

IT'S POSSIBLE IN

SMITHVILLE

WILLIAM SMITH

MURRAY BURLESON

THOMAS GAZLEY

**Color Me**

**Smithville**

**the History of**

**our Hometown**

**Teacher's Guide**

TIGERS

SCREW

COACH CARTER

I HAVE A DREAM THAT MY  
Four Little Children Will One  
Day Live In A Nation Where  
They Will Not Be Judged By  
The Color Of Their Skin But  
By The Content Of Their  
Character. - MARTIN  
LUTHER KING

REV. DR.  
MARTIN LUTHER  
KING JR.

THE TELLER AND THE TAUGHT

MARK FLORES

THREE OF US

JHG



**Page 1:**

## **“Smithville Possibilities”**

### **Mural by Clover Cochran and the Smithville Community**

#### ***Introduction***

Smithville is “small but mighty.” At about 4-square-miles in area and about 4,000 people, Smithville has a will to find a way to get nearly everything done. Richard D. Latham coined the phrase, “It’s Possible in Smithville,” because this community makes it possible to do things here that might not work anywhere else on the planet. People work together to celebrate when times are good, and to help each other when times are tough. Richard Latham was a visionary -- you can color his picture on page 38 in the Coloring Book. The Smithville Cultural District is named after him.

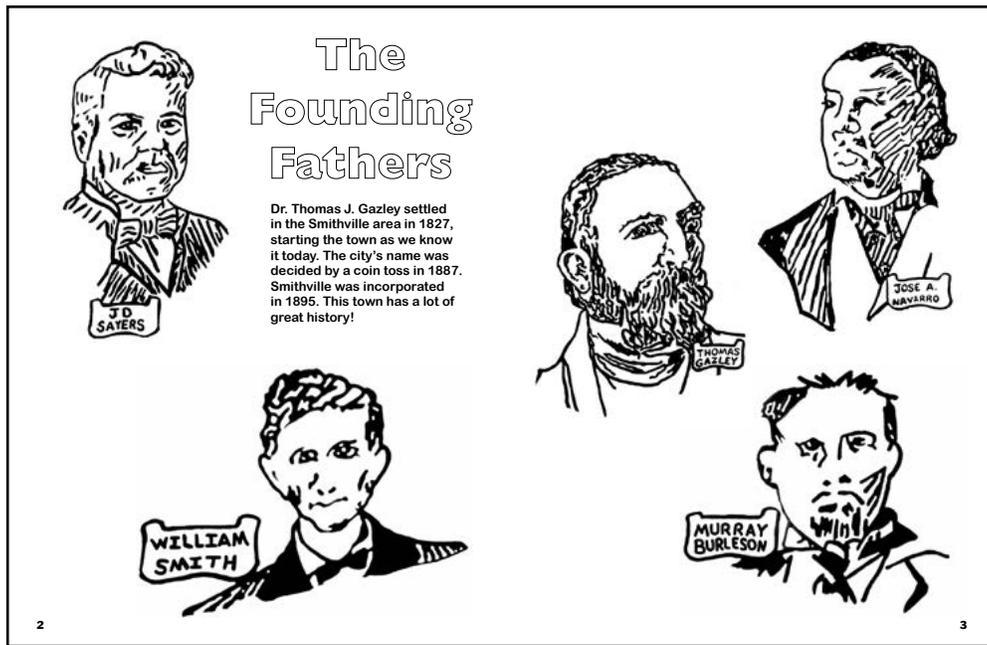
You all know the Tin Man, the oldest water tower in town. It still functions to get water out into the community! It was built in 1943, and is one of the town’s most distinguishing landmarks. Do you see the “fickle nickel” in the banner? Murray Burleson left the naming of the town to the fate of a coin toss, and didn’t realize until later that it was a two-tailed coin! The image in the banner shows the missing “heads” of that coin.

Take a look at the wildflowers in the kitchen sink on the inside cover. Wildflowers, crepe myrtle trees, and other beautiful plants are important to making the public parks even more inviting and colorful for people. These wildflowers also represent the work that Mayor Renee Blaschke, Smithville’s first female mayor, did as a founding member of Keep Texas Beautiful and the Texas Garden Club in the 1950s and 1960s. She led a state-wide effort to make sure that people have access to gardens and beauty, and made sure that her hometown benefited from these organizations. Today, Keep Smithville Beautiful and the Smithville Garden Club are still going strong! You can volunteer on a citywide cleanup or to plant trees or paint benches through these groups.

What’s the story with the kitchen sink? Have you ever heard the expression “Everything but the kitchen sink”? It means just about everything was included -- or the only thing not included

was the kitchen sink! The lead mural artist, Clover Cocheran, added the kitchen sink as a joke. This coloring book is built on the images found on the “Smithville Possibilities” mural, which came from many community members all over Smithville. Smithville residents were asked what they think makes Smithville unique and which people, places, and events are important to the story of Smithville, and many people contributed many ideas for what should be included. Since she used nearly every idea that the people provided, the artist thought it would be funny to include the kitchen sink, too!

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 2-3: Founding Fathers

### Coloring Book Text:

Dr. Thomas J. Gazley settled in the Smithville area in 1827, starting the town as we know it today. The city's name was decided by a coin toss in 1887. Smithville was incorporated in 1895. This town has a lot of great history!

### More Detailed Information:

In 1827, Dr. Thomas Jefferson Gazley became the first settler in what has become our hometown when he received a Mexican Headright Land Grant of 4,428 acres on fertile, riverfront property at the site of what is now Independence Park. At that time, the land was part of Mexico. As people began to settle near his home and general store, this area became known as Gazley Prairie. In addition to operating a small general store, Gazley practiced medicine and served as clerk and judge in the Mexican government. He also signed the Texas Declaration of Independence, fought in three of the battles in that war, served in the new Texas legislature after independence was achieved, and helped draft the Texas Constitution.

Jose Antonio Navarro owned land in the area and also signed the Texas Declaration of Independence. He was a leader in the Texas Revolution, and later worked towards the vision of statehood for Texas along with his friend, Stephen F. Austin. In his later years, he became a representative in the Republic of Texas Congress from Bexar County.

This little hamlet grew to include 17 families who lived along the Colorado River in a neighborhood that came to be known as "old Smithville" after William Smith. William Smith operated a small general store at that location in those early days. In the 1870s, Murray Burlleson was one of the owners of the Smithville Town Company. They bought land in the Gazley and Loomis leagues (a "league" is a unit of length) on what is now the Railroad end of Main Street, and drew up plans for residential and commercial plats (property lines) in that area. He knew that the Taylor, Bastrop & Houston (TB&H) Railroad wanted to build an

extension of their existing railway service that would run through Bastrop County. Burleson donated some of that land to influence the TB&H Railroad. He wanted them to build a terminus in his newly platted area -- and they did, helping Smithville grow into the largest city in Bastrop County for over 50 years.

Murray Burleson wanted his new development to be known as Burlesonville. However, many people were proud of being from Smithville, and wanted to keep the name. In 1887, the townspeople decided to toss a coin, and Smithville won! Later, Murray Burleson wrote that he was “foiled by a fickle nickel” -- a coin that had two tails. Take a look at the mural. At the top in the center, it reads “It’s Possible in Smithville” and you’ll see a coin where the “o” should be in the word Possible. According to the legend, the coin had two tails, but the mural commemorates the “heads” side that was missing on that coin.

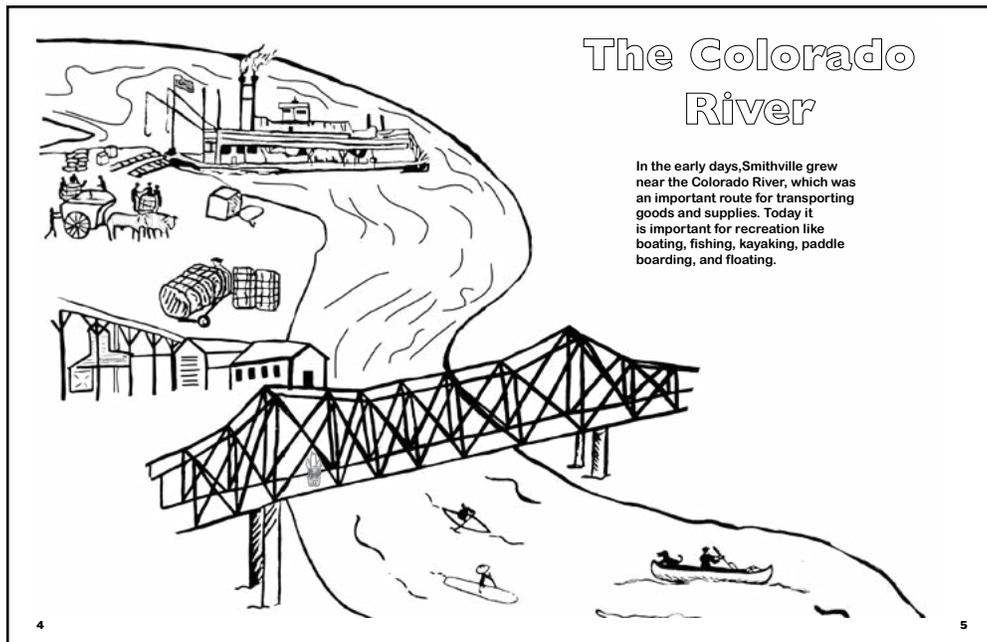
One of Burleson’s business partners, J.D. Sayers, became governor of Texas from 1899-1903.

