101 E. Jackson—Its History

Norman Rozeff, December 2010

Lots 21, 22, 23 and 24 of Block 47 were conveyed by the Lon C. Hill Town and Improvement Company to Gordon Hill, son of Lon, likely in 1908 or 1909. Early middle-aged Gordon Hill was to die on 10/29/18 of influenza while being treated in Devine Providence Hospital in Brownsville. Early on there was a one-story frame building on Lot 24. This building is barely discernable in some old photographs of Main Street. The two-story brick building that now exists on Lots 23 and 24 was apparently constructed in the late 1920s. Interpreting the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, the building was erected after February 1925 and before July 1929.

Its 1930 occupant was the Hartman Dry Goods Store owned by H. Hartman. He and his wife Rose were residents of Mercedes. The 1931-32 Harlingen telephone directory has the store being occupied by the Hertz Style Shop owned by E. Hertz. No residential address is provided for Mr. Hertz. It was managed by Mrs. Blanche Fulgham who husband clerked in the store. They resided at 310 W. Buchanan Avenue. The year before Mrs. Fulgham managed the shop when it was at 106 S. A Street. That year her husband was a traveling salesman.

By 1935 the store had changed hands. It was now the Exclusive Dress Shoppe. Its manager was Dora McCullough, who lived at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel. In 1937-38 the shop was being managed by widow Mrs. Edna Grimes, who resided at the Plaza Hotel.

The Exclusive operated in 1939, but Mrs. Grimes was no longer on the scene at the shop or listed as such in Harlingen. The year 1941 was to see the first of several pharmacies occupying the premise. This was Central Walgreen Drug owned by Mr. Jean S. Cavett. Together with his wife Mary and student daughter Ellen B., Mr Cavett lived at the Reese-Wil-Mond. They would continue to live at the hotel into 1944. It was this year that Rease C. Harrell was listed as a co-partner of the drug store. Mr. Harrell, his wife Estelle and two children under 18 years of age resided at 217 E. McKinley Avenue.

By 1946 the Cavetts were gone from Harlingen. Harrell was the sole owner of the business. He and his family had moved to 213 W. Pierce Avenue.

By 1948 the business name had become Harrell's Central Drug. By 1950 one of the Harrell children had left the nest, and the second one followed by 1952.

In 1954 the business name was simply Harrell Drug as it was in 1956.

By 1958 the business had moved to 1338 E. Blvd. 77 and was renamed Harrell's Walgreen Agency Drug. 101 E. Jackson had no listing for that year. The 1959 and 1959-60 directories showed the occupant to be Sam's Walgreen Agency, Sam Green owner. This gentleman also owned Sam's Liquor Store at 108 N 1st. He and his wife Gladys lived at 2 ½ m. Rio Hondo Road, San Benito.

The site was once again vacant in 1961, but Green was operating Sam's Walgreen Agency Drugs in San Benito and would soon open again in Harlingen at 124 W. Jackson. 101 E. Jackson sat unoccupied through 1968.
The 1969 directory listing has C. R. Anthony Co., a chain department store, in the building and into 1971. Founded in 1922 in Oklahoma this company would grow to 300 stores in 20 states by 1964. It went into bankruptcy in 1997 and was later branded Stage Stores. Gone in 1972 Harlingen's Anthony's is to resurface later at the Sun Valley Mall. In 1974 and 1975 the building is filled by Economy Furniture. This firm is supplanted by Trevino's Fine Furniture in 1976 and continuing into 1978.

The building then experiences a long period of vacancy in the years 1979 through 1990. In 1991 Bill's Dollar Store moves in and maintains its presence into 1997. 1998 sees the store become Dollar General, a fast-growing national chain. By March 2009 Dollar General will have moved on to occupy several new location throughout the Harlingen.

In December 2010 the building is being restored. It is owned by the Sandra Corp. Mike Watkins of Pampa, TX is a principle in this company. The exterior is being refurbished as well as the interior drywall and the electrical system.