606 W. Monroe Avenue Occupancy History

The initial record we have is from the first telephone directory for Harlingen, that of 1930. It lists at the site in the two story building Mrs. Crisanta Navarro. Her occupation is laundress, and she has living with her two children under 18 years of age. In the one story building in the rear, sometimes listed as 606 ½ W. Monroe, are living Mrs. Dolores Nino and a Sifuentes Paz.

In the 1931-32 directory is listed Juarez Macimano, grocer, but no telephone. (Is this possibly a botched listing?)

For 1935 is found Vincente Juarez who is employed by the Mo-Pac Lines and Crisanta with one child. At 606 ½ is laborer Carlos Cantu and Lola (Dolores?).

For 1937-38 the directory again has Crisanta Navarro at 606. Carlos Cantu is still at 606 ½. Also listed in that house is Dolores with one child. She is employed at the Rio Grande National Life Insurance Building. Another family there this year is Samuel Longoria, wife Fidela, and two children. He is employed by Grant E.Lovett, a fruit packing plant.

For 1939 606 has no listing but 606 ½ lists Carlos Cantu, Lupe Cantu with two children, Dolores Juarez with two children, and laborer Juan Ramos.

In 1941 Eduardo Flores, housepainter, is in 606 along with his wife Manuela and one child.

The 1942-43 directory shows laborer Maximilo Juarez and Crisanta at 606. Carlos Cantu and Dolores are shown with four children. There is also a Crisanta with Alonzo Ponce, who is a tailor with Baum's Men Store.

1944 indicates Maximilo Juarez and Crisanta are at 606, but by 1946 he is noted to be retired.

In 1948 606 is occupied by Gomez Ignacio, his wife Genoveva, and one child. He is a laborer.

In 1950 the place is vacant, but in 1952 Julio Flores and eight children are said to live there. Julio, who works for the railroad, and his wife Ausencia and nine children live in 1939 at 608 W. Monroe. In the 1942-43 directory he is listed with ten children at an Orange Heights addition address and again with eleven children at the 608 address. In 1944 they are residing with 10 children at 203 N. E Street and finally in 1948 laborer Julio and Ascencion with 9 children are shown at 602 ½ W. Monroe. This appears to be the second story of this commercial building.
2/8/11 Mr. Rozeff,

I have greatly enjoyed your historical essays on the Cameron county website. I can remember my grandmother telling me stories that correspond to the very same events. My great grandfather was one of the men responsible for clearing the wooded area that would become known as Jackson street. My grandfather started as a track layer and made his way up to mechanic for Missouri Pacific Railroad. So my family is deeply ingrained in the history of the valley and of Harlingen itself.

This brings me to the reason I am contacting you today. My grandfather built a building that still stands at 606 W Monroe in Harlingen. As I’m sure you know the city is in the process of cleaning up Harlingen and has compiled a list of structures set to be destroyed. My cousin owns the building and I am trying to contact him to ask him to sign it over to me. The building itself is in a bit of a disarray. It has been neglected for years and is in desperate need of repair… I do know that it was one of the first Mexican bakeries in Harlingen and would deliver bread as far out as Lozano. It was owned but Julio Flores and his wife Aucencia and is now owned by Jesus Macedonio Camacho. My question to you sir is, is there any historical value that would help me preserve this building? If I am able to obtain the building I do plan on renovating it and bring back its luster. Any advice you could give me would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you

Ruben Martinez JR. (RJ)

P.S. Please response to this email address and cc rusa7476@ymail.com

Thank you

RJ

2/10/11 Norman,

Thank you very much for the research on the building. You name half of my family tree lol.. Maximilo is my great grandfather and the family Paz in my great aunt and uncle. The building was used as a bare bakery restaurant boarding house and residence. Julio and Aucencia Flores are my grandparent and the story did not stop at 10 children. In 1948 they had the last of 18 children and then they moved on to 1518 w Jefferson street. Since that time the building was use as a small grocery and boarding house then storage after. I believe the last residence to live in the building and maintained the small store moved out in the 1980’s. it has been vacant and used for storage since… I was hoping that since it was one of the towns original structures and the bar and restaurant were frequented by the employees of the Big Tex Juice company that we could somehow historically preserve it… but that light seems bleak now.
I was hoping to preserve it and offer a portion of the building to a group who provides ESL and GED classes to the lower income. I also wanted to open small necessity businesses washateria or a small grocery. Like you said it is a working class neighborhood and always has been. This businesses would help avoid people having to walk to the grocery store or to wash their cloths. The tomato and cotton picking trucks used to drive through there to pick up laborers. My father as a young child used to jump on and work the field picking tomatoes’.

I do appreciate your help and if there is any other info or help you could provide I would appreciate it…

Thank you

RJ