The Elrod Gin, Harlingen

Sometime around 1926 or earlier the Harlingen Gin Co. came into existence at 321 West Jefferson Avenue. In May 1927, the partnership of Davis Wade of San Benito, Fleming Newton of Jacksonville, TX, and Jesse N. Elrod, Harlingen purchased the facility, and it became the Wade-Newton-Elrod Gin Co. By 1935 it was simply the Elrod Gin Co. In 1937 produce shipper Louis Cullen purchased a 1/3 share in the gin from the San Benito Bank and Trust which had acquired it when Wade defaulted on a loan. In 1942 Cullen and his son-in-law and partner S. Eugene (Gene) Thompson purchased Elrod's 1/3 share. Cullen and Thompson had become large buyers, brokers and shippers specializing in onions, cabbage, corn, and tomatoes under the Rio Grande's Best Brand label. They were also land owners and growers in the area north of the airport. Newton's 1/3 share was conveyed to Horace Etchinson of McAllen in 1943. The Elrod Gin was to cease operations in 1960.