Many influential and famous people have lived in Smithville. These individuals provide the foundations of Smithville’s long and storied history. You will see many more of these important people in this coloring book.

You may also learn about even more of Smithville’s rich history and other founders and famous residents from other sources including:

- Images of America: Smithville by Carol Phillips Snyder, David L. Herrington, and the Smithville Heritage Society (available at the Smithville Public Library)
- Early History of Smithville, Texas by Silky Ragsdale Crockett (available at the Smithville Public Library)
- David Herrington’s website: <http://www.fourhorsemenofthetexasapocalypse.com/>
- Explore Bastrop County’s Smithville History website: <https://explorebastropcounty.com/listings/historical-downtown-smithville-tour/>
- City of Smithville, History website: <https://www.ci.smithville.tx.us/for-residents/history-of-smithville/>
- Smithville’s Richard D. Latham Cultural District website: <http://www.smithvilleculturaldistrict.com/history-and-art/>
- History of Smithville Independent School District: [https://www.smithvilleisd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC\\_ID=186472&type=d&pREC\\_ID=388571](https://www.smithvilleisd.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=186472&type=d&pREC_ID=388571)
- Smithville Heritage Society: <https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/partners/SVHS/> and <https://www.facebook.com/SmithvilleHeritageSociety/>
- Texas State Historical Association: Online Handbook of Texas: <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/smithville-tx>
- Grace Jones of Salado by Mary Margaret Quadlander (available to purchase at: <https://www.amazon.com/Grace-Jones-Salado-Margaret-Quadlander/dp/0615654231>)

*Teaching Notes:*

## Page 4-5: The Colorado River

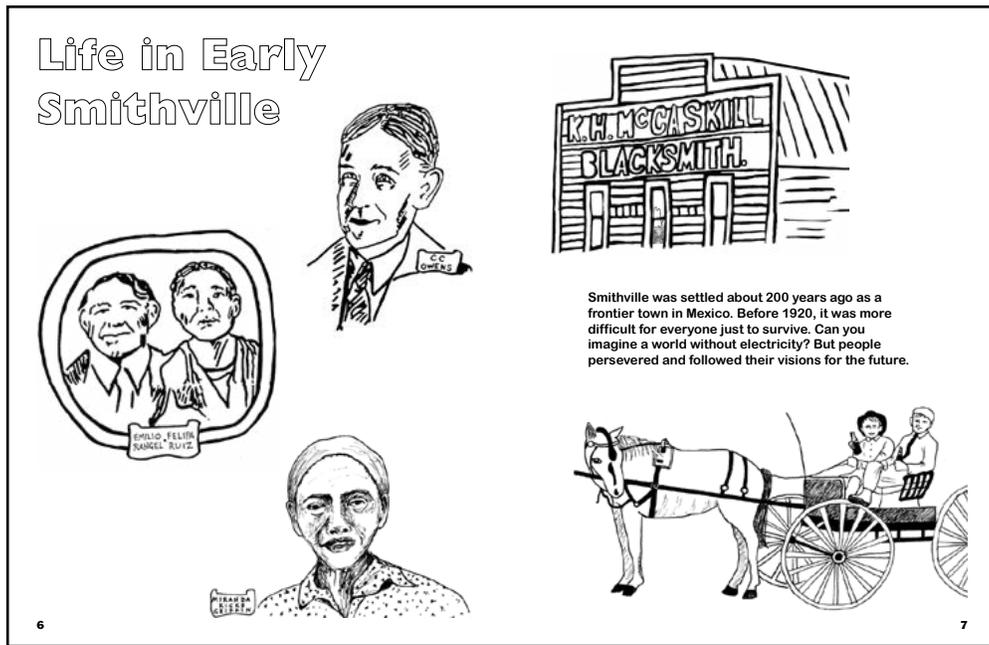
### **Coloring Book Text:**

In the early days, Smithville grew near the Colorado River, which was an important route for transporting goods and supplies. Today it is important for recreation like boating, fishing, kayaking, paddle boarding, and floating.

### **More Detailed Information:**

Smithville's Founding Families knew that the Colorado River was important to ensuring that the town would thrive. The Colorado River was important because the townspeople could never have survived without its water or the farms and ranches it supported. Boats and ferries at that time were safer and more reliable than other means of transportation, and they regularly brought clothes, food, materials to build houses and stores, and other goods and supplies that could not be made or found on the frontier. One of the earliest Smithville industries was the steam cotton gin and grist mill. These businesses were established in 1890 by a man named George W. Jones. The cotton gin was a place to work for many Smithvillians. The original Smithville Bridge crossed the Colorado River at the end of Main Street where the "Overlook Park" is now located. It was built in about 1900 and was destroyed in 1913 after it washed out in a flood. A second bridge was built at that location in 1915, and was taken down in 1950 when it became obsolete and the road changed directions. The final remnants of the bridge were dynamited to clear the river. The bridge we all use these days crosses at a different point at the river, and was built as a part of the State Highway System. Today, the Colorado River is used by fisherpeople, boaters, and other outdoors enthusiasts, and is no longer the commercial route it was over 100 years ago.

*Teaching Notes:*

## Page 6-7: Life in Early Smithville

### Coloring Book Text:

Smithville was settled about 200 years ago as a frontier town in Mexico. Before 1920, it was more difficult for everyone just to survive. Can you imagine a world without electricity? But people persevered and followed their visions for the future.

### More Detailed Information:

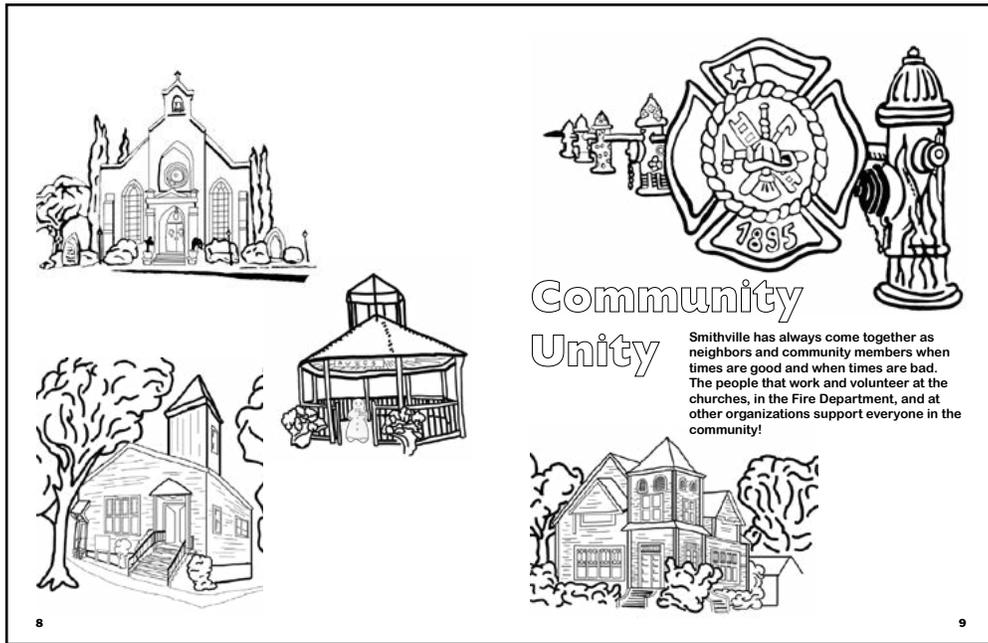
The local blacksmith, K.H. McCaskill was also the local locksmith, gunsmith, hardware store, farrier (someone who puts horseshoes on horses), and mechanical engineer. He could repair anything made of wrought iron, and sometimes even used his pliers to pull teeth! It was very important, especially in those days, that people knew how to do many things since so few people lived in town and their survival depended on their knowledge and skills.

Some important people to the early community of Smithville were dedicated farm workers and laborers, who worked the fields, built the churches, and contributed to making Smithville a place where people and businesses can thrive. Emilio Ruiz and Felipa Rangel Ruiz represent a large part of the community that is sometimes lost in the historical records. Migrant workers are still important in construction and working on farms today, and many of them retain the kinds of skills that were needed on the frontier.

In 1912, an African-American physician who graduated from Meharry Medical College in Tennessee named Dr. C. C. Owens, set up his physician's office above the Mize Drug Store, a building on Main Street owned by the Hill family. Even 100 years ago, Dr. Owens treated patients regardless of race and was well known for his kindness. The woman who worked as his midwife to deliver babies, Miranda Ricks Griffin, was the daughter of a slave named Gaberella Ricks. When she was small, her family moved to Smithville to seek a better life. She learned midwifery and general medicine from a book, and she and her husband had 11 children themselves! She worked until she was 98 years old and lived until she was 103. In 2018,

Smithville declared its support for a kinder world through the “Cities of Kindness” program. The roots of Smithville’s kindness stretch all the way back to people like Dr. Owens and Miranda Ricks Griffin.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 8-9: Community Unity

### Coloring Book Text:

Smithville has always come together as neighbors and community members when times are good and when times are bad. The people that work and volunteer at the churches, in the Fire Department, and in other organizations support everyone in the community!

### More Detailed Information:

The early Smithville community built quite a few churches. A few of them maintain congregations that are still around today. Three of them are depicted in the Coloring Book, but many others tend to the spiritual needs of the Smithville community.

At St. Paul's Catholic Church, early records show that its congregation began building the church in 1896. This church housed Smithville's very first pastor: Father Charles S. O'Gallagher.

Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church was founded in 1900. That's over one hundred and twenty years ago!

When they first came together, the congregation of the First Christian Church met at the Maney Opera House (which was built in 1893 and burned down in 1928). They also shared service space with another church called the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Finally, in 1903, they built their very own church building, which is still standing today.

This is a great example of how people come together in this community to take care of what people need through cooperation and perseverance.

The volunteer community effort is alive and well today, especially among our retired citizens. The National Headquarters of a non-profit, faith-based group called RVICS (Roving Volunteers in Christ's Service) is located in Smithville, and many village residents volunteer to help fellow Smithvillians.

Another aspect of the early community in Smithville, the Smithville Volunteer Fire Department

(SVFD) was established in 1895, the same year that Smithville officially became a City. Now, SVFD volunteers serve to protect over 9,000 residents in Smithville and the surrounding rural area. The SVFD Emergency Service Area equals about 152 square miles! That's a lot of people, animals, and property that about 25 volunteers serve. Make sure you do your part in keeping safe from fire danger!

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



**Page 10-11:**  
**Smithville Visionaries**

**Coloring Book Text:**

Many local visionaries have contributed to putting Smithville on the map with its rich history. Some of them are included in this Coloring Book! Maybe in 50 years, you will be among them!

**More Detailed Information:**

Many local visionaries have contributed to putting Smithville on the map.

Lewis Berry grew up in Smithville and had a love for science. He worked at Los Alamos during the time that the Manhattan Project was underway. The Manhattan Project was a research initiative led by the U.S. that produced the first nuclear weapons during World War II.

Francis E. “Babe” Shirocky was an advocate for the construction of the Science Park Research Division of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, which has become a world leader in cancer prevention. He also “saved” city hall’s cupola when the building was being torn down, so that now it sits atop the Gazebo in Railroad Park.

Albert Crawford was the mayor of the City of Smithville in 1975. The Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport, which was dedicated in 1976, bears his name because of his strong support and work towards making it a reality. Most pilots use Smithville Crawford Municipal Airport for recreation, but it has also taken an important role to serve aircraft during emergencies, such as wildfires and floods.

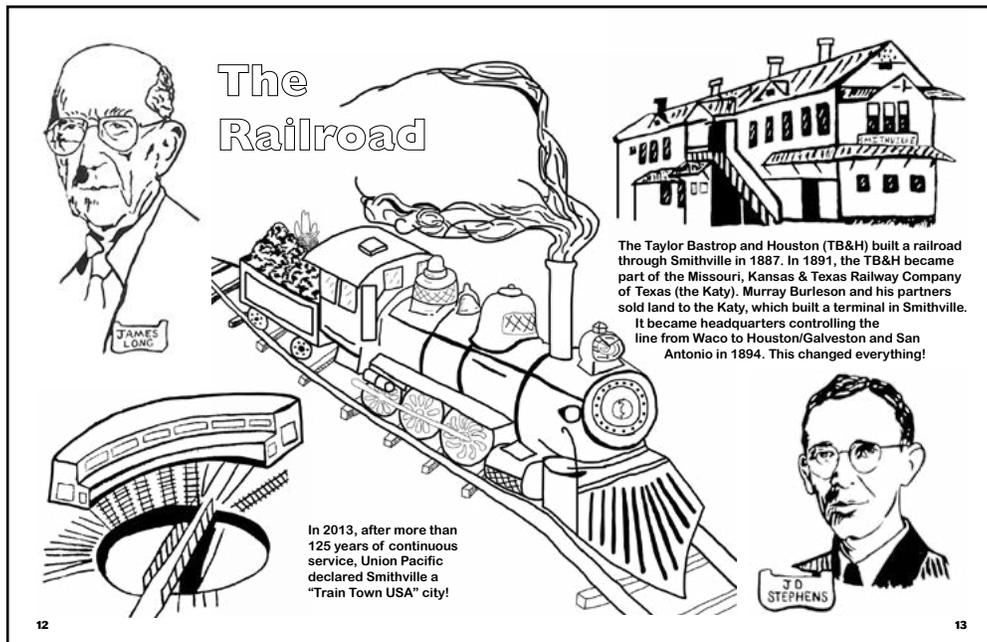
The Luecke Forest was created by Jimmie Luecke. He attempted oil drilling in 1980, and the Austin chalk boom made him a millionaire. He bought the Luecke Farm, and while clearing brush, carved out his name in the greenery. The large green “L U E C K E” monument can be seen from space!

Local historian and former Municipal Judge David Herrington enjoys taking visitors on historic tours and talking about Smithville’s history (in this picture, Mr. Herrington is pointing to the

satellite that can “see” the LUECKE sign). His grandfather purchased a building on Main Street that David Herrington still owns. David Herrington also led the way in building Independence Park as a commemoration to Smithville’s original settler, Dr. Thomas Gazley.

Many of the people you see in this book are visionaries who brought us from a past to progress to today -- what is your vision for Smithville’s future?

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 12-13: The Railroad

### Coloring Book Text:

The Taylor Bastrop and Houston (TB&H) built a railroad through Smithville in 1887. In 1891, the TB&H became part of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Company of Texas (the Katy). Murray Burlison and his partners sold land to the Katy, which built a terminal in Smithville. It became headquarters controlling the line from Waco to Houston/Galveston and San Antonio in 1894. This changed everything!

In 2013, after more than 125 years of continuous service, Union Pacific declared Smithville a "Train Town USA" city!

### More Detailed Information:

Smithville is known for being a train town. By 2013, Smithville had provided 125 years of continuous railroad service, and Union Pacific Railroad declared Smithville a "Train Town USA" city!

The first railroad lines were built through Smithville in 1887 when the Taylor Bastrop and Houston (TB&H) added tracks through Bastrop County. On November 18, 1891, the TB&H became part of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway Company of Texas (the Katy). Murray Burlison, who owned the land and created the Smithville Townsite Company with two partners, sold land to the Katy for a terminal to be built in Smithville.

On September 1, 1894 Smithville became the terminal for and headquarters of the Smithville District of the Katy. It controlled the line from Waco to Houston/Galveston and San Antonio. Smithville had the largest railroad yard between Houston and Waco in the 1890s. They built a roundhouse (a building shaped in a semicircle), and a turntable (a large disc that turns trains around).

This changed everything! Smithville became the largest town in Bastrop County for more than 50 years as men came to work on the railroad and later as their families started to grow. The

downtown area came to be built close to the railroad tracks rather than the river. The railways were the largest employers in Smithville at that time.

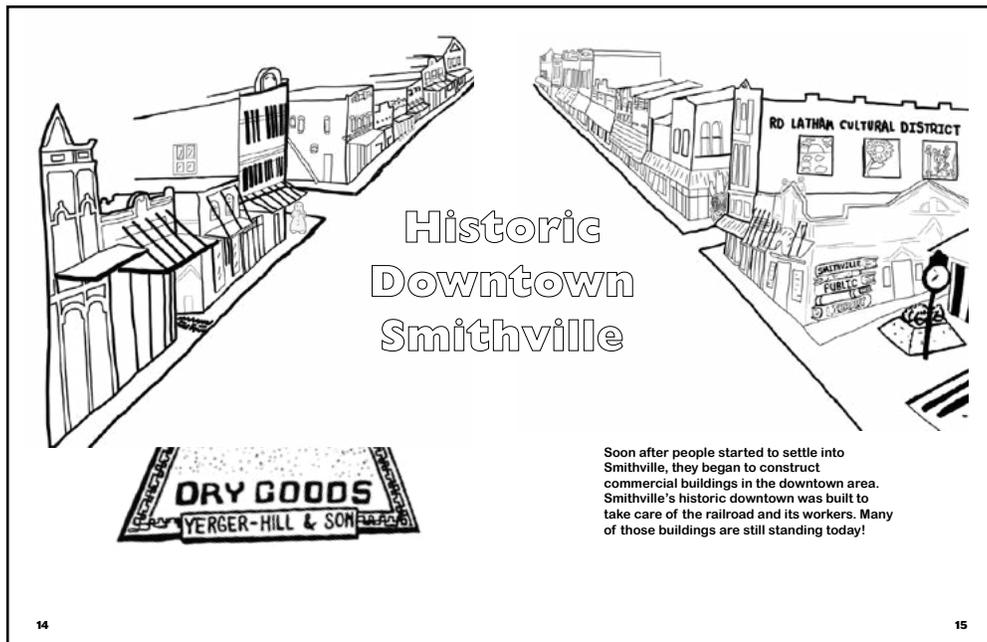
Close to the rail lines, the large Railroad YMCA building provided lodging for travelers and railroad workers. The YMCA was built in 1899 and burned down in 1926, but was the site of many community events, such as performances of the MKT Band.

The Katy later merged with the Union Pacific line. Today, Union Pacific Railroad still operates the rail line although it does not maintain a depot for people or goods.

Many people have been important to the history of the railroad. J.D. Stevens was a railroad division surgeon. He moved to Smithville in 1937, and began his medical practice in the upper floor of his house. The Katy House, as it is now called, has been a locally-owned bed and breakfast since 1994.

James Long was another hard-working community volunteer involved in the railroad park that now bears his name. In 1988, he was recognized as a Smithville “Citizen of the Year” by the community through the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce for all of his volunteer efforts throughout his long life.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 14-15: Historic Downtown Smithville

### Coloring Book Text:

Soon after people started to settle into Smithville, they began to construct commercial buildings in the downtown area. Smithville's historic downtown was built to take care of the railroad and its workers. Many of those buildings are still standing today!

