

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Henry Smith Statue
Other name/site number: NA
Name of related multiple property listing: Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial

2. Location

Street & number: Intersection of N. Brooks St./TX-36 and W. Smith St.
City or town: Brazoria State: Texas County: Brazoria
Not for publication: [] Vicinity: []

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
[n] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National
Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the
property [x] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
[] national [x] statewide [] local

Applicable National Register Criteria: [x] A [] B [x] C [] D

Signature of certifying official / Title Date
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
[] entered in the National Register
[] determined eligible for the National Register
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register
[] other, explain: _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
1	0	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: NA

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: RECREATION AND CULTURE: work of art

Current Functions: RECREATION AND CULTURE: work of art

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Other: Sculpture

Principal Exterior Materials: Stone/granite; Metal/bronze

Narrative Description (see continuation sheet 7-6)

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
<input type="checkbox"/>	B	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
<input type="checkbox"/>	D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations: Criterion F (Commemorative Properties)

Areas of Significance: Social History, Art

Period of Significance: 1938

Significant Dates: 1938

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): NA

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): NA

Architect/Builder: Villa, Hugo (sculptor), Nelson, Donald S. (architect)

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 8-7 through 8-11)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 9-12)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than 1 acre

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 29.047068°N Longitude: -95.570424°W

Verbal Boundary Description: The statue is located at the intersection of N. Brooks St./TX-36 and W. Smith St. on property that includes the 1933 Brazoria Public School. The nomination encompasses only the monument and the ground upon which it stands, an area of approximately 173 square feet.

Boundary Justification: The nomination boundary is drawn to include only the monument itself. No other structures on the property have been evaluated for eligibility due to the specific focus of this theme (*Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial*).

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Bonnie Tipton Wilson, THC National Register Historian
Organization: Texas Historical Commission
Street & number: P.O. Box 12276
City or Town: Austin State: TX Zip Code: 78711-2276
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Date: March 1, 2018

Additional Documentation

- Maps** (see continuation sheets MAP-13)
- Additional items** (see continuation sheets FIGURE-14 through FIGURE-18)
- Photographs** (see continuation sheets PHOTO-19 through PHOTO-26)

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photograph Log

Henry Smith Statue
Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas
Photographer: Gregory Smith
Date: February 14, 2018

Photo 1: Henry Smith Statue on school grounds—camera facing west

Photo 2: Henry Smith Statue—camera facing west

Photo 3: Henry Smith Statue detail—camera facing west

Photo 4: Detail of statue torso and head—camera facing northwest

Photo 5: South elevation of statue—camera facing north

Photo 6: Detail of statue base— camera facing north

Photo 7: Rear (west) elevation—camera facing east

Photo 8: Detail of rear (west) elevation—camera facing east

Photo 9: Northwest oblique—camera facing southeast

Photo 10: Detail of statue base— camera facing south

Photo 11: Northeast oblique—camera facing southwest

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Description

The *Henry Smith* statue is an 8.6-foot-tall bronze full-figure portraiture mounted on a Texas pink granite base and flanked by 12.5-foot-tall granite shafts in Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas. Commissioned by the State of Texas, it is one of 20 statues erected to celebrate the anniversary of Texas independence, and is identified as such in *Buildings and Monuments of the Texas Centennial MPS*. Hugo Villa sculpted the statue to memorialize Henry Smith, the first governor of Texas, and architect Donald S. Nelson designed the granite base. Completed in 1938, the statue is on the 1933 Brazoria Public School grounds, facing State Highway 36. It retains excellent integrity and is in good condition.

Brazoria, Texas is 55 miles south of Houston in Brazoria County, which borders the Texas Gulf Coast. Named for the Brazos River that runs through it, the original Brazoria townsite is located on the south bank of the river in the western portion of the county. In 1912, a second townsite was laid out one mile south around the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexican Railroad (now Missouri-Pacific). State Highway 36 (known locally as Brooks St.) intersects the train tracks to connect the neighborhoods to the north and south of it.

The Henry Smith statue is at its original location two blocks north of the rail line at the intersection of W. Smith St. and TX 36/Brooks St. on grounds historically-associated with the 1933 Brazoria Public School. Today, the two-block property is the Brazoria Civic Center, and the historic school building houses a history museum. It is owned and operated by the Brazoria Heritage Foundation. Eight free-standing buildings, including the schoolhouse, are clustered on the western and middle portion of the lot. The Henry Smith statue is at the far eastern side of the property with no structures immediately surrounding it. It faces east towards the highway from which it is set back approximately 35 feet. A non-historic concrete slab with a flagpole is directly behind it.

The entire memorial is erected on a reinforced concrete cap foundation paved with Texas pink granite, quarried in Llano, Texas. The 14.6' by 12' raised rectangular base supports the statue and five granite blocks. The foremost block, 3.5'-tall, supports the bronze figure and the name "HENRY SMITH" is sandblasted on it. The rear portion of the block intersects with the shafts behind it. Above, a bronze full-figure portrait of Henry Smith stands with the right foot forward. Smith's upper torso and head orient to the right, and he looks slightly down. The left arm is bent at Smith's side, and his left thumb is hooked in the vest pocket; Smith gestures with the right arm as though he were speaking. The figure is clothed in a style of the era: a long coat, buttoned vest, collared shirt, tie, long pants, and boots. The sculptor's signature is on the north side of the bronze base, and the foundry is indicated on the south side.

