The Anderson Family of Harlingen and the Manhattan Café
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The Manhattan Café of 206 W. Jackson Avenue was one of the city's oldest restaurants. It is to be found in the earliest extant Harlingen telephone directory, that of the year 1930. Here we learn that it is owned by a partnership, that of George J. Corris who, this year is residing at the Reese-Wil-Mond Hotel and Bill Nakes who is at the Gateway Hotel. It is interesting to note that both men appear to be of Greek ethnicity and in a business common to that nationality. Perhaps the "Manhattan" name is indicative of their origin or selected to indicate some big city glow. By the next year both have taken up residence at the lower-cost Plaza Hotel.

One of the first public records found about the Anderson family is in the 1910 U.S. Census of April 25. T. C. Anderson, 23, is a farmer and works at a gin also. He is Texas born in 1887. His wife Velma, 17, is also Texas born. They live in the rural area of Justice Precinct 3, Dallas.

By the 1920 census of January 19 they reside at 204 New Hope Village, Dallas. T.C, 33, lists his occupation as deputy sheriff (One of his duties was in fact hangman.). Velma, 27 is now the mother of William, 9; Dorothy, 8; Howard, 6; and Earl, 4.

In the April 15, 1930 census they reside at 405 E. Filmore, Harlingen. The family was renting this house for $40 a month. T.C., 43, lists his occupation as a farm laborer. His mother is noted as Texas born while his father shows Georgia as his birthplace. Velma, 38, notes both of her parents as being Texas born. William, 20, is listed as a college student. A Thomas Wynn, 21, is listed as a brother (of Velma's?) and is employed as a gas station attendant. The address also includes two boarders.

In the 1930 Harlingen telephone directory we first find William "Bill" C. Anderson. He is noted to be a student at the State University. This tall, slender young man had been a star athlete just a few years prior while attending Harlingen High School. He was adept in football, basketball, and baseball. By April 1933 he has been married to Ola and together the attractive couple have their photo taken on the front steps of the Harlingen Municipal Auditorium.

By 1935 they have their first child and reside in the Pittman Addition. He is operating Andy's Confectionery along with his younger brother Howard. The address of the shop is 123 W. Jackson.

By 1937-38 Bill and Ola have a second child and are living at 609 W. Filmore. While the sweet shop continues to operate, Howard has opened Andy's No. 2 at 199 North A Street. It not only sells sweets but also has a café. Howard who is yet married resides at 109 W. Filmore. Bill Nakes is now listed as the sole owner of the Manhattan Café.

By 1939 the Bill Anderson's have added another child to the family, and Bill is listed as the proprietor of Andy's No.1. Howard has married Laverne, and she has moved in with him at 108 W. Filmore. Howard continues to operate No. 2.
In 1941, the beginning year of World War II both brothers continue as before. However Howard and Laverne have moved to 1218 E. Van Buren and the Bill Anderson family is now at 310 E. Madison. Bill has been elected to the City Commission. This year Mayor Ramsey and Harlingen City Commissioners J.L. Head, Guy Leggett, Bouldin C. Mothershead, W.E. Gaines, W.C. Anderson, and Arthur Dabney together with U.S. Senators Tom Connally and Morris Shepherd go to Washington to present the city's plans to the War Department.

The 1942-43 directory shows the Bill Williams family having four children at home and now living at 714 S. 7th Street. He is shown to be the proprietor of both Andy's Drive Inn at 220-2 E. Jackson and the renamed Manhattan Café, now the Wings Grill, in deference to the new Harlingen Army Air Field. Andy's Café run by Howard is now located at 110 W. Jackson.

In the 1944 directory neither Howard nor Laverne is to be found. Andy's No. 2 is no more. It may have been that as a married man, but with no children, he had been drafted into military service. Andy's Drive Inn at 220-22 E. Jackson is being managed by J.B. Simpson. Bill's occupation is noted to be shipper, and he continues to serve as a city commissioner. The Manhattan Café has changed hands, resumed its old name, and is now owned by D. M. Denton. He is married to Maude P. and they live with their two children at 622 E. Filmore.

1946  Bill Anderson is now a produce shipper and continues to serve as a city commissioner.

1948  The Bill Andersons have moved to 405 W. Buchanan Avenue. In the last year or so the Manhattan Café closes forever. By this year Otto Schvab is running his Schvab Jewelry Store at 206 W. Jackson.

1950 Bill Anderson is operating his produce shipping business out of 307 N. Commerce. By this year one child has left the home nest, and by 1954 all will have moved elsewhere. In 1959 this will allow Ola to take a job as manager of the Black Stamp Redemption Center. By this year also Bill has become the owner of the Harlingen Grain Company.

1954 Howard Anderson, this year, commences to operate his Red and White Grocery Store. Red and White is a food wholesaler that supplies independent grocers. The store is located at 1208 N. 7th Street. In 1957 when the state enlarges North 77 Sunshine Strip Howard erects a new, larger store across the street at 1209 N. 7th at the intersection with the strip. Opened by 1958 this is named Andy's Model Market. At the time he and Laverne are living at 1101 Rio Hondo Road.

More of their life is: 1918 From DeLeon, TX, the family of (Althea) Laverne Vinson arrives in the Harlingen area. She had been born in DeLeon 8/15/15. On 4/11/38 she is to marry Teddie Howard Anderson, beginning a union which lasts 45 years until his death. In 1983 they sell the store that will later become the Lopez Supermarket and still later the national chain Save-A-Lot Food Stores. Laverne is a long-time member of the First
Baptist Church where for many years she serves as Superintendent of the Junior's Sunday School Department and altar flower coordinator. She was known as "Mom" to many Air Force Cadets at the HAFB. Dying on 5/11/04, she is survived by two daughters and their families.

On 3/56 the W.C. Anderson Fire Station opens at 2112 North Commerce Street. It is named after William C. (Andy) Anderson who first owned Andy's Confectionary Store at 123 W. Jackson then went on to Andy's Drive Inn at 220-22 E. Jackson and Wings (formerly the Manhattan) Grill at 206 W. Jackson. He served as a City Commissioner 1939-53. This station will be closed in 1993 when the Grimes station is erected and the Anderson personnel are shifted to that station. It is currently Aguilar's Salvage Store.

11/27/56 The city dedicates Fire Station No. 3 near the north end of Commerce Street as the W. C. "Bill" Anderson Fire Station in recognition of his long service to the community.