With Harlingen rapidly growing in every direction, subdivision and city officials are challenged to come up with names for streets, avenues, drives, boulevards, circles, lanes, and roads. When the new 1910 Harlingen township was relatively compact, a systematic plan for naming could be instituted. The very first street was in essence a trail. This was the three mile long sendero which Lon C. Hill had cut to access his lands. It ran from what is now Loop 499 to what is currently the Valley Vista Mall. This east-west thoroughfare became Harrison Avenue and has remained one of the city's main arteries.

When the edge of town ended just north of City Lake, the east-west streets commenced there and continued to the south. The choice of names was easy. The city fathers began with U.S. presidents in their order of taking office. Washington was first, of course, and in time the list reached the name of Calvin Coolidge before the Arroyo Colorado intervened. A few presidents were short-changed. John Adams and John Quincy Adams had to share one avenue as did William Henry Harrison and Benjamin Harrison, and Theodore and Franklin Delano as well. The sometimes controversial Rutherford B. Hayes receives shortshrift here. His name is misspelled as "Hays" on street signs as well as on street maps.

Politicians and those in public service always get their share of recognition. So it is that Texas governors Pat Neff, Sul Ross, and Jim Hogg have street names here as do former Harlingen mayors Woods (this is a misspelling; it should be Wood for Mayor C. Worth Wood), Hode, Washmon, Kroeger, Botts, Roberts and Parker. The streets named for mayors are in northwestern Harlingen near Palm Valley.

In late 1922 or early 1923 E.C. Bennett, manager of utilities and in charge of city equipment including that for fire fighting, authorized street name changes. East of the intersection of Harrison and Commerce the north-south streets were assigned consecutive numbers and west of this intersection alphabet letters in order from "A". At this time existing street names were lost. These were Mexico Street which became F Street and moving east Matamoros, Hidalgo, Winchell, Bell, Hill, Fordyce, Brookings, Van Arsdale, Beggs, Vanderbilt, Bennett, Whitaker (7th), Bryan (9th) and Regin (10th). Bell was named after Dr. S. H. Bell, who was Hill's best friend. Fordyce, Brookings, and Whitaker were backers of the Valley railroads. Brookings went on to fame for his philanthropy and the founding of the Brookings Institute. Van Arsdale was another railroad man though with no known Valley connections. Vanderbilt was William K. Vanderbilt, an eastern capitalist who visited the Valley and whom Lon C. Hill may have been trying to entice to invest here. He was the second son of Cornelius "Commodore" Vanderbilt, the shipping and railroad tycoon. William occupied a famous mansion in Newport, RI and was the father of the famed beauty, Consuelo. Bryan was possible William Jennings Bryan, a friend of Lon C. Hill, several time presidential candidate on the Democratic ticket, and whom Hill had interested in buying land near Mission. The connections for the other names, other
than Bennett, are not known. The correct numbering of houses was also accomplished thereby paving the way for home delivery of mail.

Lettered streets now extend west to V Street. It is doubtful that anyone would want to live on "X" Street should it come into being. The numbered streets would eventually move from the city boundary at 13th Street east now to 32nd Street, however 18, 20, 22, 30, and 31 are non-existing. One day when farm land is subdivided they may come into existence.

When John McKelvey laid out his Laurel Park Subdivision in the early 1950s it was one of the first indications of expanded growth. Streets in this area were named after native trees and shrubs such as cenizo, lantana, ebony, mesquite, and elm(wood). Out-of-state tree names were used in the subdivision north of Pendleton Park and also in Treasure Hills.

The Citrus Terrace-WhiteHouse Circle Subdivision selected names of Texas patriots such as Austin, Crockett, and Bowie, then resorted to women's names, often those related to the developer. The latter was also favored in other subdivisions. Fannin, Travis, Lamar, and Sam Houston are other Texas patriots recognized by street names elsewhere in the city.

When the area south of Expressway 77/83 and around Rangerville Road belatedly came into being, the names assigned were those of states and in alphabetical order west to east. Some states were favored; other omitted. When Ed Carey was reached the thought was to rename it Pennsylvania, but history and public opinion overrode this change.

It was in 1919 that Wiley Edgar and Adella Carey had arrived in Harlingen with their 20 year old son James Edmond (Ed) Carey. The following year Ed returned to Throckmorton, TX to marry and bring his bride, Monterey McCay, to Harlingen. He then builds and furnishes for her a two story California style house where Ed Carey Drive now meets Expressway 77/83. He plants 200 acres of citrus in the area and later also grows cotton and vegetables. His first attempt to operate a service station located at North Commerce near the old jail ends in failure. Later however he will successfully own and operate two or three service stations around Harlingen. This First Baptist Church member will support the Boy Scouts and be very active with the Kiwanis Club. His strong faith will encourage his young brother-in-law, L.B. McCay to take up the ministry. He and Monterey have two children, Isla Lou (later Mrs. Wallace C. Athey) and son James Edmond Carey, Jr. After recovering miraculously from a cerebral hemorrhage and semi-paralysis in 1950, Ed, a native of Caddo, TX, will die in late November 1951 at age 52. When the expressway is constructed in the 1950s, the Carey homestead is demolished. Mrs. Carey then builds a smaller residence on her property to the south. She will die in 1978.

Similar to Ed Carey, every street name has a history or story to tell but many have been lost over time. Markowsky is near where the family of that name once farmed. Despite its Polish-sounding name, the family is of German ethnicity. Matz Avenue is named for that family. They lived on the west end where the street intersects with Business 77.
When the latter was widened in the early 50s, the Matz home had to be moved several lots east. Morgan Blvd. is named for Col. John R. Morgan. He was the first base commander at the Harlingen Army Airfield and later retired in Harlingen. The construction of the boulevard greatly shortened the travel time from downtown to the base. Dilworth Road is named after the R.S. Dilworth Ranch which existed across the Arroyo Colorado at the very south end of the present road. Mr. Dilworth was ranching here by 1908.

Other streets in Harlingen and the vicinity were named after prominent business people and others of accomplishment. These include Pittman, Davis, Flynn, Ferree, Lozano, Baker-Potts, Brazil, Garrett, Pendleton, (Dr. Pierre) Wilson, Rodgers, Simmons, and Stuart. Grimes may be named after J.R. Grimes, who was vice-president of the Cameron County Water District in 1928 but may have been deceased by 1930.

The city will continue to expand, at least in three directions. As a result new street construction will offer opportunities for imaginative, creative naming.