

SAN JACINTO ARTS PROJECT ON ROUTE 66

1. The People of San Jacinto- the past, present and future:

From the beginning, the San Jacinto neighborhood has been a melting pot of demographics. It contains small, simple homes and architecturally renowned estates. Its residents have been wealthy business owners and hard-working laborers. It has represented the racial and ethnic diversity that has been part of Amarillo from the beginning, providing homes for Black and White families, immigrants, refugees and more. Route 66 brought travelers of all types through the neighborhood, introducing new cultures and ideas to the community. Businesses of all kinds have thrived along 6th Street and beyond. For decades, San Jacinto has been a place where the people of Amarillo come together and celebrate each other. The historic community is not just a representation of yesterday—it's also a symbol of our city's future.



2. Beef Burger Barrel: 3102 Plains Blvd

Originally, this iconic building was in a different location. The original restaurant opened in 1937 as an A&W Root Beer stand at the corner of Amarillo Boulevard and Hayes, during the height of Route 66 traffic through Amarillo. But in 1952, it moved to its current location in the San Jacinto neighborhood and was renamed Lot-A-Burger. It became the Beef Burger around 1970 and had been renamed the Beef Burger Barrel by the 1990s. This walk-up diner has been photographed by travelers all over the United States, and still sells a no-frills menu of burgers, fries, sandwiches, chicken baskets and more. Because of the unique building shape and nostalgia, this tiny restaurant continues to get attention from travel websites from as far away as New Zealand.



3. **Borden's Heap-O-Cream:** 3120 SW 6th

This single-story building isn't large, but its rounded windows and rounded metal awning—the curved lines are quintessential Art Moderne details—are definitely eye-catching. It was originally built in 1941 by the Borden Company as an ice cream parlor. This Route 66 location was Borden's third in Amarillo, as two other Heap-O-Cream eating establishments already existed downtown. In later years, the building was repurposed as Mom Sherrod's Sagebrush Inn, a restaurant known for fried oysters. It has since hosted second-hand shops and antiques dealers. By 1990, the building had fallen into disrepair but was rehabilitated by Preservation Amarillo with the help of a Boy Scout troop in the San Jacinto neighborhood.



4. **The Bussey Buildings and San Jacinto Beauty School:** 2713-2727 SW 6th

These four storefronts were the first significant commercial buildings on Sixth Street in Amarillo. They were commissioned by local businessman L.W. Bussey and built by Albert Randall. The first two buildings (2719 and 2727 W. 6th) were finished in 1924, with Lineville Drug as the first occupant. The other two were completed in 1927. As the years went by, these shops have been occupied by a series of commercial enterprises, including grocery stores, cafes, cleaners and pharmacies. The most famous tenant was the San Jacinto Beauty School from 1935-1978, which held the distinction of holding Beauty License #1 issued by the State of Texas. Today these shops are home to the Sixth Street Antique Mall, Amarillo's Route 66 Store, Lile Art Gallery, and Evermore.



5. **The Carolina Building:** 3313-3323 SW 6th

Strip commercial buildings are ubiquitous in Amarillo, but they were a relatively new idea when introduced along 6th Street in 1926. This commercial block with a unique Spanish Colonial Revival style—visible in its red-tiled sloping roof—was one of the earliest examples of strip commercial property in Amarillo. Contractor M.C. Hancock built the rectangular building for partners T.W. Cotten and J.W. Kemp. Originally it was divided into eight glass storefronts, with a flexible floor plan that could be adapted to both small and large businesses. The first spaces were leased to an auto paint company, a barber shop, a beauty salon, and a drug store. Today the strip is home to Evolve by Moonwater Designs, Nomads and Neon Moon.



6. **1926 Storefronts:** 2812-2822 SW 6th

This block dates as far back as 1926—the year 6th Street was incorporated into the Route 66 highway network—and represents some of the earliest strip commercial buildings in Amarillo. That year, 1926, was also the year oil was discovered in the area, increasing the city’s prosperity and bringing thousands of newcomers. In fact, nearly one in four buildings in the Sixth Street Historic District were built in 1926. Originally, these four brick storefronts were home to businesses like Cupie Donuts, Amarillo Home Laundry, Zach McGrady Plumbing Co., and Johnson Barber. This strip is now home to The 806 Coffee + Lounge, The Roseberry, and Reminisce Antiques & More. Later, in the 1940s, Stoddard Brothers Garage and Service Station was built immediately west of the rectangular structure. That building now houses Bracero’s Mexican Grill & Bar.



