you to write your memories of Garland's history and send them, along with supporting pictures, letters or newspaper articles to us for possible use in the *On Track* newsletter.

Please email to Heritage@GarlandTX.gov or send to the Landmark Museum, 393 North Sixth St., Garland, TX 75040. You're also welcome to drop information by the museum Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



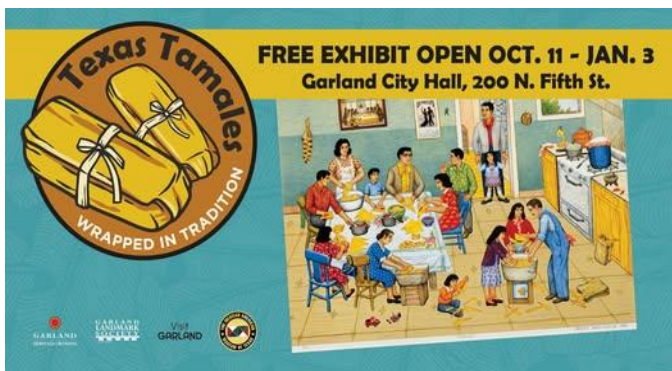
The Landmark Museum and the Pullman Railcar are operated by the Garland Landmark Society, a nonprofit, volunteer organization.

Open
Thursday, Friday and Saturday
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



GarlandHistorical.org

Don't miss Landmark's tamale exhibit



Be sure to see our upcoming exhibit *Texas Tamales – Wrapped in Tradition* Oct. 11, 2025 – Jan. 3, 2026, at City Hall, 200 North 5th St. in downtown Garland. You'll see great photos, videos, cooking equipment and other information on the history of tamales in Garland. The owners of Taqueria & Tameria Nuevo León and several Garland residents will be featured in video interviews.

In addition, the Central Library, 625 Austin St. in downtown Garland, will host tamale making classes led by Doris Quintanilla, owner of Nuevo León, on Oct. 11, Nov. 22 and Dec. 13 from 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. The classes are **free** but limited to 20 participants each. Register early! Get tickets via Prekindle.

Membership Rates:
\$20 Individual/Couple
\$100 Corporate

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

**Enclose payment with this
form and mail to:**

**Garland Landmark Society
PO Box 462232
Garland, TX 75046**

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GarlandHistorical.org

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GARLAND LANDMARK MUSEUM



Landmark's Lecture Series

Downtown Garland's Square of Change
Part VIII

4 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 15
393 N. Sixth St.

\$10 for non-members or join The Landmark
Society at the door for free admission.

Questions? Email Heritage@GarlandTX.gov
GarlandHeritage.com



Heritage Crossing has partnered with the Math Happens Foundation to provide math for all ages, shared at all places. Join us on the first Saturday of each month to explore math-based activities and discover the beauty and relevance of mathematics in the world around us.

FREE PROGRAM

First Saturday of each month
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Landmark Museum
393 N. Sixth St.
Downtown Garland

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