



WALKING TOUR  
**HISTORIC  
DOWNTOWN  
CONROE**

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# CRIGHTON THEATRE (1935)

234 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301

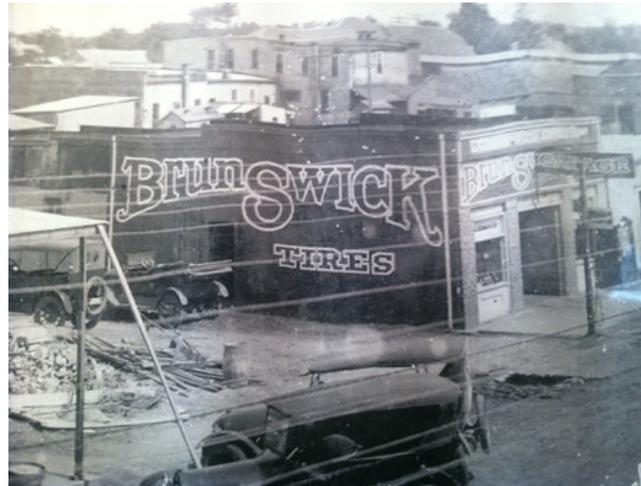


In 1934 Conroe Mayor Harry M. Crighton commissioned Houston architect Blum E. Hester to build a movie and vaudeville theatre in the Italian-Romanesque style at a cost of \$80,000. On November 26, 1935, the Crighton Theatre opened and served for many years as a popular movie theatre. After remaining vacant and neglected for several years, in 1978 community efforts to restore the building to its original grandeur were successful. Known as the “Crown Jewel of Conroe,” today it serves as a wonderful venue for live stage and musical performances.



# GRAND LEADER DEPARTMENT STORE-COMMUNITY CLUB ( CIRCA 1918)

234 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



This building was believed to have been constructed circa 1918, originally as a motor car garage that sold Brunswick tires. By the mid-1920's it was remodeled as the Grand Leader department store, featured as "Conroe's Greatest Family Outfitters." By the 1930's the store had closed and later the building housed the "Community Club," popularly known as "Paul Green's Pool Hall." Today it is owned by the Crighton Theatre Foundation which will use it in expanding the theatre's lobby and provide downstairs restrooms and offices.



# KOONCE-GENTRY BUILDING (1911)

127 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301

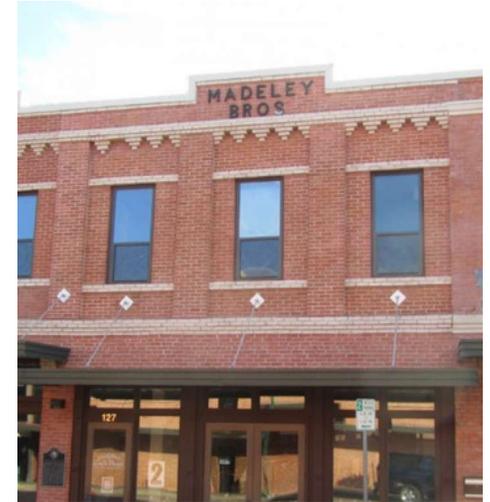


This building was built by a railroad man named A. L. Koonce in the fall of 1911 as the first building reconstructed after the Great Fire of February 1911. In the past 100 years, it has housed the Carnes mercantile store, Farmers & Merchants Bank, various lawyers' offices, the Rosner clothing store and insurance office, and in 1929, the Gentry men's clothing store. Elvis Presley purchased sport shirts in the store in August 1955, and U.S. Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson visited his friend Thomas Earl Gentry in the building in the 1950's.



# MADELEY MEAT MARKET (1911)

127 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



Local business owners Dan and Albert Madeley reopened their new brick Madeley building in September 1911 after the original wooden building on this site was destroyed by the fire of February 1911. Their brother George B. Madeley moved his new telephone company upstairs where it operated for over 40 years. Downstairs it served Midland Cleaners and other retail businesses for decades. In November 2011, the Conroe Art League opened its Madeley Art Gallery downstairs with its offices and art class area above.



