Presented in collaboration with Historic Denton, Inc. and the Historic Residential Neighborhoods of Denton
The original John B. Denton College building at the corner of Denton and Gregg Streets, acquired by the Denton City Schools, became the first city high school in the fall of 1912. In May 1913, the Denton Record-Chronicle reported, “At the request of J.R. Christal, J.C. Coit and other interested Denton citizens, (A.A.) Greene Jr. of Dallas has agreed to set a price for the sale of the old homestead of the late Judge Carroll, which he owns” to become a city park. Instead, the owners decided to develop the land and subdivided the property into lots. On July 24, 1913, they recorded a map and plat of the Carroll Park Addition. The Simmons family built the first home in the area in 1915 at 607 Pearl Street. Gregg Street is the namesake of family of the Gregg Ranch.

The Craftsman-style home was built in 1917 by builder S. K. Withrow for Rena and Felix B. Ross for $3000. Mr. Ross was a Professor in the Department of History and Sociology at the College of Industrial Arts (present day Texas Woman’s University) from 1916 to 1918. He also served on the Denton City “Council” in 1919 and was named the Chairman (Mayor) of the City Commission.

In 1926 the house was sold to a Daisy and R. J. Wilson. The Wilsons are identified as a Denton pioneer family. He served on the board that created the College of Industrial Arts. Mr. Wilson and his brother owned a hardware store on the Square, helped start the Denton Interurban Railway and Power Plant in 1906. In 1909 he acquired ownership and became General Manager of the Denton Traction Company, which operated the trolley system that included land ownership of Highland Park (present-day Denia) and the Knoll (present-day Apogee Stadium) where he added a golf course. They owned Cascade Plunge, the old Denton swimming hole improved with a cemented bottom filled with artesian water for “the general welfare of the young and old alike” on North Locust.

The Denton Traction Center began operating the streetcar trolleys in 1908, which influenced the day-to-day lifestyle of individuals living in Denton prior to the First World War. The trolley “streetcar” line west of the downtown square was begun to develop the Highland Park area (present-day Denia Neighborhood). The line started at the power plant, located near the Denton railroad station (present-day Central Fire Station). It traveled up East Hickory Street to the west side of the downtown square, turning north on Elm Street, and then west on West Oak Street.

Trolley #30 traveled on West Oak Street to present-day Fry Street, turning south at the next corner to West Hickory Street, past the Normal College, then west on West Hickory Street to present-day Avenue D. The line ran
to Highland Park and returned on the same route. Highland Park was a popular picnicking spot in the early 1900s. It was located on the hill where Apogee Stadium is now situated. The trolley ended at Highland Park for strolls and picnic lunches.

This streetcar line consisted of a six-mile connection from the railroad station, to the square, past residential homes, to the North Texas Normal College, terminating at Highland Park. The trolley provided an inexpensive form of transportation (5 cents per day) and supported the social life in Denton during its operations from February 1908 until January 1918, providing passage to those without access to horse or carriage. By 1912, the city extended the boundaries west to encompass the new North Texas State Normal College. This incorporated a new section of West Oak and West Hickory streets within the city limits to Avenue C.
616 West Oak: Schweer-Jamison House; Built 1916

This Italian Renaissance house was built in 1916 by George Harris (January 26, 1867-September 12, 1941) for H.F. and Annie Clare Schweer. In addition to fine homes, George Harris built many public buildings such as a passenger train depot in Pilot Point and at least one public school in Denton. He was active in general construction in Texas and Oklahoma, but concentrated his home building in Denton.

Born in St. Louis, MO, H.F. Schweer (1850-Dec 10, 1931) moved to Denton in 1884. He met and married Annie Clare and began working in the mercantile business in Denton. He became the financing partner to the Hann family of Denton as they opened the John A. Hann & Co. on the Square in 1884. This “dry goods” store morphed to become the William-Hann Co. and later the Russell-Gray-Jones Co. which ultimately became the J.W. Gray Co. J.W. Gray lived at 515 Pearl Street, behind the home that the Schweers built on Oak Street.

Schweer remained a financial partner in these stores, along with Mrs. John Hann, and they owned the building on the Square where each of these businesses were located. During this period (1884 to at least 1925) this business venture became one of the six oldest businesses in Denton, along with five others that all began in 1885. These five businesses are: 1) John B. Schmitz (furniture), 2) William's Store (home furnishings), 3) Evers Hardware via the Evers House at 1035 West Oak, 4) Exchange National Bank, via the Christal House at 722 West Oak, and 5) First National Bank. In 1889, Schweer became the cashier at the First National Bank and by 1920 became the bank president.