Two, 12.5-foot-tall granite shafts frame the Henry Smith statue. Each are 3'-wide at the base and taper to 2'. Smith's historical significance is conveyed in inscriptions (Figure 7) that were sand-blasted on the south side of one shaft and the north side of the other shaft. From the rear of the monument (faces west), the foremost block is visible between the shafts. Its back face is inscribed with the following, "ERECTED BY THE STATE OF TEXAS 1936 WITH FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO COMMEMORATE ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF TEXAS INDEPENDENCE."

The Henry Smith statue retains exceptional integrity and is in good condition as stipulated by the registration requirements outlined in *Buildings and Monuments of the Texas Centennial MPS*.¹ It retains integrity of materials, design, workmanship as there have been no changes or damage inflicted to the statue since its dedication. The workmanship of Hugo Villa's artistry evident in its design. It retains integrity of location and setting at its original dedication site on the school grounds in Brazoria along the state highway. The statue conveys the feeling of a commemorative monument created to memorialize Henry Smith, and its association with the 1936 Texas Centennial is intact.

¹ National Register of Historic Places, Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial MPS, Statewide, Texas, 49.

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The *Henry Smith* statue in Brazoria, Brazoria County is one of 20 statues erected by the State of Texas between 1937 and 1939 to celebrate the statewide Centennial. Italian-born sculptor Hugo Villa and architect Donald S. Nelson designed the statue to memorialize Henry Smith, known as the first governor of Texas. The idea for the statue originated within the Advisory Board of Historians, a group appointed to recommend commemorative projects for the Centennial. Erected in 1938 on school grounds along the state highway, the community reportedly refused to dedicate the statue because of its “arbitrary” location. Hugo Villa (1886-1948) began his career as an assistant to internationally-acclaimed sculptor Gutzon Borglum, the artist responsible for Mount Rushmore. Villa, known in Texas for his architectural ornamentation, sculpted the *Henry Smith* statue at the height of his career in the 1930s. It was one of two full-figure statues the artist is known to have completed.

The property is nominated to the National Register at the state level of significance under the multiple property submission *Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial*. It is eligible under Criterion A in the area of Social History as a product of the concerted statewide effort to commemorate historic persons and events important to Texas history in the 1930s. The monument was commissioned as part of a major Depression-era public arts project and is significant under Criterion C in the area of Art as an important work by sculptor Hugo Villa. The property meets Criterion Consideration F (Commemorative Properties) because it is significant as a work of art that reflects early 20th century interest in recognizing historic subjects throughout Texas, which culminated in the publicly-funded statewide Texas Centennial. The *Henry Smith* statue is located at its original site in Brazoria and it retains excellent integrity. The period of significance is 1938, the year it was erected.

Brazoria, Texas²

Stephen F. Austin’s 1828 colony in Texas included the townsite of present-day Brazoria. It was established at a crossing of the Brazos River, the chief artery of commerce and communication for the settlement. During the Texas Revolution, the Mexican Army burned the town and its citizens fled. Rebuilt along the south bank of the Brazos River, the town functioned as the county seat from 1836 to 1897 before it transferred to Angleton. When the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexican Railroad was built in Brazoria County in 1906, it passed south of the town. Brazoria laid a new townsite in 1912, 1 mile south of its original site, along new railway. The development divided the town between each site for two decades, and it gradually merged as the population increased. Between 1906 and 1929, the population grew to 1,050, and Brazoria completed a second school building in 1933 to accommodate its student citizenry. The new public school was located on grounds at the intersection of Smith St. and State Highway 36 in the new section. In 1939, a nearby oil discovery revived Brazoria’s economy and it grew steadily until 1986.

Henry Smith (1788-1851)³

Kentucky-born Henry Smith settled in present-day Brazoria County in 1827 when he was 39 years old. Smith married three times to women—Harriet, Elizabeth, and Sarah Gillet—who were sisters, and he fathered a total of nine children. Between 1833-1841, he was an active participant in Texas politics under the Mexican government and for the Republic of Texas. He first earned local prominence as the *alcalde* for the Brazoria jurisdiction in 1833 and was its chosen delegate to the Convention of 1833, one of the first political meetings of colonists that led to the Texas Revolution two years later.

² This section derived from *Handbook of Texas Online*, Diana J. Kleiner, "Brazoria County," accessed April 10, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcb12>.

³ This section derived from *Handbook of Texas Online*, Ralph W. Steen, "Smith, Henry," accessed April 12, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsm23>.