7. **The Golden Light Café:** 2908 SW 6th

Established in 1946, the Golden Light is the oldest restaurant in Amarillo and may be the oldest continuously operating restaurant (in the same location) anywhere on the original Route 66. Its founders were Chester “Pop” Ray and his wife, Louise. According to legend, Pop was sick the first day the restaurant opened, so his son, Charles, manned the grill. They made \$10.48 that day. Pop regained his health and operated the restaurant until 1957, when he sold it to Dorothy Gauden. Bill and Pat Alexander then owned it, then Marc Reed. Today the establishment is on its fifth owner—Angela Corpening, a former waitress and bartender. A few of today’s customers used to eat here when Pops was slinging burgers. Though each owner has changed the chili recipe, the Golden Light is still praised by travelers for having one of the best burgers on Route 66.



8. **Original NWTB & Northwest Nursing School:** 6th and Rusk

Northwest Texas Hospital opened on March 22, 1924, as the city’s first public medical facility and second hospital overall. Located along 6th and 7th between Rusk and Fannin, Northwest offered hospital residents a shared room for four dollars a night. It also established a School of Nursing on the campus. The school’s first graduates, in 1926, were Maude Mary Abbott, Olive Fitzgerald, Pemine Hanson, Viola Hanson, and Anna Lee Smith. For the next few decades, thousands of nurses were trained on this campus. The original hospital building was remodeled multiple times over the years before Northwest moved to its present location in 1982. Today, the old hospital houses a low-income retirement community. The two-story, standalone nursing school building is now the Meridian Apartments, managed by the Downtown Women’s Center.



9. **The NAT Ballroom:** 604 South Georgia

Unofficially, the Nat served as the gateway to the San Jacinto area. After being built in 1922 as a natatorium (an indoor swimming pool), this building was converted into a ballroom in 1926, with Art Deco ornamentation inside and a turreted exterior design that resembled a medieval fortress. Advertisements during the 1920s boasted of its 10,000 feet of polished maple flooring beneath a mirror ball. Like many other ballrooms along Route 66, the Nat hosted musical acts who were playing their way across the country, especially those headed west to Los Angeles. Amarillo was the center point of the highway and therefore a fixture on these concert schedules. Over the years, on a near-monthly basis, The Nat hosted bands led by Harry James, Paul Whiteman, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and the Dorsey Brothers. The ballroom closed in 1960. Today the historic building is home to a sprawling antiques mall.



10. **1927 Storefronts:** 3302-3310 SW 6th

This unique set of brick storefronts in the 3300 block of 6th came to life during the season of rapid expansion along Route 66 in Amarillo. The buildings currently housing the Chamber Music building (3306 W. 6th) and The Muse (3310 W. 6th) were built in 1927, a year after the street was incorporated into the highway network. That year was when the city of Amarillo replaced the street's gravel paving with brick. Today, Blue Sage Gallery fills a space that was built a few years later, in 1930. The original tenants of these storefronts were the Peerless Furniture Store, a Clarence Saunders grocery store, and M Systems Grocery Store. The M Systems store at 3306 W. 6th was one of several in the area. These were eventually purchased by Roy Furr, who then launched the Furr Food Stores in Amarillo.



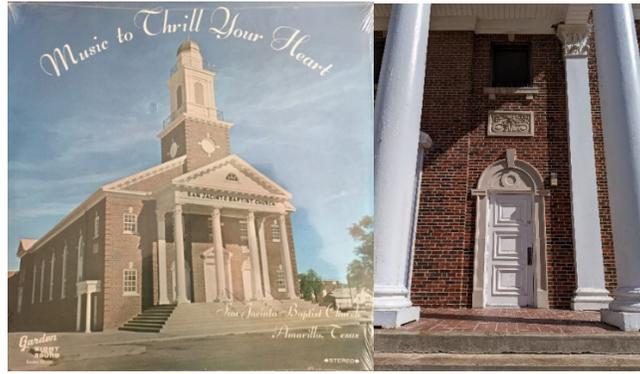
11. **Potter County Courthouse 1895:** 1621 SW 5th/Bowie St

Most locals are aware of the prominent, historic Art Deco building in downtown Amarillo, which serves as the Potter County Courthouse. That building opened in 1932 and is a historical landmark in its own right. But it is actually the fifth courthouse to serve Potter County. The third courthouse, completed in 1895 and opened in 1896, was located at 5th and Bowie streets in the San Jacinto neighborhood. This three-story building had a prominent tower that was visible throughout the community. However, unusually heavy rains flooded the community after its construction, forcing property owners to move their homes and businesses to higher ground a mile to the east. Since Amarillo had virtually abandoned its courthouse, this one was only used until 1906. The original building was eventually torn down and replaced by a white-painted structure (currently unoccupied) on the same foundation.