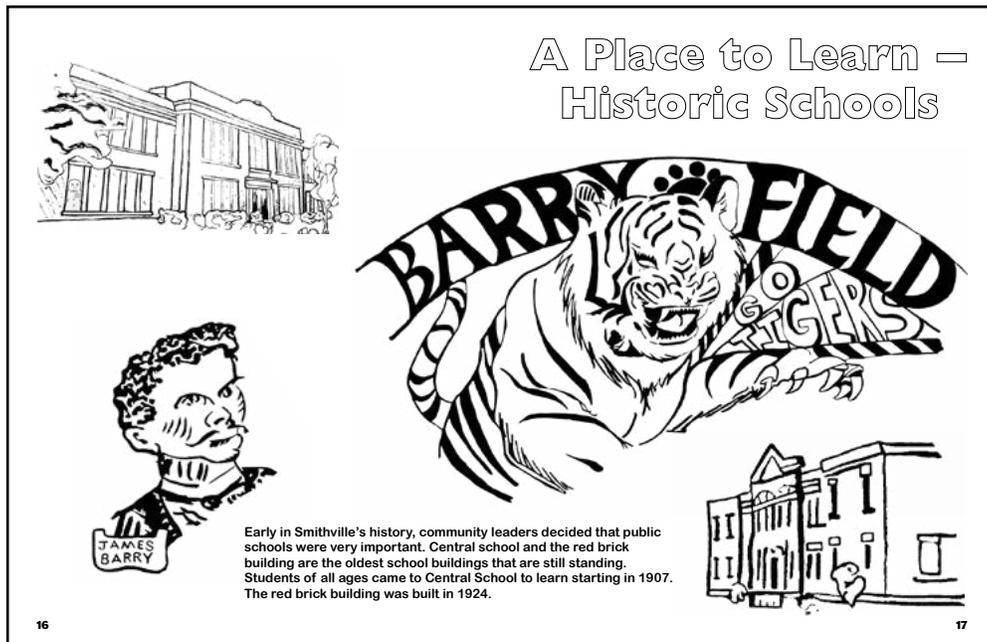
### More Detailed Information:

Many of the buildings that are standing today in downtown Smithville were constructed more than 100 years ago. Smithvillians have had a strong ideal for preserving history, and the downtown area really shows off that value. This is one of the reasons that Smithville is so attractive to movie producers and tourists!

Among the prominent early businesses on Main Street were the "Yerger-Hill and Son" Hardware and Feed Store. You can still see the mosaic thresholds in front of these historic stores on this historic block! In the early days, the Smithville Hospital and Pharmacy were just a few doors down from that Feed Store.

Next to that, a three-story Opera House held many amazing performances until it burned down in 1928. The Masonic building (built in 1903) and the Rabb-McCollum building (built in 1907), located across from each other at the corner of Main and Loop 230, are now the only three-story buildings on Main Street. The Rabb-McCollum building is historic, housing various businesses before becoming the "Texas Theater" where many of the earliest "talkies" were shown -- according to lore, the last movie shown in that theater was "Midnight Cowboy" in the 1970s.

*Teaching Notes:*

## Page 16-17:

# A Place to Learn -- Historic Schools

### Coloring Book Text:

Early in Smithville's history, community leaders decided that public schools were very important. Central school and the red brick building are the oldest school buildings that are still standing. Students of all ages came to Central School to learn starting in 1908. The red brick building was built in 1924.

### More Detailed Information:

Before 1895, families had the sole responsibility to educate their children. In 1895, when the City became incorporated, city leaders decided to take actions that would make sure that all children would be able to attend school. The first public education classes began on the first floor of a wooden structure on "Block 16" -- one of the lots that had been platted in the early days. The W.J Nixon Masonic Lodge built it and used the second story for lodge activities. In 1907, the School District passed a bond for \$25,000 to purchase "Block 16" and to construct Central School with the help of the Masons. They began teaching White children of all ages in the old Masonic Lodge, then called Central School.

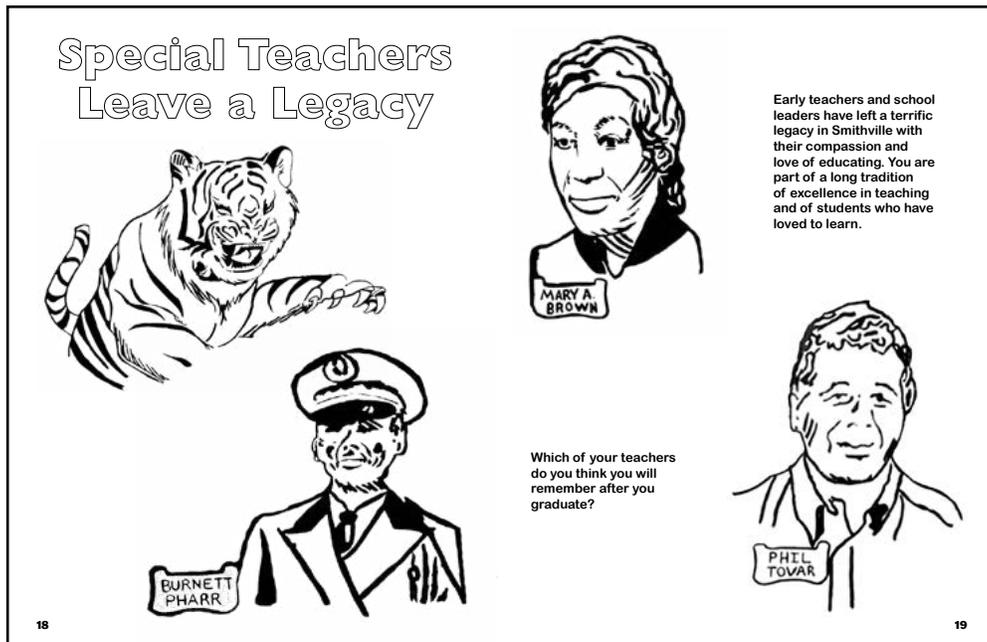
Central School was used as an educational building from 1908 to 1973. It became the whites-only high school in 1908, and was integrated in 1967 along with the rest of the School District and the nation. After 1973, Central School served students through the Head Start Program. The school district sold it in 1988, and the deed covenant was changed so that it was no longer tied to its original purpose of education, morality and charity. It has had several owners since then, but it is still standing.

The Red Brick Administration Building was constructed in 1924, and originally housed an administration office, 12 classrooms for High School students, and a stage and auditorium. Today, it is used as the Central Office for the district's administration.

Barry Field, which is located next to the 1924 Red Brick Building, is named for James Kilgore

Barry (1869-1947). Prof. James Kilgore Barry, who moved to Smithville in 1907, was the first principal at the Red Brick Smithville High School. He was considered “probably the ablest and no-doubt the most popular principal that the Smithville High School ever had” according to newspaper records of 1913. He later became the superintendent for SISD. Barry Field is Smithville’s former home football field. It was replaced by the new stadium, built in 2019 near the High School/Junior High complex.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



**Page 18-19:**  
**Special Teachers Leave a Legacy**

**Coloring Book Text:**

Early teachers and school leaders have left a terrific legacy in Smithville with their compassion and love of educating. You are part of a long tradition of excellence in teaching and of students who have loved to learn.

Which of your teachers do you think you will remember after you graduate?

**More Detailed Information:**

Although the city leaders began educating students as early as 1895, Smithville ISD officially became a state-certified school district in 1920. Smithville has a long history of truly wonderful and dedicated educators, and only a few are mentioned in this coloring book. Many more have taught students throughout the years, and you can probably name your favorite teacher today!

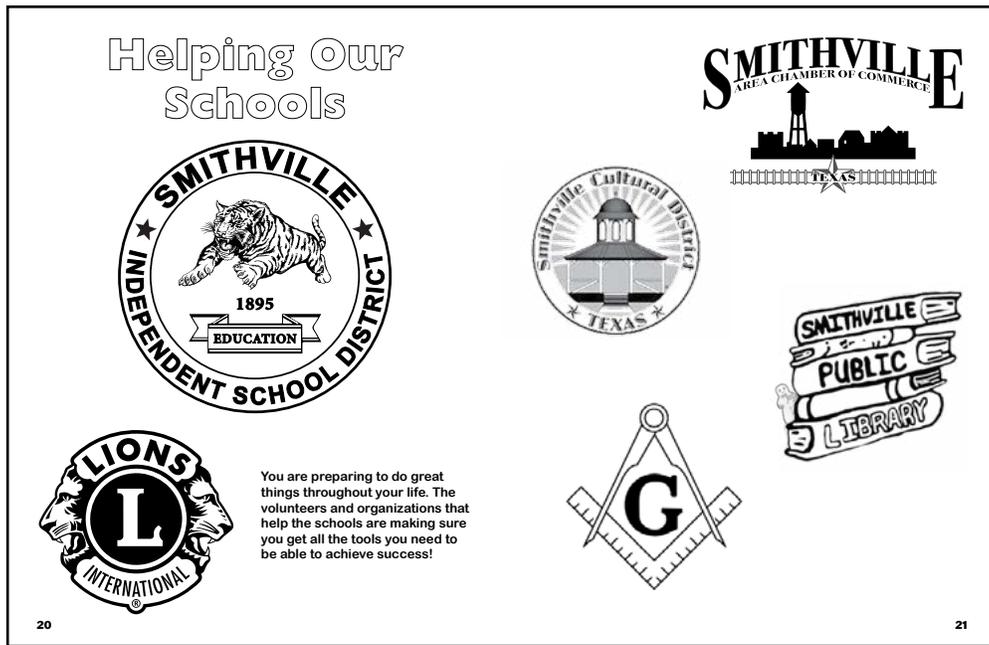
In the school system’s early years, Burnett “Blondie” Pharr moved to Smithville in 1937 to direct the high school band. He had been the director of the U.S. Military Band during WWI and later directed the University of Texas Longhorn Band. The Smithville Band was extremely successful under his direction, and that legacy follows until today with Mr. and Ms. King. Burnett Pharr also became the tennis coach, and later, the principal at Central School. After retiring, he moved back to Austin and served as the professional tennis instructor for Austin Parks and has a tennis center in Austin named after him!

