



continued from p.6

people about land. They're buying it up and waiting for the prices to go up."

But antiques, not industry, are what interest the people of Calvert for now. Lockhart says antiques account for 75 percent of the town's business. Residents depend on the town's historic homes and Victorian ambiance to get tourists to the shops.

Some of the historic homes have been restored and will be featured on April 12-13 in the Robertson County 14th Annual Historical Pilgrimage, which includes tours of the refur-

bished, period-furnished Victorian homes.

Give or take a few paved-over brick streets, a 12-block historical district is being restored to its original condition. The cast-iron store fronts, made in St. Louis in the 1870's, are regaining their former glamour and grace and the shops on the west side of the street have new coats of paint in Easter-egg colors. No old men line the sides of the street now. Instead, tourists with cameras stroll up one side and down the other, browsing and buying in the town's 12 antique shops.

Tannie Pickle, manager of Gray's Antiques, says tourists come because Calvert is "The Antique Capital of Texas."

"I guess we just started call-

ing it that," says the 12-year resident in explanation of the title. "People started coming in here and fixing things up and people just started coming to buy."

Gray's tight-packed rows of bureaus, sideboards and dresser sets line the store from end-to-end. All of the shop's polish seems to be on the furniture, but the treasures the store contains, like a hundred-year-old Victrola, make up for the lack of decor.

Pickle says all the antiques are bought by the owner, and many come from as far away as England. Most of the store's customers are passing through from Waco, Houston or College Station, he says.

People passing through Calvert do so on Highway 6, which is to Calvert now what the railroad was in the 1870s and 1880s, says Lockhart.

"At one time they were talking about re-routing it," she says of the highway. "They didn't do it but you should have heard the screaming about it."

Sallie Tucker Anderson, a local merchant, agrees that the highway is the lifeblood of the town. But she says the historical importance of the town has been just as important in its growth.

"It's been called the Williamsburg of Texas," she says. "And it's one of the few authen-

continued on p.11