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

As tensions rose between Texas colonists and the Mexican government in 1834, Smith became a fervent supporter for independence. Texan opponents and proponents to revolution organized a provisional government, the Consultation, on November 7, 1835. Smith chaired the committee to determine the organizational structure of the provisional government. On November 13, the Consultation elected its general council and executive; Smith was selected as the governor. As a leader, however, Smith “did not believe in compromise and did not know the language of diplomacy,” and discord weakened the provisional government. The general council impeached Smith when he attempted to dissolve the conflicted council.

General Sam Houston, first President of the Republic of Texas, selected Smith as his treasury secretary in 1836. However, he efforts to bring the new republic out of debt proved unsuccessful. In 1840-41, Smith served one term in the Texas House of Representatives before he retired. Gold fever enticed Smith from Texas to California in 1849 and he died in a Los Angeles County mining camp on March 4, 1851.

The Henry Smith Statue

Originally conceived as a bas-relief monument, the Henry Smith statue in Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas is one of 20 bronze statues of historical figures erected by the State of Texas for the 1936 Centennial. The idea for a commemorative monument to Smith statue originated with two members of the Advisory Board of Historians. In October 1935, Louis Kemp and Father Paul Foik recommended to the Commission of Control for Texas Centennial Celebrations \$10,000 for a “granite [monument] bearing a bas-relief in bronze commemorating an [*sic*] historic event in the life of Mr. Smith” to be erected in Brazoria, Brazoria County.⁴ A paragraph-long summary of Smith’s 5-year-long political career justified the allocation. J. Frank Dobie, the third board member, challenged his colleague’s decision to recognize Smith and other 19th-century politicians whom he thought were undeserving of monuments and statues. Dobie’s minority report explained:

All of these men had the positions of statesmen without being eminent as statesmen and their personalities have failed to make any impression on the generations that have followed...In any well considered history of Texas these men and their equals receive at best only a paragraph or two. Why should they receive in enduring bronze the equivalent of full-length chapters?⁵

Ultimately, the Commission of Control sided with the majority’s recommendations for Brazoria County that included \$10,000 for a monument to Smith.⁶

Brazoria County citizens were keen to celebrate the Texas Centennial, and available newspapers document the county Centennial commission’s progress in organizing local celebrations throughout 1936. However, interest in the statewide program to construct monuments and markers appeared to wane by the time the state completed public art projects, like the Smith statue, in 1938. Although several large monuments were initially planned for the county, including the Henry Smith project, the state constructed small grave markers and historical markers instead.⁷ Newspapers, the best

⁴ Advisory Board of Historians, *Report of the Advisory Board of Historians*, Majority Report, James Frank Dobie Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin, 18.

⁵ Advisory Board of Historians, *Report of the Advisory Board of Historians*, Minority Report, James Frank Dobie Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin, 18, 7-8.

⁶ Majority Report, 18.

⁷ The Majority Report of the Advisory Board of Historians initially recommended: an \$8,000 monument depicting the first Capitol, \$10,000 for the Henry Smith monument, a \$1,000 county monument, and eight historical markers. The Commission of Control only approved all their recommendations except for the county monument. During the process of carrying out recommendations, many Centennial projects were cancelled and money re-apportioned. This is explained in greater detail in *Monuments and*

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

source for chronicling local Centennial history, gave little mention to historical markers and monuments after 1936, and none remarked on dedication ceremonies for any commemorative properties in Brazoria.⁸ It is also not clear when the Commission of Control officially decided to recognize Smith in statuary, versus bas-relief, form.

For a project that received little attention locally, the planning and construction for the Smith statue was a coordinated effort between private contractors and federal and state-level agencies, commissions, and boards. As a federally-funded commemorative project, the concept for a Henry Smith tribute underwent review by the U.S. Texas Centennial Commission in Washington. Upon their approval, the State Board of Control's Centennial Division organized an art competition to commission sculptors for centenary public art projects. Artists submitted models for the Smith monument at a competition organized on April 2, 1936, but a controversy about their choice for the *Pioneer Woman* monument (Denton, Denton County) halted the state's prescribed process for deciding artists for federally-funded Centennial commissions.⁹ When planning resumed a year later, it was under the auspices of the federally-appointed Arts Committee, which recommended artist Hugo Villa among dozens of other curated names. The Board of Control accepted Villa's model for a statue to Henry Smith in June 1937.¹⁰

The Centennial Division hired several contractors to complete the Smith statue with Villa. Dallas-architect Donald S. Nelson worked with the artist to plan and execute the large granite base (Figures 2-4). The Llano Premiere Granite Company quarried Texas pink granite for the project and installed the completed product.¹¹ Villa sculpted the model in his San Antonio studio and contracted its bronze casting with the Brooklyn-based Mario Scoma Foundry.

