113 East Jackson—Its History

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1918 A.A. Kimmel establishes a business with his name, A.A. Kimmel and Company Hardware and Implements. It is in a brick front building on Jackson to the east of that of H. Letzerich at the northeast corner of West Jackson and Commerce Streets. Kimmel, a native of Williams County, Ohio first came to Riviera, Kleberg County in 1908. Kimmel was born in Montpelier, OH 9/27/84. He married Josie M. Heaton of Norton, KS on 11/19/06.

In WWI he serves on the Registration Board

1919 The present Harlingen Chamber of Commerce takes shape with A.A. Kimmel as president and J.B. Challes, who had come to Harlingen in 1918, as secretary-manager. In 1921 it incorporates with A.L. Brooks as chairman and Challes remaining as secretary-manager but now being paid.

He serves as a City Commissioner 4/1921-4/1923 and again 1/1936-12/1938.

In 1925, newly elected to the school board of trustees are John Sanders and A.E. McLendon taking the places of John James and C.A. Bobo who do not choose to run again. Holdovers are president, B.H. Brindley, A.A. Kimmel, Paul Hill, L.M. Chaudoin, R. B. Nunally, with R. B. Hamilton, secretary.

By 1925 his brother Roy is helping him manage the store, and by 1929 the company is called the Kimmel Implement Co., Inc. and deals in hardware, implements, machinery and is agent for International Harvester. Now at 219-211 N. Commerce, it boosts a floor space of 4,000 square feet. In 1928 he is president of the Retail Merchants Association and treasurer of the Rotary Club.

After partnering with a Brownsville implement firm, Kimmel sells out in the 1930s. The merged company will later become Aldridge-Washmon. It is in 1934 that he constructs the commercial high-ceilinged building at 113 E. Jackson. The following year he opens at this site A. A. Kimmel and Company, a retail hardware firm. Involved in its operation is his brother Roy and Mrs. E. A. Cole. Roy and his wife Winifred reside at 1118 E. Taylor. By 1939 Mrs. Cole is out of the picture.

1929 This year A.A. Kimmell joined with Aldridge Hielscher Hardware Store of Brownsville to form the renamed Aldridge-Kimmell Co. It later was to open additional stores in San Benito and Los Fresnos. The latter was to close in the business downturn of the 1930s. Charles A. "Cut" Washmon was lured away from International Harvester in 1935 to help the business. By 1937 the name of the stores was changed to Aldridge–Washmon, and this name continued at least through 1985. It was to handle International Harvester equipment from the 1930s.

Serving as commissioner again in 1942, Kimmel runs for re-election in May 1944. Mrs. Kimmel is active in the Business Women's Club, the Red Cross, and with her children Gordon A., Julia M., and Edna Mae.

By 1941 Kimmel has apparently sold out, and the premise is occupied by the Rio Grande Hardware Company, Inc. N.V. Stewart is noted to be the company's secretary-treasurer.

The following year (1942) Mrs. Ronald (Kathleen) Smallwood, wife of the Harlingen lawyer, is listed as its president. Her residence is 321 West Fillmore. Come 1946 and following a divorce she is listed as Mrs. Kathleen Cheek but retains the same residence.
The status of the firm with Mrs. Cheek and Stewart remains the same at least through 1946. Before 1948 commences the store becomes Kay-Dache, Inc. with Mrs. Cheek as president. This store specializes in china and glassware. An employee is Clyde S. Cheek, who with his wife Ava Nell resides at 314 E. Jackson.

In 1950 both Mrs. Cheek and Stewart are noted to be with the firm but not Clyde. Living with Mrs. Cheek at 321 W. Fillmore is a daughter or granddaughter, Patricia, who is a hostess at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel Dining Room.

By 1952 Mrs. Cheek has remarried and is Mrs. H. C. Callaghan. He is the general manager of Storm Proof Roof Company, Inc.

When the telephone directory is published in the second half of 1954, the premise is vacant. It is occupied before 1956 by Lee Brown, whose shoe store is named Lee's. Together with his wife Winifred he resides at 1026 16\textsuperscript{th} Street. Before the year is out he and his wife have apparently left Harlingen.

The store in the 1956-57 directory is Lairsen's. Ronald A. Lairsen is the proprietor. He and his wife Reamore (Rea, for short) live that year at 1115 Greenway. He is listed as manager/co-owner of the shoe store. In 1958 the firm is called Lairsen's Shoe Store.

In 1959 M. P. Lairsen is noted to be the owner and R. A. Lairsen the manager. The following year the latter and his wife Rea are residing at 2401 Bowie. In 1961 the directory calls him Rollo A. Lairsen as it does the following year.

By 1965 clothing has been added to the inventory and the name changed to Lairsen's Inc. An R. E. (Rea?) Lairsen is listed as secretary of the company and also in 1966. The following year Rea is listed as secretary of Lairsen's Shoe and Clothing and R. A. as owner. Sharing the facility with them is M. P. Lairsen and his Lairsen's Ready to Wear.

By 1971 the store is vacant. Lairsen's has moved to the new Sun Valley Shopping Center and renamed itself Lairsen's Style Shop.

The store is rented in 1975 to McCloud's Arts and Crafts and this firm stays there into 1976. In 1978 the store has no listing. Paul and Bess Western Wear are a going concern at the site by 1979. She is Bess Pless. The business is short-lived, and by 1981 the store is once more vacant and remains so into 1982.

By 1983 however Elena's Flower and Gift occupies the site, then the business becomes Flower and Gift Bazaar by 1984. It remains so through 1994, however the store space is shared with Core Skates starting in 1990.

D. M. Park and Latelier Beauty Salon are doing business at 113 in 1995-96, but the following period (1996-97) it is only Latelier Salon and Antiques.

In 1998 Country Cupboard moves in and continues there through 2004 at which time space is also provided for the two businesses, Christina Antiques and Accessories and Kandyceink. In 2005 Country Cupboard is out, and Cossey Creations and Texas Crafters Showcase, Inc. are in. Cossey Creations is owned by Mayte Zebroski. Ms. Zebroski, a native of Mexico but who came to the Valley from California in 1998, specializes in custom painted furniture and home décor. This self-taught artist has a folksy eclectic style of her own. Cossey Creations continues to occupy 113 as this is written in January 2008.

The building is presently owned by Bill Debrooke. Mr. Debrooke over the last decade has purchased a number of commercial buildings along downtown Jackson Street as well as West Harrison. He has stabilized, renovated, and given a facelift to many of these structures.