Schweer was also active in other business developments. He was the Vice President of the Denton Oil and Development Company along with other residents of Oak Street like R.H. Evers, President and R.P. Lomax, Secretary. They drilled the first well in Denton in 1913. In 1915, he was elected to the Board of the Denton Chamber of Commerce, along with other residents of Oak Street, like Rayzor, Blewett, Long, Millicent, and Evers.

George Harris began construction of the Schweer home in mid-September 1916, and by November 1916 “good progress” is reported. The Schweer family moved in shortly afterwards as the Roaring Twenties began. Common knowledge reports are that the Schweer home was like in The Great Gatsby as the merrymaking house for wild parties. These events stopped in 1928 when Schweer was arrested as the President of First National Bank, taken to court, and charged with embezzlement. During the stress of court and trial, Mrs. Schweer attempted to save her home by opening a women's clothing shop in her house in February 1930; however, by April 1930 the Schweers sold their home to the Wells family who lived next door at 610 W. Oak. The Schweers immediately moved to Los Angeles, where Mr. Schweer died in December 1931 at the age of 81.
Jasper Wells purchased Judge Carroll’s home at 610 W. Oak and the Schweers’ home at 616 W. Oak just months apart in 1930. Born in Barren County, KY, Jasper Wells (April 22, 1845-December 6, 1934) moved to Marshall, MO with his parents when he was 10 years old. Both parents died in Marshall and he grew up with relatives until he ventured to Texas in April 1861. Within days of arriving in Collin County, he joined Company G of the 11th Texas Calvary of the Confederate States of America at the age of 16 years. His Confederate Veteran status is recorded in detail on his headstone (see below) as he fought for the South during all four years of the Civil War.

His CSA adventures took him into many battles: 1) with natives in Oklahoma; 2) his first battle with the Union at Elk Horn, AR; 3) with about 8,000 other Texans at Richmond, KY; 4) in the battles of Murfreesboro, TN; 5) during the Battles of Lookout Mountain and around Chattanooga, TN; 6) at Kennesaw Mountain, GA; 7) during the Battle of Atlanta, GA; 8) defended Knoxville, TN; 9) with Sherman’s Army during its march to Savannah, GA; and 10) was defending Raleigh, NC when
the Civil War concluded. After he was discharged, he started back toward Texas from Raleigh, NC, wounded with a broken leg and a bullet hole through his hand.

Wells stopped at Marshall, MO to recover from his injuries with his relatives, finished his education and taught school. He met Sue Gillum while in Missouri. They married on March 29, 1871 and moved to the area of Bonham, Texas, where he again taught school. In 1872 they moved to Cooke County, near present-day Valley View, where he purchased land and began farming. He extended his land acquisitions to holdings of over 5,000 acres.

He became the vice president of the Valley View National Bank for five years. With the founding of Sanger, Texas in 1886, he organized the Sanger National Bank where he became president for five years. During this time his landholding expanded into northern Denton County as he to establish the first mill and elevator in Sanger in 1897.

The Wells had three daughters whose married names were Cecil Jamison, Evie Henderson and Lola Rogers. Cecil Jamison's son, Alonzo Wesley Jamison Jr., was Jasper Wells' grandson. Cecil Wells (October 14, 1882-March 9, 1949) was born in Era, Cooke County. She married Alonzo Jamison Sr. on March 1, 1917 in Ft. Worth and they lived in Prosper, where he worked in banking. In 1932 the family moved to 610 W. Oak in Denton. They inherited 616 W. Oak from Mrs. Wells. In 1935, the Jamisons were living at 616 W. Oak and included Cecil’s sister, Lola Rogers, in their household. Lola Rogers and the Jamisons divided the back lot of 616 W. Oak and Rogers built the home at 302 Denton St. where she lived several years before her death.

Alonzo Jamison Jr. (April 12, 1918-October 29, 2011) was born in Prosper and grew up at 610 W. Oak and then moved next door to 616 W. Oak with his family. He attended North Texas State University (now UNT) and was recognized in the “Who's Who” on college campuses in 1938 for his heavy involvement in activities, leading the Campus Chat student newspaper and being the president of the university historical society and other groups. He graduated from North Texas State University in 1939.

With the outbreak of WWII he joined the Army, completing his training to become an officer in 1942 and that same year became 2nd Lieutenant. In April 1943, he was deployed to North Africa and then was part of the southern Europe invasion forces fighting from Sicily to Italy to southern France. He became 1st Lieutenant by 1945 and was on the front lines in France during the Battle of the Bulge. He received the Bronze Star during WWII for his service.