On July 21, 1938, *Freeport Facts* published its only announcement regarding the Henry Smith statue. It stated, "the huge likeness of Smith," was erected "facing the highway" on the local school grounds followed by a description of its physical attributes and Smith's historical value to Texas. The article did not indicate local plans for its dedication. The following January, the *Victoria Advocate* stated that Brazorians were unsatisfied with the statue's location. It quoted a disgruntled Refugio County Centennial committee member who mentioned Brazoria in an article about his community's disdain for the *Amon B. King's Men* Centennial monument, "the monstrosity," in Refugio:

We were rationed out what pleased the [Commission of Control] ... The result is that many localities are ashamed or hurt by what they got, or where the monuments were placed... The people of Brazoria got a monument to Governor Henry Smith, but it was placed in an arbitrary spot and the people there have refused to dedicate it.¹²

With no evidence to substantiate his claim or any records to refute it, it is unlikely the Henry Smith statue was dedicated. As the Brazoria community has grown, the statue that honors Henry Smith is no longer in an arbitrary

Buildings of the Texas Centennial MPS. The State of Texas completed the Henry Smith statue, 8 historical markers, twelve grave markers, and two highway markers in Brazoria for the Centennial.

⁸ The *Freeport Facts* and *Brazoria County Review* were local newspapers consulted for this research. Other Brazoria County periodicals, like *The Angleton Times*, either did not cover the 1930s or did not have copies of that period available for research. Nearby counties also failed to document the Henry Smith statue or other Brazoria Centennial news.

⁹ The controversy over the "nude pioneer woman" delayed artist selections. The Board of Control commissioned artists for state-funded projects (like *King's Men*) first, but other art projects (those funded jointly by the federal and state allocations) were deferred by a year due to a new process for artist selection that was implemented. *Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial MPDF*, National Register nomination, 2018, 22-24.

¹⁰ National Register of Historic Places, *Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial MPS, Statewide, Texas*, National Register, 2018.

¹¹ "Contracts Given for Statue Bases," *Austin American Statesman*, December 10, 1937.

¹² "Monument in Victoria to Hero Astounds Refugians," *Victoria Advocate*, January 15, 1938.

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

location but within its central boundary. Each year, Henry Smith Day is celebrated on November 4 and, citizens pose with the statue.

Hugo Villa (1886-1948)

Hugo Villa was born on June 20, 1886 in Roppolo, Biella, Italy where he studied medicine, music, and sculpture. In 1918, Villa immigrated to the United States from Mexico, crossing the border in Laredo, Texas. He moved to New York City in 1919 where he became an assistant to Gutzon Borglum (1867-1941), an internationally-acclaimed sculptor best known for Mount Rushmore.¹³ While in New York, Villa married Ida de Mezzi (1889-1958) and fathered two children with her, Fiona and Anna Maria. Although the couple remained married, they spent most of their lives apart.

Villa worked alongside Borglum for more than a decade and followed Borglum around the country to assist with his many commissions. Borglum trusted Villa, his studio superintendent, to carve his *maquettes* into stone saying, "Villa is not equaled in the exact duplication of models."¹⁴ Villa moved with Borglum to Texas in 1925 where Borglum established a studio in San Antonio to model the *Texas Trail Drivers Monument*. Borglum later closed this studio in the 1930s, but Villa permanently-settled in San Antonio. In 1927-28, Villa helped Borglum translate his models of presidents into the face Mt. Rushmore, but Borglum apparently fired Villa from the project for unexplained mistakes.¹⁵

During the 1930s, Villa established a reputation as independent sculptor of portraits and ornamental architecture. During these productive years, he collaborated with architect S.C.P. (Samuel Charles Phelps) Vosper to create bronze relief and carved stone sculpture, and cast stone, plaster, and concrete ornaments. At Texas A&M University, Vosper hired Villa to work on ten buildings, and the intricate and playful cast stone ornaments were a substantial architectural feature on each edifice.¹⁶ Their partnership is also exemplified in *Texas Memorial to Honored Dead* (Austin, 1928), the reconstruction of Nuestra Senora del Espiritu Santo de Zuniga Mission (Goliad, 1935), and the Centennial-sponsored Goliad Memorial Auditorium (1936). A full record of his independent commissions is incomplete, and Villa is only credited with two, full-figure sculptural portraits: the *German Pioneers Monument* (New Braunfels, 1938) and the nominated statue of Henry Smith (1938).

The statewide Centennial public art program produced 20 statues across the state. Historian Light Cummins, Ph.D. observed that the statues "hark back to the artistic style of the Beaux Arts neo-classicism that centered in City Beautiful movement."¹⁷ Indeed, commissioned artists like Villa, sculpted heroic portraits of historic Texans in a timeless style that was designed to appeal to the masses. Stylistically, the Henry Smith statue exhibits a classical aesthetic and presents the one-time governor in an admirable manner.

Following his Centennial commission in 1938, Villa gained full-time employment with the San Antonio-based Southwell Art Bronze and Rubber Stamp Company. As its resident artist, he modeled Texas-themed book-ends, plaques, statuettes, cigarette and powder boxes and completed bronze-cast bas-relief plaques for private and state-

¹³ Nancy T. McCoy and David G. Woodcock, *Architecture That Speaks: S.C.P. Vosper and Ten Remarkable Buildings at Texas A&M*, (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2017.): 121.

¹⁴ "Assistant Sculptor," *The Daily Argus-Leader* (Sioux Falls, ND), April 2, 1927.

¹⁵ McCoy and Woodcock, 121.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 117-121.