Mary A. Brown was an influential elementary school teacher at the then-named Smithville “Colored” School until her death in 1954. She was selected through a contest run by former students to be the school’s namesake, which became the Mary A. Brown School in 1954. At that time, the Class of 1954 presented a large picture of Mary A. Brown to the school, which still hangs in the building.

Another member of the education community was Felipe (Phil) Hernandez Tovar who became the first Hispanic school board member in Smithville. He mentored many high school students

from Mexico in higher-level courses such as algebra, physics, calculus, and English. The Smithville Independent School District is responsible for the education of Smithville and the outlying rural areas, teaching students who live in the southeast one-third portion of Bastrop County.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



**Page 20-21:  
Helping Our Schools**

**Coloring Book Text:**

You are preparing to do great things throughout your life. The volunteers and organizations that help the schools are making sure you get all the tools you need to be able to achieve success!

**More Detailed Information:**

Many organizations and individuals volunteer their time, energy, and money to make sure that the students and teachers have everything they need to get a great education. Some of those important organizations include the Smithville Public Library, the Lions Club, and the Masonic Lodge, which all have long histories of helping the schools.

The Smithville Public Library is an important place for kids to work on homework, pick up fun things to read, take part in special programs, and learn to love reading and learning! The library began, like many things do in Smithville, as just an idea that the members of the Smithville Women’s Club had in 1929. By 1931, the Smithville Public Library was up and running with a collection of about 500 books. Before building its own space, the library had been located inside a downtown business, then at City Hall. Like everything good that happens in Smithville, a simple idea that started out small has turned into something truly big and important because people have worked to make it happen. This is what makes Smithville a special place to live.

Four of the other community groups that have worked hard to help the Smithville schools are the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club and the W. J. Nixon Masonic Lodge.

In the very beginning, the Masons of Smithville provided the space and vision to educate Smithville’s youth. The 10-room, wood-framed, L-shaped building located on Block 16 served as the first schoolhouse in 1903, and Central School, also built by the Masons, served as an educational center from 1908-1973. They have been active in helping the schools ever since.

The Smithville Noon Lions Club, founded in 1927, has worked with the school system to

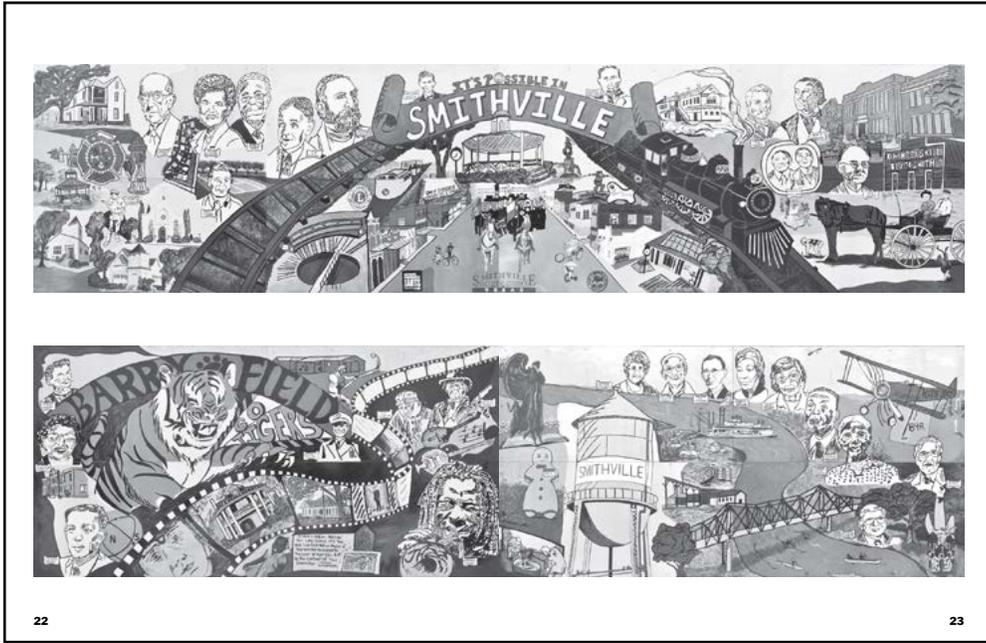
provide vision and hearing tests, funding for many different projects, and support for many school activities.

The Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce, another nearly 100-year community institution, has helped the schools in a million ways in all those years. These days, the Chamber provides scholarships for students and works with local businesses to brighten the day for teachers and staff with lunch and supplies they can't buy with school funds. The Chamber also works to make sure programs support our students in many other ways.

The Texas Commission on the Arts designated Smithville as an official Cultural District in 2013. The Cultural District is one of the partners in Smithville to bring a lot of arts and culture programming to Smithville youth -- including this Coloring Book!

These are just a few examples of how Smithville organizations and volunteers make a difference for the schools and students. All of these organizations and many others bring projects, programs, and resources to the schools, but they also do great work with other parts of the community. You can join any of them and volunteer to make life wonderful in Smithville!

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



**Page 22-23:**  
**CENTER SPREAD**

*Teaching Notes:*




## **Page 24-25: Smithville's West End Park**

### **Coloring Book Text:**

West End Park is one of the historic performance venues still standing today that was part of the Chitlin' Circuit where famous jazz and blues musicians like B.B. King and Etta James performed. Next to it, the baseball field was used for exhibition games by the Negro Leagues where Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, and many other African-American baseball players competed before a Smithville audience

### **More Detailed Information:**

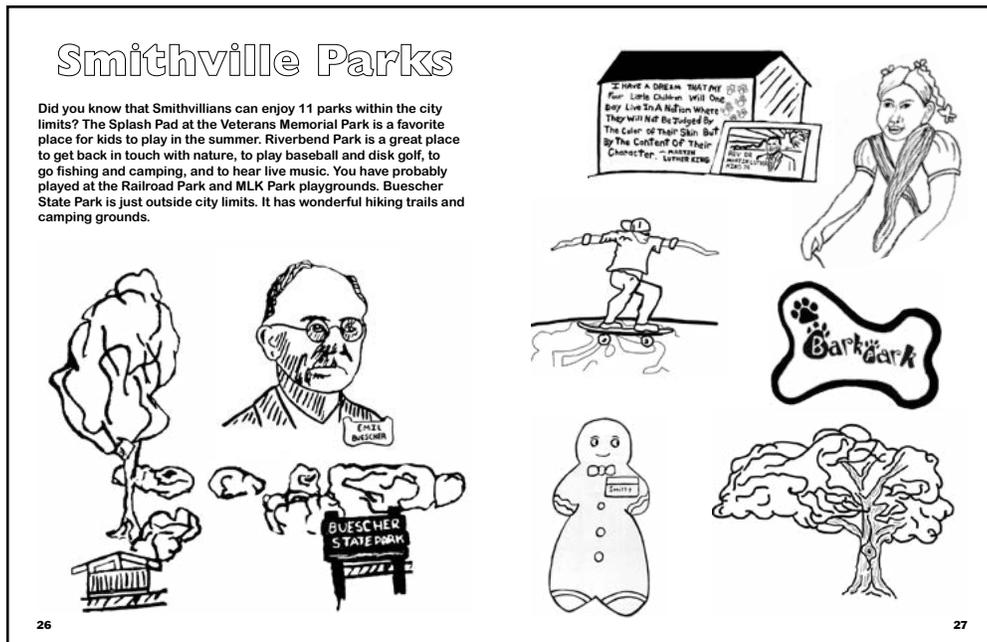
The Chitlin' Circuit was a network of performance venues open to African-American musicians when the country was still segregated and African-Americans were not allowed to be in the same spaces as their White neighbors.

The Smithville slice of this circuit was called the West End Park Club -- one of the few buildings on the Chitlin' Circuit that is still standing today. Many famous African-American musicians came through Smithville to perform at West End Park, including B. B. King, Etta James, and T-Bone Walker.

West End Park influenced many Smithville musicians. Clarence Smith, known to the world as Sonny Rhodes, is a world-famous blues guitarist who was born and raised in Smithville. He released his first single, "I'll Never Let You Go When Something Is Wrong" in 1958, and returned to Smithville in 2016 for a "Blues Review" celebration together with Hannibal Lokumbe (born Marvin Peterson in 1948). The Park was an important part of Hannibal Lokumbe's life. As a young person, he would go to listen to the amazing music near the fence.

The baseball field is also an important part of West End Park. This field was the site of professional baseball games in the Negro Leagues circuit, where Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson played in Smithville. The Texas Historical Commission celebrated this area's history with a special historical marker at the site, 242 SH 95.