Jamison Jr. was provided 616 W. Oak from his parents in 1946 and on June 3, 1947, Elisabeth McCullar married Alonzo Jamison Jr. Jamison Jr.’s sister, Cecil, married Clifford Sankey, and they purchased 302 Denton from Jamison and lived next
door to her brother. Jamison remained in active service in the Army and became Captain in 1951, later to retire from the Army in 1974 as a full Colonel. He served 7 terms in the Texas House as the representative from the Denton area, between the years of 1955 and 1969. In 1968 he began a faculty position at TWU, his wife’s alma mater, in the History Department where he became Chair, retiring in 1984. The Jamisons left a gift of $1.5 million to the University of North Texas to support the UNT President and the mission of UNT as an educational university.
619 West Oak – Mrs. T. Denton House; Built 1928

When the John B. Denton College was built in 1901 (present day NW corner of Denton and Gregg Streets), a new street was created to connect the College to West Oak Street named “John B. Denton Street,” later shortened to “Denton Street.”

This house was built in 1928 in Tudor Revival style for Mr. and Mrs. T. Denton. In January 1913, Mr. & Mrs. T. Denton are noted as returning to Denton, and moved back to Denton by November 1913, possibly from Waco, the original home of Mrs. Denton. They purchased the home of James W. Simmons in March 1915, described as west of Krum in 1912 (likely on the Gregg Ranch), as the Simmons made plans to construct their new home at 607 Pearl Street. Mrs. T. Denton is recognized living at 1825 Sanger Avenue in Waco in 1921 while known to reside in this house by 1930, as she actively hosts fine arts club and social events at her home for many years. On January 21, 1938, Dr. E. H. Hanson moved from 1204 W. Oak after purchasing the home from Mrs. T. Denton, who moved back to Waco.

Dr. Hanson was appointed Professor and Director of the Mathematics Department at the Teachers College (present-day UNT) in September 1935. He arrived from Ohio State University, where he had taught mathematics. Mrs. Hanson was active in the community, hosting events at their home.
In 1942, Dr. Hanson was appointed a Navy Lieutenant and reported to Washington D.C. utilizing his math skills. By December 1946, he has returned to Denton and their home at 619 West Oak. He continued in his role as Director of the Mathematics Department until 1958 when he announced his leaving from North Texas State University (UNT). He became an engineering specialist for Chance Vought Aircraft in Dallas and was interviewed by the *Denton Record Chronicle* in October 13, 1958 for a story titled “Denton Man Sees Space Travel Soon” which reveals his work on missile trajectory mathematics.

The Hansons remain in their home until October 1961 when the house is listed for sale.
The historic residential neighborhoods west of the Square began with a few homes and expanded after 1890, initially centered on the John B. Denton College, which transitioned to the first public High School in Denton, and the North Texas State Normal School (present-day UNT). The neighborhood’s original platting in 1856, 1858 and 1876 established this downtown neighborhood approximately half a mile west of the Denton County courthouse square as the city grew away from the rail line toward open farming areas. The walking- and carriage-oriented neighborhood began to expand from several residential homes built before 1900 to swell with hundreds of new residents constructed by 1924, the year the Senior High School opened (present-day Calhoun Middle School). Home construction in this area peaked between 1923 and 1929 with hundreds of new residents, representing two-thirds of the properties completed before the Great Depression.
Few homes in this historic residential region were designed by architects, yet most residences exhibit design styles associated with a recognizable time period in American domestic architecture. The development of the region begins with Victorian house styles as the Queen Anne style built between 1880 to 1910. Between 1880 to 1940, a period of Eclectic house styles dominated: Colonial Revival; Neoclassical; Tudor Revival; Italian Renaissance; Mission Revival and Spanish Eclectic style homes. American Modern styles dominated after 1900 with Prairie and Craftsman styles of homes. This region is comprised by a surprisingly large—more than 50%—of Craftsman-style homes built between 1910 and 1928! Housing development changed with the Great Depression and following World War II with Minimal Traditional and Ranch-style houses. Explore this historic treasure of Denton and let the style of homes define the time periods of residential neighborhoods.
1019 Egan – Kerley House; Built 1923

This Craftsman-style home was built in 1923 by E. D. Porter for J. Homer and Werdna Kerley, who were married in Fort Worth on September 23, 1923. J. Homer owned an ice house, delivering blocks of ice for ice box units in homes and businesses; sold real estate; and provided livestock to residents of Denton. The Kerleys sold their home to Fred and Corie Freeman in 1928.