¹⁷ Light Townsend Cummins, Ph.D., "Statues of the State," *The Medallion* 48, no.7-8 (July/August 2011): 9.

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commissioned monuments.¹⁸ He established a close relationship with his boss, Wilson Southwell, over the next decade. When Villa suffered a fatal heart attack in 1948, Southwell and Vosper were pallbearers at his funeral.¹⁹

Donald S. Nelson (1907-1992)

Dallas architect Donald S. Nelson's contribution to the Henry Smith statue and the statewide Centennial public art project is often overshadowed by his later accomplishments. Nelson was born in Chicago, Illinois on February 10, 1907. His formal training began at age 19 at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Fontainebleau, France. Upon his return stateside, he earned a BA in Architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). After winning the prestigious Paris Prize, Nelson returned to France in 1927 to attend the Ecole Normal Superieur des Beaux Arts. The young architect began his professional career in 1930 working as a junior member of the Chicago firm Bennett, Parsons, and Frost.²⁰

Nelson's work for the 1933 Chicago Century of Progress Exposition earned him the attention of Dallas architect George Dahl who invited Nelson, among others, in 1935 to assist in the design of the Texas Centennial Exposition complex. When the project concluded in 1936, Nelson remained in Dallas and established a private practice. He responded to the Texas State Board of Control's open call for an architect to design bases for Centennial statues and monuments. Nelson won the contract and, between 1936 and 1939, he collaborated with commissioned sculptors, monument makers, stone quarries, and local communities to plan and execute the foundations for 24 public art projects.

Following World War II, Nelson entered the height of his professional career when he formed an architectural firm with Thomas D. Broad (Broad and Nelson) in Dallas. Nelson became a regionally-significant architect known for adding sculptural elements to his projects. No doubt his early career working with Centennial monuments introduced him to sculptors, like Raoul Josset, and influenced his architectural aesthetic. He designed many public and commercial buildings across the state and is recognized for several noteworthy buildings in Dallas and Waco. These projects include: the Dallas Mercantile Bank Complex (1940-1947), a contributing building in the Downtown Dallas Historic District; the Texas Memorial Grand Lodge Temple in Waco (1950); the original passenger terminal at Love Field in Dallas (1957); and the Scottish Rite Library and Museum in Waco (1969).²¹

Conclusion

The 1938 *Henry Smith* statue in Brazoria, Brazoria County is one of 20 statues erected by the State of Texas celebrate the Centennial. Designed by Italian-born sculptor Hugo Villa and architect Donald S. Nelson, the statue memorializes Henry Smith, the first governor of Texas. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Social History and Criterion C in the area of Art at the state level of significance under the multiple property submission *Monuments and Buildings of the Texas Centennial*. The Smith statue is an excellent example of the statewide public art program. It is significant in the area of Art as an important work by master sculptor Hugo Villa. The property also meets Criterion Consideration F (Commemorative Properties) because it is significant as a work of art that reflects early 20th century interest in recognizing historic subjects throughout Texas, which culminated in the publicly-funded statewide Texas Centennial. The period of significance is 1938, the year the statue was erected.

¹⁸ "S.A. Rubber Stamp Co. Features Original Models in Bronze by Noted Sculptor," *San Antonio Light*, December 1, 1941.

¹⁹ Death Announcements, *San Antonio Express*, November 7, 1938.

²⁰ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Christopher Long, "Nelson, Donald Siegfried," accessed September 01, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fnejz>.

²¹ *Ibid*.

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Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Maps

Map 1: Brazoria County, Texas



Map 2: Google Earth, accessed March 1, 2018
Latitude: 29.047068°N Longitude: -95.570424°W