# TALLEY'S DOMINO HALL (1930)

119 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



Felix (F. A.) Talley bought this building in 1931 for \$5,000 and opened the popular Talley's Domino Hall the next year. During the 1930's Conroe oil boom, 3 shifts kept this establishment open around the clock, 7 days a week, while lease hounds and locals struck deals on oil leases that made many millionaires overnight. In the 1950's, then U.S. Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson was known to stop by for a beer and to solicit votes. After Mr. Talley died in 1984, it was operated for a few years by Jimmy Lynch. The domino hall remained empty for a few years until the Red Brick Tavern restaurant and bar opened in September 2012.



# J. L. HICKS BUILDING (1911)

116 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



Dr. John L. Hicks established the first dentist office in Conroe in 1902. In 1911 the Great Fire consumed several street blocks of wooden structures in downtown Conroe, including Dr. Hicks' wooden office building. He immediately started construction on his new brick office building. While the Modern Cleaners and various other businesses operated downstairs over the years, Dr. J. L. Hicks and his son Dr. Paul Hicks' dental offices remained upstairs. Today the building serves as storage and dressing rooms for the Crighton Theatre.



# COLLIER-HARRIS BUILDING (1911)

101 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



This was the site of the wood frame Corner Drug Store which was destroyed by the Conroe fire of 1911. The new building was constructed on the site in brick in 1911 by Dr. J. F. Collier (Conroe's first mayor) and his partner Malcolm L. Harris, who reopened the Corner Drug Store downstairs in July 1911. Dr. Collier and others officed upstairs. Today it serves as a law office.



# FIRST STATE BANK OF CONROE (1911)

102 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



The First State Bank of Conroe was opened in May 1911 by local banker Banks Griffith after the Great Fire of February 1911. The brick building was constructed for about \$4,000. By about 1917, William Munger Conroe opened his "Gem Theater" next door where patrons viewed silent movies complemented with background piano music played by local ladies. The bank closed about 1930 during the Great Depression. Over the following years the bank building has been used as a machine shop, part of Everett's Hardware, and an antique mall. The theatre building served in the 1930's as the "Star Theater" for African-American patrons. Today the old bank and theatre buildings serve as loan offices, though recently sold, probably to be replaced by retail.



# EVERETT'S HARDWARE STORE (1911)

104 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301



Prior to the February 1911 downtown fire, the Everett Cash Grocery store stood here on Simonton Street as a wooden frame structure and one of Conroe's first mercantile stores. Immediately after the fire, it was rebuilt in brick as the "Randolph Building," named for C. A. Randolph, a Huntsville businessman. H.B. Everett bought the building in 1915. After over 80 years in business, the hardware store closed. The building was then used for years as an antique mall. In 2013 the brick façade was covered with the current material and will soon be remodeled for retail use.



# SHEPARD'S BARBER SHOP (1911)

116 Simonton St, Conroe, TX 77301

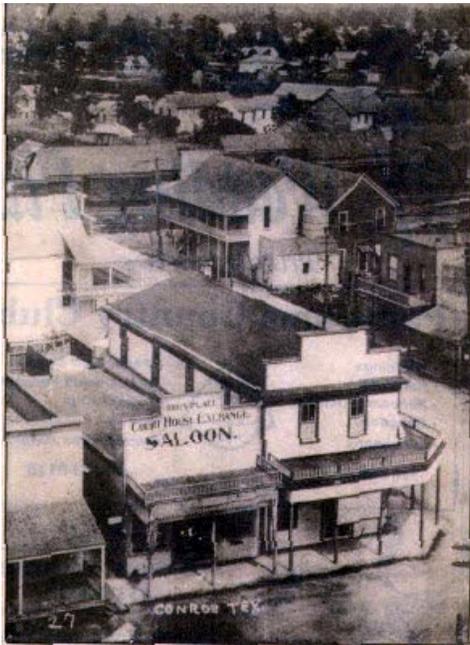


This small brick building was built by Peter West and his son Jack West soon after the Conroe Fire of 1911. It has been used continuously as a barbershop since that time and is recognized as the oldest barbershop in Texas. In August 1955, Elvis Presley reportedly had his hair cut here while he was in Conroe performing with the Louisiana Hayride.