12. **The Ranchotel (Morning Star):** 2501 SW 6th

Located between Amarillo's congested downtown and the growing San Jacinto neighborhood, the stretch of Route 66 along 6th Street became a fantastic place for motels and tourist cabins. At one point, six different hotel courts lined this stretch of the neighborhood. One of the most prominent was the Ranchotel, a U-shaped property at 6th and Bryan, which boasted 16 units linked by alternating garage spaces. Its stucco walls, rustic wooden shutters, and exposed rafter ends added to the western ambiance. The porches were framed by wagon-wheel handrails, and hotel guests enjoyed rustic bedsteads, cowhide lampshades and horseshoe-shaped mirrors inside the small rooms. After Route 66 moved to Amarillo Boulevard in 1952, most of these tourist courts disappeared. The Ranchotel eventually became an apartment building and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1995. Though on the decline, its red-painted exterior is still hard to miss.



13. San Jacinto Baptist Church: 3314 SW 6th

In 1923, a Sunday school class at First Baptist Church in downtown Amarillo organized a mission in the growing San Jacinto area. By 1924, there were 20 charter members led by pastor J.B. Parker, and San Jacinto Baptist Church was born. Its first building was a small one-room church at the corner of Sixth and Mississippi. By 1929, the church had moved to the corner of 6th and Carolina, where the congregation eventually constructed a multi-story brick building, auditorium and more. Another addition in 1948 completed the existing campus, though an education wing was destroyed during a fire in 1960. San Jacinto Baptist Church moved out of the neighborhood onto Tascosa Road in 1987, where the congregation is now known as The Church at Quail Creek. Today, the original, historic church campus is home to San Jacinto Christian Academy.



14. San Jacinto Elementary School: 3400 SW 4th

In 1909, San Jacinto Heights was first developed to add residential homes to a new neighborhood a mile west of the original townsite. Trolley service from downtown began in 1910. The neighborhood expanded quickly. To serve this growing neighborhood, the city built a new grade school in 1926. It was originally known as San Jacinto Heights School. The original two-level brick building had a Spanish Revival design and a tiled roof, which was relatively common in the community back then but stands out now, particularly among the rest of Amarillo's elementary campuses. It was constructed for \$105,940. The Amarillo Independent School District has expanded the campus since then to better serve the children of the neighborhood.



15. **San Jacinto Fire Station:** 610 S Georgia

With a Mission Revival architectural design inspired by Spanish missions in California, the San Jacinto Fire Station opened in 1926 with a red-tiled roof, curvilinear parapets and a pergola on the south side. Located immediately south of The Nat, this station served the community until 1975, when it was sold to a private party for just \$7,600. Before it closed, it had been the only pre-World War II fire station still in operation in Amarillo. Today the unique building is occupied by a roofing company. On the side facing Georgia Street to the east, the door to the original fire truck garage bay is visible, right in the center of the building.



16. **San Jacinto Park:** 100 S Louisiana

One of the oldest parks in the city, San Jacinto Park was established soon after the neighborhood began to be developed early in Amarillo's history. Today, it hosts the neighborhood's main playground and picnic area north of 6th Street, along with an athletic court and splash pad. None of the buildings or equipment survive from the park's early days, but its tree-lined sidewalks and green space have made it an important gathering place for this residentially dense neighborhood. Multiple generations of San Jacinto residents grew up playing in this park.



17. **Wunstop Duzzit Shop (Cal Farley Service Station):** 2917-19 SW 6th

Goodrich dealership owned by Cal Farley, this service station and tire store provided repairs and more for travelers along Route 66. First built in 1926, the brick building actually represented Farley's second service station, years before he built a reputation for serving underprivileged children. Farley was the first Amarillo merchant to introduce buying on an installment plan, and his business prospered. In 1935, Farley added a \$3,000 addition to the original stucco building. Farley also ran a radio station from the 6th street location. It was bought in 1945 by chemist L.G. Gusler for the Gusler Products cleaning supply company. The existing brick storefront was added by Gusler in 1953—with a much more contemporary design—along with a drive-thru for a liquor store that occupied the western side of the building. The drive-thru passage was enclosed in 1991. Today the building is the home of Hide & Seek Treasures, an antique store.