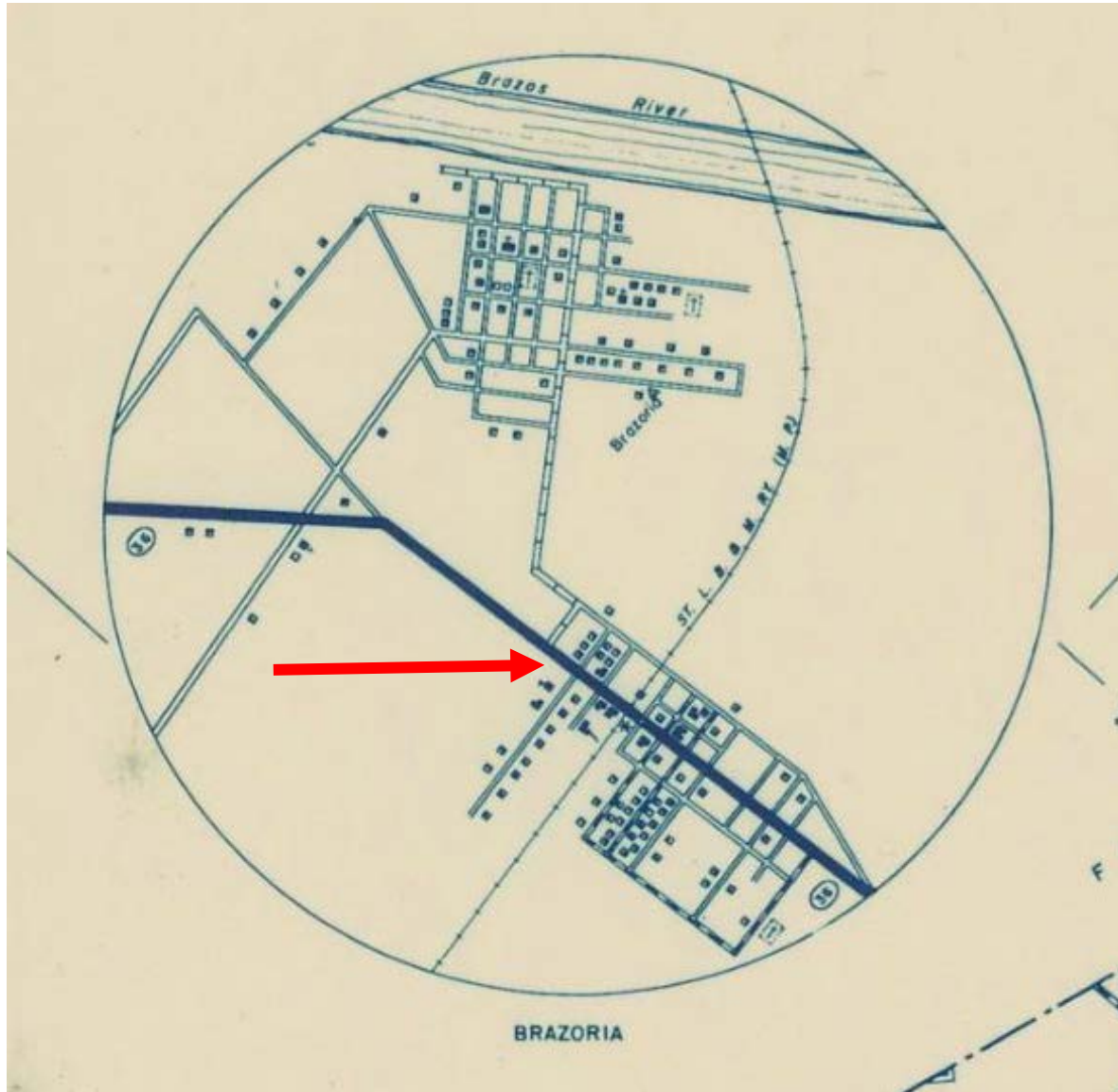


Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Figures

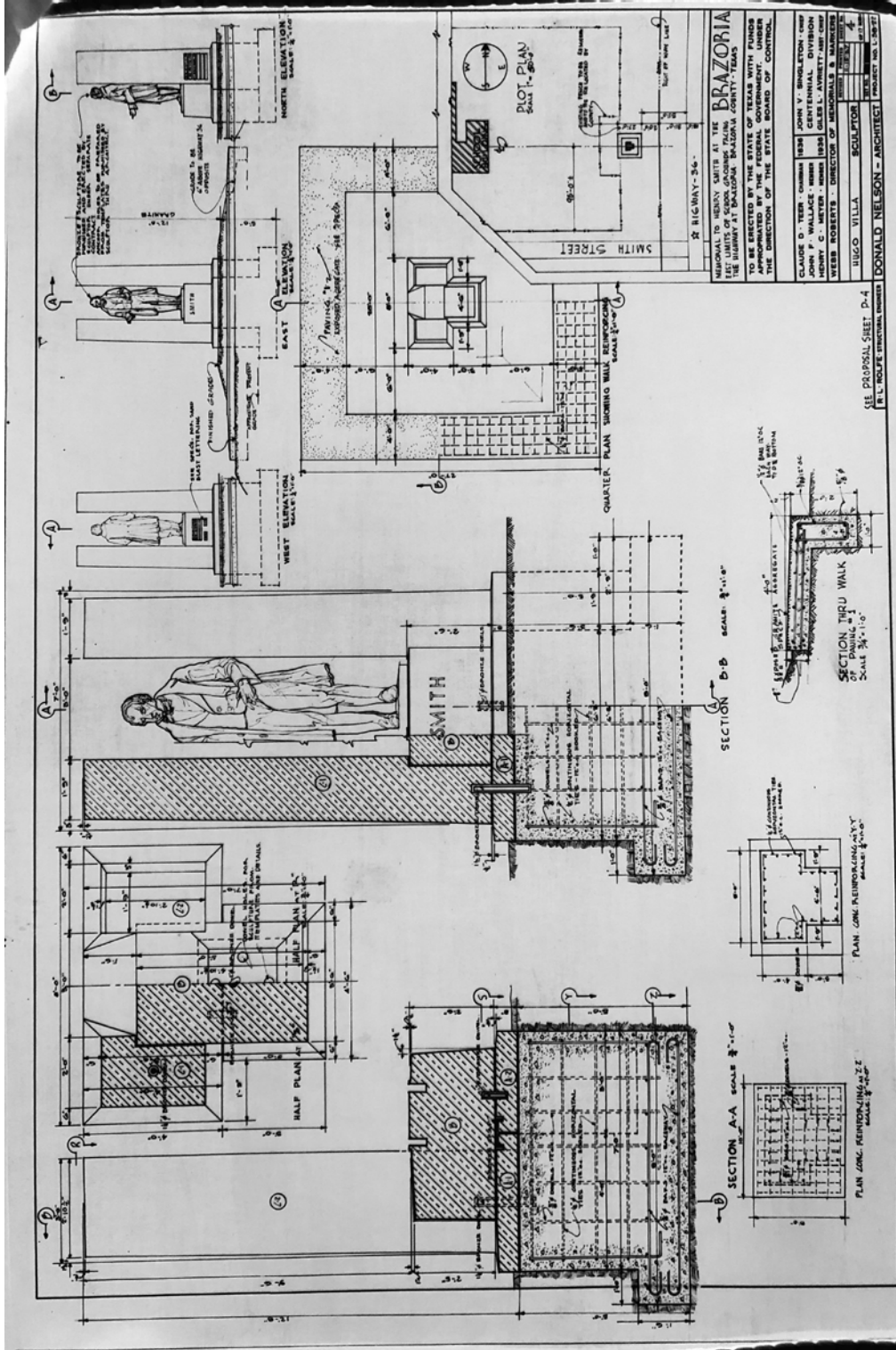
Figure 1: In 1939, Brazoria's two townsites were still evident on city maps. The approximate location for the Henry Smith monument is indicated with a red arrow. The square and flag next to it indicates a school building.