*Teaching Notes:*

## Page 26-27: Smithville Parks

### Coloring Book Text:

Did you know that Smithvillians can enjoy 11 parks within city limits? The Splash Pad at the Veterans Memorial Park is a favorite place for kids to play in the summer. Riverbend Park is a great place to get back in touch with nature, to play baseball and disk golf, to go fishing and camping, and to hear live music. You have probably played at the Railroad Park and MLK Park playgrounds. Buescher State Park is just outside city limits. It has wonderful hiking trails and camping grounds.

### More Detailed Information:

Smithville is home to 11 different parks within city limits, and is close to two major state parks, which have important ties to Smithville.

Buescher State Park is just outside of Smithville City Limits. It is named after Emil Buescher, who moved to Smithville in 1897. He was influential in many of the town projects at the turn of that century. He helped to bring electricity, water, and sewer infrastructure to the city; started several businesses and schools; showed the first movies ever made; and contributed the land needed to create Buescher State Park. Emil Buescher and his wife, Elizabeth Buescher, along with the city of Smithville, donated 1,017 acres of land to the State Park system. Its buildings were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC. The CCC was a work program started under the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. It provided work relief for many people who were unemployed during the Great Depression of 1929-1939.

A few of the 11 city parks include the Bark Park, the Skate Park, Riverbend Park, the Railroad Park, Independence Park, the Veterans Memorial Park, and MLK Park (named for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.).

MLK Park displays the famous “I have a dream” quote by Dr. Martin Luther King. He made this speech in 1963 during the March on Washington. The park also displays a bronze sculpture

called a “bas-relief” of Dr. King, the famous civil rights activist.

The Bark Park opened on May 1st in 2010. It is a no-leash required park for dogs to play and have fun.

The Skate Park is a place for people to come and show off their skating skills. It is often visited by students after school.

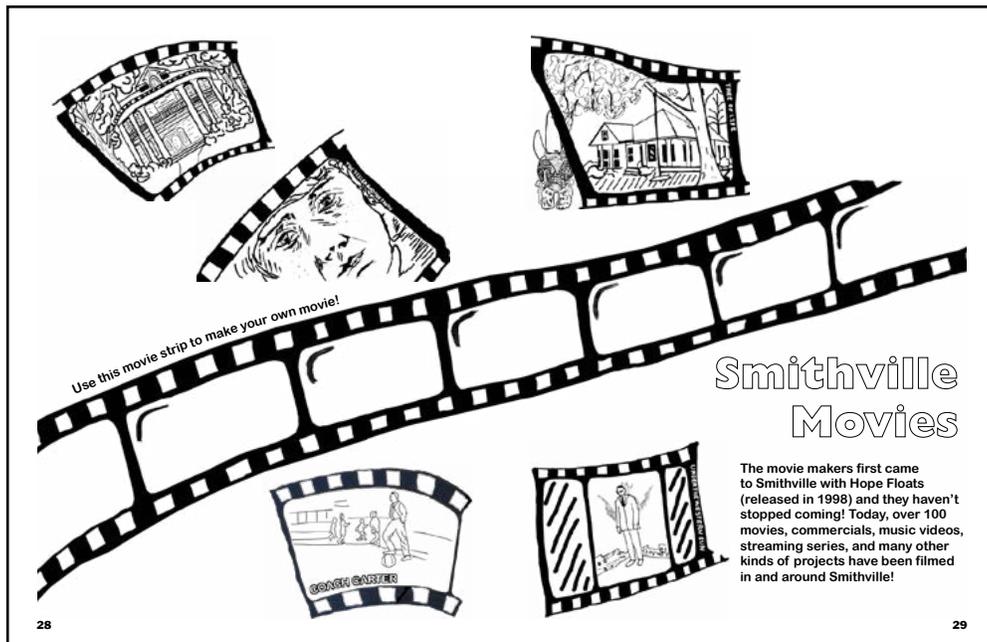
Riverbend Park is officially known as the “Vernon L. Richards Riverbend Park” because of Mr. Richard’s work to bring the land to the city for use as a park. It is unofficially known as the “65-Acre” park because of its size. The Smithville Jamboree is held at Riverbend Park.

The Veterans Memorial Park is located on 311 NW 2nd Street, and honors the brave men and women in the armed services who have served in our country’s military. The park was the vision of Mayor Mark Bunte, who was inspired by the families of the military personnel who had perished in the War on Terror to construct this park and splash pad. Bill McGlaun’s 15-foot tall bronze angel represents the sacrifice of these young service members and their families. The walls in the park represent the service of over 6,000 veterans. The splash pad represents the ultimate reason that the military exists -- the freedoms that we all enjoy. It opened on Memorial Day, 2013.

Independence Park is located at 506 TX- 230 Loop, Smithville Texas. It was created to celebrate the town’s founder, Dr. Thomas Jefferson Gazley, and the fight for Texas Independence.

Smitty, now located in his “corner” on the east side of the Chamber of Commerce on 1st Street, has a story that will be told for many years to come.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 28-29: Movies in Smithville

### Coloring Book Text:

The movie makers first came to Smithville with *Hope Floats* (released in 1998) and they haven't stopped coming! Today, over 100 movies, commercials, music videos, streaming series, and many other kinds of projects have been filmed in and around Smithville!

### More Detailed Information:

Smithville has become a hotspot for movies, commercials, music videos, and other films. *Hope Floats*, starring Sandra Bullock and Harry Connick Jr., was released in 1998. It was the first movie to put Smithville on the Hollywood map! Since then, over 100 movies, commercials, music videos, short films, TV/Streaming series, and other kinds of films have brought actors, directors, and all the crew necessary to Smithville, and Smithville has become a featured character that people all over the world can see. Award-winning or cult classic, some of the movies that were filmed partially or mostly in Smithville are in this coloring book.

*Coach Carter*, a movie directed by Smithvillian Thomas Carter, was released in 2005. It stars Samuel L. Jackson as Coach Ken Carter.

*Under the Western Sun*, starring Mark Meir and Smithville's very own Troy Streuer, was released in 2011.

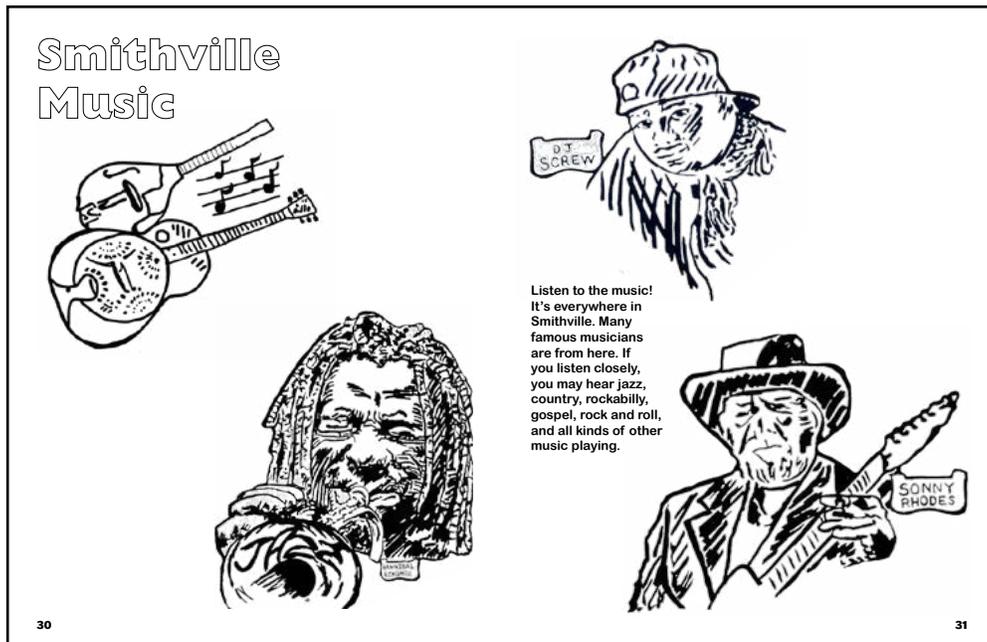
*Tree of Life*, a movie directed by Terrence Malick and starring Brad Pitt, Jessica Chastain, and Sean Penn, was released in 2011 and won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

*The Teller and The Truth* was released in 2015, and stars Leilani Galvan as Francis Weatherbee. Smithvillians David Herrington and Skeeter Sewart performed supporting roles in this film as well.

You also find Smithville in music videos by Willie Nelson and Miranda Lambert and many others that were filmed in Smithville.

Web series like “Night of the Walking Dead” and “Panic” were also filmed in Smithville.  
They even filmed a commercial about a Toyota truck!  
Make your own movie strip in this coloring book! What is your story?

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 30-31: Smithville Music

### Coloring Book Text:

Listen to the music! It's everywhere in Smithville. Many famous musicians are from here. If you listen closely, you may hear jazz, country, rockabilly, gospel, rock and roll, and all kinds of other music playing.