Fred Freeman had moved from Decatur to Denton in 1925 and founded a bus line that ran from Dallas and Fort Worth, through Denton, and up to Ardmore, Oklahoma. Mrs. Fred Freeman is noted as living at 1019 Egan in May 1928 and hosting community events in her home.

In 1928, Fred Freeman sold his original bus line to the Dixie Trailways System. Then, in May 1928, Fred Sr. and son Fred Freeman, Jr. founded the Freeman and Freeman company, parent company of the Red Ball Bus Lines that travelled between Denton and destinations such as Dallas, Fort Worth, Sherman, Gainesville and Oklahoma City. Freeman and Freeman also acquired the Yellow Taxi Cab Company of Denton.

During September 1929, Fred Freeman purchased the Golden Hoof Ranch from J.R. Christal (722 West Oak) and continued to raise cattle and other livestock on the 950-acre ranch fronting Jim Christal Road west of Denton. Fred Freeman won prizes in October 1929 for the Rambouliet rams, acquired from Jim Christal as part of the Golden Hoof purchase.

On April 11, 1930, the Freemans moved to the Golden Hoof Ranch when their son Walton married and the couple moved in with the Freemans. The Freemans continued to live at the Golden Hoof Ranch until 1942, building a large herd of prize-winning Hereford cattle. Mr. Freeman sold the Golden Hoof Ranch about 1942 and purchased a home on Scripture Street, where he lived for several years before moving to Lubbock shortly before his death in July 1949.

1019 Egan was sold by the Freemans on March 15, 1930, to Mr. and Mrs. Weitinger, who went on to sell the home on November 24, 1930, to A. B. and Mattie Wilkirson. Mrs. Wilkirson is identified as the daughter of James Williams, a Denton pioneer in his December 11, 1936, obituary. Hugh and Annie Keel acquired this home in January 1946, who sold this home to Elton and Dixie Clardy on June 21, 1954.
Kenneth Clardy, age 11

Dixie Clardy and grandson
1109 Congress: Morrell House; Built 1924

The original John B. Denton College building at the corner of Denton and Gregg Streets, acquired by the Denton City Schools, became the first city high school in the fall of 1912. Denton City Schools built a new Denton High School building next to the original College in 1915. This triggered the creation of a new residential area platted in 1916 as Mounts 2, replacing the original Mounts family farm with Mounts, Anderson, Haynes, Amarillo and Gregg Streets. The new high school also generated another residential plat adjacent north of Mounts 2 in 1917. C. Lipscomb Jr. platted the “High School Addition” creating home lots between Mounts and Ponder Streets along Congress Street and the south side of Egan. By 1924, the Senior High School (present-day Calhoun Middle School) was built at 709 Congress Street.

The Morrells (living at 1118 Egan) contracted with H.F. Davidson in September 1924 to build a house on Lot 2 on Congress Street by the end of the year. The house was to be a brick veneered, one-and-a-half story house with eight rooms with an English roof. The design of the house has many elements of a Tudor house, including a steeply-pitched front-facing gable with wing, decorative half-timbering, a prominent chimney, and round-arched doorways. The agreed upon price was $6500, of which the Morrells paid H.F. Davidson $2500 up front and the balance due in March 1925 with a mortgage.

H.F. Davidson built several prominent buildings in Denton between 1900-1930, including original homes in Quakertown, the Martin-Russell House (811 W. Oak, designated a Registered Texas Historic Landmark in 2007), the Denton Women’s Club Building (610 Oakland at Quakertown Park) as well as other houses in the neighborhood, as the home across the street at 1108 Congress.

In April, 1927, Silas Arthur “Jack” Blewett purchased the house. Jack Blewett, son of G.H. Blewett (owner of 903 West Oak), was involved with the Denton Milling Company (most likely also known as Blewett Mill and Elevator), with his brother, Emerson K. “Pete” Blewett. The Mill building burned on July 1, 1928.

Interestingly, Richards Harpool was hired to run the financially failing Mill shortly after moving to Denton from Hebron with his family in August 1928. The mill was located on what later became a part of Harpool Seed, assumed at corner of McKinney and Bell. Richards and his wife, Octa, owned this house for a little over two months, selling it to Wayne and Mattie Freeman (living at 1019 Egan), on May 31, 1929. The Freemans lived in the house until July 1933, when they sold the house back to the Harpool family, to Robert Thomas (R.T.) and Josephine

In 1938, R.T. and his three sons founded Harpool Seed. Their company expanded significantly in 1963, entering the bulk fertilizer business. In 1974, Harpool Seed bought the Robert Nicholson Seed Company in Dallas, which gave them access to the Dallas and Fort Worth markets. Six years later, the company expanded into Oklahoma by purchasing the Muskogee Seed Company. By the 1980s, Harpool Seed was noted as “among the top ten lawn and garden suppliers in the nation.”