Source: Brazoria County Highway Map, 1939. Texas Highway Department (Texas Department of Transportation)



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Figure 2: Blueprint "Henry Smith" by Donald S. Nelson showing plans for base, statue, and site.
Source: Henry Smith Statue, Blueprints and drawings collection. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Figure 3: Detail of Nelson's blueprint for "Henry Smith," showing three elevations of proposed base and figure. Source: Henry Smith Statue, Blueprints and drawings collection. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

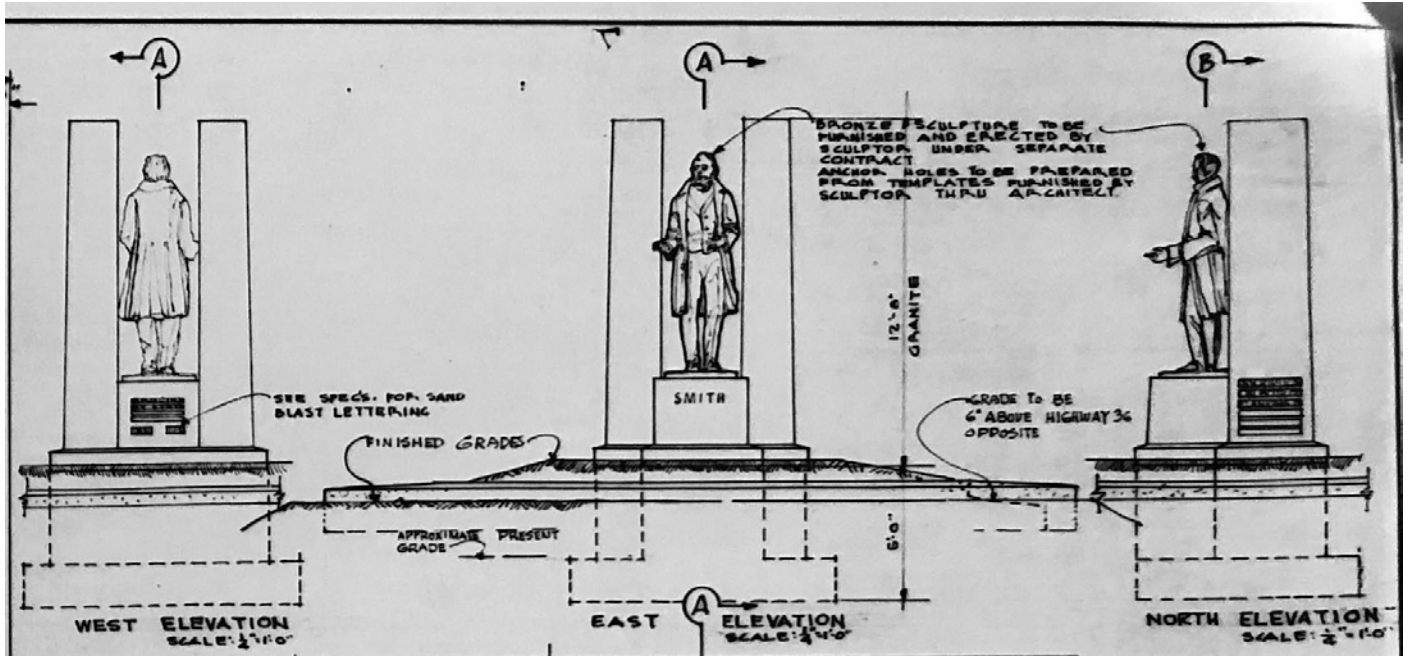
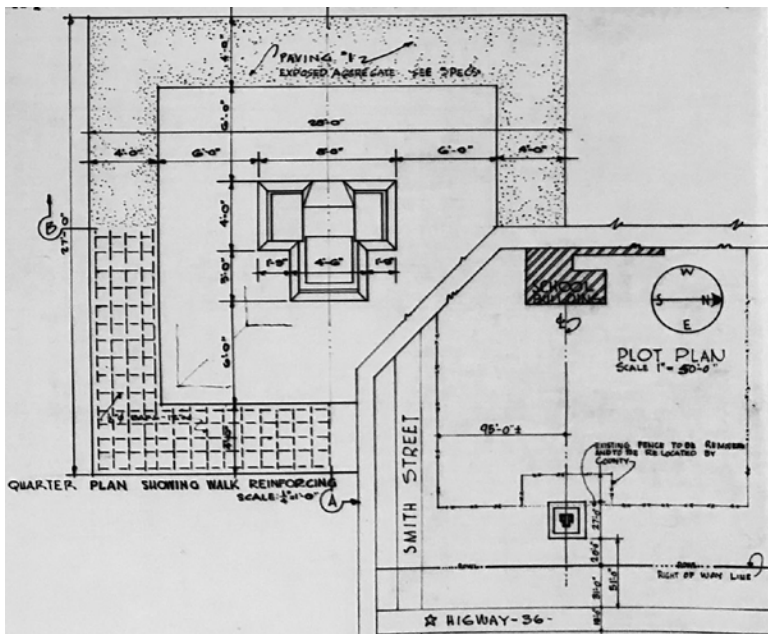