### More Detailed Information:

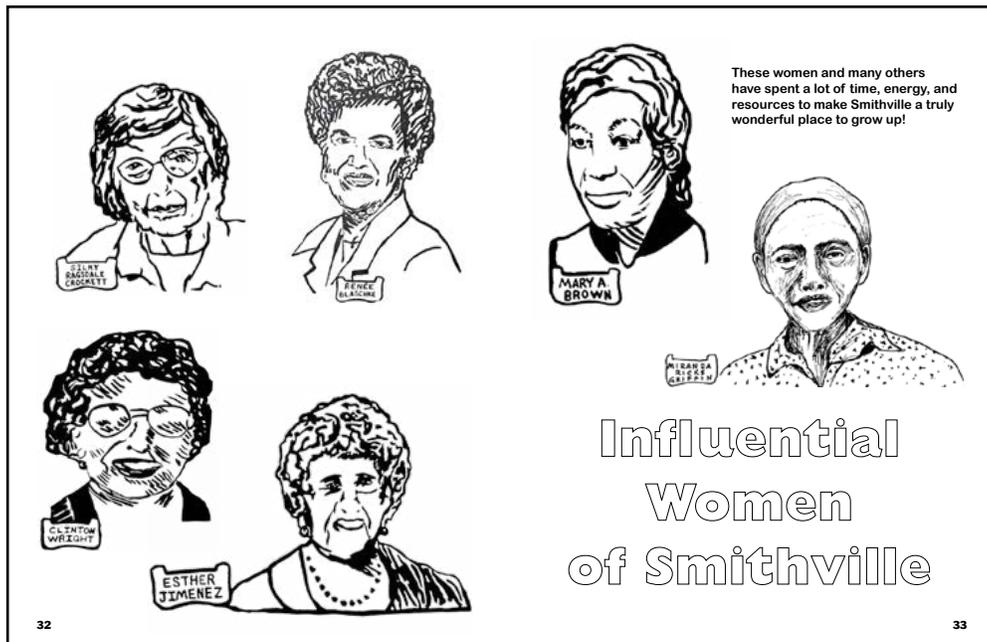
Many musicians live in Smithville. You can hear them playing at venues around town, at the Gazebo, during events, and just jammin' just because! Smithville is the home to several internationally-acclaimed musicians, including Hannibal Lokumbe, DJ Screw, and Sonny Rhodes.

Born in 1940 in Smithville, Clarence Smith, known to the world as Sonny Rhodes, is a world-famous blues guitarist. He has been nominated 15 times for Blues Music Awards and won for Instrumentalist in 2011. He was orphaned as a baby and adopted by sharecroppers Leroy and Julia Smith. When he was eight years old, he got a guitar for Christmas and by the time he was 12, he was seriously playing the blues, inspired by his uncle.

Hannibal Lokumbe was born in Smithville in 1948 as Marvin Peterson. He is an extremely famous trumpeter and composer. His work often focuses on civil rights leaders, such as his album *Dear Mrs. Parks*, which was inspired by Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a segregated bus in 1955.

Robert Earl Davis Jr. (known by his stage name, D.J. Screw) was born in 1971. A hip-hop revolutionary, he grew up in Smithville, Texas. He dropped his first album in 1995, and was the creator of a famous DJ technique called the "Chopped and Screwed." He died in November of 2000, but many people "discovered" him after his death, and he has influenced many artists despite his short life.

*Teaching Notes:*

**Page 32-33:**  
**Influential Women of Smithville**

**Coloring Book Text:**

These women and many others have spent a lot of time, energy, and resources to make Smithville a truly wonderful place to grow up!

**More Detailed Information:**

Smithville has been a home to many influential women.

Born into an enslaved family in 1851, Miranda Ricks Griffin came to Smithville with her mother and stepfather (Gaberella Ricks and Henry Tolbert) with the desire for a new beginning in life. She learned medicine from a book that she ordered, and made a name for herself as an early healthcare provider who specialized in midwifing (delivering babies). She died at age 103 in 1954.

Silky Ragsdale Crockett (born 1920, died 2013) was a writer and historian. She published the “Early History of Smithville, Texas,” in 1964, and reprinted it in 1990. It is available at the Smithville Public Library, where you may check it out or buy it!

Esther Jimenez was born in 1928, and died in 2014. She was an extremely active community leader. She participated in the Chamber of Commerce, the Hospital Auxiliary, and many other community-based organizations, serving as a role model for many women and people in the Hispanic community.

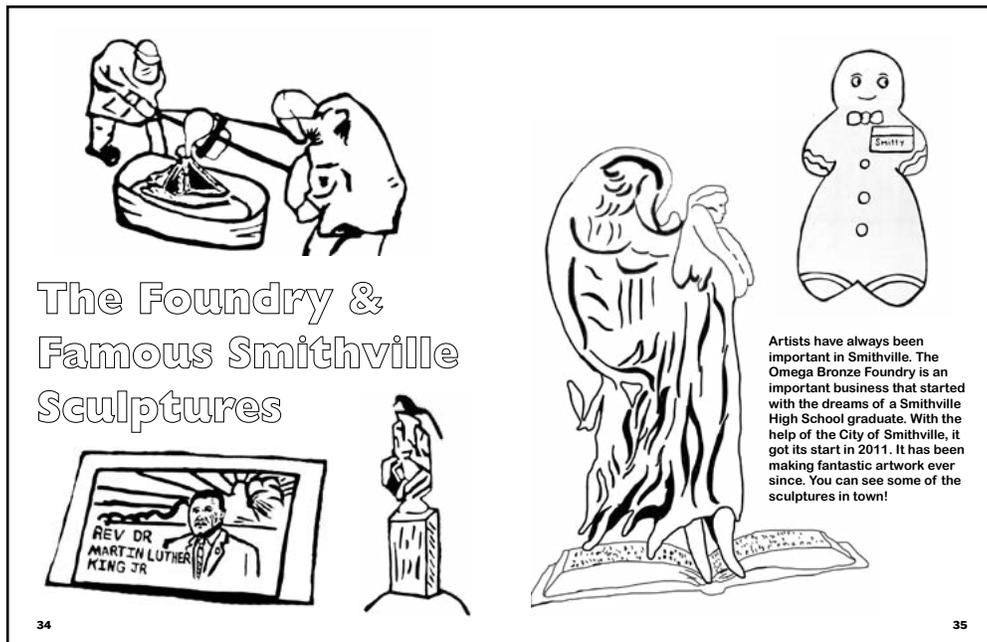
Clinton Marie Wright was born in Smithville in 1929. She became the Deputy Director of the Women’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor. Years later, she returned to Smithville to work in the Pendergrass Mortuary with her mother and step-father. She died at the age of 91 in February of 2021.

Renee Blaschke, born in 1938, was the first female mayor of Smithville and served from 1998 to 2006. She served as a leader of the Garden Club at a national level and she founded

the Keep Smithville Beautiful organization. The wildflowers in this mural are a tribute to her leadership and to the Smithville Garden Club.

Mary A. Brown, who died in 1954 proved how influential teachers can be -- as one student remembers, "She led the way in a time when both women and Blacks were undervalued and marginalized."

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



## Page 34-35:

# The Foundry and Famous Smithville Sculptures

### Coloring Book Text:

Artists have always been important in Smithville. The Omega Bronze Foundry is an important business that started with the dreams of a Smithville High School graduate. With the help of the City of Smithville, it got its start in 2011. It has been making fantastic artwork ever since. You can see some of the sculptures in town!

### More Detailed Information:

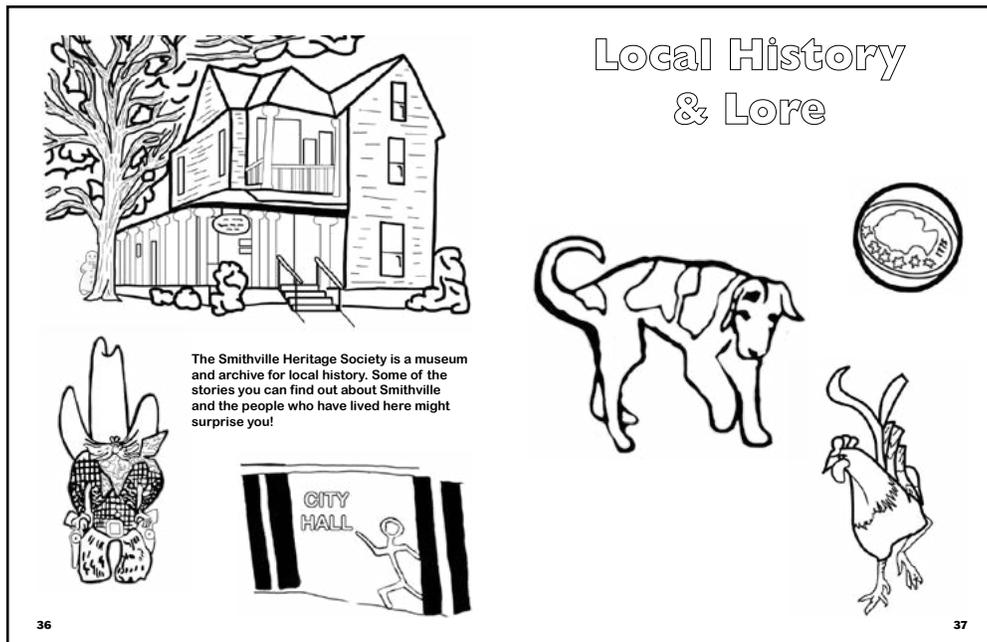
Artists in Smithville have been an important part of our community and our economy. One of the businesses started in response to artists' needs is the Omega Bronze foundry, which opened its doors in 2011. Omega Bronze has cast important sculptures all over town and all over the world.