# WEST BUILDING (1911)

302 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



This saloon faced the courthouse square on the corner of Chambers (now Main) Street and Simonton Street. *Conroe, TX*



This two-story brick building was constructed in 1911 by Pete West, a local business and civic leader, on the site of his two-story wooden building that burned down in 1911. It was completed by September 1911. Over the years, the downstairs has served as a saloon, grocery store, several different drug stores, numerous businesses, and now the Corner Pub. The upstairs provided offices for local doctors and attorneys for several decades.



# CAPITOL DRUG AND MASONIC BUILDINGS (1912)

322 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



Since it was completed in August 1912, this brick building has served as the center of many civic, medical and business activities in downtown Conroe. It replaced a previous wooden frame Masonic Lodge that was destroyed by the great downtown fire of February 21, 1911. The fire reportedly started upstairs in the old wooden Capitol Drug Store located on this site. The new structure served as the Masonic Lodge until 1948 and the Capitol Drug Store. At one time it also housed the U S post office and the KMCO radio station.



# H. C. ADDISON-CARTER BUILDING (1913)

336 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



This building was constructed in 1913 to serve as the popular Addison Mercantile store operated by H. C. Addison, on the former site of the Mistrow Munn Building which was destroyed by fire. In December 1919, Robin C. Carter opened his Carter Drug Store here which operated on this site along with a bus station for almost 70 years. Today it serves law offices and other businesses.



# WAHRENBERGER STORE (1913)

128 TX-105, Conroe, TX 77301



The original building on this site was the largest mercantile store in east Texas when it was opened in the late 1890's by John Wahrenberger, one of the founding fathers of Conroe. Originally built as a wooden frame mercantile store, it was reconstructed in brick in 1913 to comply with the city's Fire Ordinance that required fire-retardant structures after the February 1911 fire. The Wahrenberger family and later the Cochran family operated their businesses here until about 1985. Notice the two concrete steps at the front of the building that provided a convenient way to step down from wagons in the early 1900's.



# OLD FIRST NATIONAL BANK (CIRCA 1901)

206 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



This stately brick building was constructed about 1901 as a private unchartered bank by Banks Griffith and D.C. Tharp. Believed to be the oldest commercial building in the county, it is known for its Greek Revival architectural elements. For over 40 years it housed First National Bank, and later a lending company. Since the 1990's, it has served as law offices.



# FOSTER BUILDING (1910)

208 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



The history of this old two-story building is obscured by the more contemporary façade that was placed over it about 1979. The building was constructed in 1910 by local attorney “Judge” William N. Foster, who practiced law upstairs for several decades. The downstairs served as a Goodyear store and later a furniture store. This building along with the adjacent one-story building, in which Quinn’s Drug Store operated for years, today serves as law offices. It is believed to be the second oldest commercial building in the City of Conroe. The 1920 photo on the left shows the Foster Building on the left and Old First National Bank on the right.



# MONTGOMERY COUNTY COURTHOUSE (1936)

301 N Main St, Conroe, TX 77301



Montgomery County is the third county created by the Republic of Texas, established through the act of the First Congress of the Republic on December 14, 1837. This site has served two different courthouse structures since the county seat was moved from Montgomery to Conroe in May 1889. The first courthouse was completed in 1891 in the popular Romanesque style of that time with red bricks which were later covered with white plaster. The aging, inadequate structure was demolished in 1935 during the Conroe oil boom; and the modern art-deco style courthouse with its 4th and 5th floor jail was completed in 1936. The two courthouse wings were added in 1966 and altered in 1979.

**\*Visit Conroe thanks the Heritage Museum of Montgomery County for most of the photos and Larry Foerster for the historical narrative.**