Figure 4: Detail of Nelson's blueprint for "Henry Smith," showing proposed site plan along State Highway 36. Source: Henry Smith Statue, Blueprints and drawings collection. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Figure 5: In 1918, Italian-born Hugo Villa arrived in the United States and applied for citizenship in 1934.
Source: Ancestry.com. Accessed March 3, 2018.



Figure 6: Villa was among many Texas artists to compete for Centennial commissions by submitting *maquettes* to the Board of Control, such as the one of Moses Austin shown below.
Source: *San Antonio Light*, December 2, 1936. NewspapersArchives.com, accessed March 5, 2018.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Figure 7: Inscription text on *Henry Smith*

[Front]
HENRY SMITH

[Left]
HENRY SMITH WAS
BORN IN KENTUCKY
MAY TWENTIETH 1788
CAME TO TEXAS IN
1827 AND SETTLED
IN WHAT IS NOW
BRAZORIA COUNTY
WHICH HE REGARDED
AS HIS HOME UNTIL
HIS DEATH * HE WAS
SEVERELY WOUNDED
IN THE BATTLE OF
VELASCO JUNE 26
1832 * ALCALDE OF
THE JURISDICTION
OF BRAZORIA 1833 *
DELEGATE TO THE
SECOND CONVENTION
OF TEXAS IN 1833 *
POLITICAL CHIEF OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF
THE BRAZOS IN 1834

1836

[Right]
HENRY SMITH WAS
A MEMBER OF THE
CONSULTATION AND
WAS BY THAT BODY
ELECTED GOVERNOR
OF THE PROVISIONAL
GOVERNMENT OF TEXAS
NOVEMBER 12 1835 *
HE WAS THE FIRST
SECRETARY OF THE
TREASURY OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
1836 TO 1838 AND
A MEMBER OF THE
FIFTH CONGRESS OF
THE REPUBLIC 1840
TO 1841 * HE DIED
IN A MINING CAMP IN
LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CALIFORNIA MARCH
FOURTH 1851 WHILE
IN SEARCH OF GOLD

1936

[Back]
ERECTED BY THE STATE
OF TEXAS 1936 WITH
FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
TO COMMEMORATE ONE
HUNDRED YEARS OF
TEXAS INDEPENDENCE

Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photographs

Photo 1: Henry Smith Statue on school grounds—camera facing west, February 14, 2018.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 2: Henry Smith Statue—camera facing west, February 14, 2018.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 3: Henry Smith Statue detail—camera facing west, February 14, 2018.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 4: Detail of statue torso and head—camera facing northwest, February 14, 2018.



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 5: South elevation of statue—camera facing north, February 14, 2018.



Photo 6: Detail of statue base— camera facing north, February 14, 2018. “Mario Scoma Foundry B’kln, N.Y.”



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 7: Rear (west) elevation—camera facing east, February 14, 2018.



Photo 8: Detail of rear (west) elevation—camera facing east, February 14, 2018. “Erected by the State of Texas 1936 with funds appropriated by the federal government to commemorate one hundred years of Texas independence.”



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 9: Northwest oblique—camera facing southeast, February 14, 2018.



Photo 10: Detail of statue base— camera facing south, February 14, 2018. “Sc. H. Villa 1936”



Henry Smith Statue, Brazoria, Brazoria County, Texas

Photo 11: Northeast oblique—camera facing southwest, February 14, 2018.



~end~