The Angel sculpture, called "Homeward," was sculpted by Bill McGlaun. It is located at the Veterans Memorial Park. The Angel holds dogtags, which are cast from the real tags, commemorating the bravery of the Bastrop County service members who died in Afghanistan and Iraq during the War on Terror. Omega Bronze also cast the bas relief sculpture now on display at MLK Park and the bust of Dr Thomas J. Gazley at Independence Park.

Other sculptures also pay tribute to historic moments in Smithville. One important historic sculpture is right next to the Gazebo. In 1911, a locomotive boiler exploded at the roundhouse killing 12 men and injuring many others -- and destroying much of the railyard and roundhouse. A piece of that boiler was found at a ranch several miles away. That piece is the focus of the sculpture created by Russell Strawn Smith. He also created the beautiful base and a scissortail swallow to commemorate this tragedy.

A more recent part of Smithville's history, Smithville entered the Guinness World Records with the largest gingerbread man cookie in 2005. Now named Smitty, the cookie's tin has been painted and is located near the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce.

*Teaching Notes:*

## Page 36-37: Local History and Lore

### Coloring Book Text:

The Smithville Heritage Society is a museum and archive for local history. Some of the stories you can find out about Smithville and people who have lived here might surprise you!

### More Detailed Information:

The Smithville Heritage Society Building is located at 602 Main. It serves as a museum for the history of Smithville, and is maintained by the members of the Smithville Heritage Society. It has a great archive with photos, newspaper clippings, and historic items -- and anyone can make an appointment to look at them! It was built as the Hyson family home, and Floyd "Skip" Hyson, who flew for the air force during WWII, the Korean War, and Vietnam and was promoted to colonel before retiring, donated it to the Smithville Heritage Society for use as a museum in the 1990s.

The "Running Man" at City Hall is a funny story... Many years ago, City Hall did not have any doors or walls in the outer hallways but was like an indoor track. The Police Department was just one office in the back corner of the building. One day, a man was arrested and brought to the Police office at City Hall after all the doors were locked after the rest of City Hall workers had gone home. He didn't want to be arrested, so he started to run in the circle around the building until he realized there was no way out.

The critter is Smithville's Jamboree mascot. Jamboree has been part of Smithville since 1969, with the annual livestock show and auction, amusement rides, carnival games, carnival food, a beauty pageant, and rodeo events. The Critter helps to get the word out about the Jamboree through contests and events on the Jamboree Facebook page.

Chickens and dogs have also been important Smithville residents. The dogs are so special, they have even gotten their own City Park -- the Bark Park! Since the chickens don't have a special park, you might find chickens running around many streets in Smithville!

*Teaching Notes:*




**Page 38-39:**

**The Groundbreakers of Smithville**

**Coloring Book Text:**

Progress isn't always easy for a small town. These people, and many others in this book, have been important leaders in making Smithville what it is today. Knowing where you are from is the start of knowing where you will go. Thanks to people such as these, Smithville's future is bright!

**More Detailed Information:**

Many people have been at the forefront of making Smithville what it is today, breaking ground for you and me to be a part of its rich history and tradition, as well as its progress.

Vernon Richards was mayor from 1988 to 1998. He is responsible for the construction of the Recreation Center of Smithville and was important in getting Riverbend Park as part of the City.

Dr. Guillermo Sanchez was a physician in Smithville, Texas. He was one of the first Hispanic doctors that worked in Smithville.

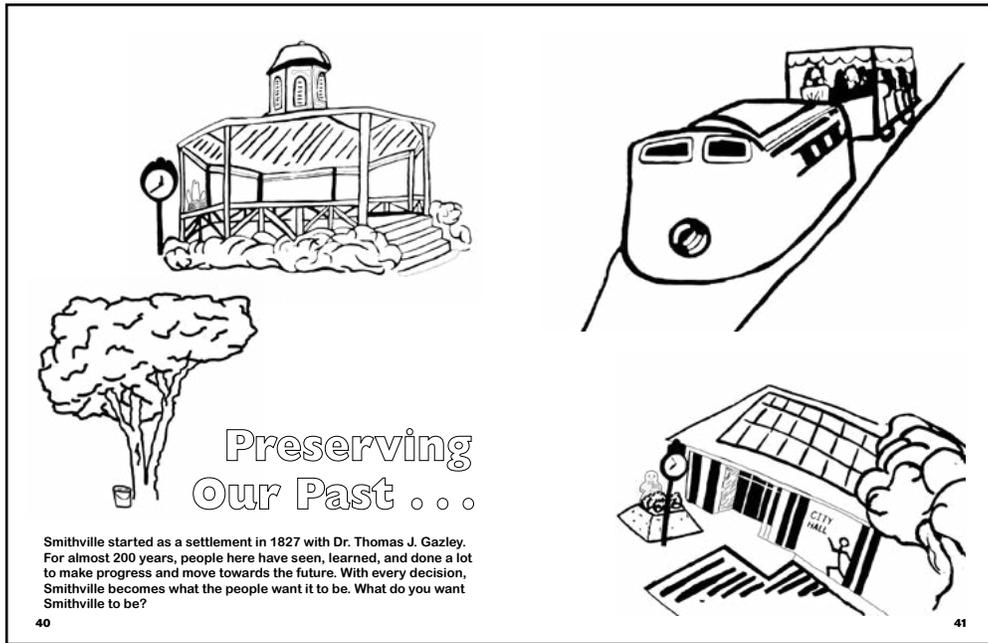
Judge Clarence E. Culberson joined the Air Force in 1951 and worked in civil service for a decade after that, including as Municipal Judge. He was chosen as the Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year in 1996. Together with Judge Ron Jones, Grover Tolbert, and Annette Anderson, Judge Culberson founded the Smithville Community Gardens in 2009, with a vision of growing healthy, delicious produce for everyone in the community.

Judge Ronald Jones was an active community leader and served as Municipal Judge until his death in 2018. Judge Jones was the president of the Smithville Community Gardens. He also volunteered to help many organizations, including Bastrop County Cares, the MLK Scholarship Committee, the Smithville Food Pantry Board, and Keep Bastrop County Beautiful, among many others.

The Texas Commission on the Arts deemed Smithville a Cultural District in 2013, which has been named for Richard D. Latham. Richard Latham was a tireless volunteer working to

promote the arts in our small town through the “Possibilities of Public Art” programs, the Lost Pines Artisans Alliance, and the Smithville Area Chamber of Commerce--he was also a Citizen of the Year in 2011. He died in February 2021.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>



**Page 40-41:**

**Preserving our Past . . .**

**Coloring Book Text:**

Smithville started as a settlement in 1827 with Dr. Thomas J. Gazley. For almost 200 years, people here have seen, learned, and done a lot to make progress and move towards the future. With every decision, Smithville becomes what the people want it to be. What do you want Smithville to be?

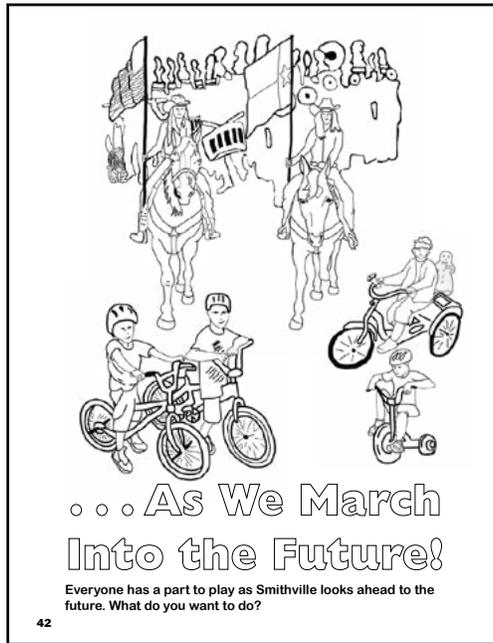
**More Detailed Information:**

Smithville’s City Hall is located on 317 Main Street. The five Smithville City Council members and the Mayor meet there every month to make important decisions on behalf of the citizens and in their best interests. It is also the place where people need to go for many other reasons, like for permits when they want to do some construction or to pay their utility bills.

The gazebo of Smithville is located at the end of Main Street, and is built from the cupola of the old City Hall! It is a popular place for local musicians to come and perform. It was constructed just a few feet off the center of the road because town leaders did not want to cut down the tree, which had been planted generations before and had been lovingly hand-watered to make sure it survived.

The Ann Powell Express is a local tram that takes people on tours through town, especially during festivals. It is named after Ann Powell, a prominent citizen. She was very generous with her time, energy, and funds for city needs, and when she passed, she made a \$10,000 donation to the Railroad Board that paid for the little diesel train.

*Teaching Notes:*

**Page 42:**

## **... as We March Into the Future!**

**Coloring Book Text:**

Everyone has a part to play as Smithville looks ahead to the future. What do you want to do?

**More Detailed Information:**

Smithville has had a long and interesting history, and knowing where you come from will help you decide where you want to go. As we march into the future, whether you are part of the award-winning high school band, a tricycle racer, an equestrian, or just watching the parade, everyone has a part to play in what Smithville will become.

<i>Teaching Notes:</i>

**“Color Me Smithville: The History of our Hometown”  
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**For more information about Smithville History, contact the Smithville  
Heritage Society at [facebook.com/SmithvilleHeritageSociety/](https://facebook.com/SmithvilleHeritageSociety/)**

Did you find them all? The Critter can be found on the inside front cover, as well as pages 4, 7, 12, 15, 24, 29, 36, 39, 40, and 42. Smitty can be found on pages 1, 8, 10, 14, 16, 21, 27, 35, 36, 41, and 42.

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