"When in the early morning hours of July 11, 2004, the Santos Lozano Building at 117-119 West Jackson Street, Harlingen was engulfed in flames, the structure would burn spectacularly, perhaps fittingly for its proud heritage. Its aged timbers and flooring were not readily consumed but for hours fought against the efforts of firefighters to extinguish them. The gap created by the burned-out structure was made more ghostly when scorched exterior walls still retained their stateliness. Not only was a physical gap created by the building's destruction but a spiritual one as well." I wrote these words late in that month in which the ill-fated fire occurred. They seem to be as applicable today as they were then.

The Lozano family has had an intimate connection with the history of Harlingen, a connection that goes back over 100 years. It was in the year 1905, one year after the city received its post office and a name, but was still five years away from organizing a town government, that Santos Lozano had come to the frontier community from Alice where he had made a living for 14 years. The next year he was to purchase the second lots newly platted by founder Lon C. Hill and his Town and Improvement Company. On one he constructed a two-story wooden frame building. The first floor was occupied by his general mercantile store while the family lived upstairs. His business flourished, so much so that in 1915 he ambitiously tore down the wooden structure to replace it with a large, impressive two-story brick one. The bricks for its construction came all the way from Monterrey (Mexico), his native hometown. It was designed by capable, but little documented, Brownsville architect Baltazar Torres.

The building would then commence to play an important role in the commercial and social life of Harlingen. For a time the post office and a drug store were located in its first floor corner. In addition to furnishing the citizens of the town a variety of goods in its large S. Lozano and Son Dry Goods Store, the spacious upstairs took on particularly important functions. Margarita Villareal, who was to become Mrs. G. M. (Willie) Lozano, taught Hispanic children there before the town organized a school district.

In August 1921 when Ku Klux Klansmen marched in Harlingen, a group of concerned citizens led by Harlingen's first lawyer, John Myrick, met an ad hoc group in Lozano Hall and denounced the Klan in no uncertain terms.

While Santos was to prosper and open branch stores in three other Valley towns, tragedy was to strike the family, when in 1919, after nursing others in the smallpox epidemic Mrs. Lozano succumbed to the disease. Santos was to live to age 90.

The hall saw service as a gathering place for chaperoned dances to recordings in the 1920s, hosted special events, and even drew live bands from Houston and San Antonio.
In the 1920s, the entire second floor was converted to offices, including a suite for Harlingen’s first business college.
By 1930 the Lozanos closed their business, but the premise was occupied by C. E. Stone Company, a Texas chain department store. At some point in time the upper façade having S. Lozano & Son – 1915 etched in it, is plastered over and "Pioneer's Building" takes its place along both the Jackson Street and A Street facades.
In 1970 perhaps it was fitting that a Lozano descendent, Sam Lozano, became mayor, for it was his pioneer ancestors who helped develop Harlingen prior to and after 1910. He was born here, was a graduate of St. Mary's University, had been a visiting teacher (truant officer) in Harlingen junior and senior high schools, and would become principal of Coakley Junior High School. He was both the first Hispanic elected to this office and the first native-born Harlingeniote to fill the position.
Numerous businesses will occupy the building over the years before Kattan's Western Wear purchased the building in 1998.
It was in 1980 that the building received a Texas Historical Commission marker designating it a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark. After the fire in 2004, the City purchased and cleared the property. The green space now known as Lozano Plaza continues to serve as a key gathering place for the community. How fitting that is for this historic site.
On May 5 at 11 a.m. at the Downtown Improvement Office, corner of Commerce and Jackson Streets, there will be a Lozano Plaza Sign Dedication ceremony. Members of the Lozano family, a city official, and others will attend.