

Blessing Texas Driving Tour

Visit

http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/visit_matagorda_county.htm

Research by Alicia L. Waters

Brochure Courtesy of the
Matagorda County Historical Commission

(RTHL-Recorded Texas Historical Landmark'

NRL- National Register Landmark, THM-Texas Historical Marker)



Blessing Hotel – A.B. Pierce, Jr.

Leaving Bay City travel west on Hwy 35 (14.6 miles). If you want to visit **Hawley Cemetery** take a right on FM 436. (Look for road marker.) Now that you visited Hawley Cemetery come visit Blessing, TX. From FM 436 take Hwy 35 west and travel an additional 2.2 miles. There is a fork in the road, veer to the right taking FM 616 straight into Blessing.

As you come into the quaint town of Blessing you will see a park on the left, continue straight on FM 616 to 11th Street. On the south corner is the **Blessing Masonic Lodge #411**, built in 1875 near Demmings Bridge, moved to present site in 1903, RTHL, NRL (1).

Take a left on 11th Street and travel south 2 blocks to Hickory Street. Take a right to view the THM at **St. Peter's Catholic Church** (2).

Travel 2 blocks west to 10th Street. On the right corner is a (3) c. 1905 mauve 1 ½ story house, known as the Harter Home. Take a left on 10th Street and travel south 3 blocks to Elm. On north corner, 193 Elm, is a (4) c. 1907 white 1 story, an example of a massed plan pyramidal home. *The house was built by O.A. Yeager who was the manager of the lumber company. He handpicked heart pine lumber to build it. He sold it to Louie Cornelius and then the house was sold to Elmer and Dorothy Cornett in 1951, present owners.* On the south corner, 188 Elm, is a (5) c. 1904 white single story, another example of a massed plan pyramidal home. It is known as the Knebel Home.

Take a right on Elm and go west one block. Take a right on 9th Street and go one block north to Cypress and turn left. On the north side corner of Cypress and 9th, is a (6) c. 1914 teal single story, a side gabled bungalow. *It was built as a duplex for F.N. Dryer. He also owned a grocery store in Downtown Blessing.* Continue on Cypress to the corner of 8th and Cypress. On the south side you will find a (7) c. 1904 mustard 2 story house.

Continue west on Cypress one block to 7th Street and turn right. Go one block north to Avenue C and take a right. On the left is the (8) **A. B. Pierce home**, built in 1909, RTHL.

BLESSING HISTORY

When the Southern Pacific Railroad and the New York Central (Missouri Pacific) Railroads intersected, Jonathan E. Pierce set aside 640 acres at the intersection for a town.

The town got its name from Pierce's expression of gratitude for the railroad junction: "What a Blessing!"

Located in northwestern Matagorda County, Blessing was established as a U.S. Post Office in 1902.

Prominent developers, J.E. Pierce and his son, Abel B. Pierce, began construction of a hotel in 1906. A semi-Spanish style building, the hotel was built for land seekers as well as a home for the Pierces.

Around 1907, J.E. Pierce had the brick building across from the hotel built to be used as a bank. The bank still stands today.

Blessing is primarily a farming and ranching community. Crops that are grown are rice, cotton, milo grains, corn, soy beans and grass. The area is also a major producer of oil and gas and a growing aquaculture area.

Proceed 2 blocks east to 9th Street and take a left. On the west corner, is a (9) c. 1911 2 ½ story white wood home, with asymmetrical façade with an attached wraparound porch supported by Tuscan columns. *The house was constructed as a family home for James H. Roach, who was a state legislator. He lived here until 1919.* Continue north on 9th Street one block to Hickory. On the left is (10) c. 1915 1 story white building. *It was a former Presbyterian Church which now serves as the Blessing Library.*

Continue north on 9th Street and take a right (east) onto Live Oak. Go one block to 10th Street. On your left is (11) the **Hotel Blessing**, built in 1906 by Jonathan E. Pierce, RTHL, NRL. Please come in to stretch your legs, look around, and take some pictures. If you have worked up an appetite, the coffee shop in the back of the hotel serves some of the best food near and far. **“Best dang food joint in Texas”-CNN.com.** Open for breakfast 7 am-10am and lunch 11 am-2 pm.

After you have treated yourself to the yummy food at Hotel Blessing, look across to enjoy the beauty of the **Blessing Bank** (12) built in 1907. Please feel free to take pictures, but only exterior pictures so we do not interfere with banking business!

On the north corner from the **The Hotel Blessing**, is a 2 story commercial brick building (13) built in c. 1911 by John Logan. It is an example of early 20th century commercial structure featuring prominent lintels and keystones and simple brick corbelling. *It was owned by the Matthes family from 1930-1976 and was used as a hardware store.* The green building c. 1905 to the north was the former Train Depot, It is a one story, hip roofed small frame building with wide dormers. It is typical of small railroad structures of the early 20th century. Next to that the white building was the former library. As you get in your car to go, take a right onto FM 616. On your left you will see (14) **Blessing Library and Community House**, completed in 1921. The small white building in the back was brought to town in 1902 and was the former reception place at Rancho Grande.

Thank you for visiting Blessing, we hope to see you again very soon. - Tell your friends!

Take a virtual tour of Blessing on our web site at

http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/bl_virtual_tour.htm



- 1- Masonic Lodge - 619 FM 616
- 2- St. Peter's Catholic Church - 306 Hickory
- 3- Harter Home - 122 10th Street
- 4- Cornett Home - 193 Elm
- 5- Knebel Home - 188 Elm
- 6- F.N. Dryer - 264 9th Street
- 7- Mustard House - 393 Cypress (south corner of Cypress and 8th)
- 8- 366 Ave C - AB Pierce Home

- 9- 1911 White Wood Home - 286 Ave C
- 10- Blessing Library - 146 9th Street
- 11- Hotel Blessing - 817 FM 616
- 12- Blessing Bank - 761 FM 616
- 13- Commercial Bldg. -10 10th Street
Green Bldg.-43 10th Street
White Bldg.-55 10th Street
- 14- Blessing Library & Community House - Ave B and 10th Street

Useful Links:

Hawley Cemetery:

http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/hawley_broc_halfold_29jun2018.pdf

Masonic Lodge: http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/hmn_bl_mas_lodge.htm

Blessing State Bank: http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/businesses_blessbank.htm

Deming's Bridge: http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/hawley_db.htm

St. Peter's Catholic Church:

http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/church_bl_st_peters.htm

A.B. Pierce Home: http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/rthl_bl_pierce_house.htm

Hotel Blessing: http://www.usgenwebsites.org/TXMatagorda/bl_hotelblessing.htm