



# 2020 Save Texas History Essay Contest

## 7th Grade Winner

Texas General Land Office  
George P. Bush, Commissioner



### **Madeline Moran**

UT Tyler University Academy  
at Palestine Campus  
Palestine, Texas

## **Magical Downtown Palestine**

A wise person once said, “Walking into a small town in the dead of night and the lights are shining and the stores are all bright it makes you feel special and magical.” Downtown Palestine is just like this. It makes you feel fuzzy, warm, and special because you are part of such of an astounding history-filled town. There is so much history just in this small part of Palestine which was built in 1890 and 1893 using 675,000 bricks that were formed and baked on-site. The buildings include the old Texas Theatre, the Courthouse, and the old jailhouse.

The Texas Theatre is beautiful and full of history. The Texas Theatre opened in 1921 It is located at 213 W. Crawford St in Palestine, Texas. This theatre is also constructed by Colonial Spanish Architects. In the past 25 years, the Palestine Theatre has showcased a lot of famous plays such as: “Guys and Dolls,” “Harvey,” “The Wizard of Oz,” “Man of La Mancha,” “Clue: The Musical” and “Disney’s Beauty and the Beast.” During its time it was titled the Best Theatre but by 1933-34 the name had been changed to the Texas Theater. Before the Texas Theatre, there was the Ritz theatre but it got demolished in the 1970s. Now the Texas Theatre is the last historic movie house downtown.

The Palestine Courthouse is also a big piece of Palestine history and the center of Downtown Palestine. Built-in 1914, the Palestine courthouse shows beaux-arts architecture with a double-spiral staircase and a gorgeous stained glass montage in the dome. Courthouse Square is the highest site in the area. An activity held at the Courthouse is the Grand Tree Lighting in front of the building which is accompanied by a Christmas parade. The county was named Anderson after Kenneth Lewis Anderson. The building was constructed by Charles Henry Page. It was dedicated on December 20, 1914, at a cost of approximately \$250,000. The Palestine courthouse is certainly a beautiful place in the heart of Downtown Palestine.

The old Texas Jailhouse is another very brilliant piece of Palestine history. The Texas Jailhouse was





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constructed in 1931 on 704 Ave A, Palestine, Texas. It was used as a jail for 55 years, but today it is used to hold events such as the Haunted Little Jail in October and the Grinch's Lair during November & December. The Grinch's lair is so amazing! There are lights and hot chocolate, and the decorations are so captivating. You can take pictures with the Grinch and do a scavenger hunt around the old jailhouse.

Another pretty cool thing about Downtown Palestine is the Christmas Parade. Downtown Palestine gets all lit up and then they put snowflakes on all the light posts. Then Downtown businesses make floats and once it gets dark a big parade goes all around the roads of downtown. My family always stands by the Cream and Coffee so we can get hot chocolate while we watch the parade. There are music and big colorful floats, and horses too! Some floats throw candy and everyone shows kindness. This is one of the times where Downtown feels even more magical like a cozy small town. There are also Old Town carriage rides. My family always stands by the Cream and Coffee so we can get hot chocolate while we watch the parade. There is music and big colorful floats, and horses too! Some floats throw candy and everyone shows kindness. This is one of the times where Downtown feels even more magical like a cozy small town.

The Redlands Hotel is a beautiful place to visit and is filled with history. The hotel was built in 1914 by a group of citizens. It was built to provide housing for visitors. It has won multiple medals. It won statewide recognition by scoring first place in the Texas Downtown Association President's Award program. It also beat out hundreds of other hotels for the best renovation and rehabilitation. The hotel had many renovations. It had to be renovated because from 1956- 1972 it was old, run-down, and decaying. It's now a fine hotel and restaurant and is used to house visitors to this day.

The Part of the Palestine Railroad that runs into downtown is a big piece of Palestine History. Since 1872, when the Houston railroad committee came to Palestine, Palestine has been a train town. Trains were a big part of transportation before cars. They were faster than horses and walking so they could get people where they needed to go quickly. Expanding the railroad made Palestine flourish.

Downtown Palestine is full of art. If you explore downtown you will find 20 large sculptures and lots of beautiful window art. These sculptures are changed every once in a while so there is a lot of culture and variation in this great artwork. The picture featured here is not p today but was up for a while last year. We appreciate the hard work of these artists for making our downtown a beautiful place to visit. As you can see, Downtown Palestine is worth saving as a grand memory in our minds forever. It's full of great history, color, and great worth. This is why I believe that Downtown Palestine is worth saving. For history!





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