The Harpools were very prominent members of the community. In addition to owning Harpool Seed with her sons, Josephine was a very active in Denton and hosted many functions at the house. Many of her recipes and articles were printed in the *Denton Record-Chronicle*. 
Irene Davidson was born in Denton April 25, 1892. She attended Denton public schools, graduated from the North Texas State Teachers College (UNT) where she started covering events as a reporter and became a woman of “firsts.”

She was the first fulltime general reporter for the Denton Record-Chronicle (DRC), respected as one of Texas’ finest reporters. Beginning in 1915, she started general reporting assignments for the DRC and controlled her own daily column called “From Another Viewpoint.” She progressed in this male-dominated field to become the DRC Publicity Director and was added to the College of Industrial Arts (present-day TWU) in 1917. Her career in reporting moved her to Wichita Falls to work at their local paper, and then on to Houston as a reporter at the Houston Post to cover the 1928 Democratic National Convention as one of the first women to ever cover such an event.

She became a freelance writer in New York City, married Roy Q. Minton there on October 9, 1929, and traveled to France with her new husband. They returned to Texas and settled in Dallas where he became the representative for King Features newspaper syndicate. The Mintons had two boys, Quillen (Roy Jr.) and David. In September 1940, they returned to Denton.

By February 1941 they had moved into their recently-completed home at 1401 Egan, built by Earl Bushey of Denton. During WWII, Irene worked with women in Denton’s Red Cross to prepare 100 care packages a month for soldiers shipping overseas. After WWII, Roy was involved with the Citizen’s Post War Planning Committee to secure street lamps in Denton and create a new telephone switchboard and establish a new power plant for Denton’s growing electric needs.

She was very involved in the Denton community, hosting events at her home such as the reception for bride-elect Elizabeth Fowler, Girl Scout Council meetings, and Red Cross activities. Roy became involved in County-level politics, such as the treasurer for a Texas governor candidate
and interest in national and local politics. Roy tragically drowned in 1946 near Galveston Island swimming in the Gulf.

Mrs. Minton and her two sons remained in their home. The DRC highlighted her life as the first woman reporter in Denton on February 1, 1948, which noted her trailblazing as a woman reporter. After raising her sons, she and two others became the first women to serve on a Denton County criminal jury in 1956. She remained homeowner of 1401 Egan until her death on February 15, 1977.
Given its location so near the North Texas State Teachers College (present day UNT), it is no surprise that this house has been home to a series of professors.

Dean J. E. Burk built this home in 1927 while he was dean of men at the Teachers College (present day UNT). He accepted a position at New York University in May 1928 to join the faculty of 1,400 as a member of the English department in the School of Education, while he finished his doctorate at the University of the City of New York. He became the president of the Ward-Belmont School of Nashville, returning to Denton in April 1940 to help celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of the Teachers College, now the North Texas State Teachers College.

Dr. W. F. Ledlow and family moved into this home in September 1928. He moved from Austin, where he was professor of education at the University of Texas for five years to teach in the education department at the Teachers College.

Dr. Ledlow became very active in community speaking at local churches, fraternal organizations, and as commencement speaker for the Senior High School during his first years in Denton. In 1930, he officiated the wedding of a local couple at his home. After he died unexpectedly in 1932 teaching summer school classes at the University of Texas, Mrs. Ledlow returned to Austin in 1935 after the wedding of her son, Carl, who remained in Denton. Mrs. Ledlow was buried in 1946 at the IOOF cemetery next to Dr. Ledlow. Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Lothman moved to this home in September 1936.

This Colonial Revival style home is believed to have been one of the 70,000 Sears Modern Homes ordered by catalog between 1908 and 1942. Starting in 1916, these homes arrived in railroad boxcars as kits with precut lumber, each with about 30,000 parts, typically weighing in at
some 25 tons. True to this era of homes, both the exterior and interior walls were covered in wooden ship’s lath. Like a gigantic piece of IKEA furniture, a Sears kit provided an affordable way to get a “modern,” quality home especially in areas reachable by train but where lumber was not plentiful.

1914 W. Oak was built over the course of 1926 to 1927 and retains distinctive features for its time. Look for the round kitchen arch, the fold-out ironing board, and the discreet lavender linen- airing closet.
2017 Historic “Gems” of the Home Tour

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